



## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

### Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge Refuge Happenings

**February 2024:** *The Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge is presently located in thirty-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.*

#### Fairbanks Museum- Science Annex Ribbon Cutting



The Fairbanks Museum and the Conte Refuge collectively work together to educate the public about the importance of conserving natural resources. In February, the museum held a ribbon cutting for the grand opening of its new Science Annex. The Science Annex is the first structure in Vermont to use the 'mass timber' building technique and is the first major addition to the natural science museum since the late 1890s. U.S. Senator Peter Welch and U.S. Department of Agriculture Deputy Under Secretary for Rural Development Farah Ahmad, local community leaders and refuge staff were present for the grand opening of the Science Annex.

Photo Credit: Fairbanks Museum

For more information contact: [Steve\\_Agius@fws.gov](mailto:Steve_Agius@fws.gov)

#### Storm Damage Tree Removal



Refuge divisions in the northern part of the Connecticut River watershed continue to experience strong winter storm events. Throughout February, refuge staff removed trees that had fallen on trails and infrastructure across the refuge. Thanks to the Friends of Pondicherry for removing the majority of the debris from the trail system at the Pondicherry Division.

For more information contact: [Jeremy\\_Goetz@fws.gov](mailto:Jeremy_Goetz@fws.gov)

Photo credit: David Govatski



## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge

## Refuge Happenings

February 2024

### Mascoma River Division Law Enforcement Meeting

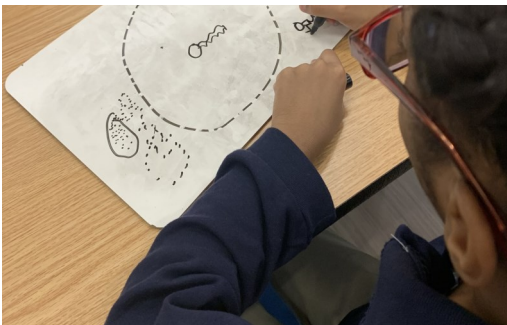


In late February, Conte Refuge management, Refuge System law enforcement, N.H. Fish and Game and the Canaan (NH) police department met to discuss the Mascoma River Division. The meeting was an opportunity for local, state, and federal law enforcement to meet to discuss the mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the purpose of the refuge, authorized recreational uses and cooperation/communication between the various departments.

For more information contact: [Steve\\_Agius@fws.gov](mailto:Steve_Agius@fws.gov)

Photo Credit: USFWS

### Leap Year– Frog Life Cycle Lesson Plan



Conte Visitor Service staff used this year's "leap year day" as a catchy way to teach students at the Bowles Elementary school about frogs and their lifecycle. Students had a great time using individual white board to draw a diagram of frog's lifecycle. A special treat for the students was getting to see live bullfrog tadpoles and macro-invertebrates that were collected before the class from a refuge pond, which was ice-free because of the warm weather in February.

For more information contact: [Tasha\\_Daniels@fws.gov](mailto:Tasha_Daniels@fws.gov)

Photo Credit: USFWS



## Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge

### Refuge Happenings

February 2024

#### Frogs are Out in February



Photo Credit: USFWS

A frog sits on a floating cattail reed in the Fort River Division's Classroom Pond in Hadley, MA on February 28th! A warm weather front in late January brought heavy rains and warmer temperatures that melted the ice on the pond and woke up the resident frogs!

For more information contact: [Dean\\_Rhine@fws.gov](mailto:Dean_Rhine@fws.gov)

#### Inspiring Future Conservationists



Photo Credit: USFWS

Emily Biggs from Kestrel Land Trust and Ashley Castillo, a Hispanic Access Foundation intern had the privilege of visiting Frontier Regional High School to conduct a career presentation on "green jobs" and pathways into the conservation field. The presentation began with an exploration of various green jobs, highlighting environmental education, conservation biology, sustainable agriculture, and renewable energy. Following an informative discussion, the staff transitioned to a hands-on activity aimed at igniting curiosity and sharpening observation skills. Students eagerly participated in identifying different animal skulls, learning about the unique characteristics that distinguish one species from another.

For more information contact: [Ashley\\_Castillo@fws.gov](mailto:Ashley_Castillo@fws.gov)



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

## Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge Refuge Happenings

February 2024

### Woodcock Programs Held at McKinney



At the McKinney refuge's Salt Meadow Unit CTDEEP Master Wildlife Conservationist Patricia Laudano led two free presentations on American woodcock, one of the most unique shrubland birds to breed along our coast. Her presentation on the bird's natural history and behavior was followed by a walk along the trails at dusk to witness the bird courtship flight. About 45 total people attended the programs.

For more information contact: [Shaun\\_Roche@fws.gov](mailto:Shaun_Roche@fws.gov)

Photo Credit: USFWS Library

### "Signs of Spring" Presentation Well-received



McKinney refuge ranger Shaun Roche and wildlife biologist Kris Vagos gave a talk on early sign of spring to the Duck River Garden Club on February 28th, that was extremely well-received. More than 30 attendees listen to Kris and Shaun talk about spring peepers, budding red maples, the return of the osprey, skunk mating seasons and other interesting and entertaining signs that the spring season is fast approaching. The talk incorporated lots of visuals, sounds and video, and the audience question period was lively. The refuge has already been approached by another group to do the talk in a nearby town next year.

Photo credit: USFWS

For more information contact: [Shaun\\_Roche@fws.gov](mailto:Shaun_Roche@fws.gov)