

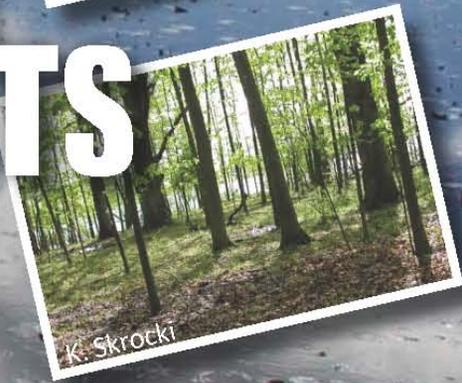
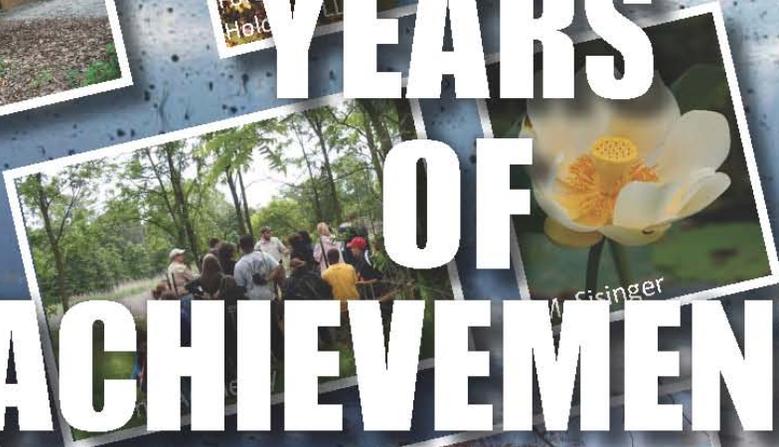
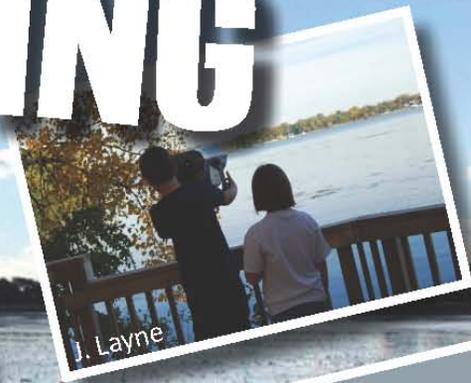
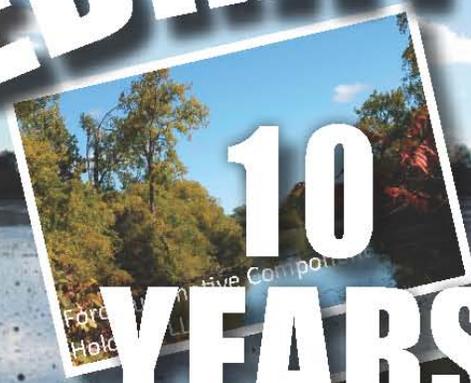
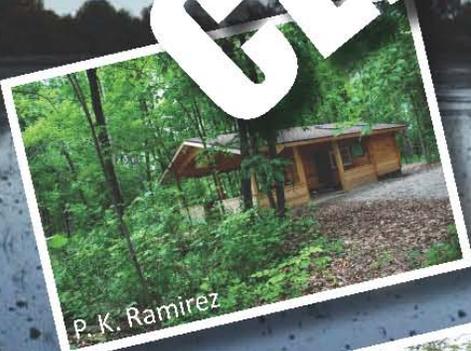
DETROIT RIVER INTERNATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

CELEBRATING

10 YEARS OF

ACHIEVEMENTS

2001-2011



Welcome!

Dear Friends,

I can't believe it has already been 10 years since we successfully created the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge. It seems only yesterday that Peter Stroh, Herb Gray, and I brought together a group of scientists and resource managers to develop a conservation vision for the region. It was this compelling conservation vision that was used to draft legislation in 2001 to create North America's only international wildlife refuge right here in our back yard. Now, ten years later, is a good time to look back and reflect on how far we have come, but yet remind ourselves how far we have to go to reach our common goal.

This annual report clearly captures the many accomplishments of the Refuge over the past 10 years. I hope you get a sense of satisfaction from what we have accomplished together. Saving Humbug Marsh and fostering nationally-recognized public-private partnerships for cooperative conservation have allowed us to leverage over \$31 million for Refuge growth and development. By using this unique model we have increased the refuge from 300 acres to over 5,700 in just a decade, quite an impressive feat. As I stand here and watch a bald eagle fly over Humbug Marsh, I fully appreciate the direct impact that this Refuge has on the world around it.

