

Chapter 4: Refuge Management

Current Refuge Programs: Where We Are Today

The Detroit River IWR is a new addition to the National Wildlife Refuge System. Producing this CCP is viewed as one of the first steps toward defining the scope of future Refuge work and the fiscal needs of the Refuge. However, the former Wyandotte NWR, which was established in 1961, has been managed by the staff at Shiawassee NWR for many years. The following paragraphs describe recent management activities related to the former Wyandotte NWR.



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Remediation and restoration activities are currently the primary management actions at Grassy Island. Refuge lands are posted with boundary and identification signs. Public use on Grassy Island is prohibited due to contaminant concerns. Visits for scientific and educational purposes are allowed by permit only.

Refuge staff have traditionally visited the former Wyandotte NWR three or four times a year. The purpose of the visits is to be sure the signs are in place, to observe the general conditions on Grassy and Mud islands, to clean up litter and debris, and to aid partners in contamination studies. In fulfilling partnerships responsibilities, the Refuge manager also attends several meetings a year dealing with contaminant cleanup, conservation initiatives, and the American Heritage River Initiative.

The responsibilities of the Shiawassee staff have increased dramatically since the passage of the Detroit River Refuge legislation. In 2002, the acting Refuge manager made nearly weekly visits to the Refuge vicinity for discussions with partners and scoping for the CCP. Other Service programs have been called in to provide assistance with planning and land acquisition efforts. We expect the Service's role and staff commitment will continue to increase as new lands and programs are added to the Refuge.

Current Partnership Activities

A wide variety of conservation, environmental education and habitat restoration initiatives are ongoing within the authorized boundary of the Refuge. The Service has been involved in many of these programs including the Greater Detroit American Heritage River Initiative, the Downriver Linked Greenways Initiative, the bi-national Conservation Vision for the Lower Detroit River Ecosystem, and programs of the Friends of Detroit River and Detroit

Audubon. County and local level programs are also important but too numerous to list. Future staff of the Refuge will be involved in a tremendous number of citizen and agency-led conservation programs.

The Detroit Remedial Action Plan, a multi-agency and community effort born out of the 1985 Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, declares the Detroit River region as a bi-national Area of Concern. Please see Chapter 3 for more detail on this effort.

The Downriver Linked Greenways Initiative is a community-based program that seeks to build “green” infrastructure and create outdoor recreational opportunities in Wayne and Monroe counties. A large part of this new program is focused on the Detroit River waterfront and connecting existing recreational trails in Detroit area communities. The project is part of the Greenways Initiative, a 5-year, \$75 million private/public partnership for southeast Michigan. More than 200 individuals from 21 communities and seven counties participated in the initial Greenway vision planning process.

Canadian Partnerships

The following section was provided by the Environmental Conservation Branch of Environment Canada, located in Burlington, Ontario. Environment Canada is a Canadian federal agency that has volunteered to be involved in development of a shared conservation vision for the Detroit River and actively participate in planning for the international wildlife refuge. This section also provides a glimpse into the ongoing conservation role of several Canadian government agencies and non-governmental organizations.



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Environment Canada has been working in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Canadian agencies to achieve a compatible, mutually shared bi-national focus for fish and wildlife habitat protection, conservation, and rehabilitation on the Canadian side of the Detroit River. This Canadian focus complements the goals of the Detroit River IWR and the Conservation Vision for the Lower Detroit River Ecosystem. In achieving the shared goals of the Conservation Vision and the Refuge, Environment Canada’s goal is to promote the establishment of a network of ecologically significant protected areas in the lower Detroit River for the purpose of conserving and protecting remaining fish and wildlife habitat as identified in the Conservation Vision document. This will be accomplished through:

- # Developing conservation/rehabilitation plans for these areas in conjunction with other agencies and landowners on a strictly voluntary basis.
- # Linking goals of the Refuge/Vision with existing Canadian/binational programs under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement such as the Detroit River Remedial Action Plan, the Lake Erie Lakewide Management Plan, the Detroit River Canadian Cleanup Committee and the Great Lakes Sustainability Fund, as well as the federal Ecological Gifts Program, and the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.

- # Meeting and partnering with local agencies and interest groups to gain support for Environment Canada's approach to meeting the Refuge/Vision goals and to discuss how programs can be better coordinated to achieve these goals.

The Conservation Vision document identifies examples of ecologically significant areas that are deemed to be worth protecting and, where need be, rehabilitated. These examples include both federally owned and privately owned properties in the lower Detroit River. Two significant federal properties, White Sands and Crystal Bay/Island, are owned by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans has an agreement with Essex Region Conservation Authority (ERCA) to manage the properties as conservation areas. Since this arrangement has been in effect, ERCA has cleaned up the sites, posted them as conservation areas, patrolled them to prevent overnight camping, and encouraged day use for recreational purposes.

In partnership with ERCA, Environment Canada organized an Ecological Gifts Workshop in 2002 in the Windsor area. The federal Ecological Gifts Program entitles private and corporate landowners who donate land, a conservation easement, or a covenant through the Program to preferential income tax benefits. Subsequent to the workshop, discussions have been held with private and corporate landowners of ecologically significant lands along the Detroit River to promote the goals of the Conservation Vision and to discuss various options that are available to the landowner for future conservation/protection/rehabilitation of their properties.

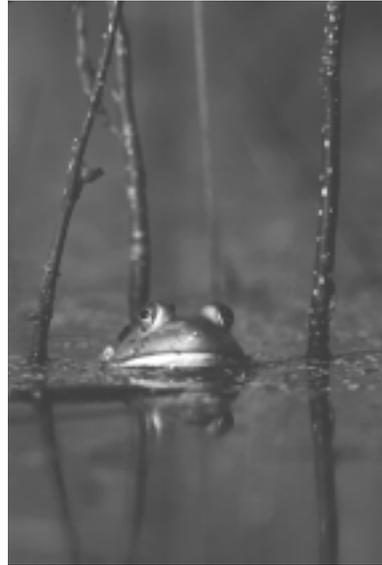
Ongoing discussions are under way with agencies/organizations with similar habitat conservation interests to promote the Refuge/Vision goals and Environment Canada's role in partnering to help establish a network of protected areas in the Detroit River. These include the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Ducks Unlimited, and the Nature Conservancy of Canada to discuss potential habitat-related initiatives; ERCA with major interests in the area for ongoing conservation, acquisition, and habitat rehabilitation projects in Essex County; and the Canada South Land Trust, a newly formed organization promoting conservation and preservation of ecologically significant areas.

Environment Canada staff coordinated a multi-agency meeting to discuss the planning process for the Detroit River IWR so that Canadian agencies and stakeholders could provide input into the planning process for the Refuge. Environment Canada and the Service co-hosted an open house in Windsor to obtain Canadian public input for the Refuge planning process.

Environment Canada supports the concept of an international conservation area in the Detroit River by working closely with other governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations and interested private landowners to further the goals of the Refuge/Vision, while staff continue to work closely with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by providing input to the development of the Refuge's comprehensive conservation plan.

