

# Appendix C: Priority Refuge Operating Needs



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The CCP directs an ambitious course for the future management of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge. The following provides a brief description of the highest priority Refuge projects. Each project description also includes the number of a corresponding strategy; linking it to the Goals/Objectives/Strategies section of Chapter 4.

All of these projects are listed in the Refuge Operating Needs System (RONS); the Service's national database of unfunded operational activities. The RONS was established in 1990 as a planning, budgeting, and communication tool to enhance identification of funding and staffing needs for the National Wildlife Refuge System. RONS projects describe the need for new or expanded activities in order to implement plans, attain goals, or satisfy legal mandates. RONS is structured around 35 management activities which include categories such as wildlife habitat management and restoration, law enforcement, visitor services and outreach, wildlife surveys, administration, and many others. Projects are linked to specific goals and objectives which are prioritized and implemented as funding becomes available. Data within RONS are used regularly in budget justifications presented to the Department of the Interior, the Office of Management and Budget, and Congress.

Specifically, the RONS projects for the Detroit River IWR will provide funding for pre-acquisition contaminant surveys, land acquisition, office equipment, vehicles, and outreach material. The projects also encompass personnel needs such as an assistant Refuge manager, a park ranger, a law enforcement officer, and an administrative technician. The listed projects include the funds, equipment, and personnel required to manage a newly-established, functional Refuge. As Refuge goals and objectives are formalized, new RONS projects will be added annually, and current projects will be reviewed to update funding and equipment needs.

### Land Acquisition Planning

This project involves new staffing and acquisition planning for the Detroit River IWR. Acquisition may be through purchase, donation, cooperative agreements, and/or leases. There is great urgency to conserve remaining fish and wildlife habitats in and along the lower Detroit River, and to improve the quality of life for people recreating and living in the area. Partnerships involved include the government of Canada, the Michigan DNR, the Michigan cities of Detroit, Trenton, Wyandotte, Ecorse, Gibraltar, Monroe and Grosse Ile, Wayne County, Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy, US EPA, the Downriver Linked Greenways Initiative, and many others. Strategies 7.1.1, 7.3.1-3. Estimated Annual Costs: \$124,000

### Conduct Biological Survey of Wildlife Use and Habitat Diversity

Standard surveys of wildlife use and habitat diversity of the lower Detroit River and Lake Erie shoreline are needed to obtain accurate documentation of flora and fauna in the area of the Refuge. Documentation based on various surveys will assist in habitat improvement planning to enhance wildlife use and diversity. This documentation will also be incorporated into outreach materials to provide environmental education to the public. Surveys will be coordinated with Michigan DNR personnel, US Geological Survey biologists, FWS fisheries biologists, and local environmental organizations. Strategy 7.2.1. *Estimated Annual Costs: \$32,000*

## **Establish Partnerships with Canada, other Agencies, Governments and NGOs**

Establishment of the Refuge has the potential to bring together a number of communities and interests along the US and Canadian shoreline. There will be involvement with a host of governments, agencies, organizations, and recreational groups. Interaction with these parties will be required to share information, resolve problems, develop cooperative efforts, and manage species and habitats. Coordination will involve research activities, routine surveys, and public outreach and education. These efforts will require attendance at various meetings and conferences both in the U.S. and Canada. Strategies 1.2.1-2, 7.4.1, 10.1.1.

*Estimated Annual Costs: \$98,000*

## **Develop Interpretive Displays, Kiosks, and Brochures**

The newly established Refuge will provide outreach to the public through the use of interpretive kiosks, Refuge brochures, and displays for use at events, in schools, at conferences, etc. The information will focus on the Refuge, the lower Detroit River ecosystem, partnerships, recreational opportunities, and area history. The brochures will include a map of the lower Detroit River showing islands, marshes, and shorelines on the Canadian as well as the U.S. portions of the Refuge. Strategies 2.2.1, 3.1.1-9, 4.1.1, 5.1.1, and more. *Estimated Annual Costs: \$58,000*

## **Install Entrance Signs and Post Boundary Signs**

Place boundary signs on islands and shorelines of lands within the Refuge. Entrance signs will be placed at access points to the Refuge, such as at boat landings and parking lots which access the Refuge or nearby parks. In partnership with Canada, standardized signs should be developed for use throughout the Refuge area, including Canadian and U.S. shorelines. Signs should have a designation to indicate Canadian or U.S. portions of the Refuge. These signs will increase public awareness of the Refuge and National Wildlife Refuge System, and generate support for conservation of the habitats of the Refuge. Strategy 2.2.2.

*Estimated Annual Costs: \$61,000*

## **Investigate Grassy Island for Extent of Contamination**

Grassy Island, an 80-acre island originally part of Wyandotte NWR and now part of the Detroit River IWR, is a containment site for material dredged from the Rouge River by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. An investigation of the extent of contaminants and the affects of these contaminants on fish, wildlife, and habitats is required. The investigation when completed will aid in efforts to monitor, evaluate, and remediate this site. Strategies 8.3.1-3. *Estimated Total Cost: \$115,000*

## **Refuge Administrative Support**

An administrative services staff person will be hired to process Refuge administrative work and receive visitors to the Refuge office. This person will administer Refuge budgets and staff payroll, serve as Refuge radio dispatcher, respond to various reports, and will also reply to public inquiries. All Strategies. *Estimated Annual Costs: \$43,000*