As always, I look forward to what lies ahead, including the complete restoration of the Refuge Gateway site, the construction of a Visitor's Center, the addition of more pristine land, and the continued successful cooperation between the Canadian and the U.S. governments toward the development of the Refuge.

I am very grateful to each one of you for what you have done to help make this possible. Thank you for your significant contributions to our international wildlife refuge. Please continue to volunteer and stay involved in this important work of teaching and inspiring the next generation of conservationists.

With every good wish,

John D. Dingell
Member of Congress



Congressmen Dingell at the Pt. Mouillee Waterfowl Festival

Celebrating our Refuge!

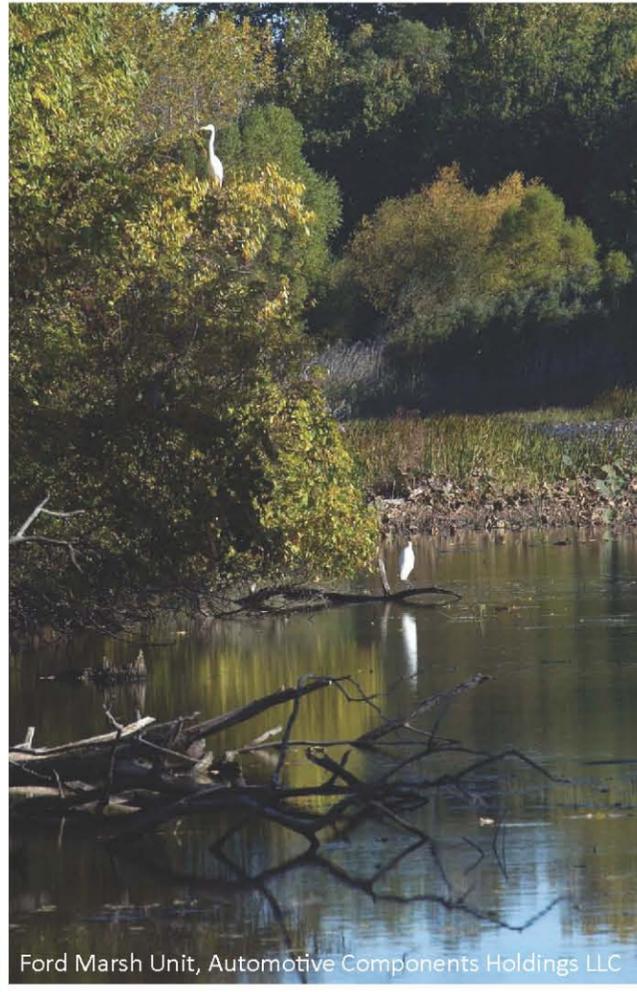
This year marks the 10th anniversary of our Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge (DRIWR).

Over the past 10 years many people, organizations, and volunteers have worked hard to grow our Refuge. We are very proud of the progress made, including: land conservation and habitat management for fish and wildlife, and wildlife-compatible recreation; scientific research to better inform management; and community education and outreach meant to inspire the next generation of conservationists. The dedication of so many has led to impressive achievements for our DRIWR. Presented below are the major accomplishments over our first decade:

- ✦ Growth of the Refuge from 300 acres to over 5,700 acres in ten years;
- ✦ Preservation of Humbug Marsh and its incorporation into the Refuge in 2004;
- ✦ The designation of Humbug Marsh as a "Wetland of International Importance" under the Ramsar Convention (1,900 Ramsar sites designated world-wide, 29 in the U.S., and only one in Michigan – Humbug Marsh);
- ✦ The 2005 documentation of lake whitefish reproduction in the Detroit River for the first time since 1916;
- ✦ Our region singled out at the 2005 White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation for leadership in public-private partnerships for cooperative conservation;
- ✦ The establishment of our friends group called the International Wildlife Refuge Alliance (IWRA) in 2006;
- ✦ The creation of the ByWays to FlyWays bird driving tour in 2007 that highlights 27 exceptional birding sites in southeast Michigan and southwest Ontario;
- ✦ The hosting of the FLW Outdoors Chevy Open fishing tournament in 2008 that offered \$1.5 million in prize money;
- ✦ The 2008 construction of the Fighting Island sturgeon reef that represented the first-ever Canada-U.S. funded fish habitat restoration project in the Great Lakes;
- ✦ The 2009 documentation of lake sturgeon reproduction on the Fighting Island reef, representing the first time in 30 years that lake sturgeon reproduction had been confirmed in the Canadian waters of the Detroit River;
- ✦ The 2009 documentation of osprey reproduction in Gibraltar, representing the first successful nesting in Wayne County since the 1890s;
- ✦ The 2010 designation of the Detroit River as an "Important Bird Area" by The Audubon Society;
- ✦ The 2011 designation of Detroit as one of the top ten metropolitan areas for waterfowl hunting by Ducks Unlimited;
- ✦ The creation of common tern (threatened species in Michigan) habitat at three locations in the Detroit River;
- ✦ The daylighting of Monguagon Creek at the Refuge Gateway and the establishment of 67 acres of wetlands at the Brancheau Unit; and
- ✦ The completion of 38 soft shoreline engineering projects in the watershed.