Habitat Restoration and Management

Detroit River: Numerous efforts are under way along the Detroit River to restore and manage natural shorelines, riparian wetlands, and island habitats. Nearly the entire U.S. shoreline, with the exception of the Humbug Marsh, has been engineered with concrete bulkheads or armor rock to halt erosion. This type of armoring provides little or no habitats for aquatic plants, fish or wildlife. Recently, several sites have received treatments using more natural materials for bank stabilization. Examples of this “soft engineering” of shorelines can be found at some Trenton street ends, the Solutia site on the Trenton Channel and on BASF Corporation lands.



Sharon Cummings

Lake Erie Shoreline: The western Lake Erie shoreline is subject to erosion and flooding during periods of high lake water and storm events. Several barrier islands that once protected coastal marshes and beaches have been severely eroded in recent decades.

Rock dikes and breakwater structures have been constructed at several communities and marinas. Some large structures have allowed for the restoration of coastal marshes and/or management of water impoundments. A large barrier reef-like structure at Pointe Mouillee has been constructed along the shoreline to recreate the protection afforded by eroded barrier islands. The Pointe Mouillee Confined Disposal Facility is a 3-mile-long structure constructed to contain dredgings from the Detroit River and the Lake Erie Shipping Channel. The lake water barriers created by the disposal facility permit the management of water levels and emergent vegetation on several impoundments of the Pointe Mouillee State Game Area.

Exotic Species Control

Invasive species of current concern within the approved boundary of the Refuge, in order of priority, are common reed (*Phragmites australis/communis*), purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), and reed canary grass (*Phalaris canariensis*). Phragmites, purple loosestrife and reed canary grass have invaded wetland, prairie and upland habitats. Several management techniques have been used to reduce encroachment of these non-desirable plant species, including mowing, burning, water level manipulation, plowing, and chemical and biological controls.

Common reed is an aggressive nuisance plant that has infested many areas of southeast Michigan. If this plant goes unchecked it will threaten the biological diversity that was once provided by natural wetlands. An aggressive approach needs to be made to stop further encroachment of this invasive weed. Not only do phragmites shade out native plant species, but the dense rhizomes and shoot litter also prevent more desirable plants from establishing.

One biological control that has been successful against purple loosestrife has been the release of *Galerucella* beetles. Beetles have been released at Pointe Mouillee State Game Area, Celeron Island, Stony Island and Grosse Ile with good results in reducing purple loosestrife. These beetles are natural predators of purple loosestrife in their original habitats of Europe and Asia. In most cases, native species such as cattail, bulrushes, and nut

sedges come through and establish themselves after purple loosestrife stands are eradicated. Continuation and expansion of the beetle program will be important as the Detroit River IWR expands.

Private Lands Partnerships

Partners for Fish and Wildlife is a voluntary program that focuses on restoring and enhancing wetlands, grasslands, stream corridors and instream habitats on private lands to provide wildlife, fisheries, water quality and recreational benefits for private landowners. Through the Partners Program, the Service focuses on improving habitat for federal trust resources: migratory birds, federally-listed endangered or threatened species, and interjurisdictional fish. In Michigan, restoration of wetlands has been, and remains, the primary focus for the Partners Program. The program also includes restoration of grasslands, stream channels, riparian corridors, and specific habitats used by federally-listed endangered or threatened species. Since this program began in Michigan in 1988, more than 1,500 projects have been completed.

The Partners Program within the counties surrounding the Refuge is currently administered by Service staff located in the East Lansing Field Office, Ottawa NWR and Shiawassee NWR. When Partners Program staff are added to the Refuge, a Management District will be created which may include Wayne and Monroe counties and surrounding counties that are within the watersheds of the Detroit River, St. Clair River and Lake Erie.



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Wetland restorations are generally focused where previous agricultural drainage provides an opportunity to restore hydrology, or put the wet back into altered wetlands. Restorations are designed to re-establish shallow water wetlands, those less than 3 feet deep, containing a mixture of open water and vegetated areas. The program does not create excavated farm ponds and does not alter existing natural, undisturbed wetlands.

Grasslands provide a buffer around wetland areas and nesting cover for some waterfowl and a number of declining grassland birds, such as Bobolinks. The Partners Program is working with its partners in Michigan to promote the establishment of mixed stands of warm-season grasses and native wild flowers. Grasslands 20 to 40 acres in size and larger help provide adequate cover and food throughout the year for a variety of migratory birds, pheasants, and other wildlife.

Projects are funded by the Service with cost-share assistance provided by conservation organizations, other governmental agencies, and landowners. Project construction is often completed at little or no cost to the landowner. Landowners are required to sign an agreement to leave the project in place on their property a minimum of 10 years.

Farm Services Administration Conservation Easements: The Service assists the Farm Service Agency in identifying important wetland and floodplain resources on government foreclosed farm properties. Once these resources have been identified, the Farm Services

Administration conserves the areas through perpetual easements and transfers the management responsibility to the Service. Properties with recorded easements are then sold to the private sector. Easement areas managed by the Service become part of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Currently 161 conservation easements in Michigan are managed by three national wildlife refuges. The 50 counties of southern Michigan have 133 easements totaling 5,213 acres, of which Ottawa NWR and Shiawassee NWR manage 18 and 115 tracts, respectively. Shiawassee NWR manages the most conservation easements in the Service's eight-state Great Lakes/Big Rivers Region. There are currently 158 landowners on these 115 tracts that need to be contacted annually.

When biological and/or enforcement staff are added to the Refuge, a Management District will be created which may include Wayne and Monroe Counties and surrounding counties that are within the watersheds of the Detroit River, St. Clair River and Lake Erie. At that time, a portion of the current conservation easement responsibilities of Shiawassee and Ottawa NWRs may be transferred to the Detroit River IWR. In addition, the Refuge may become involved in the acquisition and management of Waterfowl Production Areas in southeast Michigan.

Waterfowl Production Areas: Waterfowl Production Areas (WPAs) conserve wetlands and grasslands critical to waterfowl and other wildlife. These public lands, managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, are part of the National Wildlife Refuge System. The WPA Program was authorized by Congress in 1958 to safeguard natural wetlands that were rapidly being destroyed by agriculture drainage, housing developments and other commercial land use practices.

In southern Michigan there are currently three WPAs: the 160-acre Schlee WPA in Jackson County, the 77-acre Kinney WPA in Van Buren County, and the 95-acre Schoonover WPA in Lenawee County. All three areas are managed as a mixture of wetlands and grasslands to provide quality nesting and brood-rearing habitat for waterfowl and a variety of migratory songbirds. All of the WPAs are open for public use, including hunting and other wildlife-dependent activities such as wildlife observation, photography, and environmental education.

Currently, the Service and Michigan DNR are proposing to reinstate the 1980 WPA Program and expand the current state Wetland Management District from 14 counties to 48 counties across southern Michigan.

Lake Sturgeon Research

Overfishing and habitat destruction in the early 1900s devastated lake sturgeon (*Acipenser fulvescens*) populations in the Great Lakes. Historically, the Detroit River



USFWS

supported one of the largest lake sturgeon populations in the Great Lakes; however, little is known about the current population or its habitat use. During 1998-2001, researchers with the Service, the U.S. Geological Survey and Central Michigan University conducted a study to determine if lake sturgeon spawn in the Detroit River. The research was funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Ohio Division of Wildlife, and DTE Energy Co.

In each year of the study ultrasonic transmitters were surgically implanted in 10 adult fish to track their movements, evaluate habitat use, and identify possible spawning sites. Using telemetry and egg mats to verify spawning activity, they located and verified one spawning site in the Detroit River. Telemetry data suggested that several other possible spawning sites also may exist, however the researchers were not able to verify spawning activity at these sites.

