

## Happenings at Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge

# Refuge Reporter

Volume 9, Issue 4

Fall 2006

### No Auto Tour, But Several Other Activities Planned for Open House

By Becky Goche, Park Ranger

The annual refuge Open House Weekend is set for September 9 and 10, 2006. During this weekend, the entire refuge is open to hiking, bicycling and scouting for deer during daylight hours only. Unfortunately, there will be no auto tour because of flooding earlier this year that damaged part of the route. We hopefully will be funded to make the repairs before next year's open house. In the meantime, several other activities have been planned for this year's event!

#### Guided Bird Walks

Join Refuge Manager Steve Kahl and refuge volunteer Steve Gasser on two separate bird tours. On Saturday morning, they will lead a guided tour of the

Ferguson Bayou Nature Trail, off of Curtis Road, beginning at 8:00 a.m. On Sunday morning the birding venue will move to the Evon Road area, west of highway M-13. Birders should meet them in the parking lot at the end of Evon Road. Early September is a good time to see herons, egrets, ducks, geese and warblers. Birders might even have a chance to see Bald eagles along with a variety of other wildlife. Each hike will be about 5 miles long and last 3 to 4 hours. Wear comfortable shoes, dress for the weather, and bring binoculars, water and mosquito spray.

#### Photo Contest Judging

Pick your favorite photos in the annual refuge photo contest at the refuge headquarters from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on

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### On Seeing Michigan for the First Time

By Nathan Northup, ECO Associate

It was by a fated series of events that ultimately led me to spend a season of summer's splendor here in the lovely state of Michigan. I was in school; fervently running between classes, rehearsals, and meetings when I overheard a friend talking about a number of summer internships

available through the Environmental Careers Organization. I went online and saw a number of 'public use' opportunities – positions doing a lot with environmental education, as well as other conservation work. Since I'm going into education, I knew that this would be a great opportunity to get some experience working with young people.

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#### Special Points:

- *The original artwork of Michigan's 2006 Federal Junior Duck Stamp winners will be displayed at the Ella Sharp Museum in Jackson, MI, to celebrate the grand opening of its wildlife gallery featuring one of the largest collections of North American waterfowl in the world*
- *Hunter packet pick-up dates: October 14, 7:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m., October 20, 7:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m., October 21, 7:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m., and October 26, 7:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m.*

## On Seeing Michigan for the First Time continued

After getting all the necessary paperwork together, I mailed it off. Weeks went by before I heard that the staff at Shiawassee was interested in interviewing me. I'd never had an interview over the phone before. I remember the most random question being asked by Becky, "Why are manhole covers round?" It threw me off guard a bit, but they must have liked my answers because I was offered the position which I immediately accepted.

Upon my arrival to Green Point, I was pleasantly surprised at the setting – such a place of tranquility surrounded by natural beauty and so close to the city! I had to stop and look around and I caught myself thinking, "This is going to be a great summer."

I cannot explain how refreshing it is to me, to be surrounded by, and work with people who care about our environment and make it their life's work to preserve and maintain a balance between humans and nature – it's incredibly inspiring to me. It seems, from my past experiences, that the only people I've known who really care about environmentalism are my generation and old 'hippies' – people who have great attitudes towards enviro-friendly ideas, but don't necessarily *do* anything or even *know* where to begin to help. Even as such, many people my age are becoming increasingly more apathetic towards environmental issues collectively making decisions with a majority of older people who seem to all share in having absolutely *no* regard for the future of this planet and country.

Though it may be somewhat hard to tell by my appearance, I am of Hocak (Ho-Chunk) lineage, a nation that spanned from Lake Michigan to the Mississippi River from the southern half of Wisconsin through Iowa, Illinois, and into Nebraska. I have set off on a journey in my past years to attempt to reconnect with this life in any way that I can. I was not raised in the traditional Hocak way, mostly because I never knew my biological father or his family where my lineage comes from. So I rely on local elders and friends who know many things about the old ways, to teach me. One of the many noble values practiced by the Hocak people is that leaders are expected to make their decisions based on how their choices will affect children six generations in the future. I wish others would take this mindset into consideration, namely our U.S. leaders of all parties.

