



FRIENDS OF THE SILVIO O. CONTE NATIONAL FISH AND WILDLIFE REFUGE

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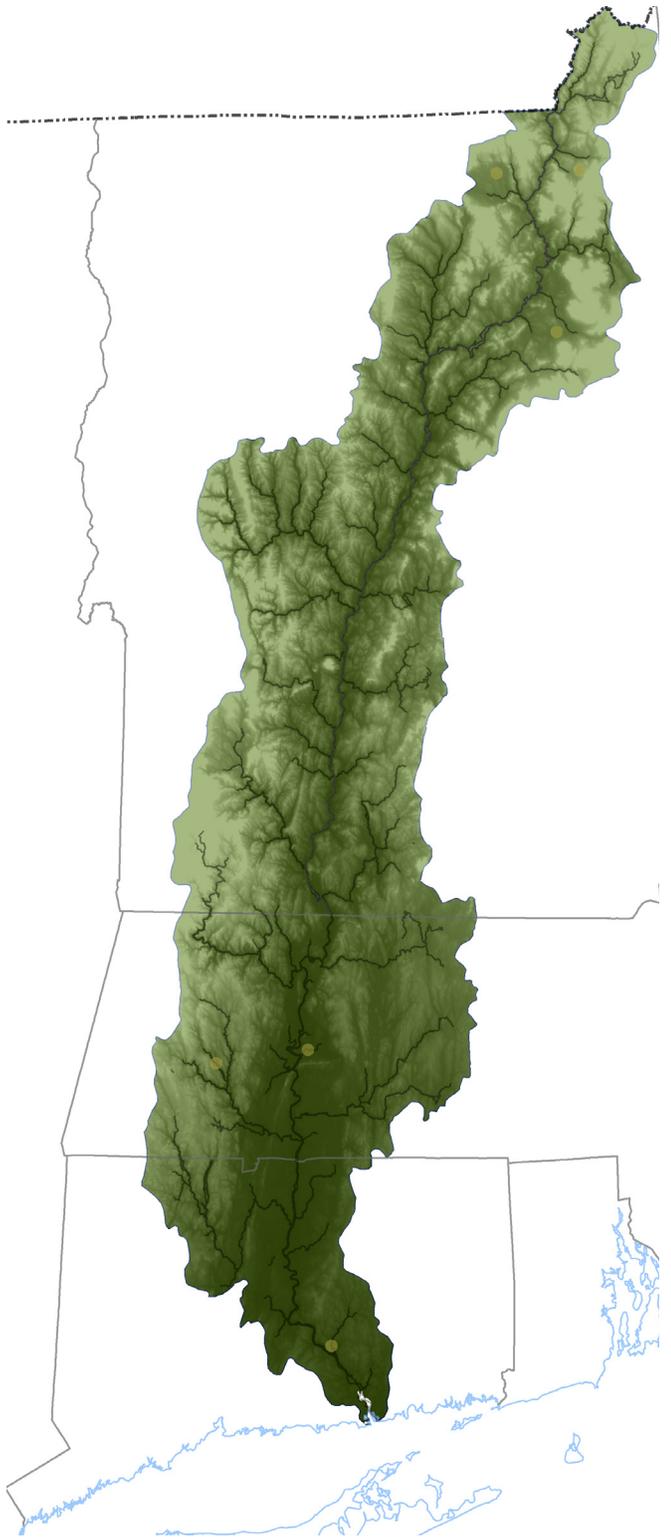
The Connecticut River watershed comprises fully one-sixth of New England and is home to 2.4 million residents. It also contains dozens of habitat types that host hundreds of plant and animal species, many that are priorities for protection. Following the death of the late Silvio Conte, Massachusetts District One Congressman and avid outdoorsman, the 1991 legislation enabling the creation of the Conte Refuge mandated protection of species across the entire Connecticut River watershed in Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. Conte was to be a new kind of refuge: large in scale; intermixed with population centers, private lands, and other conservation efforts; and designed to enhance traditional refuge tools with public-private partnerships and a strong role for education and outreach. *In short, the Conte Refuge was a "Beyond the Boundaries," landscape-scale effort from its inception.*

Since 1997, the Conte Refuge has conserved almost 35,000 acres of land in the Nulhegan Basin Division (VT), the Pondicherry and Mohawk River Divisions (NH), the Fort River and Mill River Divisions (MA), and the Salmon River Division (CT) as well as a number of smaller units in all four states. It has also helped establish educational centers at the Montshire Museum (VT), Great North Woods Interpretive Center (NH), and the Great Falls Discovery Center (MA), provided critical leadership on invasive species in the watershed, and made grants to private partners for research, education, and other purposes.

The Conte Refuge is expected to release a draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) in 2011 that will reflect climate adaptation strategies and other priorities of the North Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative. The Conte Refuge ranks second in the nation and first in the Northeast in the Service's Land Acquisition Priority System (LAPS), and contains a tremendous range of latitudes and elevations that can support species migration and refugia. The Conte Refuge and the US Fish and Wildlife Service have an important role to play in addressing climate adaptation across this landscape on both public and private lands.

FRIENDS OF THE CONTE REFUGE

The Friends of the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge (Friends of Conte) is a diverse multi-state coalition of local, regional, and national conservation partners working with the Refuge. We serve as a foundation and a forum to forge partnerships and initiatives in support of the Conte Refuge's legislated purposes and partner missions. Current efforts include engagement with the Service and stakeholders in four states to help develop an ambitious and focused Comprehensive Conservation Plan, and development of a Recreation and Education Committee and a



Member organizations and supporters include:

Appalachian Mountain Club*
Audubon Connecticut*
Audubon Vermont
Connecticut River Joint Commissions*
Connecticut River Watershed Council*
The Connecticut Audubon Society
Connecticut Ornithological Association
Farmington River Watershed Association
Fort River Partnership
Friends of Nulhegan
Friends of Pondicherry*
Friends of the Great Falls Discovery Center
The Hartford Audubon Society
The Highstead Foundation*
The Kestrel Trust
Massachusetts Audubon Society
National Wildlife Refuge Association
New Hampshire Audubon
New Haven Bird Club
Northern Forest Alliance
Northwoods Stewardship Center
Nulhegan Gateway Association

Park River Watershed Revitalization Initiative
Rivers Alliance of Connecticut
Rushing Rivers Institute
Society for the Protection of New Hampshire
Forests*
The Conservation Fund
The Nature Conservancy*
The Wilderness Society
The Trust for Public Land*
Vermont Institute of Natural Sciences*

** represented on the Friends of Conte Executive
Committee*

PHOTO CREDIT:

Jerry and Marcy Monkman/Ecophotography.com

Stewardship Committee to help deliver on the Conte Refuge's potential to provide wildlife-compatible public benefits on Refuge lands and throughout the Connecticut River watershed.

OUR VISION

The Friends of Conte believe strongly in the Refuge and its legislated purposes, and support efforts that help to ensure that this unique, four-state, watershed-based refuge can achieve its full promise over the lifetime of the CCP and beyond, including:

Catalytic Leadership: The Conte Refuge, unlike many traditional refuges, can only achieve its potential if it is able to enhance the success of others whose goals are compatible with Refuge purposes. Convening stakeholders, research and information leadership, and leading by example locally are key roles that the Friends of Conte will continue to assist the Conte Refuge to fulfill.

Land Conservation: The Friends support both continued fee acquisition of Conte Refuge lands in conformance with the 1995 Plan and the upcoming CCP, and protection of land important to the Refuge by land trusts, communities, and land owners. Conservation easements, private landowner cooperative agreements, and other innovative approaches using the resources of multiple agencies will be important to achieving the Conte Refuge's habitat conservation goals.

Technical Assistance and Education: One of the most exciting innovations in the Conte Refuge model is its emphasis on public-private partnerships that can reach far beyond the boundaries of Refuge lands to positively impact conservation and resource stewardship across the 7.2 million acre watershed. Public education, outreach to private landowners and communities, and leadership on key issues such as climate adaptation and invasive species, are all opportunities for the Conte Refuge to leverage the talents and resources of others to achieve shared goals.

CONNECTICUT RIVER CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION

VERMONT

Senator Patrick J. Leahy (D)
Senator Bernard Sanders (I)
Representative Peter Welch (D), At Large

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D)
Senator Kelly Ayotte (R)
Representative Paul W. Hodes (D), District Two

MASSACHUSETTS

Senator John F. Kerry (D)
Senator Scott Brown (R)
Representative John W. Olver (D), District One
Representative Richard E. Neal (D), District Two

CONNECTICUT

Senator Joseph I. Lieberman (I)
Senator Richard Blumenthal (D)(D)
Representative John B. Larson (D), District One
Representative Joseph Courtney (D), District Two
Representative Rosa L. DeLauro (D), District Three
Representative Christopher Murphy (D), District Five

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