This study confirmed spawning by lake sturgeon in the Detroit River for the first time in several decades. By locating previously unidentified active spawning sites, fisheries managers can try to conserve these areas. Additionally, there has been recent interest in creating artificial lake sturgeon spawning habitat in the Detroit River and other systems. This study gives further evidence that lake sturgeon will use man-made substrates for spawning, and will provide fisheries managers with additional data to aid in the construction of new artificial spawning sites.

Visitor Services

The Detroit River, islands, and the limited amount of shoreline in public ownership, are used heavily for recreational purposes by local residents and visitors to the region. In the lower river, the amount of public land is limited to a few community parks, such as Elizabeth Park, Grosse Ile Land Conservancy sites, and islands such as Stony and Celeron. The western Lake Erie shoreline includes the Pointe Mouillee and Erie SGAs, Lake Erie MetroPark, and Sterling State Park. The types of recreational uses allowed vary at each site and more information can be obtained from the Michigan DNR and local sources. The following is a description of the public use history of the former Wyandotte NWR.

The demands for recreational use on the former Wyandotte NWR have been high. There have been proposals to install an Olympic Rowing Course (1963) and a city-sponsored (Wyandotte) recreational area (1963-1999) on the Refuge. Due to the contaminant issues on Grassy Island affecting habitat and wildlife, and the potential for contaminants to affect human beings, recreation on the island is considered unsafe. This policy may be revisited in the future if proposed remediation measures are successful and island soils are considered safe.

Until 1973, Wyandotte NWR was closed to boating, fishing and hunting. The original intent for the Refuge was to provide a sanctuary for waterfowl. The sanctuary was to protect the wild celery beds surrounding the islands from propeller damage and provide a resting and feeding area for waterfowl, which otherwise would be moved out of the celery beds through hunting pressure. Service staff would place buoys out to the 6-foot contour line of the Refuge boundary to warn boaters, anglers, and hunters that the area was off limits to recreational use.

In 1973, the Service decided to discontinue the placement of buoys. Maintenance was a leading factor in this decision. The buoys were put out from September to late November, and many were moved by ice and ultimately lost. The cost of replacing buoys and the staff time needed to place them was deemed to be greater than the benefit received. The Service received complaints from waterfowl hunters that the buoys were removed and waterfowl weren't provided the protection that the Refuge was established for, but the Service felt the maintenance of the buoys was too expensive to fund. The Service also felt that because Grassy Island and its shoals were annexed by the City of Wyandotte and the City had an ordinance prohibiting hunting, the no hunting ordinance could be enforced by the City. The

City, however, has not routinely enforced the ordinance. Hunting occurs in the sheltered bay on the west side of the island. Hunting may be causing some disturbance to the wildlife and habitat.

Hunting

Historically, the Detroit River and adjacent Lake Erie marshes were widely renowned as premier waterfowl hunting areas. Waterfowl hunting is still a popular activity on the Lower Detroit River and at some spots along the shoreline of Lake Erie. Hunting success can often be high due to the impressive fall flights of migrating ducks, especially diving ducks. Public hunting areas along the shore are limited to a few locations such as the Pointe Mouillee State Game Area and portions of Lake Erie MetroParks. The most popular type of waterfowl hunting is from boats using numerous decoys to attract diving ducks on the open water. Current state law allows duck and goose hunting along the Detroit River, as long as the hunter is standing in the water, is pointing his or her gun away from the shoreline and is at least 450 feet from an occupied building.

Upland game hunting within the authorized Refuge boundary is limited by local ordinances and the amount of undeveloped lands and public hunting areas. The Refuge portion in southern Monroe County contains the most private croplands, open fields and woodlots where hunting for deer, wild turkeys, rabbits and other upland game is possible.

Fishing

The lower Detroit River and western Lake Erie support important sport fisheries. Based on creel survey data for the Detroit River during April through November of 1983 and 1984, boat anglers averaged 681,602 hours and shore anglers averaged another 714,957 hours. Boat anglers harvested an average of 915,149 fish annually and shore anglers averaged 502,690 fish annually during 1983 and 1984 (Haas et al. 1985). White bass was the most abundant fish harvested, followed by walleye, yellow perch, rockbass, white perch, and freshwater drum. Within the Detroit River IWR, approximately 73 percent of the boat effort, 36 percent of the shore effort, and 70 percent of the total catch, came from the lower half of the Detroit River.

A more recent creel survey in 2000 focused on the spring walleye fishery. From mid-May to mid-June, boat anglers fishing in Michigan waters of the Detroit River fished an estimated 344,741 angler hours and harvested 97,292 walleye, with almost 80 percent of the angler effort and walleye harvest taking place in waters within the Refuge boundary.

A creel survey was most recently conducted on the Detroit River from March to October 2002 and results again documented the importance of the sport fishery. Anglers fished 874,186 angler hours and harvested 434,313 fish. White bass accounted for one-half of the fish harvested and walleye just over one-third of the harvest, followed by yellow perch, rock bass, smallmouth bass, and largemouth bass. The majority of the fishery was in the lower river (within the Refuge boundary).

Although the creel surveys document the large size of the fishery on the Detroit River, the estimates of angler effort and harvest for all three survey periods is considered conservative. There is an established night fishery on the Detroit River that is not represented in the creel survey data. Additionally, the two more recent surveys did not attempt to evaluate the shore fishery, which accounted for one-half of the total fishing effort in the 1983-84 survey. Finally, these surveys did not attempt to evaluate anglers that launched from Michigan ports, but fished the Canadian side of the Detroit River.

The sport fishery in Michigan waters of Lake Erie is also a very important fishery. Anglers fished 490,807 angler hours from April through October 2001 and harvested 378,700 fish. In order of abundance, the catch included yellow perch, walleye, white bass, channel catfish, white perch, freshwater drum, smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, northern pike, rockbass, and bluegill. In addition to sport fishing, there is an established charter boat fishery on both the Detroit River and Lake Erie where captains take anglers on fishing trips for hire. In 2001, over 10,000 anglers fished Michigan waters of Lake Erie on charter boats, harvesting 44,324 walleye and 29,483 yellow perch.

The magnitude of the sport fishery on the lower Detroit River and western Lake Erie is large. Based on creel survey results, the shore angling and boat angling effort in the Detroit River IWR waters accounts for 15 percent annually of all recreational fishing effort in Michigan's Great Lakes waters.

Another form of fishing in the authorized Refuge boundary is tournament fishing. Due to the great sport fish populations of popular gamefish like smallmouth bass and walleye, coupled with the increased frequency of fishing tournaments, the lower Detroit River and western Lake Erie are becoming popular tournament locations. In recent years, two national walleye tournament tours have occurred on the Detroit River, as well as many local and regional walleye and bass tournaments.

There is one active commercial fisherman (two licensed) operating in the shoals and waters of Grassy Island. Catch is composed primarily of carp (75,000 pounds in 2001).

Law Enforcement

In order to effectively safeguard the biological and cultural integrity of Refuge resources, the safety of visitors, and the health and safety of the Refuge staff, the enforcement of federal and state laws are an essential part of Refuge operation.