Habitat Conservation

{sustaining our wildlife}



Ford Marsh Unit, Automotive Components Holdings LLC

Ford Marsh: Automotive Components Holdings, LLC and Ford Motor Company donated the 242-acre Ford Marsh in Monroe County to the Refuge in 2010.



Common Tern, J. Jourdan

Common Tern Habitat Restoration Efforts Expanded on Belle Isle: The Detroit Zoological Society, the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department, and the Refuge expanded common tern habitat to 9,600 square feet on Belle Isle.

Prairie Planting: 10 acres were planted with native prairie seed at the Fermi Power Plant in Frenchtown Charter Township in partnership with DTE Energy.



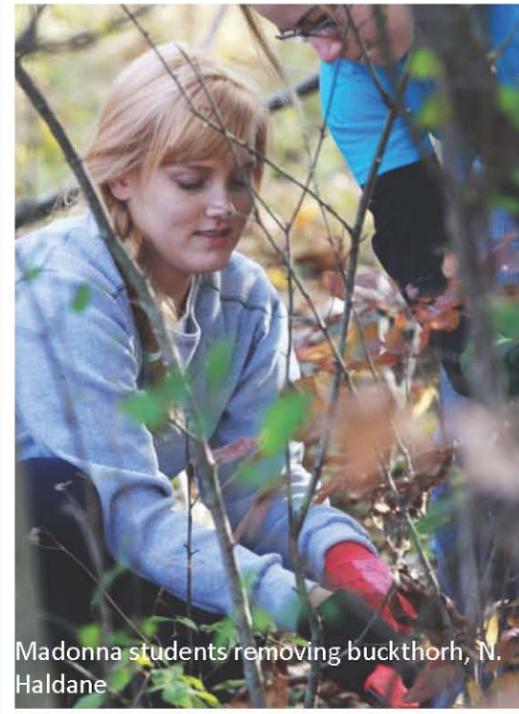
Field of Black-eyed Susans, M. Sisinger

Humbug Marsh Receives Ramsar Designation: In 2010, Humbug Marsh was designated Michigan's first Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention, an international treaty that supports wetland conservation and public education of the values of wetlands.



Continued Invasive Plant Management:

In 2010, DRIWR herbicide-treated *Phragmites* within 64 acres of the Strong Unit in preparation for removal by prescribed fire or mowing. Staff and volunteers helped remove buckthorn and garlic mustard in the Gibraltar Bay and Humbug Marsh Units.



Madonna students removing buckthorn, N. Haldane

Shoreline Restoration at the Refuge Gateway:

Permits and a contractor were secured for rehabilitation of 14 acres of coastal wetland habitat and for seeding of 11 acres of upland habitat and 14 acres of prairie habitat. This work will be completed in 2011.

Soft Shoreline Engineering Website:

The purpose of this new website is to share information on 38 soft shoreline engineering projects completed in the watershed (www.stateofthetrait.org; under "Soft Shoreline Engineering" tab).



Wayne County's Elizabeth Park in Trenton, before and after restoration; E. Wilke, DRIWR



Swamp Rose Mallow at Erie Marsh, C. May

Erie Marsh Preserve Coastal Wetland Restoration Project:

The Nature Conservancy, in partnership with Ducks Unlimited and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), received \$2.5 million from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for restoration of 258 acres of wetlands in Erie Marsh.

Bank Swallow Habitat: U.S. Steel, the Refuge, and Friends of the Detroit River partnered in creating nesting habitat for Bank Swallows on company property in Ecorse.



