

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
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News Release



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U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE TO CARRY OUT AERIAL HERBICIDE APPLICATION OF *PHRAGMITES* IN MONROE COUNTY

GROSSE ILE, MICHIGAN – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is contracting with Hamilton Helicopters, Inc., a certified commercial pesticide applicator, to treat remaining invasive *Phragmites* on the Strong, Brancheau, Fix, and Plum Creek Bay Units of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge (Detroit River IWR) in Wayne and Monroe Counties during the week of September 9, 2013. Each of the areas that will be treated are posted at all points of entry and along the shoreline indicating temporary closure for at least 24 hours after treatment and will reopen thereafter.

Phragmites australis, an aggressive, invasive species is a major threat to native ecosystems. The non-native plant can grow to heights exceeding 18 feet, creating a plant community dominated by one species. The presence of *Phragmites* decreases the density of more desirable native species, alters hydrology and changes many aspects of the ecology of western Lake Erie marshes. Its removal is an essential step in the rehabilitation of native ecosystems.

“The application of herbicide to treat invasive *Phragmites* is the most effective method of reduction,” according to Detroit River IWR Wildlife Biologist, Greg Norwood. Combined with a targeted prescribed fire and mowing program, the herbicide will help to remove dead biomass and restore native plants to Refuge lands.

The Detroit River IWR is permitted by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality under a Certificate of Coverage for aquatic nuisance control of certain non-native invasive plants. The selection of herbicide and application rates are restricted by State and Federal regulation and will not pose any threats to human health, wildlife or threatened or endangered species and are approved for use in wetlands. People must stay out of Refuge land that is posted closed until the herbicide treatments are completed and the signs are removed by Refuge staff.

The Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge focuses on conserving, protecting, and restoring habitat for 29 species of waterfowl, 23 species of raptors, 31 species of shorebirds, over 100 species of fish, and over 300 species of birds. It is one of few urban refuges within the National Wildlife Refuge System, and the first international refuge in North America.

For additional information, please contact Greg Norwood, Wildlife Biologist at 734-692-7611 or Greg_Norwood@fws.gov.

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