The Refuge currently does not have any staff conducting law enforcement duties on Refuge properties. Law enforcement support has come from Shiawassee NWR, which has one full-time and one dual-function officer, and Service special agents. Support has been limited to two law enforcement visits to the Refuge during the waterfowl hunting season and occasional visits throughout the remainder of the year. When Refuge staffing is funded, the Refuge will be seeking one full-time officer and the associated equipment to build a capable law enforcement program. A cooperative relationship with state conservation officers, county sheriff departments, Michigan State Police, U.S. Coast Guard, and U.S. Border Patrol is actively being constructed by the Shiawassee NWR law enforcement program.

The Service is currently seeking concurrent legislative jurisdiction from the State of Michigan for lands and water administered by the Service within the State of Michigan. The reservation by the United States of concurrent jurisdiction will assist in the enforcement of state criminal laws by the United States under the Assimilative Crimes Act, 18 U.S.C. § 13. Public activities on the Refuge will be governed according to Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations, Subchapter C, The National Wildlife Refuge System, and Refuge Public Use Regulations, 2003. The Refuge Public Use Regulations, 2003, were adopted to supplement Title 50 CFR in reference to public use on the Refuge. The regulations follow:

<i>Boating</i>	Grassy Island is closed to boating. Overnight mooring of watercraft is prohibited at all areas of the Refuge. Boats left unattended or moored in violation will be impounded at the owner's expense.
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<i>Camping</i>	All areas of the Refuge are closed to camping, except by special use permit.
<i>Collecting</i>	All plants, animals, minerals, and objects of antiquity are protected. Disturbance or collection is prohibited, except by special use permit.
<i>Firearms</i>	Carrying, possessing, or discharging firearms or any other weapons on the Refuge is prohibited, except by licensed hunters engaged in authorized activities during established seasons, in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations.
<i>Fires</i>	Fires are not allowed on the Refuge at any time.
<i>Fireworks</i>	Possession or use of fireworks or explosives is not allowed on the Refuge.
<i>Fishing</i>	Fishing is allowed on designated areas of the Refuge in accordance with federal and state regulations. Bank fishing is not allowed at Grassy Island, however the surrounding area can be used for off-shore fishing only.
<i>Group Events</i>	A Refuge permit is required to hold public meetings, assemblies, demonstrations, parties, organized group events, and other public gatherings, whether or not an entrance fee is charged.
<i>Hunting</i>	Waterfowl hunting is allowed on designated areas of the Refuge in accordance with federal and state regulations. Only portable blinds that are removed on a daily basis are allowed.
<i>Pets</i>	Pets are prohibited on Refuge lands.
<i>Vehicles</i>	All off-road vehicles are prohibited, including snowmobiles and wheeled or tracked all-terrain vehicles, on or across Refuge lands at anytime, except on designated routes of travel, or on the ice over navigable waters accessed from outside the Refuge. Vehicles may not obstruct or impede any road, trail, fire lane, boat ramp, access gate, or other facilities. Parking in a manner to create a safety hazard, or endanger any person, property, or environmental feature is prohibited. Vehicles left parked in violation may be impounded at the owner's expense.
<i>Spotlighting</i>	Spotlighting wildlife is prohibited on the Refuge.

Future Management Direction: Where We Want To Go Tomorrow



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

The Service and our partners recognize that we face major challenges in providing for fish and wildlife in the Detroit River and Lake Erie Western Basin. Grassy Island and many other sites in the authorized Refuge boundary are contaminated and development has altered most of the natural system. Can we make a significant difference in this ecosystem? Will our efforts be worthwhile? We think the answer is

“yes” to these questions. At a minimum, we need to work together with partners to conserve the last remnants of coastal wetlands and undeveloped islands. But beyond the minimum, we expect to restructure areas to benefit wildlife and the aquatic environment. We do not yet have a plan for remediating and restoring Grassy Island. The Service will review the type and extent of contaminants present on Grassy Island, which will dictate our eventual response. A range of remediation/restoration alternatives will be examined to determine what will best meet short- and long-term goals in a cost-effective manner. However, the final remediation/restoration plan will be protective of human health and the environment.

Perhaps someday Grassy Island will be safe for wildlife-dependent public use such as hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, interpretation, and environmental education.

For existing Refuge lands and waters, and lands that could be added in the coming years, we intend to learn about the waterfowl use of the area. We know that the Lower Detroit River is important for waterfowl, but we do not know how big a role the Refuge plays in this importance. A better idea of the role the Refuge plays in providing for waterfowl will allow us to judge how to allocate our money and time among the lands that we manage.

We think that fishing and hunting from boats in Refuge-owned waters is compatible with the purposes of the Refuge and in the spirit of facilitating priority uses as specified in the Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997. We intend to amend the Refuge regulations to permit fishing from boats in the Detroit River near existing Refuge islands.

We intend to participate as partners in efforts to monitor and restore the lake sturgeon spawning area within the Refuge. Our intent is to work with others to conserve the remaining lands in the area for migratory birds, fish, endangered species and other Service Trust resources. By preserving coastal marshes and areas of submerged plant beds, we will benefit migrating and wintering waterfowl and spawning and juvenile fish along this international border. Working with the Service's Great Lakes Ecosystem Team and other partners, we will assess and conserve the important lands in the Detroit River corridor and Western Lake Erie Basin.

Climate Change Impacts

The U.S. Department of the Interior issued an order in January 2001 requiring federal agencies under its direction that have land management responsibilities to consider potential climate change impacts as part of long-range planning endeavors.

In relation to comprehensive conservation planning for national wildlife refuges, carbon sequestration constitutes the primary climate-related impact to be considered in planning. The U.S. Department of Energy's "Carbon Sequestration Research and Development" (U.S. DOE, 1999) defines carbon sequestration as "...the capture and secure storage of carbon that would otherwise be emitted to or remain in the atmosphere."

The land is a tremendous force in carbon sequestration. Terrestrial biomes of all sorts – grasslands, forests, wetlands, tundra, perpetual ice and desert – are effective both in preventing carbon emission and acting as a biological "scrubber" of atmospheric carbon monoxide. The Department of Energy report's conclusions noted that ecosystem protection is important to carbon sequestration and may reduce or prevent loss of carbon currently stored in the terrestrial biosphere.



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Preserving natural habitat for wildlife is the heart of any long-range plan for national wildlife refuges. The actions proposed in this comprehensive conservation plan would conserve or restore land and water, and would thus enhance carbon sequestration. This in turn contributes positively to efforts to mitigate human-induced global climate changes.

Refuge Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Introduction

This section contains the primary strategies that will define the management direction for the Refuge for the next 15 years. This direction is based on the Refuge System mission, the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, the purposes for which the Refuge was established, goals defined for the Great Lakes/Big Rivers Region, as well as agency policies and directives. The purposes for the Detroit River IWR and other directives were presented in Chapter 1.

The goals that follow are general statements of what we want to accomplish in the next 15 years. The objectives are specific statements of what will be accomplished to help achieve a goal. Objectives describe who, what, when, where and why of proposed accomplishments. Objectives are designed to be specific, measurable and time-fixed. Strategies listed under each objective specify the activities that will be pursued to realize an objective. The strategies may be refined or amended as specific tasks are completed or new research and information come to light.