One of the things I enjoyed most about working here was the ability to work with local youth. It's exciting to be surrounded by their energy, and their seemingly never-ending quest for knowledge. I had the opportunity to

work with many student groups. It's great to see those same children come back out here with their friends and families, sharing what they've learned. They are the future, and if we can get them to care and *keep* them caring about our environment, the brighter our future will be.

Along with working with kids, I did other exciting things, like nest counts on island bird colonies in Lake Huron, assisting our Private Lands Biologist, helping with the Fishing Day, teaching Girl Scouts about edible native plants, re-building a frog pond, maintaining Green Point's trails, capturing snakes and spiders, feeding the animals and birds (and mosquitoes), and organizing a big part of the refuge's deer hunt.

I've enjoyed my time here immensely, and while I look forward to returning to my home, I'm going to miss it here very much. I've had a great time getting to know the staff, learning as much as I can from all of them; it's just been an incredible experience. My bachelor's degree is actually in music-education, but I plan on getting my master's in the biology/science/resources-ish education field. I love kids, I love teaching, I love nature, I love music, and I love to learn. So hopefully I can fuse that all together in my future and have whatever adventures come my way.

I'd like to give my heartfelt thanks to *all* of the staff at Shiawassee NWR for letting me bug them and talk to them and tag along with them all summer – you guys are great! (Ed, you'll have to keep me updated on the iguana...I'll miss that old reptile!) Finally, I'd really like to give my thanks to my "project supervisor," the person with whom I spent most of my time, but who I consider to be more of a friend and mentor, Becky. We had some good times with all those crazy kids, spiders, fox snakes, and nights on the town! Thanks for everything these past couple months and I'm really going to miss you. Oh, and if anybody ever finds themselves in La Crosse, Wisconsin, feel free to look me up!

Nagewah (until later), Nate



# New Days for Goose Hunting and Trail Closures in 2006

By *Becky Goche, Park Ranger*

There have been changes made to the goose hunting program on the refuge in an effort to provide a better experience for hunters and to free up staff time. This year goose hunting will only be allowed on Tuesdays, Thursday, Saturdays and Sundays. The refuge goose season will start on October 7 and go through October 29. The first two days are reserved hunts, but there may be some open blinds in case other hunters want to wait on the stand-by list. There still will be a one bird per day limit for Canada geese.

A lottery-style drawing is held each morning of the hunt at the refuge headquarters at 5:30 a.m. Doors open at 5:00 a.m. for hunters to sign up and to have their licenses checked. Up to three people may sign up for a blind. Each person in the blind must pay \$4, whether hunting or not. People with Golden Age Passports pay only \$2. There are usually about 30 blinds situated in corn fields overlooking winter wheat strips. Hunting starts one-half hour before sunrise and ends at 12:00 noon. All blind parties must check back in at the refuge headquarters by 1:00 p.m. whether they were successful or not.

The Ferguson Bayou Trail will be closed until 1:00 p.m. each day of the goose hunt. Other trail closures during 2006 due to deer hunting on the refuge are as follow:

## **Ferguson Bayou Trail at Curtis Road**

October 27—31, November 1—5, November 15—20, November 25—26, December 2—3, December 8—11, December 20—24, and December 27—31.

## **Woodland Trail at Stroebel Road**

October 27—31, November 1—5, November 19—20, December 2—3, and December 8—11.

## **Cass River Unit in Bridgeport Township**

October 27—31, November 1—5, December 20—24, and December 27—31.

Trails at Green Point remain open for your use! Keep in mind, no bicycles or pets are allowed on the trails.

## Refuge Open House continued from page 1

Saturday only. Amateur photographers enter their pictures in four different categories—Wildlife & Plantlife, Habitat, People and Young Nature Photographer (must be 16-years-old or younger). Visitors vote in each category to determine the winners.

## **Nature Photography Workshop**

Refuge volunteer Kim LeBlanc will lead an hour-long workshop beginning at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday at the butterfly garden near the refuge headquarters. He will give some basic photography tips and demonstrate different blind setups. Even though this workshop will be geared towards film photographers, digital photographers will benefit from it, too.

### **REFUGE REPORTER**

Published quarterly by Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge with funding from the Friends of Shiawassee NWR.

