



# North Atlantic-Appalachian Region's Refuge Highlights

L. Thompson/USFWS

We hope you enjoy learning about all of the great conservation and outreach work being accomplished on national wildlife refuges in our region! Our Regional priorities, listed to the right, represent the areas where we are focusing our work and investments. We have color-coded each story according to the key listed to the right in an effort to highlight how our efforts are supporting these priorities. For questions about Refuge Highlights, please contact Susan Wojtowicz at [susan\\_wojtowicz@fws.gov](mailto:susan_wojtowicz@fws.gov).



Connecting People to Nature



Supporting Our Workforce



Strategic Conservation

Above: A recently sampled grey seal pup surveys its surroundings on South Monomoy Island, with researchers looking on

## Collaboration to Study Northwest Atlantic Seals

Throughout January, researchers led by Tufts University, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and others continued a long-term study on the ecology of harbor and gray seals in New England waters. Refuge staff transported researchers to the Monomoy Point Lighthouse, where a 15-person crew successfully captured and sampled 40 pups over several days. Pups were assessed for their health, contaminant load, and mobility. Sampling also occurred at Nantucket NWR, Seal Island NWR, and Muskeget Island off the coast of Nantucket, MA with a total of 104 pups sampled. Research published from this work is already contributing to our understanding of the region's rebounding seal populations.



Refuge Manager Matt Hillman orients research crews on the first day of the 2020 seal research season at South Monomoy Island  
*Milton Levin/USFWS*

## New England Cottontail Annual Meeting

Refuge Wildlife Biologist Kate O'Brien and New England cottontail rabbit program coordinator, Jeff Tash, attended the annual meeting of the New England Cottontail (NEC) Regional Initiative in Southbury, CT. The NEC Technical Committee tracks detailed measures of performance for 83 strategic objectives in the NEC Conservation Strategy on an annual basis. The Technical Committee reviewed the status of all 83 objectives in January, 2020. The outcomes of this meeting will provide guidance for NEC management in the coming year.



A recently released New England cottontail munches on a leaf at the Wells Reserve at Laudholm Farm  
*Rebekah Smith/USFWS*

## **Refuge Joins the Audubon Society's 120th Christmas Bird Count**

On December 29, 2019, Supervisory Biologist Kevin Holcomb facilitated local participation in the 120th Annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count. Conducted each year from mid-December to early January, this national wildlife census is used to assess the health of bird populations and to guide conservation efforts. The refuge is located within a 15-mile “count circle” in coastal Virginia and Maryland. In this area, participants counted nearly 28,000 individual birds, representing over 150 species!



Waterfowl swimming in front of Assateague Lighthouse

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## **Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge**

### **Partnering to Restore a Refuge Pollinator Garden**

This winter, refuge volunteer Elizabeth Ann Klein worked with Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory Biologist Brian Taber to restore a pollinator garden located behind the Eastern Shore of Virginia NWR Visitor Center. The garden was installed almost a decade ago and provides a sampling location for tagging monarch butterflies during the fall migration. Together they overhauled the garden by removing invasive weeds, clearing overgrown areas, spreading new mulch, and replanting native species. Additional plants will be added in the spring to maintain a viable garden for pollinator species and provide a location for visitors to observe pollinators in action.

Elizabeth Ann Klein at work in the pollinator garden

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## First Land Acquisition at Great Swamp Since 2015

Great Swamp NWR recently acquired an 87.3-acre parcel from the New Jersey Natural Lands Trust with \$560,000 from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The tract is located along the Primrose Brook, which feeds the refuge's waterfowl impoundments. It includes forested and shrub wetlands, forested uplands, and former agricultural fields. The property is adjacent to existing refuge lands and there is a plan to open it up to recreational opportunities, such as deer hunting. The refuge is also planning invasive species management and stream restoration to improve habitat conditions for native species, including wood turtles.



A forested wetland in the newly acquired property  
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## Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge

### Bobcat Home Range and Habitat Selection Project

Canaan Valley NWR is assisting West Virginia University and the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources with an ongoing bobcat home range project. By trapping and collaring bobcats, this project hopes to determine their average home range in West Virginia. This year the refuge began trapping in January. While no cats have been caught to date, a baited trap was visited recently, so the refuge is hoping for a successful trapping in early February. Last year two bobcats were caught and collared on the refuge. The refuge is hoping for another successful year with the West Virginia Bobcat Spatial Ecology Project.