A Vision for the Refuge

“The Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, including the Detroit River and Western Lake Erie Basin, will be a conservation region where a clean environment fosters the health and diversity of wildlife, fish, and plant resources through protection, creation of new habitats, management, and restoration of natural communities and habitats on public and private lands. Through effective management and partnering, the Refuge will provide outstanding opportunities for quality of life benefits such as hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and environmental education, as well as ecological, economic, and cultural benefits, for present and future generations.”

In the numbering scheme that follows, the first number represents the number of the goal. The second number represents an objective within that goal. The third number represents a strategy within an objective. Thus, 3.2.1 represents the first strategy for the second objective within the third goal. This numbering scheme is used to index Refuge Operating Needs Projects in Appendix C and personnel needs in Chapter 5.

Goal 1. Partnerships

Establish functional partnerships involving communities, industries, governments, citizens, non-profit organizations and others to manage and promote the Refuge consistent with the plan's vision statement and the Act that created the Refuge. Provide an institutional framework to develop effective private or public partnerships for the purpose of sustainability.

1.1 Objective: Annually, for a period of 5 years, identify and contact 20 potential partners to offer direct participation in Refuge programs. Partners will include local area schools, conservation and business organizations, and local governments.

1.2 Objective: Participate in a working group, representing all partners, to coordinate, advise and integrate all environmental project proposals within the authorized boundary of the Refuge.

Strategies:

1.2.1 Task groups will be designated by the main working group. Task groups will include NGOs, business leaders, resource users, and recreational users.

1.2.2 In 1 year, task groups will formulate their strategies and recommendations for habitat conservation and other programs¹.

1.3 Objective: Develop a Friends of Detroit River IWR group and establish a volunteer program within the first year a permanent Refuge manager is hired.

Strategies:

1.3.1 Volunteers will assist in environmental education and outreach.

1. Working group recommendations are subject to Compatibility Determination by Refuge Manager.

Discussion: Volunteer Contributions: At the present time, there is no official volunteer program for the Refuge. Several local organizations have stepped up to help with various activities associated with starting the new Refuge, including the Detroit Audubon Society providing bird data to interim Refuge biologists.

There is a great potential for an active pool of volunteers once a dedicated staff person, especially a public use specialist, is assigned to the Refuge. The goal of any Refuge volunteer program is to have staff and volunteers working side-by-side in the most efficient manner to accomplish the goals and objectives of the Refuge. Volunteers may be called upon to help with all aspects of the Refuge's public use program including assisting with the environmental education and interpretation programs for both children and adults. With easy access to the river and its fishery, skilled volunteers may help with children's fishing clinics and fishing contests. An educational waterfowl hunting program for children could also enlist the help of volunteers trained in the identification of waterfowl, the safe use of firearms and hunting ethics. Volunteer bird and wildlife experts could lead guided wildlife hikes or cruises to help visitors identify and appreciate the local wildlife within the Refuge. Volunteer workers are not limited to just the public use arena. They may also help with habitat management activities, controlling exotic species, wildlife surveys and more.

Goal 2. Wildlife-dependent Uses

The Refuge will facilitate and promote hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, environmental education, and interpretation as wildlife-dependent uses.

2.1 Objective: Provide waterfowl hunting opportunities on Refuge lands and waters, subject to state and local regulations and public safety concerns, that meet the definition of quality in the FWS Manual.

Strategy:

2.1.1 Issue a compatibility determination on whether to open waters surrounding Grassy Island for waterfowl hunting within 2 years of plan approval.

Discussion: Quality Hunt Definition, FWS Manual Part 605 FW 2.6:

B. Quality hunting experience. A quality hunting experience is one that:

- (1) Maximizes safety for hunters and other visitors;
- (2) Encourages the highest standards of ethical behavior in taking or attempting to take wildlife;
- (3) Is available to a broad spectrum of the hunting public;
- (4) Contributes positively to or has no adverse effect on population management of resident or migratory species;
- (5) Reflects positively on the individual refuge, the System, and the Service;
- (6) Provides hunters uncrowded conditions by minimizing conflicts and competition among hunters;

- (7) Provides reasonable challenges and opportunities for taking targeted species under the described harvest objective established by the hunting program. It also minimizes the reliance on motorized vehicles and technology designed to increase the advantage of the hunter over wildlife;
- (8) Minimizes habitat impacts;
- (9) Creates minimal conflict with other priority wildlife-dependent recreational uses or Refuge operations; and
- (10) Incorporates a message of stewardship and conservation in hunting opportunities.

2.2 Objective: Allow fishing and hunting to the maximum extent, except where contaminant exposure, safety or sensitive species needs prohibit such uses.

Strategies:

2.2.1 Develop a leaflet identifying access locations for public hunting and fishing areas in the authorized Refuge boundary.

2.2.2 Adequately post boundaries of Refuge-owned lands.

2.3 Objective: Annually, provide on-site environmental education and interpretation programs for 1,000 participants to increase the community's understanding and appreciation of the Refuge.

Strategies:

2.3.1 The annual visitation target will be reviewed and likely increased as partnerships and Refuge staffing grows.

2.3.2 Assist Wayne County in development of an administrative/visitor facility at the former Daimler/Chrysler site in Trenton.

Discussion: Visitor Center and Public Use Facilities

The Detroit River IWR is unique within the National Wildlife Refuge System in that a majority of the land base within its boundaries will not be owned by the FWS. Rather private industry, local and state governments, and private individuals own most of the land. This creates a need to form partnerships with these other organizations to incorporate their existing public use facilities to help further the mission of the Refuge. Through this approach a network of shared facilities can line both sides of the Detroit River.

The former Daimler/Chrysler tract, now owned by Wayne County, is the proposed site of a future headquarters and visitor center. Wayne County, or another appropriate agency, would own the structures and lease space to a number of organizations, including the Service. The facilities would incorporate a "green" or environment-friendly design that reflects the character of the River. The visitor center could include space for:

- # Two teaching classrooms, each capable of holding an average class size of 30 students, including areas for wet labs for studying river life.
- # A theater with state-of-the art audio/visual equipment and lighting capable of seating 150 people.

- # User-friendly, interactive displays for both adults and children featuring various topics, including the history, ecology and other resources of the River.
- # Restroom facilities.
- # A centrally located contact point where visitors can speak to a staff person to get more information.
- # Adequate retail space for a bookstore.
- # Plenty of storage space for storing environmental education equipment, interpretation materials, chairs and tables.

Other public use facilities could include trails and boardwalks accessible to disabled users, interpretive signage, observation decks with spotting scopes, wildlife viewing blinds, photography blinds, fishing platforms, outdoor vault toilets along the trails, benches, and an outdoor classroom pavilion.

2.4 Objective: Annually, provide on-site wildlife observation and photography opportunities for 1,000 visitors to increase public appreciation for the ecological value of the Detroit River and Lake Erie.

Strategy:

- 2.4.1 Provide trails, observation platforms, and photography blinds of the new visitor facility.



Sharon Cummings

Goal 3. Public Environmental Awareness

Visitors and local citizens demonstrate a strong conservation ethic that supports the Refuge and broad-based environmental awareness.

3.1 Objective: Within 2 years of CCP approval, develop and implement an outreach program focusing on the Refuge and its role in the Great Lakes ecosystem that will reach 50 percent of the residents of southeast Michigan.