Bank Swallow, J. Jourdan

Research & Monitoring

{improving knowledge & measuring results}

Common Tern Roundtable: The DRIWR, in collaboration with the Detroit Zoological Society, organized a Canada-U.S. roundtable on common tern management, including setting a quantitative management target. Research was also completed on common tern nest-site selection, nocturnal nest-desertion, and productivity with funding from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.



Grassy Island Investigations, USFWS

Grassy Island Update: \$2.8 million was received from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative for completion of the investigative work on Grassy Island. All field work was completed in 2010.



Pied-billed Grebe found breeding at Gibraltar Wetlands Unit, J. Jourdan

Breeding Marsh Bird Survey at Gibraltar Wetlands Unit Refuge staff worked with volunteer Sarah Van Buren on the Refuge's first baseline survey of breeding marsh birds following a national protocol.

Hawk Watch Update: An analysis of 18 years of migration data was completed, a report prepared for the 2010 season, a new website completed, and a volunteer program piloted.



Hawkfest, Lake Erie Metropark, 2010, J. Jourdan

Impressive Christmas Bird Counts: 2010 marked the seventh year of the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) at Humbug Marsh Unit and the second consecutive year at Gibraltar Bay Unit. The CBC, organized by the Rouge River Bird Observatory, helps to track wintering bird populations. This year an astonishing 5,500 mallard ducks and 142 great blue herons were observed in Humbug Marsh.



Morning bird surveys at the DRIWR, J. Craves



Grey Hairstreak, J. Craves

Insect Surveys at Humbug Marsh: Julie Craves of the Rouge River Bird Observatory and Darrin O'Brien continued baseline insect surveys at the Refuge Gateway and Humbug Marsh Unit.



EMU Researchers, K. Judd

Eastern Michigan University (EMU): EMU continued to perform research on invasive species in support of adaptive management, including plant community surveys, water quality analyses, remote satellite detection of invasive species, mapping invasive species expansion, and management support through advanced Geographic Information Systems technology.

Scientific Publications: In 2010, the following scientific work was either published or accepted for publication: Herring Gull and Ring-billed Gull species' accounts will be published in the Michigan Breeding Bird Atlas II; an article on the Refuge was published in the journal *Sustainability*; and a survey of 38 soft shoreline engineering projects was accepted for publication in the journal *Ecological Engineering*.



Ring-billed Gulls, J. Jourdan

Community Engagement

{leading by example}

Ford Volunteers Build Entry Garden at Refuge Gateway: With the support of a Ford MODEL Teams Mini-Grant, Ford volunteers installed an entry garden of native plants at the Refuge Gateway. The visual impact of the garden is a wonderful improvement to the landscape and helps to showcase native landscaping.

Pointe Mouillee Waterfowl Festival: In September, over 8,000 people attended the 63rd annual Pointe Mouillee Waterfowl Festival at the Pointe Mouillee State Game Area. Refuge staff and IWRA volunteers helped make the festival a great success. IWRA held a "color a duck stamp" contest, which brought a tremendous response. Colorful drawings were made by visitors ages 3-80, with prizes given to the winners!



Pt Mouillee Waterfowl Festival 'Color a Duck Stamp' Winner, J. Van Aken

Visitor Services Plan: Refuge staff prepared a draft of the Visitor Services Plan and hope to complete it in 2011.



Summit Academy volunteers, Summit Academy

Stewardship events at Humbug Marsh: Volunteers participated in buckthorn removal, 20 students from Summit Academy performed stewardship projects for a week, 25 students from Madonna University removed invasive plants, and the Huron High School Ecology Club planted and maintained 30 native trees.

Hunt Plan: Refuge staff completed a draft of the hunting chapter of the Visitor Services Plan and the accompanying environmental assessment (EA). The plan will open hunting on selected lands owned and managed by the DRIWR. The hunt plan and EA were put out for public review and comment in February 2011. It is hoped that the hunting program will be approved and authorized in time to offer hunting on the Refuge in 2011 or 2012.



YCC Crew, USFWS

Youth Conservation Corps: The DRIWR welcomed another five high school students to work on trail maintenance, habitat restoration, invasive plant removal, and other Refuge jobs. This federal program provides students with temporary employment to work on many aspects of Refuge management and gain professional experience.

Nighttime Explorations at Humbug: During 2010, a series of nighttime activities were held in Humbug Marsh, including an event focusing on viewing the night sky with the Ford Amateur Astronomy Club and an Owl Prowl.