A bobcat investigating the baited trap

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## New Jersey Statewide Seabeach Amaranth Meeting

On January 22, Edwin B. Forsythe NWR hosted the New Jersey Statewide Seabeach Amaranth Status Meeting. The meeting focused on the status of seabeach amaranth populations present on Federal, State, and municipal township beaches. Meeting attendees included representatives from the Army Corp of Engineers, the National Park Service, Cape May NWR, New Jersey Division of Land Use, New Jersey Conserve Wildlife Foundation, New Jersey Park Service, and academia to name a few. A federally listed plant, seabeach amaranth (*Amaranthus pumilus*), appears to be regaining a foothold on the Jersey Shore due to effective beach habitat management. The year 2019 saw the largest number of seabeach amaranth since the year 2000 with 14,819 plants. This eclipses the next highest count of 10,908 in the year 2002!

Seabeach amaranth growing at E.B. Forsythe NWR

*Meghan Kolk/USFWS*



## Fisherman Island National Wildlife Refuge

### Diamondback Terrapin Concrete Barrier Completed

In early January, the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel (CBBT) Authority finished placing a concrete barrier as part of an Eastern Federal Lands Access Program grant. This will prevent nesting diamondback terrapins from crossing where the tunnel intersects with Fisherman Island NWR. The grant funded a 1.5-mile barrier, two educational kiosks, and 15 cameras for monitoring the terrapins. A Directorate Resource Assistant fellow will monitor the effectiveness of the barrier and lead tours describing the project in the summer of 2020.



CBBT installing concrete terrapin barrier with a crane

*Pam Denmon*

## Replacement of Aging Water Control Structures

Chincoteague NWR is working with Ducks Unlimited to replace the aging culverts that connect the moist soil management units on the refuge. These water control structures allow the staff to keep certain pools full in the winter and shallow in the spring and summer. On a refuge established for migratory birds, these structures are integral to providing high quality habitat for waterfowl, wading birds, and shorebirds year-round. Structures are currently being replaced along Beach Road, the Wildlife Loop, and on the Service Road.



One of the damaged water control structures slated for replacement  
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## Division of Refuge Law Enforcement

### Metinic Island Trespass

On January 10, 2020, four defendants plead guilty in U.S. District Court (Portland, Maine) to trespassing in a bird nesting area during the summer of 2018 on Metinic Island (part of Maine Coastal Islands NWR). These pleas and subsequent elevated fines were obtained given that these four defendants were cited previously in 2012 by Federal Wildlife Officer Jay Perez, for trespassing on the island. Officer Perez successfully conducted a multiple-year investigation which included the use of trail cameras, social media, and interviews. As a result of Officer Perez's diligent work, the defendants have been ordered to pay a fine of \$1,510 each.



Metinic Island  
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## Aquaculture, Terns, and Shorebirds

In January, Rachel Carson NWR Wildlife Biologist Kate O'Brien attended the Atlantic Coast Piping Plover and Least Tern Workshop at the National Conservation and Training Center. Kate led a session on aquaculture, terns, and shorebirds. As the presence of aquaculture expands, biologists are exploring how terns and shorebirds may interact with these operations. Kate represented Rachel Carson NWR, which plays an active field and advisory role in the conservation of the federally listed piping plover and the State endangered least tern in southern Maine.



Oyster aquaculture cages on the banks of a tidal river  
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## Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge

### Golden Eagle Migration Study

Canaan Valley NWR began its 5th annual golden eagle camera trap survey this year. Working in partnership with the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources and the Golden Eagle Work Group, this project assesses golden eagle location and habitat use across the State. Two trail cameras were set up facing a roadkill deer carcass placed in a remote forest opening on the refuge. The first eagle was observed from these cameras on January 24, 2020, approximately 3 weeks earlier than last year. This seems to indicate that the eagle had decided to either prolong its migration or remain in West Virginia during the winter.



A golden eagle photographed during the camera trap survey

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## **AmeriCorps NCCC Southern Region Team Installs Fencing**

In mid-January, the Delta 3 Team of the AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) began work on the fencing that surrounds the Chincoteague ponies' grazing areas. This improvement project follows studies from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which assessed grazing pressure on the refuge and food availability for the ponies. These studies revealed that although the ponies have ample forage, a strategic approach could yield higher quality graze and improve the overall habitat. This project will allow the Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Company to rotate pony grazing, helping overgrazed areas to recover.