Strategies:

- 3.1.1 Develop a general brochure on the Refuge.
- 3.1.2 Include outreach to Essex County, Ontario, residents through appropriate Canadian partner organizations.
- 3.1.3 Host an annual “Refuge Days” street fair involving all downriver communities.
- 3.1.4 Print quarterly newsletter, use videos and local cable TV programs.
- 3.1.5 Develop school curriculum focused on the Refuge (include same in MEAP test), mail leaflets to educators and school systems.

- 3.16 Frequently post upcoming education opportunities on the Refuge website.
- 3.1.7 Conduct workshops for local teachers, realtors, townships, and county or city planning commissions.
- 3.1.8 Publish a birding trail map-highlighting key viewing areas within the Refuge.
- 3.1.9 Develop fishery displays including aquaria with native species to highlight the “underwater resources” of the Refuge.
- 3.1.10 Develop photo blinds in various locations and encourage photo or video submissions to local media to promote the Refuge.

3.2 Objective: Within 5 years of plan approval, 50 percent of visitors will be able to explain a key environmental theme for the Refuge. Topics may include wetland ecology, human impact on the landscape, migratory bird corridors, habitat restoration, etc.

Strategy:

- 3.2.1 Maintain interpretive displays and programs at the visitor center.
- 3.2.2 Measure success through periodic exit surveys.

3.3 Objective: Within 5 years of plan approval, 50 percent of neighboring communities and businesses will express support for the Refuge through active promotion of Refuge facilities and events.

Strategies:

- 3.3.1 Develop methods for the public to show support (street banners, posters, window decals, etc.).
- 3.3.2 Working group to develop measures to judge which businesses or organizations should be publicly recognized.

Goal 4. Watershed Development:

Future development that occurs within surrounding watersheds that may impact the Refuge is well planned, environmentally sustainable, and reflects known Best Management Practices.

4.1 Objective: Within 1 year of plan approval, make the local, state, and federal regulatory (permitting) agencies aware of the Refuge vision and goals.

Strategy:

- 4.1.1 Distribute Refuge brochures to regional and state headquarters of each agency.

4.2 Objective: Within 1 year of plan approval, Refuge staff and partners are representing Refuge interests as participants in the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) and other regional planning boards.

4.3 Objective: By 2010, a formalized clearinghouse will be in place to provide streamlined review of all development proposed within the approved boundary. Service staff and the working group will recommend a process for this group².

Goal 5. Refuge Outreach

People living or working within the Refuge watersheds will understand and appreciate the importance and ecological value of the Detroit River and Western Lake Erie, and their contributing watersheds, to fish and wildlife and to human quality of life.

5.1 Objective: Within 2 years of plan approval, all plan/planning commissions, township boards, city governments, and major landowners, will have been informed as to the importance of the Refuge and its associated waterway connectors as a migratory bird corridor and the importance of fish habitat to the Detroit River watershed.

Strategy:

5.1.1 At least one interpretive display, developed through partnership efforts, will be placed in a public place of each neighboring township or city showcasing goals/objectives/vision of the Refuge.

5.2 Objective: By 2008, 50 percent of local real estate agents and corporate relocation departments will include information about the Refuge in material promoting the area.

Strategy:

5.2.1 Distribute brochures and/or e-mail information to each agency.

Goal 6. Heritage Values:

The hunting and fishing heritage, cultural resources and cultural history of the Refuge are valued and preserved, and connect Refuge staff, visitors, and the community to the area's past.

6.1 Objective: Within 2 years after construction of the proposed visitor facility, 50 percent of visitors will be aware of key heritage values of the area (i.e., river transportation, hunting and fishing).

Strategies:

6.1.1 Refuge visitor center displays, promotional, and educational materials incorporate a section on heritage values.

6.1.2 Ensure staff and volunteer training highlights these values.

6.1.3 Link heritage information to other educational information available in the area.

6.2 Objective: Archeological and cultural values will be described, identified, and taken into consideration by a trained cultural resource professional prior to implementing all undertakings on the Refuge.

2. The clearinghouse could be a group within SEMCOG that will review for representative agency and Refuge interests. Review will assure Best Management Practices and environmental sustainability.

Strategies:

- 6.2.1 Notify the Regional Historic Preservation Officer early in project planning or upon receipt of a request for permitted activities. The intent of this statement is to cover Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and Section 7(e)(2) of the National Wildlife Refuge Improvement Act.
- 6.2.2 Develop a step-down plan for surveying lands to identify archeological resources and for developing a preservation program. The intent of this statement is to meet the requirements of Section 14 of the Archaeological Resources Protection Act and Section 110(a)(2) of the National Historic Preservation Act.

Goal 7. Healthy Fish & Wildlife Communities:

Fish and wildlife communities are healthy, diverse and self-sustaining.

- 7.1 Objective:** By 2015, protect 40 percent of remaining coastal wetland and island habitat on public and private lands through fee, easements, and cooperative agreements.

Strategy:

- 7.1.1 The Humbug Marsh Complex, Hennepin Marsh Ecosystem, and the islands within the “Conservation Crescent” will receive a high priority for permanent conservation measures.

Discussion:

Conserving the remaining sensitive wildlife habitats of the Detroit River ecosystem is a high priority for many regional conservation groups and river area residents. The Refuge, working in partnership with many, will seek to secure funding to conserve these areas through fee acquisition, easements, or other permanent measures. Land values are high for waterfront property in this densely populated region and may prove a challenge for future fundraising efforts. In addition, environmental contamination and future liability may preclude the Service's ability to acquire land interests.

Appendix K of this CCP, Habitat Conservation Options, contains a discussion of the variety of options currently available for conserving remnant fish and wildlife habitats. Figure 9 and Figure 10 present the highest priority shoreline and island properties in need of conservation and/or future inclusion in the Refuge. The Service's highest priority lands for conservation and/or restoration, and inclusion in the Refuge land inventory, are identified as Priority 1 (9,300 acres). These include the largest remaining wetlands in private ownership on the U.S. side of the river and select coastal and island properties. These are parcels where the Service could purchase fee title or conservation easements if funds, and willing sellers, are available. Lands that could be restored and managed under private ownership through cooperative agreements or partnerships are the second highest priority, or Priority 2 (2,700 acres).

- 7.2 Objective:** Establish partnerships to identify and monitor populations of federally listed and state-listed endangered and threatened species within the approved Refuge boundary and work to prevent the listing of additional species.

