



Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge

Refuge Happenings

November 2020: *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.*

Virtual Lessons: From Farm to Table



Conte staff are thrilled to maintain our connection with young people in the City of Springfield through a series of virtual programs. This month, as part of a lesson on food chains, we visited and broadcast from a local dairy farm, showing students the process by which milk, eggs and other farm products end up on their tables at home. Students saw calves, chickens and adult cows up-close. Denise Barstow, whose family owns and runs the farm, toured us and the students around the farm, explaining the process by which they robotically milk the cows. The students asked questions and were excited to see the live animals.

For more information contact: Jennifer_Lapis@fws.gov

Photo Credit: USFWS

Measuring Water Levels and Temperature For Tiger Beetles



This month refuge staff retrieved a water logger from the Connecticut River that was located near one of the two places tiger beetles have been detected. We set up the water logger earlier this summer in order to measure water levels and temperatures. The data can be correlated to water flow readings at nearby locations, such as the beach area inhabited by tiger beetles. The information provides important habitat clues as to why tiger beetles choose specific areas to lay their eggs and how much inundation the eggs and larvae can tolerate.

For more information contact: Dean_Rhine@fws.gov

Photo Credit: USFWS

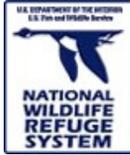
Mollie Beattie Bog Boardwalk Replaced



Staff from the NorthWoods Stewardship Center recently replaced the Mollie Beattie Bog Boardwalk at the Nulhegan Basin Division. The new boardwalk includes a larger elevated observation platform that will allow the public to experience a black spruce bog at bird's eye view.

For more information contact: Steve_Agius@fws.gov

Photo Credit: USFWS



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Mascoma Easement Inspection



Photo Credit: USFWS

Conte Refuge staff have conducted two site visits to the Mascoma River Division conservation easement in the month of November. In collaboration with Bear Hill Conservancy, WildLandscapes and Redstart Consulting, efforts are underway to collect baseline data on the conserved lands. On a recent visit more than half a dozen bear nests were found on the top of mature beech trees on the property!

For more information contact: Steve_Agius@fws.gov

Mud Pond Trail Expansion



The Mud Pond National Recreation Trail continues to grow in popularity. The fully accessible trail allows visitors to experience a 'poor fen' and various other habitat types. A discussion is underway to expand the one way trail into a loop trail. Recently, conservation partners met at the trail to discuss expansion options and maintenance of the trail.

For more information contact: Steve_Agius@fws.gov

McKinney Refuge Launches AGENTS OF DISCOVERY For Visitors!



McKinney Refuge recently launched the Agents Of Discovery Challenge, an educational game that allows visitors to explore their refuge in a whole new way. AGENTS is an App where people test their knowledge of wildlife and habitats interactively while walking the trails of the refuge's Salt Meadow Unit in Westbrook. Visitors can come to the refuge with their smart phones or tablets, open the App and look for "Discover McKinney National Wildlife Refuge Mission". The five challenges are appropriate for the entire family, and children are especially welcome to try their hand at this game.

For more information contact: Shaun_Roche@fws.gov



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Blueberry Swamp Site Visit



The Blueberry Swamp Division is the most northern division of the Conte Refuge. Refuge staff recently visited the property in preparation to re-establish a habitat management access corridor. During the site visit numerous violations were observed and reported to management.

For more information contact: Steve_Agius@fws.gov

Photo Credit: USFWS

New Visitor Counter Installed at Fannie Stebbins



This month refuge staff installed a pedestrian trail counter at the Fannie Stebbins Division in Longmeadow, MA. The counter will tell us how many people are using the trail, as well as visitation patterns such as, what days of the week, time of day and time of year people are visiting the most.

For more information contact: Jennifer_Lapis@fws.gov

Photo Credit: USFWS

Partnership With Forest Park Zoo Brings Live Animals To Students



As part of Conte's Urban Refuge Partnership, this month we worked with the Zoo at Forest Park to deliver virtual educational programs to students in Springfield. Teaching about animal adaptations, Conte staff used animal artifacts to demonstrate different ways animals are adapted to their environments. Zoo staff participated in the discussion and introduced some of their live education animals to also demonstrate adaptations. Students saw a fox, snake, and bird during the presentation, along with various mammal pelts and a sea turtle shell.

Photo Credit: USFWS

For more information contact: Jennifer_Lapis@fws.gov