AmeriCorps members install a fence post  
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**PA Project Leaders Mtg, Jan 9 2020**

Participants in the inaugural Pennsylvania Project Leaders meeting  
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## **Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge**

### **First Annual USFWS Pennsylvania Project Leaders Meeting**

The inaugural Pennsylvania Project Leaders Meeting was held on January 9, 2020 at the Northeast Fishery Center in Lamar, Pennsylvania. Project Leaders and staff from the Allegheny National Fish Hatchery, Delaware Bay Estuary Project, Erie NWR, Iroquois NWR, Lenape NWR Complex, Mid-Atlantic Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office, Northeast Fishery Center, Office of Law Enforcement, and the Pennsylvania Ecological Services Field Office attended. It was a great opportunity for these USFWS programs to get acquainted, share priorities, and discuss ways to collaborate more effectively. They plan to meet annually, and look forward to future successes from their shared efforts!



## Honoring a Twenty-Year Volunteer

Patti Laudano has volunteered at the Stewart B. McKinney NWR in Connecticut for more than 20 years; building bird boxes, leading education programs, and much more! This month refuge staff surprised Patti at her “day job” at Westbrook High School, presenting her with a canvas tote embroidered with an American woodcock. Patti is an expert on birds and will be giving her famous woodcock presentation at the refuge again this spring. Thank you Patti for all of your time and dedication to the refuge!

Biologist Kris Vagos (left) and Visitor Services Manager Shaun Roche (right) present a special American woodcock tote bag to volunteer Patti Laudano for her years of service.

*Deanna Broderick/USFWS*

## Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge

### Volunteer Reaches 35,000 Hours!

You read that correctly, THIRTY-FIVE THOUSAND hours! Carl Zenger, volunteer extraordinaire, was honored on February 1, 2020 with a plaque, pin, and chocolate cake (his favorite) for all his service to Iroquois NWR in New York. Carl has been instrumental in so many projects on the refuge it’s hard to count. Since he began working on the refuge in 1997, he’s been active in the refuge’s cavity bird nesting program, special events, youth education, interpretive programs, and habitat management. His contribution to the refuge is endless. Carl has dedicated so much to the well-being and success of the refuge; we are infinitely grateful!

Volunteer Carl Zenger receives a plaque from Complex Manager Thomas Roster commemorating his work on the refuge and this milestone

*Sasha Azeez/HAF Intern*



## Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Tribal Prescribed Fire

On January 22, fire resources from The Nature Conservancy (TNC), the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, and Great Dismal Swamp NWR conducted a 46-acre prescribed fire on Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Tribal lands in Courtland, VA. This collaborative effort supports hazardous fuels reduction and longleaf pine restoration efforts. The Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) tribe of Southampton County, VA is a State recognized Iroquoian-speaking tribe that first made contact with English colonists between 1607-1608 in what is now Nottoway County, VA.



Interagency fire personnel igniting a controlled burn on Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Tribal lands

*Bobby B. Clontz/TNC*

## Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge

### Groundwork Elizabeth Youth Interpretation Workshop

From January 16 to 18, 2020 Great Swamp NWR hosted six students for their 4th annual Groundwork-Elizabeth (GWE) Youth Interpretation Workshop. This workshop is intended to build youth skills and community capacity to interpret urban spaces in Elizabeth, NH. Students learned about the principles of interpretation, practiced networking skills, and improved their public speaking. The workshop also gave students an opportunity to practice their upcoming speech for the GWE Annual Gala in February.



Groundwork Elizabeth youth enjoy the snow after a day spent improving interpretation skills

*Groundwork Elizabeth*

## Successful Youth Deer Hunt at Ninigret NWR

Ninigret NWR in Rhode Island hosted its annual Youth Deer Hunt in December, and this year had special meaning for the Lagasse family. Jeff Lagasse and his sons have participated in the refuge's youth season since its onset. His two older sons have aged out, but his youngest son harvested his first deer this season. From Jeff: "Thank you for organizing these hunts and presenting kids like mine with an opportunity they may not have otherwise. All three of my boys have taken deer as a result of this program, providing us with lifelong memories and stories that will be shared for years."

A young hunter takes his first white-tailed deer at Ninigret NWR during the Youth Deer Hunt.