Figure 9: Conservation Priority Lands Within the Lower Detroit River, Michigan

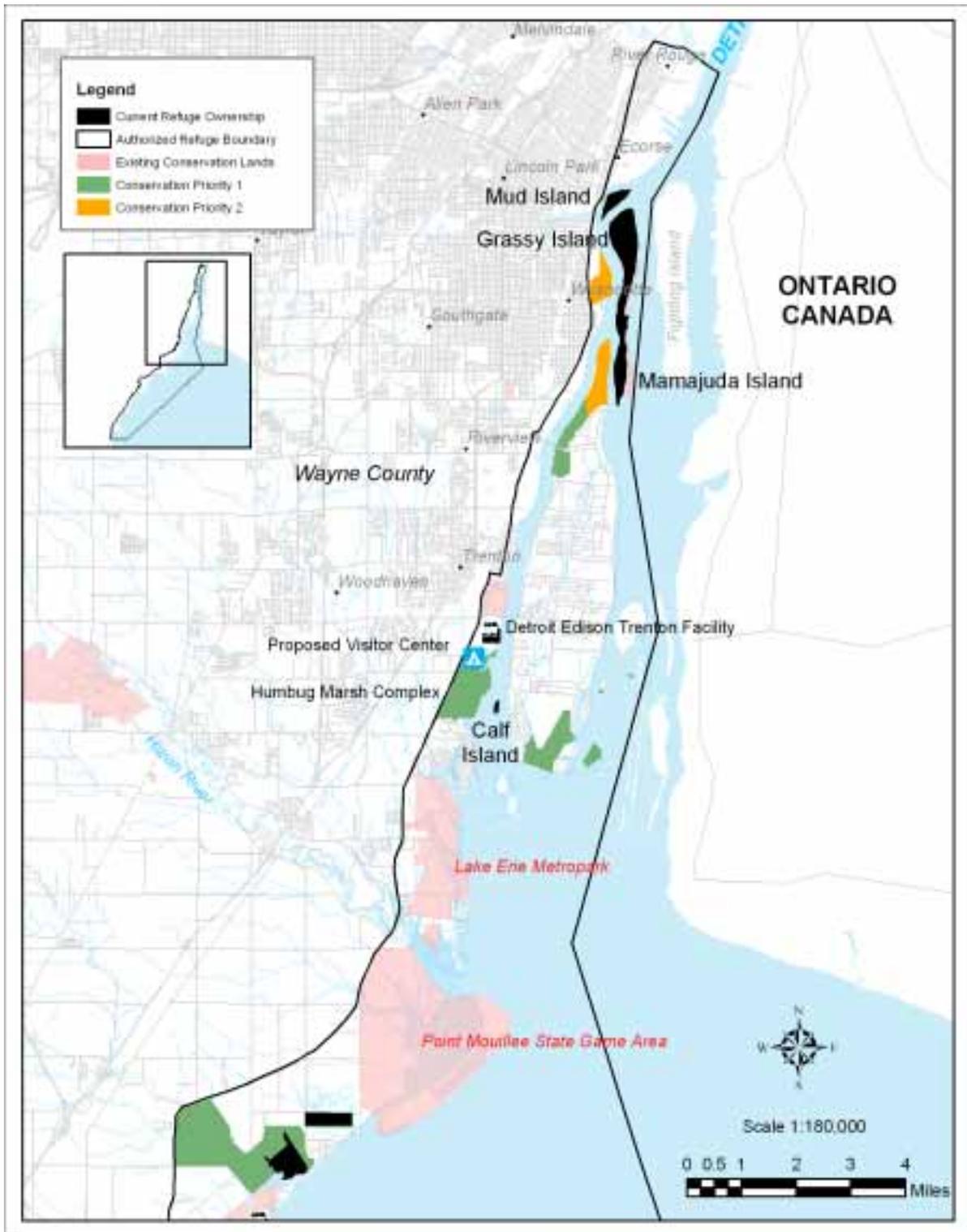
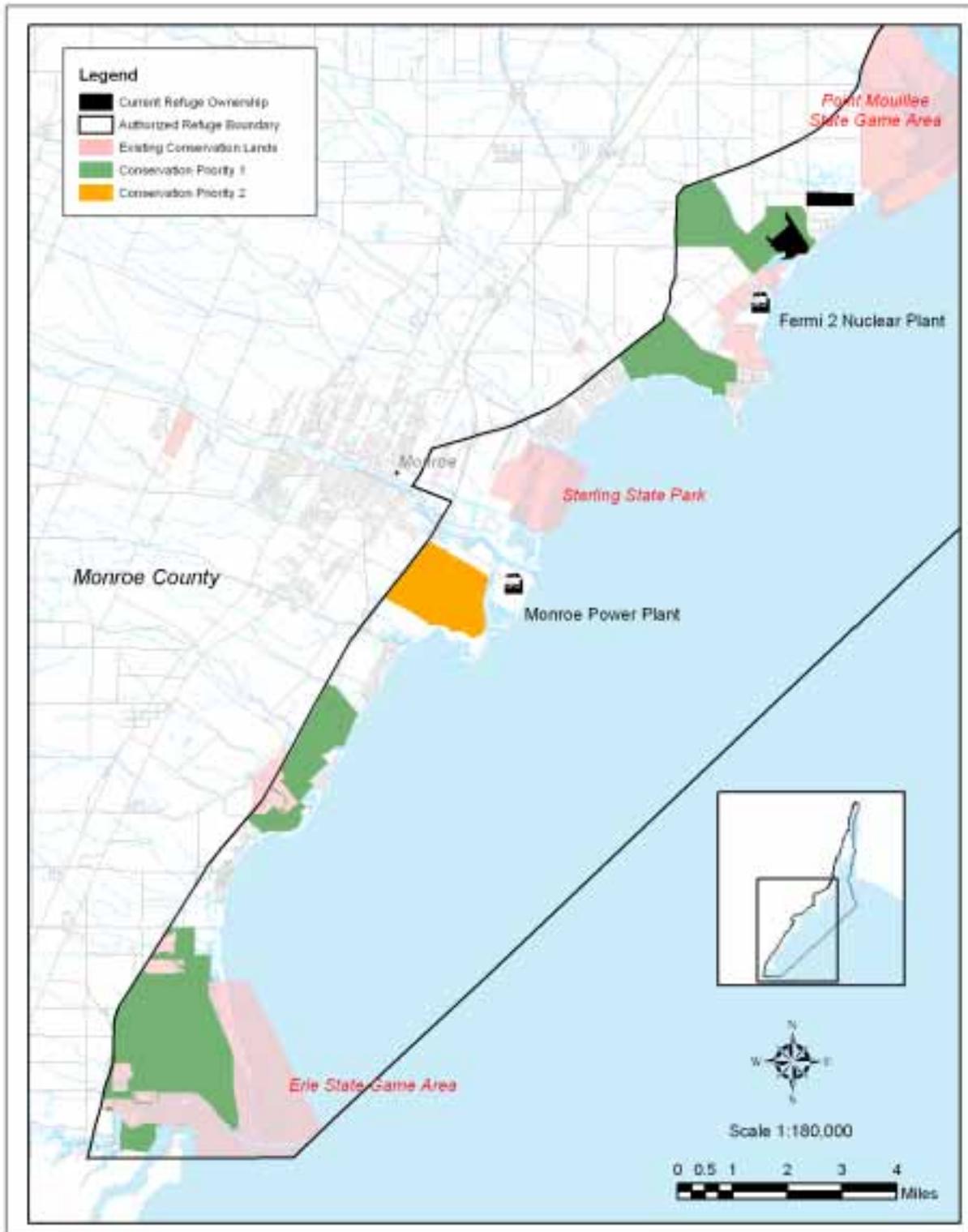


Figure 10: Conservation Priority Lands Along the Western Lake Erie Shoreline



Strategy:

7.2.1 Conduct standard surveys of wildlife use and habitat diversity of the lower Detroit River and Lake Erie shoreline to obtain accurate documentation of flora and fauna in the area of the Refuge.

7.3 Objective: By 2007, quantify the importance of habitats within the Refuge authorized boundary to migratory waterfowl with an emphasis on Regional Resource Conservation Priority Species such as Canvasback, Black Duck, Mallard and Blue-winged Teal.

