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REFUGE WELCOMES NEW PARK RANGER NAMED JENNIE BRAATZ

Grosse Ile, Mich. – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is pleased to welcome park ranger Jennie Braatz to the staff of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge. Jennie comes from the Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge where she was a visitor services park ranger and volunteer coordinator for nearly five years. She also has worked with the National Park Service as an interpretive park ranger and with the Peace Corps as an environmental education volunteer in Nicaragua.

Jenner brings extensive public use experience in the National Wildlife Refuge System and loves working with school children. Jennie always wanted to be a naturalist as a child growing up in heavily populated Northern Virginia where she began volunteering at a local county park at the age of 12. She later pursued that passion through a career with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. She excels at making environmental education and interpretation “new” for children and families. Her unique gifts and talents in environmental education and interpretation are precisely what the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge needs to help bring conservation to the Detroit Metropolitan Area in an effort to help develop the next generation of conservationists. Currently, 80% of all U.S. citizens live in urban areas and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is placing a priority on developing the next generation of conservationists in urban areas through innovative educational programming, meaningful volunteer opportunities, and compelling outdoor recreational and citizen science experiences under a new Urban Refuge Initiative.

“I am pleased to welcome Jennie Braatz as a park ranger at Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge,” noted Congressman John D. Dingell. “This is particularly close to my heart because I started my career as a park ranger in the National Park Service, and my time as a ranger marked the start of my lifelong commitment to promoting conservation and outdoor recreation for all. I look forward to seeing the many ways in which this wonderful refuge will make nature part of everyday urban life”

The Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge represents a new model for conservation – one that both restores habitats for fish and wildlife in an urban area through innovative public-private partnerships and that provides a blueprint for bringing conservation to cities across the nation. 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. The Refuge currently owns or cooperatively manages 5,817 acres of unique habitats that include islands, coastal wetlands, marshes, wet prairies, 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 a Canadian registry of lands, and 7,897 acres of Michigan Department of Natural Resources lands have been added to the U.S. registry of lands for conservation purposes. When totaled between Canada and U.S., 18,492 acres of land in southwest Ontario and southeast Michigan are now being collaboratively managed and protected for the benefit of wildlife and outdoor recreation in the spirit and intent of the 2001 Conservation Vision and the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge.

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. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, and dedication and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov or www.fws.gov/refuge/detroit_river/.

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Jennie Braatz, Park Ranger, Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge (photo credit: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)