



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge

Refuge Highlights

October 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.

Retreating Into Nature: Conte Complex staff meet in VT and NH



Photo Credit: USFWS

Conte Complex Staff from S.B. McKinney, Conte South (Sunderland), and Conte North (Nulhegan) spent three days in Vermont and New Hampshire on a staff retreat. We started the trip with a visit to our partners at Vermont Institute of Natural Science, where we toured their newly built Canopy Walk (a highly recommended visit for anyone). After meeting on business related issues, we toured the Mascoma River Division, a 761-acre easement which contains large areas of intact forest and provides outstanding recreational opportunities. The meeting was a much needed opportunity for staff to work together in person, and visit the places we work so hard to conserve on a daily basis.

For more information contact: Andrew_French@fws.gov

Celebrating Fall in Springfield, Massachusetts



Photo Credit: USFWS

Refuge staff participated in the Mason Square Library's Fall Festival this month. Families learned all about owls: dissecting owl pellets, seeing an owl mount, playing an owl ID game and making owl puppets. Other activities offered by the library were fall leaf rubbing and guess the weight of the pumpkin contest. More than 70 members of Mason Square community attended the event.

For more information contact: Jennifer.Lapis@fws.gov

Teamwork at Conte Refuge Brings Results



Photo Credit: USFWS

Conte staff accomplished much progress working on the Black Branch Trail at the Nulhegan Basin Division this month. The collaborative effort brought together staff from all three Conte Complex locations. The hard working team installed 96 feet of trail frame, of which 72 feet are complete. The opportunity to work together was enjoyable, while also productive and rewarding.

For more information contact: Andrew_French@fws.gov



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Northampton Cops & Bobbers, Hooks & Ladders



The Conte Refuge partnered with the Northampton, Massachusetts Police and Fire Department for our Annual Cops & Bobbers, Hooks & Ladders Youth Fishing Program. More than 200 people attended the event, fishing for trout stocked by the Berkshire National Fish Hatchery. Other partners included Mass Wildlife Angler Education Program and the local chapter of Trout Unlimited.

For more information contact: Jennifer_Lapis@fws.gov

Photo Credit: USFWS

New Viewing Platform at Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge



If you take a walk in the Salt Meadow Unit of the S.B. McKinney NWR you might notice a new structure being built. The idea for a viewing platform came from an Eagle Scout candidate who approached the refuge with his plans. Eventually the platform will be enclosed allowing visitors to have a nice view of marsh wildlife, without disturbing them. Thank you to everyone who has helped work on this project, which will benefit both the public and wildlife.

Photo Credit: USFWS

For more information contact: Shaun_Roche@fws.gov

Creepy Critter Trail Fun



Refuge staff hosted the *Creepy Critter Trail Event* at the Fort River Birding and Nature Trail this month. Thanks to Visitor Service Intern Sydney Giuliano for teaming up with Conte Staff to develop and host this fun, “not-so-scary” outdoor fall event. Visitors learned about bats and their value to maintaining a healthy ecosystem. The trail was decorated with fun fall decorations for an even more entertaining walk along the trail.

For more information contact: Tasha_Daniels@FWS.gov

Photo Credit: USFWS



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Deputy Manager Reaches 20 Years With the Service!



Photo Credit: USFWS

Conte's Deputy Refuge Manager, Dean Rhine received his twenty-year service award and pin this month. Rhine is an experienced wildlife and fisheries biologist who started his career with the Service as Hatchery Manager at White Sulphur Springs National Fish Hatchery in West Virginia. He moved on from there to the Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge as Refuge Manager, and then up to New England as an Assistant Refuge Supervisor in the Regional Office. In 2015 Rhine transferred to Conte Refuge as the Deputy Manager. All Conte Staff are thankful to Mr. Rhine for providing us with daily doses of his dry sense of humor and brightening smile! Congratulations Dean!

For more information contact: Andrew_French@fws.gov

S.B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge Unveils New Mural



Photo Credit: Patrick Comins (top), Sean Healy (bottom)

Staff, Friends and partners held an unveiling ceremony at the Great Meadows Unit of the S. B. McKinney NWR this month for a new mural that will be displayed at the site. The project, coordinated by a refuge volunteer, included a concept design by artist Sean Murtha, and was painted by middle school students at Flood and Wooster Middle Schools in Stratford, Connecticut. The mural is an added bonus for all visitors to the Great Meadows Division. Thank you to everyone who participated in this successful project.

For more information contact: Shaun_Roche@fws.gov

Measuring Forest Regeneration—Effects of White-tailed Deer



Photo Credit: USFWS

In 2015, Stewart B. McKinney NWR's YCC crew constructed ten deer exclosures in random locations in the forest at Salt Meadow. These locations, with the addition of ten control plots will be used to determine the effects that white-tailed deer have on the regeneration of the maritime forest. Seedlings and saplings were found in low density in a recent forest survey. The first surveys of trees, saplings, seedlings, shrubs, and herbaceous vegetation were completed this October. Because this is a long-term survey, the plots won't be surveyed again for another 5 years. Stay tuned for future analysis.

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