



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge

Refuge Highlights

June 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.

Meet the Silvio O. Conte NFWR's Summer Intern and Youth Conservation Corps Crews



Photo Credit: USFWS

The Northwoods Stewardship Center started their summer Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) program at the Fort River Division this month. About half their time will be dedicated to tackling the much needed repairs on the Fort River Birding and Nature Trail. Other projects include helping at the Fannie Stebbins Unit, general refuge maintenance and lending a hand with visitor service programs. For more information contact: Chad_Roderick@fws.gov



Photo Credit: USFWS

The Northern Conte Youth Conservation Corps crew primarily focuses on repairing and upgrading hiking trails at the Nulhegan Basin and Pondicherry Divisions of the Conte Refuge. This year the crew is focusing on trail work and will complete the new hiking trail to the historic Gore Mountain Fire Wardens Cabin, replace hemlock bog bridge planks, improve the North Branch River Trail and construct water bars on the Nulhegan River Trail. In addition, they are working with the Vermont River Conservancy to build a stone step canoe launch on the Nulhegan River and removing invasive plants in New Hampshire and Vermont.

For more information contact Steve_Agius@fws.gov



Photo Credit: USFWS

Through a partnership with the Hispanic Access Foundation, Anderson De Aza is one of several interns stationed in the Northeast Region focusing on Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnerships. While at Conte, Anderson will focus much of his work on the Springfield Partnership, doing programs with youth through Springfield Parks and Recreation. In addition, he is working with Eagle Eye Institute on several programs involving youth from the Boys and Girls Club in Holyoke, Mass. Anderson is currently a Junior at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, VA pursuing a career in civil engineering, with a goal of one day bringing affordable, yet green housing back to people in the Dominican Republic.

For more information contact Jennifer_Lapis@fws.gov



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Nulhegan Basin Division, Vermont

Surveying Snowshoe Hare Abundance



Photo Credit: USFWS

Conte Staff and partners surveyed more than 650 hare fecal pellet plots this spring, continuing to index the abundance of snowshoe hare within predominately spruce-fir habitats in the Nulhegan Basin Division. Snowshoe hare are considered a key-stone species in the boreal forest; providing a food source for numerous carnivores. They are also vulnerable to climate change, making them an important species to consider when managing habitats. In this photo, a PhD Candidate from the University of Massachusetts counts hare fecal pellets within a 56 centimeter plot.

For more information contact Steve_Agius@fws.gov

Northeast Kingdom Trail Dedication



Photo Credit: USWS

Twenty years ago, Champion International sold more than 125,000 acres in northern Vermont. A conservation partnership was developed to conserve the lands for public recreation, wildlife management and timber production. Over the course of the past twenty years, a network of trails was constructed to connect the protected lands. A dedication ceremony for the completed Kingdom Heritage Trail System took place on June 22, 2019. The 25 mile long trail starts in Island Pond and traverses numerous mountains and historic sites before crossing onto and ending at Conte Refuge's Lewis Pond Overlook.

For more information contact: Steve_Agius@fws.gov

Friends of Silvio O. Conte NFWR Hold Quarterly Meeting



Photo Credit: USFWS

The Friends of Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge held their quarterly meeting at the Massachusetts Audubon, Arcadia facility in Easthampton, Mass. Partners shared their project priorities within the watershed to identify opportunities to coordinate and collaborate on projects benefitting the Connecticut River Watershed.

For more information contact Andrew_French@fws.gov



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Springfield Urban Partnership Hosts Refuge VIP



Photo Credit: USFWS

Conte Refuge staff and partners were proud to host Angelina Yost, National Urban Coordinator for the National Wildlife Refuge System, on her tour of Urban Partnerships in the Northeast Region. On her last day in Region 5, Angelina toured the Abbey Brook Conservation Area in Springfield, while meeting and talking with several urban partners. Members from ReGreen Springfield, The Springfield Science Museum and the U.S. Forest Service came together to discuss partnership highlights and accomplishments. We were pleased that Ms. Yost selected to make Springfield, MA one of the stops on her tour throughout Region 5.

For more information contact: Jennifer_Lapis@fws.gov

Springfield Youth Discover Pollinators



Photo Credit: USFWS

Conte Visitor Service staff and interns introduced young Springfield residents to the pollinators living in their own backyards. In a program at Mason Square Library, participants searched for pollinators in the vibrant library gardens. A highlight of the afternoon was locating and identifying a few species of bees and other insects found on the garden plants. The program ended with each child making their own pollinator seed ball to take home and plant in their yard.

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Working with Massachusetts Audubon



Photo Credit: USFWS

Conte Refuge is pleased to be continuing our collaboration with Massachusetts Audubon. As partners, we are launching a landscape based aerial insectivore initiative as a way to engage youth and the young adults while further connecting people to nature. This month the Director of Bird Conservation provided a banding demonstration to our Youth Conservation Corps crew.

For more information contact: Andrew_French@fws.gov



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Soldier On Veteran's Enjoy an Afternoon of Fishing



Photo Credit: USFWS

Adding to our partnership for Veteran's Fishing Programs, Conte Refuge hosted 19 Veteran's from the Soldier On program for an afternoon of fishing and enjoying the outdoors. Thank you to Cronin Aquatic Resource Center and to Berkshire National Fish Hatchery for allowing the use of the fishing pond and stocking it with brook trout. Long time volunteers from both the community and from Trout Unlimited attended the event, helping the anglers along the way. The event was so well received, the group scheduled another outing in the month of July.

For more information contact: Jennifer_Lapis@fws.gov

Birding with High School Students in Holyoke



Photo Credit: USFWS

In partnership with the Eagle Eye Institute and the Kestrel Trust TerraCorps program, Conte Staff and intern conducted an urban birding program with high school students in Holyoke, Mass. Park Ranger Tasha Daniels and HAF intern Anderson De Aza taught students how to locate and identify birds along the banks of the Connecticut River. In addition, they discussed bird behavior and anatomy. The program is part of a larger partnership being formed to work with youth throughout the city of Holyoke.

For more information contact: Jennifer_Lapis@fws.gov



Photo Credit: USFWS

Pollinator Garden at Fort River Division

This Foxglove Beardtongue (*Penstemon digitalis*) is just one of the many native plants that adorns our pollinator garden at the Fort River Division. If you look closely you can see a small pollinator inside one of the white flowers.

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