

Acknowledgements

Many individuals, organizations, corporations, and agencies have significantly contributed to the accomplishments highlighted in this annual report and to building our International Wildlife Refuge. Without this broad-based involvement and support the vision of a world-class refuge in the industrial heartland would not be possible. A special thanks is extended to DTE Energy for providing the design, layout, and printing of this annual report. We all should be very proud of what we are accomplishing.

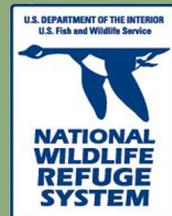
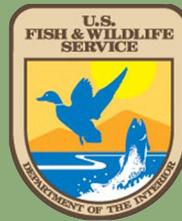
***International Wildlife Refuge Alliance,
Board of Directors***



Website: www.fws.gov/midwest/detroitriver/index.html

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Building Our International Wildlife
Refuge in the Industrial Heartland



Aerial photo of refuge: U.S. Geological Survey

Annual Progress Report of the
Detroit River International Wildlife
Refuge and the International
Wildlife Refuge Alliance



Building Our Refuge - 2005

Over the last year, the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge has continued to build upon the cooperative partnerships that have proven so successful in saving thousands of acres for conservation, recreation and preservation of fish and wildlife and their habitat. As you will see in this first annual report, much has been accomplished through the efforts of these partners, the individuals, private landowners, state and local governments, local businesses, conservation organizations and the federal government all working together to further conservation as responsible environmental stewards.

It is heartening to see the number of people who work as a labor of love to build our refuge. Indeed, the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge is now a major source of pride to our region. The progress we have seen to date using public-private partnerships for conservation is truly becoming a source of hope and inspiration that we can indeed do more for future generations to enjoy.

It is my distinct pleasure to open this annual report and to entrust it to each of you. Although much has been accomplished, much remains to be done. May its words and works fill you with hope and inspire you to get involved to help make this region an even better place to live, work, and play.

Join us in building North America's only International Wildlife Refuge and making this region a world leader in sustainability and cooperative conservation.



JOHN DINGELL
Member of Congress 15th District Michigan

Congressman Dingell: Office of Congressman John Dingell

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Dingell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



The region stretching south along 48 miles of Detroit River and Western Lake Erie shoreline is a major urban area, one of world's greatest manufacturing centers, and the only International Wildlife Refuge in North America

– the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge (IWR)

Over 5 million people live in the U.S. portion of the watershed and over 500,000 people live in the Canadian portion. This region is best known as the automobile capitals of the United States and Canada. However, it is rapidly gaining an international reputation for its biodiversity, wildlife, close-to-home outdoor recreation, and public-private partnerships for conservation.

Stretching along these 48 miles of shoreline are over 20 islands, many coastal wetlands, numerous marshes and shoals. Preserving open spaces and sustaining diverse and abundant wildlife for quality of life is a priority in the Detroit-Windsor Metropolitan Areas where the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge resides. The Detroit River/Western Lake Erie area is the intersection of two major North American flyways. Birds come to rest, nest, and feed along the shoreline of the many islands and marshes. Over 30 species of waterfowl, 17 species of raptors, 31 species of shorebirds, and 160 species of songbirds are found along or migrate through the Detroit River corridor. In addition, 117 species of fish are found in or migrate through the Detroit River. This biodiversity and the diversity of habitats to support these biota have given the region international acclaim. The Detroit River and Western Lake Erie have been recognized for their biodiversity in the North

From humble beginnings to international wildlife refuge:

THE HUMBUG STORY

Rain soaked and determined was the feeling of nearly 1,000 people that September day in 1998. Gibraltar Carlson High School was invaded by concerned citizens who were there to stand up for what they felt was right. People from all over Michigan attended, so many that there were traffic jams and the fire marshal had to lock the doors to prevent a larger crowd. The issue at hand was residential development of the last mile of natural shoreline on the U.S. mainland of the Detroit River – Humbug Marsh. The vast majority of these citizens strongly opposed the development and was in favor of preserving the rich and diverse coastline that was part of their home and heritage.

By allowing the development to proceed, they knew the precious life and rich history would forever be lost. This tremendous support was the key catalyst in establishing the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge. The people spoke and those in charge listened. By doing so, this area now belongs to wildlife and people for their use, study, and enjoyment. Humbug Marsh will forever stand as a site of great determination and love by those in the Downriver community.