Discussion:

Waterfowl use of the Refuge is certainly influenced by the availability of food and human disturbance levels. We intend to measure how much food is available to waterfowl and whether the most critical habitats are subject to disturbance by hunters, boaters and other recreational users. Measurement of waterfowl use and food will allow us to determine the relative importance of Refuge and wetland habitats to waterfowl in the context of the Lower Detroit River and Western Lake Erie Basin.

Strategies:

7.3.1 In cooperation with Michigan DNR and using volunteers, conduct weekly waterfowl counts from mid-November through March for at least 3 years.

7.3.2 Request that special note be made of Service-owned parcels during the State's waterfowl count.

7.3.3 If technically feasible, install an observation camera linked to a recorder and the Internet to regularly observe duck numbers and disturbance.

7.3.4 In partnership with universities and other governmental agencies, annually measure the abundance of wild celery and zebra mussels within the Refuge during the years of the waterfowl counts.

7.3.5 Distribute information about the prohibition of hunting in sanctuary areas in press releases, notices at launch facilities, and flyers at sporting goods stores.

7.4 Objective: Participate in the restoration of lake sturgeon spawning beds and riparian and shallow wetland habitats to benefit fish in the Detroit River and Lake Erie within 3 years of acquiring a permanent staff for the Refuge.

Discussion:

We expect the Service's Fishery Resources Office to take the lead within this objective. Our role will be to support and facilitate their activities. In order to provide support, we plan to devote a portion of the time of a part-time biological technician with fisheries experience to duties at the Refuge. The biological technician may also have duties at other Michigan and Ohio national wildlife refuges.

Strategy:

7.4.1 Hire a biological technician with fisheries experience to work part-time.

7.5 Objective: Working with others, identify and prioritize additional areas best suited for restoration through partnership efforts (e.g. coastal wetlands, lakeplain prairies, forested wetlands, oak openings, and riparian buffers).

Strategies:

7.5.1 Review and consider linkage to remaining open space areas (Manny, USGS map).

7.5.2 Conduct Geographic Area Program (GAP) or similar analysis.

7.5.3 Restore native plant species identified as appropriate for the Refuge. Develop a native seed inventory and sources.

7.6 Objective: Work cooperatively with all local governmental jurisdictions to advocate zoning and comprehensive land use planning that promotes no net loss and protection of existing habitat (see Figures 9 and 10).

Strategy:

7.6.1 Refuge staff will attend scheduled planning and zoning meetings that have agenda items of concern to Refuge resources.

Goal 8. Reduced Toxic Substances

Reduce levels of toxic substances to a threshold that does not threaten or harm or adversely affect wildlife, fish or human health.

8.1 Objective: Within 1 year of plan approval, establish partnerships with state, federal, local agencies, nonprofits and industrial partners to facilitate solutions to contamination sources and liability issues based on intended future restoration and use.

Strategy:

8.1.1 Future Refuge staff and Service contaminant specialists would select participants and coordinate with them.

8.2 Objective: Within 2 years of identifying land parcels in priority order, and with the landowner's permission, complete a Level I environmental contaminants review on priority parcels.

Strategy:

8.2.1 Liability issues will be decided based upon DEQ/EPA criteria to protect human health and the environment for the intended future use.

8.2.2 Future value to natural resources and restoration potential of parcels may be developed by evaluating ecological risks and benefits as well as estimating restoration costs.

8.3 Objective: Provide a clean, safe habitat for wildlife and people within EPA standards on Grassy Island by 2009.

Strategy:

8.3.1 Conduct a Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study for a remediation/restoration plan through contract, cooperative agreement, or similar device with plan completion by 2007.

8.3.2 Ensure that the remediation/restoration plan includes (1) a detailed landscape plan that will specify desirable habitats and (2) a public use plan that will specify how public use, if feasible, will be facilitated.

Discussion: As the technical details of remediation, restoration, and public use are closely interdependent, it is not realistic at this time to specify what habitats are possible and what species these habitats will benefit. The remediation/restoration plan will necessarily be developed through an extensive design and evaluation cycle. Ideally, the island habitat will be designed to benefit species on the Region 3 Resource Conservation Priority list.

8.3.3 Coordinate with EPA and State of Michigan on the remediation and restoration of Grassy Island and immediately surrounding area and also conservation of existing habitat.

8.4 Objective: Within 6 months of plan approval; identify mechanisms for addressing contaminant issues that may apply to less-than-fee ownership situations (easements, leases, coop. agreements).

8.5 Objective: Monitor air quality within the Refuge directly, or through partnership effort, and present data to responsible entities.

Goal 9. Sustainable Economic Development

Economic development and redevelopment is environmentally sustainable, well planned, and aesthetically pleasing.

9.1 Objective: Within 3 years of plan approval; encourage work with landowners, the business community and all local governments within the Refuge boundaries to implement a voluntary certification for developments that are environmentally sustainable, well planned and aesthetically pleasing.

Strategies:

9.1.1 Look at other organizations' certification processes, e.g. Wildlife Habitat Council and National Wildlife Federation.

9.1.2 Within 1 year of developing the certification, meet with landowners, business and industry to inform them of the certification and encourage their participation and application.

Goal 10. Beneficial Water Uses:

Restore beneficial uses of water resources in the Refuge.

10.1 Objective: By 2010, the Detroit River is removed from listing as an Area of Concern under the International Joint Commission's Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement Protocol.

Strategy:

10.1.1 The Refuge will be an active partner in the Detroit River Remedial Action Plan and Lake Erie Lakewide Area Management Plan.

Goal 11. Conflicting Use Resolution:

Lands and waters within the Refuge are responsibly managed to resolve potentially conflicting uses.

11.1 Objective: Within 5 years of plan approval, establish a Refuge program for environmental education and interpretation that emphasizes the need for compatible uses on Refuge lands and waters.

Strategy:

11.1.1 Message will emphasize how to reduce disturbance of resting and feeding migratory waterfowl, waterbirds that nest in colonies, and other species that can be sensitive to human activity.

Discussion: Management of national wildlife refuges requires a delicate balance among the various partners who use the Refuge. The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System is to conserve, manage, and, when appropriate, restore the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats. Recreational uses that are wildlife-dependent and compatible with the refuge purpose are considered an appropriate way of enhancing appreciation for fish and wildlife. However, what constitutes compatible human activity is not always clear, and people's expectations of refuge activities vary considerably. Industry along the Detroit River is a vital part of the nation's economy, however in some cases there is a potential for adverse effects such as contaminant spills, illegal discharges, air, water and noise pollution, as well as habitat loss. Current levels of toxic substances in the soil and water must be reduced to a level that is no longer a threat to wildlife, fish, or humans. Other examples of conflicts include river bottom dredging and habitat destruction/wildlife displacement, landfill operations in proximity to wetlands, and power boating in critical habitat areas such as submergent wild celery (*Valisneria*) beds.

The legal jurisdiction of the Detroit River IWR is limited to lands in which the Service owns a real estate interest. Most of the existing and potential conflicting uses occur on lands and waters governed by local and state regulations. However, the Refuge staff will work with other government agencies to resolve conflicting uses that may harm fish, wildlife and plant resources.

The Refuge will seek to facilitate and promote hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, environmental education, and environmental interpretation. At the same time, the Refuge will be involved with future development within the Refuge's watersheds to ensure that it is well-planned, environmentally sustainable, and aesthetically pleasing.