



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge Refuge Happenings

April 2024: *The Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge presently includes twenty-three different divisions and units, located 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.*

Viewing Totality



The Friends of Nulhegan hosted a solar eclipse event at the Nulhegan Basin Division Visitor Center on April 8th. The location and weather forecast provided ideal viewing conditions for the full solar eclipse. Just under 100 people from every New England state came together to view this special occasion. Refuge staff received many compliments about the event, especially regarding the welcoming and inclusive atmosphere provided by the Friends and the local community.

For more information contact: Rachel_Cliche@fws.gov

Photo Credit: Dave Govatski

Thank You Volunteers At McKinney National Wildlife Refuge

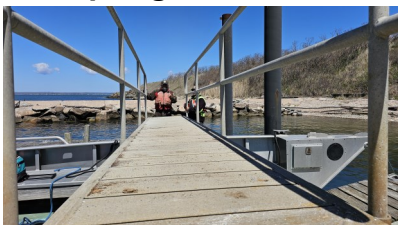


S.B. McKinney NWR was contacted by the University of Rhode Island, University of Connecticut, Massachusetts Audubon, and American Museum of Natural History to assist the organization in bringing 3.5 tons of building supplies out to Great Gull Island. The supplies were needed to improve living conditions for the Island research staff. This island is home to the largest federally endangered roseate tern colony in the hemisphere. As part of an Earth Day Celebration, The U.S. Coast Guard Academy also assisted, sending Academy Cadets, enlisted members and civilian staff as volunteers to help with this effort.

For more information contact: Shaun_Roche@fws.gov

Photo credit: Jean Potvin

It's Spring Time! The Falkner Docks Are Out At McKinney



On April 26th, Stewart B. McKinney staff headed out to Falkner Island with a mission in mind. Spring has sprung and it's time for the docks to be put back in place! The seas were calm and cooperative, allowing for smooth installation. In fact, the process went so well, the team of three installed the gangway as well, a task normally done by a much larger team. Falkner Island is now ready for action!

Photo: USFWS

For More Information Contact: Shaun_Roche@fws.gov



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge

April 2024

Birding With Partners In Forest Park



Photo Credit: Allen Bird Club

In celebration of Earth Day 2024, members of the Allen Bird Club invited the Conte Refuge to partner on an Earth Day Family Bird Walk in Forest Park, Springfield. Conte Refuge visitor service staff provided binoculars for anyone who did not have their own pair to use on the walk, and joined the participants on the walk. Two members of the Allen Bird Club led the walk, pointing out at least 35 different species of birds in the two-hour long event. The event attracted folks new to birding, as well as seasoned birders.

For more information contact: Jennifer_Lapis@fws.gov

Being Part Of The Team



Photo Credit: USFWS

Conte Maintenance Professional Chad Roderick spent two weeks working as part of demolition team at Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge on Cape Cod, MA. The team of Service employees removed the last building at the site, which was in jeopardy of falling into the Atlantic Ocean due to massive beach erosion. In addition to removing the building, the team cleared underground debris from the area such as pipes, septic systems, and wires buried in the ground. In addition, they constructed a new gravel public parking area where visitors can enjoy coastal views. Projects such as this are critical as we manage more closely for a changing climates and landscapes.

For more information contact: Chad_Roderick@fws.gov

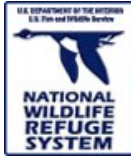
The Finishing Touch: Plant Trees



Photo: USFWS

Conte Refuge Staff worked with partners to plant trees in two different locations along the watershed this month. Together with the Connecticut River Conservancy, a team planted 750 live stakes of shrub willow and red osier dogwood in Lyme, CT to help a landowner stabilize an eroding riverbank. The property is adjacent to the Whalebone Division and supplies buffering to the refuge. Moving north in the watershed, over 450 trees, shrubs, and live stakes were planted in Wilmington, VT, thanks to amazing volunteers and the Connecticut River Valley Chapter Trout Unlimited and the Connecticut River Conservancy. The planting completes the culvert replacement and dam removal project site, which took place last year.

For more information contact: David_Sagan@fws.gov



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge

April 2024

Conte Refuge was fortunate to have a student intern working with us for the past 9 months. During this time Ashley Castillo forged meaningful partnerships and developed programs that will have a lasting impact on all the participants. The following excerpt was written and submitted by Ashley as she finished her internship, and left to pursue a Master's Degree at school in Australia. Thank you to Ashley and Kestrel Land Trust intern Emily Biggs for providing these amazing experiences for our next generation of earth stewards.

Empowering Young Adventurers: Girls Inc. Field Trips at the Refuge



At the refuge, two memorable field trips with Girls Inc. showcased the transformative power of outdoor exploration for young girls. These excursions weren't just about experiencing nature; they were about empowering these girls to embrace new challenges and discover their inner strength.

During the first outing, a group of teen girls gathered at the archery range. Under expert guidance, they learned the essential safety rules of archery and honed their skills with a bow and arrow. The joy and excitement on their faces were palpable as they confidently aimed and released their arrows. By the end of the session, their newfound confidence was unmistakable, and they left brimming with enthusiasm, eager to share their newfound passion for archery.

The second adventure welcomed younger girls, grades 3 to 5, for a ponding exploration. Initially apprehensive about catching frogs, they soon embraced the challenge with encouragement and support. With waders on, they ventured into the pond, eager to discover the wonders of aquatic life. As they observed and learned about the frogs' life cycle, their nervousness melted away, replaced by curiosity and wonder.

Photo: USFWS



Photo Credit: Pat Crutchfield

By the end of the day, they were proudly sharing tales of their frog-catching adventures, their newfound appreciation for nature evident in their smiles. The impact of these experiences extended beyond the field trips themselves. As the girls bid farewell, Girls Inc. expressed their desire to continue the partnership, highlighting the girls' eagerness to further explore the outdoors. It was a testament to the profound effect of these outings, illustrating the importance of providing opportunities for young girls to connect with nature, build confidence, and cultivate a love for adventure.

These field trips served as empowering journeys, igniting a spark within each girl and reminding them of their limitless potential. As they navigate through life, these experiences will serve as beacons of inspiration, guiding them to embrace challenges with courage and curiosity. The refuge looks forward to many more adventures with Girls Inc., inspiring and empowering the next generation of fearless leaders.

For more information contact: Jennifer_Lapis@fws.gov