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Editor: Becky Goche

#### **Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge**

Established in October, 1953 and administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Shiawassee NWR provides resting, nesting and feeding habitat for waterfowl and other birds. Its mission is to preserve or manage an undeveloped expanse of floodplain forest, marshes, rivers, and associated habitat within an agricultural and urban landscape through habitat management, encouraging public stewardship, educational programs, and private lands activities.

Refuge Manager—Steve Kahl

Assistant Refuge Manager—Ed DeVries

Biologist—Jim Dastyck

Private Lands Biologist—Michelle Vander Haar

Biological Science Technician—Vacant

Park Ranger/Volunteer Coordinator—Becky Goche

Administrative Technician—Mary Ann Gillette

Maintenance Staff—Marion "Butch" Nowosatko and David Peters

Law Enforcement Officer—Jonathan Priday

#### **Friends of Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge**

A nonprofit 501 (c)(3) organization established in 1999 to promote the preservation of the natural and historical resources of the Refuge, foster its use and enjoyment by the public consistent with the protection and preservation of its environment, and engage in such educational, scientific and civic activities as will assist the management of the Refuge in carrying out its mandates.

Refuge Website: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/shiawassee>

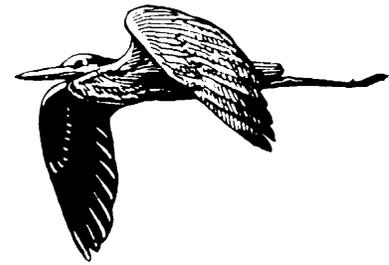
Shiawassee NWR  
6975 Mower Rd.  
Saginaw, MI 48601  
Phone: 989-777-5930  
Fax: 989-777-9200  
Hours: M - F, 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

We're on the web!

[Http://www.fws.gov/midwest/shiawassee](http://www.fws.gov/midwest/shiawassee)



***Lots of Activities Planned for this Year's Open House***



## Plan Your School Field Trips Today

*By Becky Goche, Park Ranger*

It's time for school and that means it's time to plan your fall field trips to Green Point! Green Point offers many different programs for you and your students to come and explore the outdoors. You can view a listing of these programs on our website (<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/shiawassee>) or you can call Green Point at (989) 759-1669 to request a copy be sent to you in the mail. We have programs for all ages—you can pick a program appropriate for your class or we can suggest one based upon the grade level you teach. Best of all, the programs are free!

We also offer programs for in your classroom, i.e. we come to you! Typically, we prefer doing these in the winter months when we have fewer visitors and school groups here, but we are flexible. How cool would it be

for a real, live Park Ranger to come visit your classroom? There are also many educational trunks covering a variety of natural resources-related topics that you can borrow for a two-week period. Each trunk contains a variety of items to enhance your curriculum including books, videos, posters, puppets, skulls, and more. All you need to do is call to schedule a time to pick one up from Green Point.

### **Junior Duck Stamp Program**

It's not too early to start thinking about the Federal Junior Duck Stamp Program. Informational brochures for the 2007 contest should be available in late fall. A National team has been working on updating the curriculum; we hope it will be ready soon. If you would like a copy of the 2007 brochure or the curriculum sent to you, please contact me at Green Point.

## **Nurturing Nature Wednesday Series**

- All programs begin at 7:00 p.m. and last 60 – 90 minutes.
- Held at the Green Point Environmental Learning Center, 3010 Maple Street, Saginaw, unless otherwise noted.
- Admission: \$2 for individuals or \$5 for a family. FREE for members of the Friends of the Shiawassee NWR.

### **Michigan's Junior Duck Stamp Program September 6, 2006**

Michigan's Federal Junior Duck Stamp contest came to Saginaw to roost this year as Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge Park Ranger Becky Goche was named its coordinator. Her presentation will offer an overview of the program, images of this year's winners and hopefully comments from some of the mid-Michigan entrants.

### **Deer Management at the Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge October 4, 2006**

Jim Dastyck, biologist at the Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge, will discuss how the refuge manages its deer herd and review the refuge's hunting policies.

### **A Winter Resort for the Birds November 1, 2006**

Chippewa Nature Center senior naturalist Janea Little will detail the variety of food, sleeping quarters, windbreaks and secured acres that will attract a diversity of wintering birds to your back yard.