Eagle Tours: In January, DTE Energy hosted eagle tours at its Monroe Power Plant where over 50 bald eagles are known to overwinter.



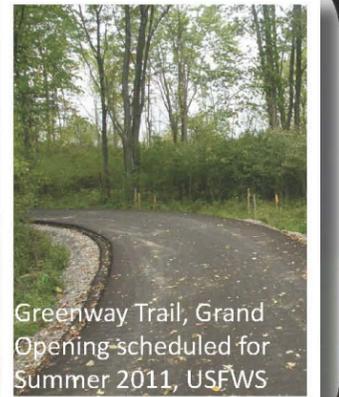
DTE Eagle Tour 2010, USFWS

Open Houses: In collaboration with DRIWR, IWRA and Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy hosted over 20 Open Houses in 2010.

Hawkfest: In September, over 5,000 people attended the annual Hawkfest at Lake Erie Metropark.

Thank you to all our volunteers who continue to support the Refuge!

Greenway Trail Completion: In fall, 2010, a 1.5 mile section of greenway trail was completed connecting Lake Erie Metropark to Humbug Marsh and the Refuge Gateway. This section is now part of 50 miles of continuous greenway trail developed through the Downriver Linked Greenways Initiative.



Greenway Trail, Grand Opening-scheduled for Summer 2011, USFWS

World Wetlands Day: World Wetlands Day was held at Gibraltar Carlson High School on February 2nd, with over 300 students participating in a program and wetlands exposition. Partners included Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment, DTE, the USFWS, and many others.



World Wetlands Day 2010, Carlson High School

Capacity Building

{cultivating stewardship for the future}

Equally important to the ongoing conservation work, the Refuge has a strong dedication to building its capacity to deliver its mission. To help build this capacity, the Refuge is fortunate to have IWRA as its Friend's Group. IWRA organizes public open houses and stewardship events at the Refuge, and also assists the Refuge in writing grants and building and maintaining relationships with partnering organizations. From IWRA's important work in 2010, over 150 new Refuge volunteers have been brought on board.

IWRA is an organization primarily run by volunteers. We would like to thank the Board of Directors of IWRA for all the hard work they do for the Refuge. IWRA board members include: Mr. Dick Micka (Chairperson), Ms. Andrea Kline (Vice Chairperson), Mr. Jack Liang (Secretary), Mr. Tom O'Hara (Treasurer), Mr. Tim Bowman, Dr. Bruce Jones, Ms. Anita Twardesky, Mr. Dick Whitwam, Ms. Molly Luempert-Coy, Mr. Fred DeLisle, Ms. Mary Bohling, Mr. Steven Beachum, Ms. Yvette Pugh, Mr. Ryan Werder, Mr. Jamie Kryscynski, and Mr. David Shefferly. Joann Van Aken served as IWRA office manager in 2010.

During 2010, Greg Norwood served as a Student Career Experience Program intern and Anna Cook served as a Student Temporary Employment Program intern. Allison Krueger joined Refuge staff as a landscape designer with funding from Metropolitan Affairs Coalition. Jeanette Bowles continued to provide administrative support to the Refuge from the USFWS's Michigan Private Lands Office. EMU provided Geographic Information System support in 2010. Finally, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Large Lakes Research Station continued to provide office space for Refuge staff.



Huron High School stewardship event, J. Van Aken



2010 Volunteer Appreciation Dinner, USFWS



IWRA 2010 Annual Benefit Dinner, Pt Mouillee, J. Van Aken

What's Next.....

The USFWS will continue to place a high priority on growing the Refuge, through public-private partnerships. A list of Refuge priorities for 2011 is presented below:

- ✦ Acquiring at least two new refuge tracts with \$1.8 million of funding from U.S. Department of Transportation
- ✦ Working with Canadian partners to add high quality habitat lands to the Canadian portion of the DRIWR
- ✦ Completing a Refuge Visitor Services Plan and opening selected Refuge units for hunting
- ✦ Continuing partnerships to document the effectiveness of fish spawning reefs off Fighting Island and BASF Riverview

- ✦ Completing the final investigative report for Grassy Island with funding from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and other partners on a long-term remedy
- ✦ Sustaining Detroit River Hawk Watch and performing common tern management and monitoring
- ✦ Working with EMU on invasive species research and management, including monitoring of biological communities using new GIS and Refuge transects

