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For immediate release

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Refuge Bike & Hike: Celebrating a Greenway Trail Linking Humbug Marsh to Lake Erie Metropark

Join staff, volunteers and partners of Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge on Saturday, October 15 from 9 AM to 2 PM for a family-friendly bike and hike event to celebrate the opening of a newly completed greenway trail connecting Humbug Marsh and Lake Erie Metropark.

The *Refuge Bike and Hike* celebration will kick off at Lake Erie Metropark at 9 AM and offer visitors the opportunity to ride or hike the new recreational trail up to the Refuge's Humbug Marsh Unit. Attendees may choose to participate in the 8-mile trip starting at the Metropark, or join in at the Gibraltar Community Center beginning at 10 AM for a less strenuous 4-mile trip. Both routes will end at Humbug Marsh where a number of festivities will be available for visitors of all ages, including a trail dedication, guided interpretive hikes and nature programs, crafts and activities, live animal demonstrations, free bike inspections courtesy of REI, and appearances by Puddles the Blue Goose, mascot of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Refreshments will also be provided.

This new greenway trail includes 1.5 miles of freshly-constructed greenway situated along the perimeter of the Humbug Marsh Unit of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge and one mile of trail within the city of Gibraltar. Its completion links two significant natural resource and outdoor recreational assets – the 410 acre Humbug Marsh and the 1,607 acre Lake Erie Metropark. This greenway trail is also part of a much larger greenway network being developed for the region through the Downriver Linked Greenways Initiative. This new section of greenway trail is now part of 50 miles of continuous greenway trail in Downriver. More information on the Downriver Linked Greenways Initiative can be found at:

<http://www.downrivergreenways.org/>.

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“This greenway trail links two significant natural resource and outdoor recreational assets,” notes Anita Twardesky, Co-Chairperson of the Downriver Linked Greenways Initiative. “It literally helps strengthen our Downriver communities by enhancing outdoor recreational opportunities and quality of life.”

In addition to celebrating the opening of this new greenway trail, Saturday’s event will also highlight the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s National Wildlife Refuges Week. Celebrated nationwide at many of the more than 550 National Wildlife Refuges and across the System’s 150 million acre network of lands, this week-long observance showcases the remarkable lands and waters of America’s Refuge System and emphasizes their value to local communities.

The opportunity to combine these two exciting events proved too great to resist. “National Wildlife Refuges Week is a terrific time to recognize the importance of national wildlife refuges to wildlife conservation, but it’s also a time to applaud the work of refuge Friends groups, volunteers, national and community organizations, and partners that promote awareness, compatible use, protection, and restoration of these public lands,” notes Jamie Lanier, Visitor Services Manager of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge.

Event sponsors include the Huron-Clinton Metroparks, Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, International Wildlife Refuge Alliance (Refuge Friends Group), REI, and the City of Gibraltar.

All those participating in the *Refuge Bike and Hike* event beginning at Lake Erie Metropark will be given free admission to the park for the day. Visitors should gather at the parking lot near the pool complex for event orientation and information. Helmets are recommended for children and adults bicycling on the trail.

Located along the Huron and Clinton rivers, the Huron-Clinton Metroparks provide a natural oasis from urban and suburban life as well as year-round recreational activities and events. A regional park system, the Metroparks consist of 13 beautiful parks covering 25,000 acres, ten spectacular public golf courses and two marinas on Lake Erie and Lake St. Clair, respectively. The parks also offer scenic nature trails, beaches, educational activities and exciting winter sports. General information can be found at www.metroparks.com or by calling 1-800-47-PARKS.

The Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge incorporates more than 5,700 acres along 48 miles of the lower Detroit River and western Lake Erie. The 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 the first international refuge in North America and one of the few urban ones in the nation. Unique habitats being managed within the Refuge include islands, coastal wetlands, marshes, shoals and waterfront lands. More information on the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge can be found at: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/detroitriver/index.html>.

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