## **Owl Night Hike**

**October 6, 2006, 7:00 p.m.**

### **Green Point Environmental Learning Center**

Help us kick off National Wildlife Refuge Week with a guided hike! Explore the night world at Green Point as we hike along the trails in search of the tiny Screech owl and other nocturnal animals. Wear dark clothing and bring a flashlight. Hike will be canceled in the event of severe weather.

# Calendar of Events

## **Refuge Open House**

**September 9 – 10, 2006, during daylight hours**

### **Everywhere on the refuge**

Once a year, the refuge is opened up to visitors for hiking, bicycling and deer scouting during daylight hours. Vote for your favorite photos from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. or join the Nature Photography Workshop at 11:00 a.m., both at the headquarters.

## **Girl Scout Work Day**

**September 23, 2006, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon**

**Rain Date: September 24, 2006**

Celebrate National Public Lands Day by helping spruce up the refuge! Pick up litter, remove weeds, stain parking lot rails and do other projects. Scout leaders must register the number and ages of girls participating by calling (989) 759-1669 before September 20.

## **Guided Bird Walks**

**September 9, 2006, 8:00 a.m.**

**Ferguson Bayou Trail  
and**

**September 10, 2006, 8:00 a.m.**

**Evon Road parking lot**

Refuge Manager Steve Kahl and volunteer Steve Gasser will lead birders about 5 miles each day. Bring your binoculars, wear sturdy shoes, and dress for the weather.

## **Refuge Horse Tour**

**September 16, 2006, 9:00 a.m.**

**Evon Road parking lot**

Assistant Refuge Manager Ed DeVries will take riders on a guided tour. You provide the horse. Reservations are required. Call Ed at (989) 777-5930, ext. 13 to sign up. Rain date is September 23, 2006.

For more information, contact Green Point ELC at (989) 759-1669.

# FRIENDS OF SHIAWASSEE NWR MEMBERSHIP PAGE

## Friends of Shiawassee NWR Membership

Renewal                       New membership

General Membership

    \$10 – Individual (1) vote.

    \$25 – Family (2) votes. (Member, spouse and children under age 18)

- Each membership receives quarterly newsletter - "Refuge Reporter."
- Each membership includes voting rights and opportunity to hold office.

Supporting Levels (includes 1 year individual membership): "Goose" \$50, "Blue Heron" \$75, "Owl" \$100, "Bald Eagle" \$125 & over

No membership at this time, but please accept my contribution.

\*Membership is for calendar year. Dues paid after October 1 include remainder of current year plus the following year.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to "Friends of Shiawassee NWR", PO Box 20129, Saginaw, MI, 48602.

Contributions to the Friends of Shiawassee NWR, a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization, are tax deductible according to IRS guidelines.

### Friends' Volunteer Opportunities

### Do you have any of these skills?

\_\_\_\_\_ Staffing Trailhead Store

\_\_\_\_\_ Leading walking tours

\_\_\_\_\_ Helping with workshops

\_\_\_\_\_ Assisting with refuge auto tours

\_\_\_\_\_ Doing outreach events, i.e. fairs

\_\_\_\_\_ Assisting with First Wednesday

\_\_\_\_\_ Writing newsletter articles

\_\_\_\_\_ Writing/developing grants

\_\_\_\_\_ Serving as Committee member

\_\_\_\_\_ Leading children's activities

\_\_\_\_\_ Developing trails

\_\_\_\_\_ Computer skills

\_\_\_\_\_ Photography

\_\_\_\_\_ Carpentry skills

\_\_\_\_\_ Business organizational skills

\_\_\_\_\_ Research

\_\_\_\_\_ Artistic skills

\_\_\_\_\_ Fund raising

\_\_\_\_\_ Grant writing

\_\_\_\_\_ Researching/Ordering merchandise

\_\_\_\_\_ Other – please list:

Board meetings held on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Green Point Environmental Learning Center, 3010 Maple Street in Saginaw. General meetings with special programs are held at various times throughout the year. Friends Board of Directors Officers are:

President – Charles Hoover

Vice President 1 – Dick Von Berg

Vice President 2 – Susan Scott

Treasurer – Wil Hufton II

Secretary – Barb Werle