Building Our Refuge - 2005

American Waterfowl Management Plan, the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, the Western Hemispheric Shorebird Reserve Network, and the Biodiversity Investment Area Program of Environment Canada and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The Detroit River IWR story is that cooperative conservation initiatives are helping recreate gathering places for wildlife and people along the Detroit River. These unique conservation places are now a key factor in providing the quality of life so important in achieving competitive advantage for communities and businesses in the 21st century. Equally important is that cooperative conservation is helping provide an exceptional experience to almost 6 million people in the Detroit River watershed that is helping develop the next generation of conservation stewards and sustainability entrepreneurs.

This annual report is a collaborative effort between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the International Wildlife Refuge Alliance (i.e., a nonprofit alliance of organizations that builds the capacity of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to deliver its mission for the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge). The purpose of this report is to document accomplishments during 2005, celebrate

successes, and build momentum for building North America's only IWR. Key refuge accomplishments can be divided into four categories: habitat conservation, research and monitoring, community engagement, and capacity building. Highlights of accomplishments are presented below for each category.

Habitat Conservation

- The shoreline at the Grosse Ile Nature Area was rehabilitated using soft engineering techniques by Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy, Nativescape, LLC, and local volunteers with \$102,000 from Metropolitan Affairs Coalition, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services' Coastal Program, the Great Lakes Basin Program for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control administered by Great Lakes Commission, and local contributors. This project won the highest award of the Michigan Environmental Management Association for 2005.
- In 2005, the north shoreline of Wayne County's Elizabeth Park was completed using soft engineering techniques (project cost: \$1.2 million).



Elizabeth Park shoreline (before)
John Hartig



Elizabeth Park shoreline (after)
Emily Wilke

Building Our Refuge - 2005

- U.S. Steel rehabilitated approximately 2,000 feet of shoreline downstream of Belanger Park in River Rouge using soft engineering techniques. This \$200,000 project was undertaken as a Supplemental Environmental Project. This shoreline habitat rehabilitation helped improve fishing opportunities for children and families in River Rouge's only waterfront park.
- \$49,000 in funding was secured in 2005 for shoreline rehabilitation at DTE Energy's River Rouge Power Plant. Funding was provided by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Five Star Grant Program, Metropolitan Affairs Coalition, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Coastal Program, and DTE Energy. In kind match support was provided by the City of River Rouge and other partners. Rehabilitation will be completed in 2006.
- \$300,000 of funding was secured in 2005 through a North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant coordinated by Ducks Unlimited, Inc. Many partners contributed match funding. \$100,000 will be used for habitat restoration at the Lagoona Beach Unit of DTE Energy's Fermi 2 Power Plant in Monroe County and \$200,000 will be used for land acquisition in Monroe County.
- In 2005, a \$9.3 million sediment remediation project was completed at the Black Lagoon with funding from U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Clean Michigan Initiative, removing a substantial mass of contaminants that was negatively impacting the river. \$152,000 in new funding was also announced for the second phase of shoreline rehabilitation.
- In 2005, BASF Corporation received international recognition for wildlife habitat conservation on Fighting Island. BASF was awarded Corporate Lands for Learning certification from Wildlife Habitat Council for its work in furthering environmental stewardship and increasing native biodiversity on Fighting Island.
- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service signed a farming agreement for the Brancheau Unit to share crop 70 acres to benefit wildlife.



US Steel shoreline (before)
Nativescape, LLC



US Steel shoreline (after)
Nativescape, LLC



Eagle Island marsh ceremony
Automotive Components Holdings



Eagle Island marsh
Automotive Components Holdings

- In October 2005, Automotive Components Holdings (ACH) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced the addition of the 240-acre Eagle Island Marsh into the Detroit River IWR. The wetlands were named Eagle Island Marsh by Monroe plant workers as a tribute to the bald eagles that have returned to these coastal marshes. Eagle Island Marsh also supports significant beds of the threatened American Lotus, a pale yellow flower that is Michigan symbol of clean water.

Research and Monitoring

- A Coastal Grant was secured from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for \$10,000 to University of Michigan-Dearborn's Rouge River Bird Observatory to compile, evaluate, and interpret the 30-year Rockwood Christmas Bird Count database.
- University of Michigan-Dearborn completed a dragonfly and damselfly survey of the Humbug Marsh Unit.
- Applied Science and Technology, Inc. completed a wetlands survey of Humbug Marsh Unit laying the foundation of ecologically sensitive trail design.
- Rouge River Bird Observatory completed a breeding bird survey of Humbug Marsh Unit.
- Detroit Audubon Society completed several bird surveys of Humbug Marsh Unit.
- The Michigan Botanical Club, the Michigan Wildflower Association, the Michigan Natural Features Inventory completed wildflower and botanical surveys of Humbug Marsh Unit.
- U.S. Geological Survey's Great Lakes Science Center performed a survey of macro-benthic invertebrates in Humbug Marsh and associated wetlands.

