

## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

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# News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 9, 2012

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## U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE TO CARRY OUT STRATEGIC FIRING OPERATIONS IN BERLIN TOWNSHIP

**GROSSE ILE, MICHIGAN** – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service firefighters plan to conduct strategic firing operations in Berlin Township, on the east side of Port Sunlight Road. The firing will take place mid-day on Friday, May 11, 2012, on the Strong Unit of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge and land owned by Great Lakes Aggregates. To ensure public and firefighter safety, Port Sunlight Road may be closed for a short duration while operations are in progress.

The use of intentional firing must be carefully coordinated with expected weather and fire behavior. Firefighters will employ hand ignition techniques during Friday's firing operation, intended to target *Phragmites australis*, a non-native, aggressive aquatic plant responsible for the degradation of coastal wetland ecosystems along the long lower Detroit River and western Lake Erie over the past decade.

Refuge staff will utilize a number of communication outreach strategies to relay current information to local authorities, fire departments, and other government agencies throughout scheduled prescription fire activities. Officials predict the operation will produce a significant column of smoke which may be visible from surrounding areas; however, due to good atmospheric conditions projected for the burn, smoke will dissipate rapidly and impacts on surrounding communities are expected to be minimized.

Plans for prescribed burns are fully contingent upon weather conditions. Should firefighters need to cancel Friday's scheduled activity, Saturday, May 12, 2012 has been selected as an alternate date for the operation.

For additional information, please contact Greg Norwood, Refuge Wildlife Biologist at 734.692.7611 or [Greg\\_Norwood@fws.gov](mailto:Greg_Norwood@fws.gov).

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