

Silvio O. Conte

National Fish and Wildlife Refuge in New Hampshire

Represented by the following Members of Congress:

Senator Judd Gregg (R)
Senator John E. Sununu (R)
Rep. Charles F. Bass (R-2nd)

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Purpose

The Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge was established to protect the abundance and diversity of native species throughout the 7.2- million-acre Connecticut River watershed. This is accomplished through land acquisition and by providing technical and financial support to partners for improved habitat management and environmental education projects. The refuge is one of 545 that compose the National Wildlife Refuge System, and ranks nationally within the top ten priority land conservation projects for plants, fish, wildlife and people.

Public Use Notes

- Partner in a visitor center in Colebrook
- Refuge lands in the state are open to the public for wildlife observation and photography, fishing, hunting, and environmental education and interpretation.

Management Activities

- Work with many public and private partners to protect rare species, native plants and animals and important habitats
- Provide leadership to partners throughout New England to control invasive species
- Develop cooperative visitor centers to educate the public about wildlife resources and issues within the watershed

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Highlights

Congress appropriated \$650,000 for easement and fee land acquisition in fiscal year 2006.

Acquired 32 acres in the state to add to the Pondicherry Division. One acquired tract protects a portion of the Cohos Trail stretching between the refuge and Route 115 in Jefferson.

The Pondicherry Division now totals 5,336 acres and includes some of the state's most diverse migratory bird habitat. The area was designated as a National Landmark and the first Audubon Important Bird Area in the state.

Northwoods Stewardship Center will manage the Youth Conservation Corps program.



Cherry Pond

The refuge, in partnership with the state, friends group and New Hampshire Audubon, developed a public access concept that includes accessible trails, overlooks, photo blinds, parking and interpretive signage.

The division is one of six refuges selected nationally to test a volunteer invasive plant monitoring process.

Issues

Habitat fragmentation and the spread of exotic or invasive species threaten the integrity of ecosystems and their dependent fish and wildlife populations within the watershed.