Building Our Refuge - 2005

- A herpetological survey (i.e., Herpathon) was performed at Humbug Marsh Unit by Herpetological Resource and Management, and volunteers, with financial support for DTE Energy. Another herpetological survey was conducted of five additional sites in the refuge with \$2,000 from DTE Energy.
- Cranbrook Institute of Science performed a bat survey of Humbug Marsh Unit.
- Refuge staff and volunteers completed a vegetation survey of Lagoona Beach Unit at the Fermi Power Plant.
- The Stream Team and Detroit Audubon Society performed a survey of common tern nesting success at the Grosse Ile free bridge.
- U.S. Geological Survey's Great Lakes Science Center and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service performed a survey of lake sturgeon reproduction in the Detroit River.
- U.S. Geological Survey's Great Lakes Science Center and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service initiated a research project to quantify and characterize fall-spawning lake whitefish, spring-spawning lake sturgeon, and walleye reproductive habitat to better manage fisheries of the lower Detroit River and Western Lake Erie.



Common tern chicks
Bruce Szczechowski

- Ecological Services staff of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service completed a Preliminary Assessment and Site Inspection of Grassy Island and performed a small mammal survey.

Community Engagement

- Wayne County, with support from Hamilton-Anderson Associates and many community stakeholder groups, completed the site master plan for the Refuge Gateway. Hundreds of people participated.



Refuge Gateway Master Plan: *Hamilton Anderson Associates*

Building Our Refuge - 2005

- Friends of Wayne County Parks received \$100,000 from DTE Energy Foundation for green architectural design and development of a business plan for the visitor center at the Refuge Gateway.
- Detroit River IWR received \$880,000 from U.S. Department of Transportation for trail construction at Humbug Marsh Unit.
- Detroit Audubon Society convened its annual meeting in April and held a birding event at the Humbug Marsh Unit.
- Several spring wildflower tours were held in Humbug Marsh Unit during April and May.
- Metropolitan Affairs Coalition and many partners, including Downriver Linked Greenways Initiative and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, completed a Heritage Water Trail Master Plan with \$93,000 of funding.
- International Wildlife Refuge Alliance, in partnership with Downriver Linked Greenways, and Riverside Kayak, and Others, held a very successful "Paddle By Your Refuge" event in September with over 200 kayakers experiencing the refuge.
- Friends of the Detroit River, Detroit River IWR, Wayne County, and University of Michigan-Dearborn convened successful Green Building Forum in June 2005 to

build support for green architectural design of the visitor center at the Refuge Gateway.



- Friends of the Detroit River and many partners convened another successful Detroit River Cleanup in May.

- Detroit River IWR received considerable national attention at the White House Detroit River Cleanup 2005 Conference on Cooperative Conservation in August in St. Louis, MO for its leadership in public-private partnerships for conservation (www.conservation.ceq.govwednsnewsltr.pdf).

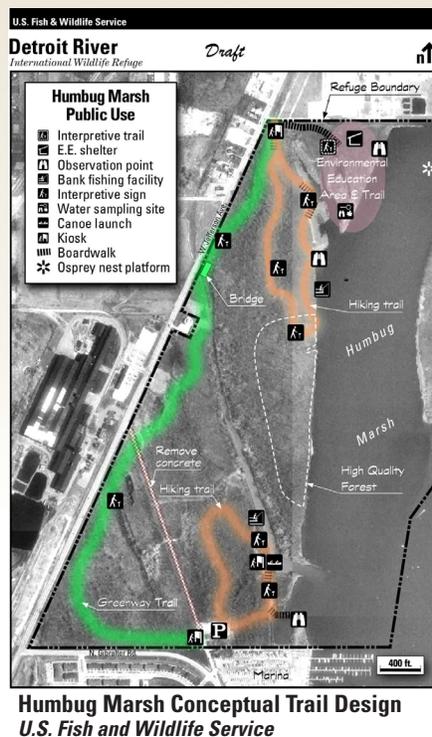
- Detroit River IWR participated in the Waterfowl Festival at Point Mouillee State Game Area in September (15,000 people attended).

- Detroit River IWR participated in the Hawk Fest at Lake Erie Metro Park in September (4,500 people attended).

