



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge

Refuge Highlights

August 2019: 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.

Putney Mountain Division Wetland Restoration Project



A certified pesticide applicator treated glossy buckthorn on the Putney Mountain Unit of the Silvio O. Conte NFWR. Buckthorn had become established along the perimeter of wetlands that provide habitat for the northeastern bulrush, a federal listed species. Buckthorn seedlings will be pulled by staff and volunteers in late summer or early fall. An event that will likely occur on an annual basis to prevent the establishment of mature shrubs capable of dispersing seed.

Photo Credit: USFWS

For more information contact: Steve_Agius@fws.gov

Nulhegan Basin Division Aquatic Organism Passage Projects



Conte Refuge staff are actively working to improve aquatic connectivity passage throughout the Connecticut River watershed. In August, two undersized culverts were replaced with larger concrete box culverts. The new culverts are larger to allow for the creation of natural stream bed and to allow for the movement of greater volumes of water in a changing environment. The work was designed and overseen by the Eastern Federal Highways Division of U.S. DOT.

Photo Credit: USFWS

For more information contact: Steve_Agius@fws.gov

Northern New England End of Year YCC Celebration



The annual end of year celebration for the CT, MA, NH and VT North Woods Youth Conservation Corps was held at the Northwoods Stewardship Center in northern Vermont. The YCC crews competed in numerous competitions and gave presentations about their field seasons. More than 80 crew members and their families attended.

Photo Credit: USFWS

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Friends of Nulhegan Basin Annual Public Meeting



The Friends of Nulhegan Basin held their annual public meeting on August 1, 2019. The event was an ice cream social that highlighted ongoing conservation work in and around the refuge. Refuge staff talked about snowshoe hare and lynx research, and aquatic organism passage projects. State biologists talked about ongoing stream restoration and moose telemetry projects on the refuge. Updates were provided about upcoming habitat restoration projects and road improvement projects.

For more information contact: Steve_Agius@fws.gov

Photo Credit: USFWS

Regional MAT Team Completes Demolition Project at Salmon River Division



After two weeks on the job, the Regional MAT team demolished 7,600 square feet of building at Conte's Salmon River Division. Darren Stover led a team from Conte, Rachel Carson, Forsythe, Rhode Island, and Umbagog on this exceptional project. The team's professionalism, efficiency and outcomes were top-notch. Thank you to the Northeast Region MAT team!

For more information contact: Andrew_French@fws.gov

Photo Credit: USFWS

Conte Refuge Helps Host Hispanic Access Foundation Close-out Session



This month the Northeast Region said good-bye to our Hispanic Access Foundation interns with a close-out session at the Regional Office in Hadley. Conte Refuge hosted the interns for a morning of archery at the Fort River Division. Park Ranger Tasha Daniels and HAF intern Anderson De Aza led the group of 7 interns through an archery lesson as part of their final days together. The close-out session was an opportunity for students and staff to reflect upon the summer, provide important feedback and highlight the great work they accomplished during their three months with the Service.

For more information contact: Jennifer_Lapis@FWS.gov

Photo Credit: USFWS



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The Great Springfield Birding Trail



Photo Credit:
ReGreen Springfield

The Great Springfield Birding Trail is nearly complete! Designated as an Urban Bird Treaty City, Springfield offers several great birding locations throughout the cities parks, neighborhoods and open spaces. The Great Springfield Birding Trail leads birders to thirteen sites within the *City of Homes* where they can view a variety of bird species. Partners in developing the trail are ReGreen Springfield, U.S. Forest Service, Springfield Parks Department and the Allan Bird Club of Hampshire County. Over the summer volunteers from ReGreen Springfield posted signs at each birding location, including Blunt Park, Hubbard Park and the Connecticut River Walk and Bikeway. Stay tuned for the final component of the project, a brochure listing all locations and visitor information.

For more information contact: Tasha_Daniels@fws.gov

Bird Banding Wrap Up



Photo Credit: USFWS

The Conte Refuge and Massachusetts Audubon wrapped up the collaborative bird banding project involving barn swallows. Throughout the summer we banded more than 100 birds, adults and juveniles, in two locations on the Fort River Division, and a third location in Amherst.

For more information contact: Andrew_French@fws.gov

New Roof and Siding for Buildings at Fort River Division



Photo Credit: USFWS

As part of the deferred maintenance program, the arena roofing project at Fort River Division was finally complete this month. In addition, the east end of the building, the “boat house annex” received new siding using Conte Refuge station funds. We are hopeful that the success of this project could influence decisions made in fiscal year 2020 for additional deferred maintenance funds to complete a siding project for the rest of the arena building.

For more information contact: Andrew_French@fws.gov



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Harvest of Cool Season Grass Fields at Fort River



Photo Credit: USFWS

A local cooperater harvested grass this month from our cool season grass fields. At five dollars an acre it does not generate much revenue, but it saves refuge staff from having to mow it ourselves. The partnership is another example of working with the local community for a mutual benefit.

For more information contact: Andrew_French@fws.gov

Gate Installed at the Salmon River Division



Photo Credit: USFWS

This month we installed a gate on Salmon River Road, leading into the Salmon River Division. The gate installation was in support of our recent demolition project and in an effort to curb trespassing and encroachment issues. Visitors to the refuge can now freely walk the road without the disturbance of vehicular traffic.

For more information contact: Andrew_French@fws.gov

River Survey for 2019 Source to Sea Clean Up



Photo Credit: USFWS

Members of the Connecticut River Conservancy accompanied Conte staff while conducting a survey along the Connecticut River in Massachusetts, Vermont and New Hampshire. The survey was done in preparation for the 2019 Source to Sea Clean Up event. The team identified several tire dump areas that could total as many as 100 tires needing to be removed from the river and its banks.

For more information contact: Andrew_French@fws.gov



Photo Credit: USFWS

World Wrestling Championship

Sometimes you see some strange things while working out in the field. Refuge staff stumbled into the final minutes of the 2019 Turtle World Wrestling Championship, observing two large snapping turtles rolling around at the surface of the water in the Connecticut River. The turtles were not alarmed or deterred by the loud noise of the airboat. After a couple of minutes, the match finished uninterrupted and both swam to their corners.

For more information contact: Andrew_French@fws.gov