

THE FANNIE STEBBINS WILDLIFE REFUGE CELEBRATING 75 YEARS WITH EVENTS & MORE!

By Jim Dorschner | Photos by Mari Solivoda



State Senator Jake Oliveira presents outgoing Friends of Fannie Stebbins President Cynthia Sommer with a Massachusetts Official Citation honoring Springfield educator Fannies Stebbins & the Wildlife Refuge she establish 75 years ago.

was led by William Arden and David Sagan. The evening also involved the election of a new President of the Friends, Jen Falcone, who replaced long serving Cynthia Sommer.

In their clearly heartfelt comments both Oliviera and Ashe expressed strong support for the Refuge as an important public space dedicated to the mindful preservation of nature while offering valuable, well

The all-volunteer Friends of Fannie Stebbins Wildlife Refuge celebrated 75 years of the Refuge during a dedicated Annual Meeting in Longmeadow on May 28. Held at the Unitarian Universalist Society on Porter Lake

Road, guest speakers included Senator Jake Oliviera and Representative Brian M. Ashe. A full US Fish and Wildlife (USFWL) contingent from the Silvio O.

Conti National Wildlife Refuge

maintained, restorative and informative access for individuals, families, school trips, and focused wildlife organizations like the Allen Bird Club. They and William Arden also stressed the importance of and their appreciation for the existing close cooperation among key players in the Refuge – USFWL, the Town of Longmeadow, The Friends group, Allen Bird Club and the Nature Conservancy.

The Refuge was founded in 1951 with 362 acres accumulated during years of dedicated effort by members of the Springfield-based Allen Bird Club, founded in 1912. Fannie Stebbins (1858–1949) was a respected Springfield science educator and original member of the Allen Bird Club, which worked tirelessly to create the Refuge named after her. Subsequently, the Town of Longmeadow added additional acreage, in cooperation with The Nature Conservancy, amounting to a total of over 1,000 acres of protected land.

In 1997 the Refuge was incorporated into the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, managed by USFWL within the Department of the Interior, with nearly 40,000 acres along the Connecticut River in New



Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. Fannie Stebbins is one of 22 divisions and units that make up Silvio Conte.

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