- University of Windsor's Great Lakes Institute, Detroit River IWR, and many partners released the report titled "State of the Strait: Monitoring for Sound Management" in October uwindsor.ca/users/k/kgd/softs.nsf/inToc/58295CE7A58E26F38525708900534E83).

- A Humbug Trail Forum was held in October to gain support for ecologically sensitive trail design in the Humbug Marsh Unit.

- A Grassy Island Forum was held in December to build support for restoration of Grassy Island.



Capacity Building

One of the major goals of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is to build the capacity to deliver its mission for the Detroit River IWR. In February 2005 key refuge partners held a special workshop titled "Let's Build a Refuge We All Will Love." Over 75 people attended and learned about the benefits of establishing a "Friends-Type" organization for the Detroit River IWR. All gave their strong support for building a "Friends-Type" organization for our refuge. In May 2005, Ms. Mary Bohling of DTE Energy and Refuge Manager John Hartig attended a special course on establishing a "friends" group at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Conservation Training Center. In August 2005 two refuge mentors (Mr. Rob Jess, Refuge Manager of Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge and Mr. Max Shenk of the National Wildlife Refuge Association) visited our refuge to lead a very successful local workshop on starting a "friends" group. In October 2005 the International Wildlife Refuge Alliance was established.

The Alliance's mission is "to support the first International Wildlife Refuge in North America by working through partnerships to protect, conserve, and manage the refuge's wildlife and habitats, and to create exceptional conservation, recreational and educational experiences to develop the next generation of conservation stewards." An interim board was established made up of: Mr. George Mans (Chairperson), Ms. Anita Twardesky (Vice-Chairperson), Ms. Molly Luempert-Coy (Secretary), Mr. Dick Micka (Treasurer), Dr. Bruce Jones, Mr. Dick Whitwam, Ms. Andrea Kline, Dr. Jim Bull, Mr. Ed Nuernberg, and Mr. Lloyd Semple. Ms. Mary Bohling serves as an interim facilitator for the Alliance. The establishment of the Alliance represents a major step forward in capacity building.

In 2005, Mr. Steve Dushane was also hired as Assistant Refuge Manager by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This represents another major step in refuge development.



Paddle By Your Refuge
Janis Layne

Building Our Refuge - 2005

In addition, Ms. Emily Wilke of University of Michigan's School of Natural Resources and Environment was awarded a fellowship from Metropolitan Affairs Coalition to work on key projects common to the Greater Detroit American Heritage River Initiative and the Detroit River IWR. Other student volunteers included: Ms. Nicki Drinane of Concordia University, Ms. Lisa Perschke of Eastern Michigan University, Ms. Tamar Dexheimer of Kalamazoo College, Ms. Olivia Napierski of Brigham Young University, and Ms. Guadalupe Cummins of Wayne State University. Metropolitan Affairs Coalition continued to provide technical grant writing support from Bristol Technical Services.

What's Next

The Detroit River IWR will continue to grow through public-private partnerships. Establishment of the International Wildlife Refuge Alliance will be an important step. Key priorities for 2006 include:

- Developing cooperative management agreements for Gard Island and Lake Erie Metro Park.
- Securing funding for a birding driving tour for the refuge.
- Posting refuge signs at 50% of the management units.
- Work with Wayne County to complete daylighting of Monguagon Creek at the Refuge Gateway and secure a National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Program grant for restoring coastal wetlands at the Refuge Gateway.
- Host a Family Fun Fishing Day event on June 10th.
- Partnering in another Paddle By Your Refuge event in fall of 2006.
- Restoring 26 acres of grasslands and begin restoring 48 acres of wetlands at the Fermi 2 Power Plant's Lagoon Beach Unit.
- Completing trail design at Humbug Marsh Unit and secure match funding for \$880,000 awarded through U.S. Department of Transportation for trail construction.
- Working with Wayne County to begin schematic design work of visitor center at Refuge Gateway with \$100,000 from DTE Energy Foundation.
- Working with Wayne County and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to initiate feasibility work for ecological restoration of the Refuge Gateway under Section 206 of Water Resources Development Act.
- Working with U.S. Geological Survey's Great Lakes Science Center to perform research on restoring whitefish and sturgeon spawning habitats.
- Working through International Wildlife Refuge Alliance to raise \$100,000 to fund an executive director and associated expenses.
- Working with both Canadian and U.S. agencies to prepare a Detroit River-Western Lake Erie Indicator Project.
- Convening the Biennial State of the Strait Conference in the U.S. in December 2006.
- Undertaking a grasslands restoration and wetland buffer project at DTE Energy's Monroe Power Plant in 2006.