



Friends of Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge Winter Newsletter 2020

Prescribed Burn a Positive for Pollinators, New England Cottontail, and the Community

On March 28th, staff from the Joint-United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)/National Park Service (NPS) Region 5 North County Fire Program conducted a prescribed burn on the Falmouth Rod and Gun Club lands within the Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge (NWR).



Upland forested habitat is successfully burned at the Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge on March 28th, 2019 (Photo Credit: Matthew Carroll/USFWS).

Two acres of field habitat were successfully burned to help with the creation of valuable habitat for pollinators. The crew also burned eight acres of fire-adapted oak-pine forested habitat that is vital to rare species like the New England Cottontail and Northern Long-eared Bat. These

burns were part of a multi-agency hazard-fuels-reduction effort taking place within the refuge and across the state as part of the Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy. **By United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)**

Time to renew your 2020 membership!

Join our [mailing list](#),
Check out our [website](#)
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Meet Our 2020 AmeriCorps Member

For the 2019-2020 AmeriCorps Cape Cod service-year, member Andrew Schwitzgebel is serving with the Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (WBNERR) and the Friends of Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge.



Andrew teaching children at a WetFest education fair.

Andrew is from all over the country, having lived in 8 states, and earned a degree from the University



of Alabama in Microbiology, with minors in Spanish and the Computer-Based Honors Program. This is his second AmeriCorps term, his first being the California Conservation Corps' Watershed Stewards Program in partnership with AmeriCorps, where he served at the Watershed Research and Training Center in Hayfork, California restoring, researching, and teaching about local watersheds. He's enjoying learning more about being an environmental educator at WBNERR and looks forward to positively impacting the local community and ecosystem during the rest of his service year!

- Andrew Schwitzgebel

Refuge Partners Work Together to Prep for Hunt Opening

Staff from Eastern Massachusetts National Wildlife Refuge Complex worked side by side with staff from the Town of Mashpee Department of Public Works during the week of July 15th to install two new gates and construct a parking lot at the Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge in preparation for opening up the refuge to hunting in Fall 2019. The gates were donated by Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Town of Mashpee. - USFWS

Preserving Our Homelands Summer Camp

Youth from the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe's "Preserving Our Homelands Summer Camp" were joined by staff from the Mashpee NWR, USFWS New England Field Office's Partner's Program, Friends of Mashpee NWR, and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation for two days of conservation-related activities on July 23rd and 24th. Campers created a pollinator garden on Tribal grounds, participated in pollinator-themed activities, toured the refuge's new "Watershed on Wheels" mobile trailer, and learned about wildlife management and monitoring activities.

Creature Feature Corner



The No



James Rassman, Stewardship Coordinator at WBNERR, holds up an anesthetized male fisher during a USDA rabies vaccine efficacy survey



A juvenile fisher pokes its head out of the maternal den high in a tree

Perhaps one of the most misunderstood animals in North America, the Northern Fisher (or fisher cat) is neither a cat, nor does it eat fish! As a member of the Mustelid family that include weasels, otters, minks, and wolverines, the fisher is the largest member of the Mustelids in Massachusetts, reaching 3 to 4 feet in length; the male fisher is nearly twice the size of the females, with females weighing between 4 and 6 pounds, and males from 8 to 16 pounds.

The fisher is a predator of small mammals like squirrels and rabbits, though it is omnivorous and will eat berries and fruit. It is an extremely elusive animal and primarily nocturnal, with occasional crepuscular (active during dawn and dusk) behavior. Before beginning a solitary life, kits are reared for 4 months by the mother in a maternity den high in a hollow tree (they are excellent climbers). The fisher is a quiet animal who emits only a rare growl or hiss; red fox vocalizations/screams are often misattributed to fishers.

Once extinct in the region due to unregulated trapping and deforestation, fishers were reintroduced to in the 1950s Massachusetts by timber companies to control porcupine populations in new forest stands. Because of the fisher's superb quickness and agility, it is the most successful predator of porcupines. The first reported sightings on Cape Cod occurred around the turn of the century and the first positive confirmation was a dead fisher found in Sandwich in 2005. Today the fisher is no longer categorized by the State of Massachusetts as a species of concern!

For more information visit:

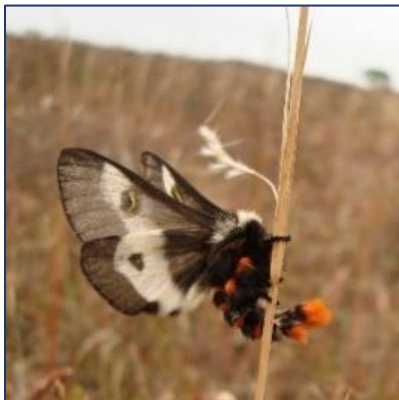
<https://www.massaudubon.org/learn/nature-wildlife/mammals/fishers/about>.



Visitor Services Specialist Kelsey Mackey leads campers from the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe's Preserving Our Homelands Camp on a tour of the refuge's new "Watershed on Wheels" mobile trailer on July 23rd (Photo Credit: Jared Green/USFWS). - USFWS

Forest inventory at Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge benefits USFWS and partners

With the very generous help and expertise of our regional Division of Natural Resources Planning (DNRPC) staff, we conducted a forest inventory at Mashpee Refuge, including adjacent Town and State partner lands. The 9-partner Refuge protection area encompasses more than 5,871 acres on Cape Cod.



The Barrens buckmoth (*Hemileuca maia*) is a species commonly found in pine barrens. (Photo credit: Nantucket Conservation Foundation).



Scrub oak regeneration comes in strong in the pine barrens after prescribed burning (Photo credit: Stephanie Koch/USFWS).

Large expanses of pine barrens are protected through this partnership, and we strive to work closely with partners on joint habitat goals to benefit pine barren species and New England cottontail. We finished collecting data in September on 40 points across the partnership lands and are excited to use these data to inform future management in helping to benefit numerous priority species. - USFWS



The New England Cottontail is a threatened species that relies on pine barrens and other early successional habitats to live. (Photo credit: M. Poole, USFWS).

**DUE TO COVID-19 HEALTH CONCERNS,
ALL MARCH to Mid-APRIL EVENTS
HAVE BEEN CANCELLED**



National Estuarine Day Celebrations: Boat Rides, highlighting Refuge History Book, Trail Maps and Brochure.

On September 14, The Refuge Partnership hosted a public event to celebrate Estuaries Week at the Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. Those who attended had the opportunity to learn all about the quahog clam and sample some clam chowder made by the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, and take a guided tour of the *Watershed on Wheels* trailer led by members of the Falmouth Rod and Gun Club.

Of the more than 200 attendees, 60 lucky individuals were among the very first to embark on a tour of Waquoit Bay on board the refuge's 38-foot landing craft, which was purchased with National Transportation funds for the purpose of providing public tours.



As part of the National Estuarine Days Celebration, the Friends of Mashpee NWR released their new history book titled "How We Got Here: The History of the Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge". The monumental effort to compile information, schedule interviews with those individuals who played critical roles in the establishment of the Mashpee NWR and work with a writer/editor and graphic designer was led by the Friends of Mashpee NWR and funded

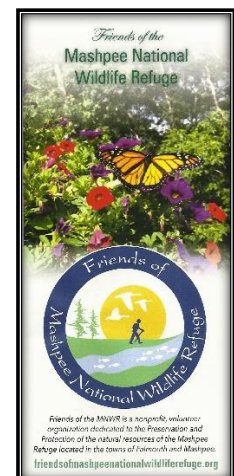
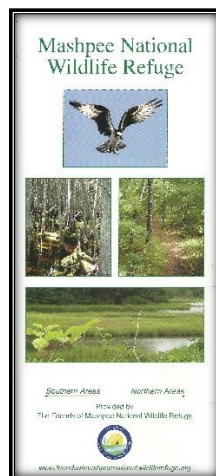
through a grant from the Town of Mashpee Community Preservation Act. The event

highlighted a panel of five of the seven original founders of this 'one of a kind' refuge. This included Ed Moses, Manager of the Refuge Complex at the time; Chuckie Green, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe's Natural Resources Department Director; Tom Fudala, former Mashpee Town Planner; Mark Forest, Aide to Congressman Gerry Studds and Christine Gault, former Director of Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve.



Carl Melberg, former Realty Specialist with USFWS, and Mary Varteresian, former Acquisition Biologist with USFWS were unable to attend and participate on the panel in sharing their personal stories in establishing the Mashpee NWR. All seven founders, were presented with the "David Ross Palmer Environmental Hero" Award by the Mashpee Friends, named after an influential refuge supporter and first president of the Friend

New Refuge Trail Map Guide & Brochure





Membership Form

YES! I want to support the *Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge* - enclosed are my dues as checked below

Name: _____ Phone: _____ (H) _____ (C)

Street: _____ Town: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Email: _____ Date: _____

Enclose payment for the membership – please make checks payable to F.M.N.W.R.

- Junior (18 and under) - \$10
- Individual - \$25
- Family - \$50
- Conservation Friend - \$100
- Wildlife Sponsor - \$200
- Refuge Sponsor - \$500
- Lifetime Gift - \$1000
- Corporate Gift - \$ _____
- Other - \$ _____



Volunteer Form

I would be interested in the following opportunities listed below

- Stewardship Projects
- Newsletter Editor
- Native Pollinator Gardens
- Educational talks/walks, Events at Schools
- Volunteer & Membership Coordinator

The Friends meet monthly on the first Tuesday, 4pm at the Mashpee Public Library, Please, come join us and get involved!