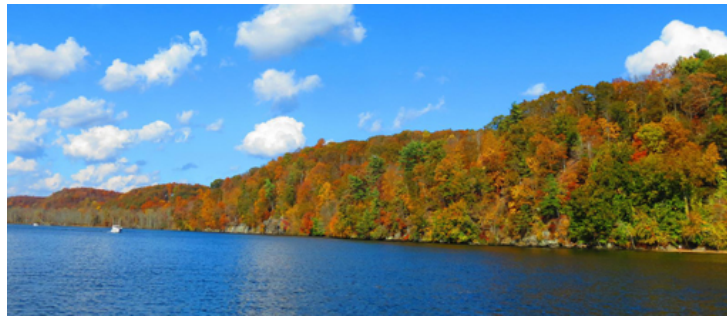


Public Information Session

*on the draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan
for the Silvio O. Conte National Fish & Wildlife Refuge*



Tuesday, May 3, 2016

*Kilton Library Community Room,
80 Main Street
West Lebanon, New Hampshire*

Representatives from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) have accepted an invitation to participate in an open house hosted by the New Hampshire Timberland Owners Association and the New Hampshire Chapter of The Nature Conservancy. The USFWS will provide a presentation of the draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for the Silvio O. Conte Refuge, answer questions, and engage in dialogue with those in attendance.

Meeting Agenda:

5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. Informal open house format with the USFWS representatives to look at Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) maps and other related material.

6:00 p.m. – 6:10 p.m. Welcome and introductions

6:10 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. USFWS presentation on the Comprehensive Conservation Plan.

7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Question/answer session

8:00 p.m. Adjourn

Thank you to the Office of Senator Jeanne Shaheen for helping to facilitate this discussion.

On August 18, 2015, The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service released a draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge to help guide refuge management over the next 15 years. The plan includes goals, objectives, and strategies for Refuge programs, and details the combination of actions USFWS will implement to protect species, manage habitats, and support compatible, public recreational and other uses. Following the draft's release, the Service hosted 14 informational sessions across the watershed and held four formal public hearings, one in each state, during the 90-day public comment period.

Acting under the direction of Congress in 1991, the Conte Refuge was authorized in the 7.2 million-acre Connecticut River watershed and encompasses portions of four states - Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont - in order to conserve native fish, plants, and wildlife. Conte is the first refuge in the

National Wildlife Refuge System with a project boundary that includes a large ecological landscape, in this case a major river's entire watershed.

The authors of the establishing legislation recognized the resources of USFWS alone could never meet the full scope and scale of the conservation needs for the full watershed. Thus, the mission of the Conte Refuge states that the Refuge will “work in partnership with others to inspire stewardship, magnify achievements, and celebrate shared successes that enhance, nurture, and protect the natural, cultural, and sustainable economic richness of the Connecticut River and its watershed on public and private land.”

The draft CCP presents four management alternatives representing different ways to achieve the Refuge's mission and purposes. The final CCP will guide the Refuge's management over the next 15 years. Once approved, the CCP will become the new master plan for the Conte Refuge, setting out goals, objectives, and strategies organized by four major categories of management activities: wildlife and habitat conservation; environmental education, outreach, and interpretation; recreation; and partnerships. The CCP also identifies the Service's best estimate of future needs.

The full CCP, including a detailed description of the four alternatives, is available at:
http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Silvio_O_Conte/what_we_do/conservation.html

Thank you also to:

