



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge Refuge Happenings

October 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.*

Planting Trees For Better Habitat



The Connecticut River Conservancy and US Fish and Wildlife staff recently planted 238 native trees and shrubs at the Dead Branch Division of the Conte Refuge in Chesterfield MA. The goal of the project is to enhance fish and wildlife habitat and reduce water temperatures in the larger Westfield River watershed. This planting was funded in part by One Tree Planted as well as the Service.

For more information contact: David_Sagan@fws.gov

Photo Credit: USFWS

Protecting Pollinators Year Round!



Refuge visitor service staff welcomed over 150 library patrons at the Mason Square Library, in Springfield, MA, as they visited our popular activity table at the annual Fall Festival. Visitors learned about the importance of “sparing” or leaving a five-by-five-foot square piece of land with leaves, for pollinators like queen bees, ladybugs, and other insects to over winter! Participants also learned how to protect their garden soil from winter’s harsh climate, by covering gardens with a blanket of leaves. As a take-home activity, adults and children made seed balls containing native plant seeds, that they could plant and grow, with hopes of attracting pollinators to their backyards next Spring.

For more information contact: Jennifer_Lapis@fws.gov

Photo credit: USFWS



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Around The World Women



The Around the World Women group visited the Fort River Division this month, as one of their many field trips that introduce women from foreign countries to life and culture of the Pioneer Valley. The group's organizers, volunteers from the local area, have been bringing members of the organization to the Fort River Division for several years, as it provides a safe, outdoor space for them to walk with family, meet new friends and enjoy the sights of nature. Some of the women have only been in the U.S. for two months, while others have been in the U.S. for up to two years.

For more information contact: Jennifer_Lapis@fws.gov

Photo Credit: USFWS

Repairs To The Pondicherry Viewing Platform



The Cherry Pond viewing platform at the Pondicherry Division is a popular destination at the refuge. Thousands of visitors use the viewing platform on an annual basis, and as such, the wood decking receives considerable wear and tear. Keeping visitor experience and safety in mind, in October refuge staff replaced deck boards on the viewing platform.

For more information contact: Steve_Agius@fws.gov

Photo Credit: USFWS

Forest Stewards Guild Tour



In October, the Forest Stewards Guild toured the Adaptive Silviculture for Climate Change treatment areas at the Nulhegan Basin Division. The treatment areas are a series of experimental silvicultural trials across a network of different forest types. A variety of adaptation treatments have been implemented and are monitored by researchers with the University of Vermont. The treatments are designed to test various approaches intended to increase structural complexity and species diversity within the forest, with the ultimate goal of improving habitat for specific wildlife species. Partners include the University of Vermont, University of New Hampshire, Dartmouth, US Forest Service, and the Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science.

Photo Credit: Forest Stewards Guild

For more information contact: Jeremy_Goetz@fws.gov



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Vermont Housing And Conservation Board Tour



Vermont Housing & Conservation Board

Conte Refuge staff met with Vermont Housing and Conservation Board staff to discuss ongoing habitat management and restoration on the refuge, and land conservation in the state. The Refuge staff provided a tour of the refuge and highlighted ongoing spruce/fir restoration work in the basin.

For more information contact: Steve_Agius@fws.gov

Photo Credit: VT Housing & Conservation Board

Parking Lot Maintenance At The Fort River Division



The entrance road and parking lot at the Fort River Birding and Nature Trail received a much needed fresh layer of gravel this month. The road and parking area were closed to visitors for several days as maintenance personnel conducted re-surfacing operations to fill potholes and compact the material.

For more information contact: Dean_Rhine@fws.gov

Photo Credit: USFWS

Refuge Managers Meet At The Rhode Island National Wildlife Refuge



Refuge Managers from the North Zone of the Northeast Region attended a two-day meeting at the Rhode Island NWR to discuss the uncertain FY 2024 budget, refuge operational efficiencies, and regional priorities. Included on the agenda were field trips to see several refuge units, including a tour of the captive rearing pen for New England cottontail rabbits, which is a candidate for listing under the Endangered Species Act.

For more information contact: Dean_Rhine@fws.gov

Photo Credit: USFWS