

News Release

Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Large Lakes Research Station
9311 Groh Road
Grosse Ile, MI 48138
Phone: (734) 365-0219
Fax: (734) 692-7603
http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Detroit_River



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 11, 2014
Contact: Anna Cook (734) 692-7672

SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AT DETROIT RIVER INTERNATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Grosse Ile, Michigan – The Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge has welcomed five local teenagers to take part in the 2014 Youth Conservation Corps (YCC), a federally funded youth employment program facilitated by the Departments of Interior and Agriculture. The employment of students and young adults as YCC crew members enables the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to complete projects that could have otherwise been delayed due to a lack of funding or available staff and fulfills a significant component of the President’s priority to engage local youth in river restoration work. The Program will run for eight weeks, from mid-June to mid-August.

The 2014 team includes two youth leaders (Devin Lang of Gibraltar, MI and Alexis Gundick of Trenton, MI) and three other crew members (Stacy Alvarez of Lincoln park, MI, Malik Jones of Warren, MI, and Roblyn Franklin of Gibraltar, MI). Leadership for this YCC team will be provided by adult leader Mr. Norman Clement, who brings experience in working with youth as an elementary school teacher and as a Program Coordinator for the Detroit Youth Foundation. Norman will oversee the youth employees as they complete an array of tasks incorporating general refuge operations, wildlife research, trail maintenance, environmental education and recreation programs, and basic grounds upkeep and repair. An exciting twist this year gives the crew four weeks to spend with our U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Fisheries Program. The crew will learn mark-and-recapture methods for tagging Lake Sturgeon, a once plentiful prehistoric fish that can measure up to 7 feet in length and weighing up to 200 pounds. Lake Sturgeon are making a comeback despite being overfished nearly to the point of extinction in the late 1800s.

This YCC program is challenging, educational and fun, offering individuals the chance to play an active role in protecting the nation’s precious resources. Crew members will learn about career opportunities in the conservation field, gain valuable work skills, and develop lifelong friendships with other young adults.

The Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge extends along 48 miles of lower Detroit River and western Lake Erie, and focuses on conserving, protecting, and restoring habitats for 30 species of waterfowl, 117 kinds of fish, and over 300 species of birds. Unique habitats being managed in the refuge include islands, coastal wetlands, marshes, shoals and riverfront lands. To date, 3,797 acres of Essex Region Conservation Authority lands and 981 acres of City of Windsor lands have been added to the Canadian registry of lands for the refuge, and 7,897 acres of Michigan Department of Natural Resources lands have been added to the U.S. registry of lands that already includes 5,787 acres of lands owned and/or cooperatively managed by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. When totaled between Canada and U.S., 18,462 acres of land in southwest Ontario and southeast Michigan

are now being managed collaboratively for conservation and outdoor recreation in the spirit and intent of the 2001 Conservation Vision and the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge.

More than 80 percent of Americans live in urban or suburban communities and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service values the role that urban refuges play in bringing conservation to urban areas and in providing innovative educational programming and volunteer opportunities.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is, working with others, to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service is both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation. Visit www.fws.gov to learn more.

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