- ✦ Continuing to support the Capital Campaign to secure funding for the Refuge Gateway and Visitor Center

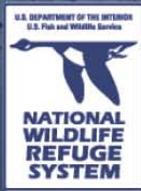
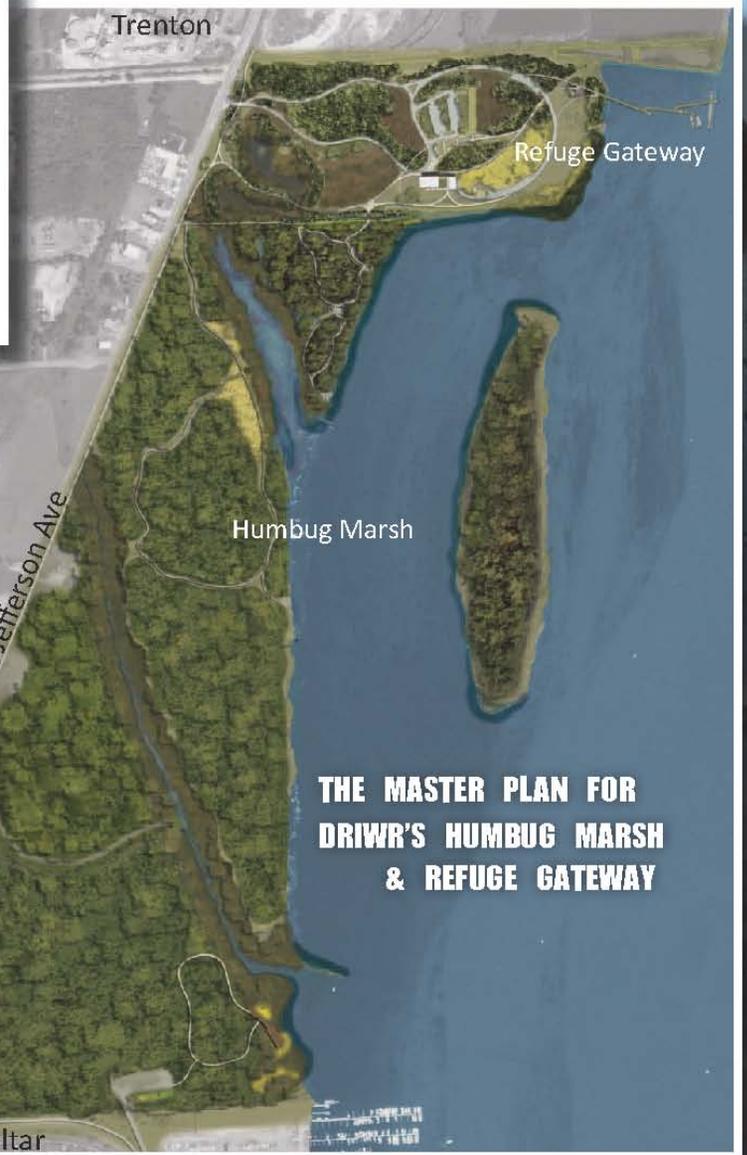
- ✦ Supporting another IWRA fundraiser in 2011
- ✦ Continuing to promote the Refuge through USFWS and IWRA websites

- ✦ Completing fundraising for construction of the boat dock & fishing pier at the Refuge Gateway
- ✦ Completing the shoreline rehabilitation at the Refuge Gateway and additional earthwork, and completing the second access road, with funding from the Downriver Community Conference

- ✦ Continuing ecological restoration through invasive species management, including undertaking prescribed burns/mowing at Humbug Marsh and Strong Units

- ✦ Continuing to support established events such as International Migratory Bird Day, World Wetlands Day, National Public Lands Day, FLW Outdoors Fishing Tournaments, Hawkfest, Pointe Mouillee Waterfowl Festival, and a Lotus Tour
- ✦ Expanding educational/outreach activities and strengthening stewardship efforts

- ✦ Increasing invasive species management by playing a lead role in the Detroit River-Western Lake Erie Cooperative Weed Management Area and *Phragmites* Strike Team
- ✦ Developing a habitat management plan for the Brancheau Unit
- ✦ Completing design work at Ford Marsh Unit with Ducks Unlimited to improve management capabilities



John Hartig, Refuge Manager
 Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge
 U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
 john_hartig@fws.gov

International Wildlife Refuge Alliance
 iwr_alliance@yahoo.com

For more information:
www.fws.gov/midwest/detroitriver
www.iwralliance.org