*Jeff Lagasse*



## Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge

### Tent Tales for Tykes at L.L. Bean

Staff from the Fort River Division of Silvio O. Conte NFWR has partnered with a new L.L. Bean store that recently opened in Hadley, Massachusetts. As part of this partnership, the refuge was invited to participate in their weekly Tent Tales for Tykes program, which engages young kids and their families around outdoor recreation and conservation issues. During their program, Silvio O. Conte NFWR staff educated visitors on the survival adaptations of winter wildlife. The partnership looks extremely promising with another youth program scheduled for next month.



Tent Tales for Tykes program at L.L. Bean

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## **Hike with Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad State Park**

On New Year's Day, 158 people enjoyed a ranger-led walk celebrating the Year of the Woman at Harriet Tubman State Park and Blackwater NWR in Maryland. While guests hiked, they learned about the refuge and its mission as well as Harriet Tubman's connection to the landscape. Attendees included members of GirlTrek, Senator Eckhardt, the Eastern Shore Network for Change, and hikers from as far away as Washington, D.C. Each participant hiked 1.5 miles, for a combined total of 237 miles hiked at the State of Maryland's first event in honor of the Year of the Woman.



First Day hikers enjoy Blackwater NWR  
*Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad State Park*

## **John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum**

### **Painting for a Purpose**

John Heinz NWR staff have been exploring new partnerships with the locally based Visual Urban Renewal & Transformation (VURT) artist collective. VURT is a non-profit formed and supported by local artists and advocates that create inspirational public art projects to inspire, unify, and renew urban communities. Jake Taylor and Evan Lovett worked with refuge staff to design and transform their education hallway into a wildlife refuge mural highlighting local wildlife and habitats. The partnership on this project was a great first step in collaborating with local artists to help tell the story of conservation in urban areas.



Philadelphia-based artist Jake Taylor works to transform the white walled hallways at John Heinz NWR

## **Novice Hunters Learn Hunting Skills and Ethics**

Great Meadows NWR collaborated with staff from the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife's Hunter Education Program to offer a two-part Basic Hunter Education course at Great Meadows NWR on January 14 and 25. The free course provided over 30 novice hunters the opportunity to learn the basic skills associated with hunting in a safe and ethical manner. Several participants expressed interest in returning to the refuge to participate in future mentored hunts.



Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife's Jesse St. Andre leads a tree stand demonstration as part of the Basic Hunter Education course at Great Meadows NWR

*Jared Green/USFWS*



## **Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge**

### **Friends Showcase Refuge at Martin Luther King, Jr. Event**

Stewart B. McKinney's Friends of Outer Island volunteered time during the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday weekend to showcase the work of the refuge at the Yale Peabody Museum. The Friends group set up interpretive materials that highlighted the work of the refuge, as well as the important role the Friends Group plays in supporting and advocating for the refuge. The event reached thousands of visitors over the course of two days. Thanks to the Friends of Outer Island, more community members are now familiar with refuge work and our conservation mission.

Refuge volunteers and Friends of Outer Island members Kenny, Jackie and Jim (pictured left to right) during the Peabody Museum's Martin Luther King, Jr. event

*Jim Lockhart/USFWS*

## Refuge Hosts Forest Management Tour

On a cold but sunny day, Umbagog NWR and the Northern Forest Land Management Research and Demonstration Program were excited to provide a forest conservation tour for Gould Academy's Environmental Studies class, including several students with interest in pursuing environmental science careers. Visiting students were able to learn about refuge conservation design, the importance of conservation for forest-dependent wildlife, and the refuge's forest management practices, which are designed to restore important habitats, protect sensitive resources, and promote healthy and resilient ecosystems. Students also learned about trees with critical habitat value that are important to retain and promote, climate adaptation and the value of "messy" forests created by natural disturbances.



Tom LaPointe talking with Gould Academy students at a managed forest site on the refuge

Ian Drew/USFWS

## Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge

### Spreading Holiday Cheer throughout Warsaw, VA

The Rappahannock River Valley NWR staff and Friends group volunteers participated in their first local parade in Warsaw, VA. Puddles made a guest appearance, sporting a blue top hat in line with the Charles Dickens Christmas parade theme, and Rudolph could be seen leading the refuge float into the holiday season! Volunteers and staff handed out 450 candy canes featuring information about upcoming events activities at the refuge. The jolly efforts and holiday cheer of refuge staff and volunteers paid off when their float won the "Judge's Choice" award!



Refuge staff and volunteers pose in front of their holiday float, which featured refuge wildlife and activities available at the public units.

