



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge Refuge Happenings

July 2023: *The Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge is presently located in twenty-two different locations in the four primary Connecticut River watershed states of Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont. The Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge is located in ten locations on the mainland and near shore islands along the northern shore of the Long Island Sound in Connecticut.*

Youth Corps Begins Rebuilding Trail At Fort River Division



Eight youth corps members and three crew leaders worked hard on making improvements to the Fort River Birding and Nature Trail this month. The fully accessible trail, originally built from 2012 to 2014, was beginning to deteriorate in some locations, and needed to have boards replaced along the trail. The crew worked together demolishing the old trail, building the frame, and replacing gravel and stone dust. They made good headway as their YCC journey comes to an end in early August.

Photo Credit: USFWS

For more information contact: Jennifer_Lapis@fws.gov

Outer Island Artists-in-Residence Create Tribute Elizabeth Hird House



Nearly forty people celebrated the amazing accomplishments of our Outer Island Artists Elvira Bättig and Jack Pryce. Both residence of Lucerne, Switzerland, the artists created a scale model of the Elizabeth Hird House during the first-ever *Outer Island Artists-in-Residence/Chez Fifi Residency Program*. The duo decided to create the model of the Elizabeth Hird House as a tribute to the woman who donated her island, the house she designed, and a trust fund to the American people for their enjoyment nearly 30 years ago. The model will reside at the island for the remainder of this season, and will then be placed permanently on display on the mainland. Thank you Elvira and Jack, as well as Kathy Battista - their host in CT, and Friends of Outer Island board member Peggy Carpenter and Vice President Ginny Baltay for making this program possible!

Photo Credit: USFWS

For more information contact: Shaun_Roche@fws.gov

Administrative Staff From Around The Country Visit Conte



Service employees from the Joint Administrative Offices (JAO) visited the Conte Refuge this month as part of week long meeting held at our Northeast Regional Office. The employees work in different locations around the country, and some were in New England for the first time. In addition to getting an introduction to and an overview of the Refuge, the group spent time shooting archery and walking the trail.

For more information contact: Jennifer_Lapis@fws.gov

Photo Credit: USFWS



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STEAM Program For Youth In Connecticut



Staff from the Conte Refuge were invited by partners at the Connecticut River Conservancy to visit and help conduct STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) nature programming for elementary aged students in Connecticut. This is the third year CRC has asked Conte to participate in the program. Students learned about watersheds, animal adaptations, macroinvertebrates and even tried casting a fishing rod.

For more information contact: Jennifer_Lapis@fws.gov

Photo Credit: USFWS

Youth Corps Take Part In Poetry And Art Workshop



Members of our summer youth crews spent time learning about art, poetry and photography, as part of a workshop presented by Ellen White-Rook for our Writing The Land project. The project will result in a published book that includes poems, photos, and original artwork all focused on green spaces within the Connecticut River Watershed. One end goal of the workshop was to have students submit their work to be included in the book's "Youth Chapter". We want to extend a huge Thank You to Mrs. White-Rook for the time she spent with the students, encouraging and inspiring their creative thoughts.

Photo Credit: USFWS

For more information contact: Jennifer_Lapis@fws.gov

Twenty-Five Year Old Common Tern Found On Faulkner Island



The Faulkner Island crew, located in Connecticut, observed a common tern struggling to get out of the tall vegetation on the island. As wildlife professionals, they are trained to handle birds safely. The crew untangled the distressed bird and upon reading its band, discovered the bird was 25 years old!!

For More information contact: Shaun_Roche@fws.gov

Photo Credit: USFWS



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Making Personal Connections Within The Watershed



Photo Credit: USWS

This spring and summer, Park Ranger Tasha Daniels has been providing weekly interpretive programs at the Springfield Science Museum. One focus of her lessons has been interpreting important information about the Connecticut River Watershed using the EM2River Table model. Museum visitors who participate in the programs learn about their connections to the land, water, wildlife, and communities as the river table simulates what happens in “real world watershed habitats”. An important message presented during the program is the connection and impact that people have on the health of our environment, including clean air, water, and soils. The programming is another step in our efforts to work with partners and neighbors on being active Earth stewards for a healthy and viable future.

For more information contact: Jennifer_Lapis@fws.gov

Northern Conte Youth Conservation Corps



Photo Credit: D. Govatski

The Northern Youth Conservation Corps crew spent time this summer working to upgrade and maintain trails along the Pondicherry Division. Crews work on Little Cherry Pond Trail, Slide Brook Trail, and other locations throughout the refuge, making trails safer and more accessible to visitors. The high school ages crew members are hired from the local community and work for six weeks on a variety of refuge projects.

For more information contact: Steve_Agius@fws.gov

Pollinator Paradise In Connecticut



Photo Credit: USFWS

Seasonal staff at McKinney Refuge hosted a Pollinator Pathway walk at Oyster Shell Park in Norwalk, CT this month. Participants on the walk learned about planning and building pollinator friendly gardens using native plants. Another topic of discussion was how to identify and control invasive species that might appear at times. One goal of the Pollinator Pathway initiative is to establish an interconnected network of pollinator-friendly green spaces, creating a more hospitable environment for pollinators in urban areas. To learn more about the project visit: <https://www.pollinator-pathway.org/norwalk>

For More information contact: Shaun_Roche@fws.gov