

News Release



Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge
1101 Casey Road
Basom, NY 14013
585.948.5445

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Contact: Thomas P. Roster 585.948.5445
iroquois@fws.gov

CONNECTING CHILDREN WITH NATURE AT IROQUOIS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge in Alabama and Shelby, NY has announced an exciting new program to introduce children to nature. In the “Take A Kid Along” (TAKA) program, children will learn about the nesting habits of Eastern bluebirds and about other wildlife by accompanying members of the Friends of Iroquois NWR, Inc. as they monitor bluebird nest boxes on the Refuge. Friends of Iroquois NWR, Inc. is a nonprofit organization whose sole purpose is to support the Refuge. The program is open to children ages 6-16 years of age but is limited to four children. Parents may accompany younger children on outings if they wish. Outings will be scheduled Monday – Friday, 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm during the nesting season. Participants must agree to commit to a minimum of five days, at least one day a week. For an application and more information visit the Friends website at www.friendsofiroquoisnwr.org or contact Dorothy Gerhart at 585-948-5445 Ext. 200. Applications must be received by May 27, 2010 at 4 pm. If more than four applications are received a lottery will be held to select the participants.

An orientation meeting will be held at the Refuge Headquarters, 1101 Casey Road, on Thursday, June 3 at 3:00 pm at which time those selected, and their parents/guardians, will meet the leaders and set up their schedules.

Each child will be provided with a backpack containing nature-related reference books, a journal and pen and binoculars to use during their outings. After completing a minimum of five session the child will be able to keep the backpack and its contents. The child will also be requested to write a short journal each time they go out on the trail and to write a story at the end of the program about their experiences on the Refuge and the bluebird trail.

The TAKA program is patterned after the TAK- Along program initiated by the Bluebirds Across Nebraska. Though this program we hope to pass on to the children and the community a legacy of love for bluebirds and a respect for nature in general.

This event is one of the many ways the Refuge offers to connect people with nature. “Connecting People with Nature (CPWN): Ensuring the Future of Conservation” is a national priority of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with the mission of “working to ensure that all Americans have enjoyable and meaningful experiences in the out-of-doors and develop strong life-long connections with the natural world.”

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Individuals with disabilities and any other person who may need special assistance to participate in this program should contact the Refuge at 585.948.5445 or at the Federal Relay No. 1.800.877.8339.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.

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