Dylan Norvel

## **Phrag Fest 2020 Begins!**

Artists, ecologists, and volunteers are joining forces this winter to harvest invasive Phragmites reed, called “Phrag” for short, across the Delaware River watershed, including at John Heinz NWR in Pennsylvania. The Phrag will be bundled and functionally repurposed to create outdoor art installations in Camden, Pennsauken, Cherry Hill, Philadelphia, and Wilmington. The program is supported by the Alliance for Watershed Education and is designed to help tell a conservation and habitat management story through art. Removing the Phragmites is an actionable first step in restoring native marsh and wetland habitat.



Volunteers remove and bundle invasive Phragmites at John Heinz NWR for future use as material for conservation-themed art installations across the watershed  
*USFWS*



Volunteers and staff pose for a group photo before heading afield to conduct the mid-winter bald eagle survey

*USFWS*

## **Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge**

### **Mid-Winter Bald Eagle Survey**

On January 10, the annual mid-winter bald eagle survey was conducted by refuge volunteers and staff, along with participants from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and New York Audubon. A total of 37 surveyors observed 51 bald eagles over 14 routes within the Montezuma Wetlands Complex, including 38 mature, 12 immature, and 1 of unknown age. This was the 3rd highest number of participants on record for this popular event, and included several first-time visitors to the refuge. The eagle count was lower than in 2019, but similar to the 10-year average. The surveyors enjoyed a warm potluck lunch following the survey.



## Volunteer Work Day

Agronomic Lawn Management (ALM) brought over 20 volunteers to Back Bay NWR on January 15, 2020 for a day of volunteer work. The group completed two projects. First, the group resurfaced one of the most heavily used trails at the refuge. This included removing grass that was encroaching on the trail, constructing a retaining wall to reduce erosion, and compacting tons of stone dust. Then, the group planted 3,000 dune grasses on the refuge. This project will assist with dune stabilization and habitat restoration along the beach.

ALM crew nearing the end of 3,000 plantings!

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## Rhode Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex


### Birding in Providence, an Urban Bird Treaty City!

The 2019 monthly bird walks hosted by Providence Parks Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership and Audubon Society of Rhode Island were a great success thanks to the support of the Urban Bird Treaty Program. The 158 participants reported 69 species and explored 12 Providence Parks. December's walk was even featured in the Providence Journal. The 2020 Birding Series started in January with 21 birders who tallied 22 bird species, 2 gray seals and one red-tailed hawk "eyeing" them from the river bank. These engaging programs are a public favorite, with loaner binoculars and field guides provided by the Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership.

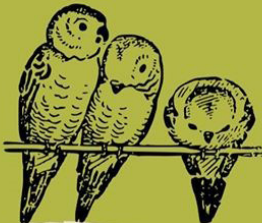
The Birding in Providence flyer created by April Alix, Urban Wildlife Refuge Program Coordinator.

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## BIRDING IN PROVIDENCE 2019




**69 Species Identified**




**Most Unique Bird Spotted: Black & White Warbler**

### Most Frequently Spotted Birds

1. American Robins
2. Blue Jays
3. Herring Gulls
4. Pigeons
5. Mallard Ducks
6. Song Sparrows
7. Mourning Doves
8. European Starlings
9. Double Crested Cormorants
10. Canada Goose



**Hosted 12 Bird Walks**



**Explored 12 Providence Parks!**

**158 Participants**

## **Annual Winter Raptor Program**

The refuge's annual Winter Raptor Program took place on December 27 in Sussex, NJ. This popular event was attended by over 100 people. Giselle Smisko, Director of the Avian Wildlife Center and Friends Group Program Chair, once again presented an excellent educational program with the help of a number of injured raptors that cannot be released back to the wild. An engaged crowd of adults and children participated, asking questions and taking advantage of the opportunity to photograph these birds close up. Afterwards, refuge staff member Ken Witkowski led 20 people on a field trip, where they were treated to views of perched red-tailed hawks and several northern harriers in flight.



Giselle Smisko introducing the raptor program

*Ken Witkowski/USFWS*



## **Monthly Nature Journaling Class Gets Rave Reviews**

Laurie Murray, a volunteer with the Friends of Maine Coastal Islands NWR, began a monthly nature journaling group. Laurie is an avid bird watcher and self-taught naturalist. She received instruction in natural history illustration through the University of Newcastle, Australia and in nature journaling and field sketching through the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Bird Academy. The purpose of this group is to learn techniques to create nature journals, whether for learning more about nature, studying phenology, or as a mindful practice. Over 50 people attended the first class with an additional waiting list for future classes.

