



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge

Refuge Happenings

October 2022: *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.*

Fall Archery Brings Smiles



Photo Credit: Elena Campbell

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Intern Elena Campbell was busy this month coordinating and hosting archery programs for college students in the Pioneer Valley. Elena reached out to student clubs at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst College, Mt. Holyoke College and Hampshire College, inviting them to take part in organized archery events that she hosted along with USFWS employee Chris Dwyer. The events, held at the Fort River Division's archery range, are a fun way to connect students with the outdoors, as well as introduce people to the Refuge System and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. We are thankful to Elena and Chris for their hard work and dedication to keep the archery range active and in use.

For more information contact: Jennifer_Lapis@fws.gov

Featuring Fannie Stebbins



Photo Credit: USFWS

The Fannie Stebbins Unit had its spotlight this month at the Longmeadow Days Festival in Massachusetts. The Friends of Fannie Stebbins hosted an information and activity table, introducing visitors to the beauty of the Fannie Stebbins Unit, as well as opportunities for volunteering and supporting the Friends Group. Refuge visitor service staff also spent time at the information table, speaking with visitors about work within the entire Conte Refuge watershed. Visitors to the table learned about beavers, the use of beaver deceivers in managing habitats, and played a habitat matching game of local wildlife found at Fannie Stebbins Refuge.

For more information contact: Tasha_Daniels@fws.gov

Infrastructure Assessment At Mascoma Division



Conte Refuge staff are collaborating with Bear Hill Conservancy, Wild Landscapes and Redstart Consulting to draft a management plan for the division in New Hampshire. In October, Conte Refuge staff collected infrastructure data that will be compiled as part of the baseline report for the property. This is an ongoing project that requires an extensive assessment of the property.

For more information contact: Steve_Agius@fws.gov

Photo Credit: USFWS



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge

October 2022

S.B. McKinney Volunteers To The Rescue



Thank you to all the volunteers who helped make much needed repairs at S.B. McKinney's Falkner Island this month. The field station's trim boards needed replacing, so we took advantage of the nice weather to tackle the project. Although we were not able to complete entire trim board project in one day, the refuge manager promised that we could finish it off next spring.

For more information contact: Shaun_Roche@fws.gov

Photo Credit: Deanna Broderick

Woodcock Migration Study



The Nulhegan Basin Division was one of two Vermont capture sites for the Eastern Woodcock Migration Research Cooperative, an international research collaboration led by the University of Maine to better understand the migratory ecology of the American woodcock along the Eastern Seaboard. This study uses Global Positioning System (GPS) technology to track the seasonal movement and habitat selection of American woodcock as they travel from their breeding grounds in Canada and northeastern U.S. to their wintering areas in the southern part of the U.S. A total of 4 woodcock from the Division were captured and outfitted with GPS units in October. Field work was led by PhD students from the University of Maine. Visit www.woodcockmigration.org to follow tagged birds as they migrate to southern wintering grounds.

Photo Credit: Chuck Hlefer

For more information contact: Rachel_Cliche@fws.gov

Improving Fish Passage In Vermont



Conte Staff worked with the Fish and Aquatic Connectivity program this month to replace two perched and undersized culverts with more resilient and suitable steel bridges. The project took place on private land and improved aquatic connectivity on two tributaries to the Nulhegan River which runs through Nulhegan Division of the Conte refuge.

For more information contact: David_Sagan@fws.gov

Photo Credit: USFWS



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge

October 2022

Keeping It Safe



The Mud Pond Trail and boardwalk is a popular destination for local residents and visitors to the area. The 900 foot boardwalk meanders through a forested wetland and ends at an observation platform overlooking Mud Pond. The wooden boardwalk requires annual maintenance to keep it operational. In October, Refuge Manager Steve Agius spent a rainy day replacing rotten sections of the boardwalk.

For more information contact: Steve_Agius@fws.gov

Photo Credit: Dave Govatski

The Big Sit



Each year in October, teams of birders sit or stand in a 17-foot diameter circle and identify all the birds that they see or hear. This semi-competitive event originated in Connecticut with the New Haven Bird Club. Again this year, two teams formed their circles at Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge - one at the Salt Meadow Unit in Westbrook and the other at the Milford Point Unit. Both teams did well, with 46 species at Salt Meadow and an amazing 103 species in Milford. Most importantly, everyone had fun; it was a beautiful day!

For more information contact: Shaun_Roche@fws.gov

Photo Credit: USFWS

Keeping Roads Cleared



With over 40 miles of publicly accessible gravel roads, annual road maintenance is a perpetual project at the Nulhegan Basin Division. During the month of October, the Refuge's tractor and boom mower were used to cut the roadside shoulders at the Nulhegan Basin Division. This ongoing preventative maintenance reduces the amount of woody growth that accumulates along the roadsides.

For more information contact: Jeremy_Goetz@fws.gov

Photo Credit: USFWS



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge

October 2022

Conte Hosts Administrative Staff From Around The Country



Employees from the Service's Joint Administrative Operations (JAO) offices visited the Conte Refuge while attending a national meeting held at the Northeast Regional Office. While at the refuge, employees walked the Fort River Birding and Nature Trail, and learned from refuge staff how to shoot a bow and arrow at the Archery Range.

For more information contact: Jennifer_Lapis@fws.gov

Photo Credit: USFWS

Celebrating Indigenous Cultures



Staff from S.B. McKinney were invited to present at Hammonasset Day in early October. Despite rainy weather, nearly 325 people attended the celebration of Native American culture and the natural world at Connecticut's most visited state park. Staff spoke with at least half of those who attended the event. People who stopped by the Conte table learned about the refuge and our mission, as well as the many native plants and fungi that were used by Native Americans and that still have great uses today.

Photo Credit: USFWS

For more information contact: Shaun_Roche@fws.gov

Fishing Event Connects People



More than 100 people attended our last fishing event of 2022, held in partnership with UMass, Amherst, and Granby, MA police and fire departments. The Cops & Bobbers, Hooks & Ladders Family Fishing Program has grown in popularity over the past several years, connecting community members with law and safety professionals. This year, participants also interacted with horses from the mounted units, and saw a demonstration of how K9 officers train their police dogs.

For more information contact: Jennifer_Lapis@fws.gov

Photo Credit: USFWS