



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge Refuge Happenings

December 2021: *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.*

Big Brothers Big Sisters Share Outdoor Learning Adventure



Conte Refuge Visitor Service staff participated in a "Winter Wonderland" event sponsored by Kestrel Land Trust, for members of the local Big Brothers, Big Sisters program. After an outdoor walk through the woods in the Holyoke Range, participants learned about the many ways animals keep warm and protect themselves during the winter months. Both young and adults enjoyed seeing the animal pelts and experiencing the "blubber glove" activity.

For more Information contact: Jennifer_Lapis@fws.gov

Photo Credit: Kestrel Land Trust

Thankful For Stebbins Stewards



The "Stebbins Stewards" spent time this month learning how to maintain the fencing located at the Fannie Stebbins Division. The temporary fence is meant to deter deer from browsing on newly planted trees in the flood plain forest restoration area, until the trees are large enough to survive. Refuge Partners Biologist Dave Sagan led the volunteer group through fence maintenance instruction on a snowy day at the refuge. Thank you Stebbins Stewards for your hard work and dedication to our natural resources.

For more information contact: David_Sagan@fws.gov

Photo Credit: Friends of Fannie Stebbins

Award Winning Staff At Conte Refuge



Congratulations to Conte's Maintenance Professional Chad Roderick and Refuge Partners Biologist David Sagan for both receiving a 2021 Regional Employee Award! Chad plays an instrumental role in training Service staff in heavy equipment and off-road utility vehicle operation and safety. David's tireless work with Service staff and partners results in beneficial landscape level wildlife and habitat improvements throughout the watershed. We are so proud of both Chad and Dave.

For more information contact: Dean_Rhine@fws.gov

Photo Credit: USFWS



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Photo Credit: USFWS

Our own Allan Chavez was part of the team of administrative assistants who won the regional award for "SUPPORTING OUR WORKFORCE". Allan does a great job handing payroll, purchasing, processing paperwork - as well as field work, boat operations, and other refuge tasks. He's a great asset to the McKinney team - and the agency's administrative team - and it's great to see him and his colleagues recognized. Thank you Allan.

For more information contact: Rick_Potvin@fws.gov

Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science Forest



Photo Credit: USFWS

Establishment of the Nulhegan Basin Lowland Spruce-Fir Adaptive Silviculture for Climate Change study site began this December. Crews are harvesting trees within a 700-acre project site. Cutting is following two differing silvicultural prescriptions designed to improve a forest's ability to adapt to a changing climate.

For more information contact: Steve_Agius@fws.gov

Predicting Density and Occurrence of Keystone (Snowshoe hare) and Umbrella (American marten)



Photo Credit: USFWS/ Alexej Siren

Twenty-one camera traps were randomly deployed within different structural conditions across seven 20 ha spruce-fir stands in the Nulhegan Basin Division in December. The camera deployment is a component of a research project evaluating forest conditions that provide habitat for a high diversity of species including snowshoe hare and American marten. Snowshoe hares prefer young forest, while American marten require mature forest conditions. This research addresses a hypothesis that suggests high biological diversity is maintained where these two species co-occur.

For more information contact: Steve_Agius@fws.gov



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Eastern Woodcock Migration Research Cooperative Project



Photo Credit: USFWS

An international research collaboration led by the University of Maine to better understand the migratory ecology of the American woodcock along the Eastern seaboard is using Global Positioning System (GPS) technology to track the seasonal movement and habitat selection of American woodcock as they travel from their breeding grounds in Canada and northeastern U.S. to their wintering areas in the southern part of the U.S. A total of six woodcock from the Nulhegan Basin Division were captured and outfitted with GPS units in October. Visit www.woodcockmigration.org to follow tagged birds as they migrate to southern wintering grounds.

For more information contact: Steve_Agius@fws.gov

Fishing Fun With Backyard Bass



Photo Credit: USFWS

Families visiting the Springfield Science Museum during this month's winter school break had a chance to practice their casting skills with the Backyard Bass Fishing game. Conte Visitor Service staff, along with Pathway's Intern Sarah Fairbanks, followed the Museum's "Under the Sea" exhibit theme, with information about fish, fishing, and the opportunity to try their hand at casting. The Backyard Bass game allows people to cast fishing rods safely (no hooks involved), and can even be used indoors during colder weather.

For more information contact: Tasha_Daniels@fws.gov

Plantation Red Pine Overstory Removal

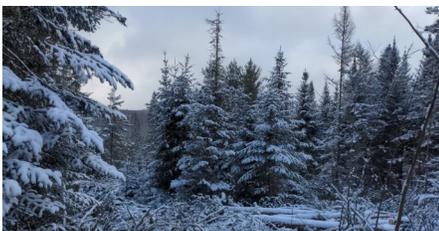


Photo Credit: USFWS

The Nulhegan Basin Division of the Conte Refuge implemented a treatment identified in its Habitat Management Plan this December. A remnant red pine plantation was harvested from a lowland spruce-fir site. Lafoe Logging LLC of Orleans, Vermont were meticulous in protecting the existing spruce and fir regeneration, which will allow a new overstory of native trees to flourish.

For more information contact: Steve_Agius@fws.gov