Students enjoying the first monthly nature journaling class

*USFWS*

## Anglers Learn New Skills at Fly-Tying Class

Refuge staff partnered with staff and volunteers from the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife's Angler Education Program to offer a two-part beginner fly-tying course at Great Meadows NWR on January 8 and 15. The free course provided novice anglers an opportunity to learn the basic skills of tying their own flies. With all tools and materials provided at no cost to participants, the hands-on course allowed each angler to make several flies.



A volunteer instructor from the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife shows participants how to tie a fly  
*Jared Green/USFWS*

## Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge

### We're Moving (in 2022)!

Rachel Carson NWR recently acquired a property in Kennebunk, Maine. Located down the street from their current office, this property will house a new visitor center and administrative offices for the refuge and the Gulf of Maine Coastal Program. With frontage on the Mousam River, this location provides excellent opportunities for wildlife observation, fishing, environmental education, and nature interpretation. The new facility, located at 188 Brown Street in Kennebunk, is expected to open sometime in 2022. We are excited about the beginning of this new chapter for the refuge!



Tom Geser and Karl Stromayer ensured a smooth realty closing with the Nash Family  
*USFWS*

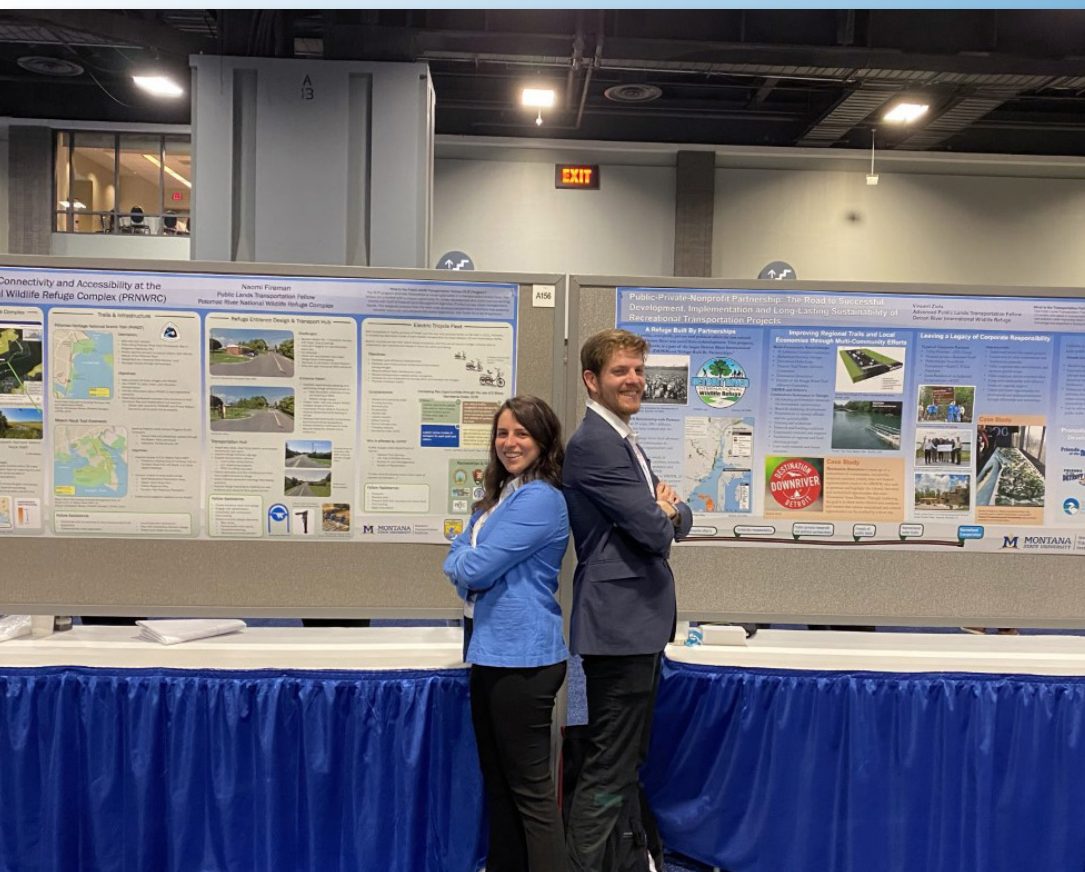
## Refuge Visitors Connect over Sustainable Agriculture Conversation

On January 14, 35 visitors were invited to Parker River NWR in coastal Massachusetts to watch a section of the film *Tomorrow*, which focuses on local solutions to climate change. The participants then engaged in a facilitated discussion answering the question, “What is the biggest obstacle that stands in the way of sustainable agriculture?” The visitors enjoyed the lively discussion and the opportunity to connect with others. Everyone came away with a sense of comradery and one change that they could make in their own lives.



Thirty-five participants engaged in a lively discussion about sustainable agriculture

*Matt Pfannenstiel/USFWS*



## Potomac River National Wildlife Refuge Complex

### New Connectivity Efforts at Conference

During the week of January 13, Transportation Fellow Naomi Fireman joined her counterpart from Detroit International Wildlife Refuge, Vince Ziols, along with over 13,000 transportation professionals at the Transportation Research Board’s annual meeting. In between her time spent networking with individuals from other agencies and businesses, she also presented a poster and spoke at a session. She highlighted the use of e-bikes and the potential for bringing this new mode of transportation to the Potomac River NWR Complex. After the meeting she came back inspired and more equipped to help refuge staff accomplish their connectivity goals.

Naomi Fireman, Potomac River NWRC (Left) and Vince Ziols, Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge (Right) with their posters on accessibility and transportation on their refuges

*USFWS*

## DNRCP Chief Scott Schwenk Visits Umbagog NWR

Umbagog NWR and the Northern Forest Land Management Research and Demonstration Program were happy to host a winter visit from Division of Natural Resources and Conservation Planning (DNRCP) Chief Scott Schwenk. The visit focused on forest conservation, management, and demonstration at the refuge. Field sites highlighted specific topics, including the process of preparing a management action, administering a harvest, and long-term habitat and forest bird monitoring. Active harvesting at the refuge provided the opportunity to see specialized logging equipment in action. Other demonstration sites provided examples of early successional management, natural disturbances, and vegetative response following a harvest.



Umbagog staff with DNRCP Chief Scott Schwenk during a Refuge tour

*Tom LaPointe/USFWS*

## John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum

### Refuge Hosts First Time Mentored Hunter Field Trip

Staff from John Heinz NWR's first mentored archery deer hunt gathered together on Saturday, January 25 to continue their hunting and educational journey with a field trip to Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area. During the field trip, mentors and mentees learned about additional hunting opportunities as well as various wildlife management practices. Participants also had the chance to try their hand at target shooting with firearms and work on their waterfowl identification skills.



Refuge Manager Lamar Gore practices target shooting with some of the first time hunters at Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area

*USFWS*

## **Coastal Wildlife Presentation at Menunkatuck Audubon**

On January 22, 2020, Wildlife Biologist Kris Vagos spoke to the public about coastal wildlife on Stewart B. McKinney NWR. The Menunkatuck Audubon hosted the talk in Branford, CT at the newly renovated community center. The talk was well-received and sparked an interesting discussion. Feedback from the talk's organizer stated that "many of the people who are regulars at these talks said that it was one of the best programs that they've ever attended."



A slide from the presentation by Stewart B. McKinney NWR Wildlife Biologist Kris Vagos.

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## **Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge**

### **Next Generation of Conservation Professionals Hone Skills at Career Workshop**

Staff from Assabet River NWR participated in a conservation career workshop for students and recent graduates hosted by the Mass Audubon on January 7. Over 30 youth from across Massachusetts participated in a variety of activities designed to enhance their chances of succeeding in a conservation-related career. Workshop activities included panel discussions, a resume-building workshop, mock interviews, and networking sessions.

A USFWS display greets students and recent graduates at the Conservation Careers Workshop hosted by the Mass Audubon

Jared Green/USFWS



Another happy angler poses with a rainbow trout from Cherry Creek

*Todd Burns*

## Recreational Fishing at Cherry Valley NWR

This past year, more than 1,000 lineal feet of severely degraded streambed and stream banks of Cherry Creek at Cherry Valley NWR in Pennsylvania was restored with assistance from the Brodhead Chapter of Trout Unlimited. As of January 1, this newly restored section was officially opened to catch and release trout fishing. Anglers in the first month reported that they each brought at least one brown or rainbow trout to net and released. Future plans for the area include a “Wounded Warrior” fishing event this spring.