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New Law Enforcement Officer Starts at Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge

Grosse Ile, Michigan – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is pleased to announce that Mr. Frank Polyak has been appointed the new Law Enforcement Officer for both Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge (IWR) and Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in northwest Ohio. Frank will have a split appointment, with roughly half-time devoted to Detroit River IWR and half-time to Ottawa NWR.

Frank Polyak grew up just outside of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and, after high school, attended the Delaware County Community College Municipal Police Academy. His first law enforcement assignment was for a detective/security agency, where, at the same time, he was a Biological Intern for the Supawana NWR in southern New Jersey. From there Frank moved to southeast Ohio to study Police Science/Criminal Justice at Hocking College and simultaneously attend the National Ranger Training Institute/Academy at Hocking College. After graduating from the Hocking College, Frank spent four years as a seasonal Refuge Law Enforcement Officer at Cape May, Chincoteague, and Blackwater NWRs. In 2004, Frank attained permanent status at the Chincoteague NWR that included special training at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) in Glynco, Georgia, the Refuge Officer Basic School (ROBS) in West Virginia, and field training in Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey, and Virginia. Frank spent roughly 4.5 years stomping around and patrolling the Delaware salt marshes at Bombay Hook and Prime Hook NWRs. In 2008, Frank transferred to Indiana where he served as the Law Enforcement Officer for both Muscatatuck and Big Oaks NWRs. He is now very pleased to be working in the Great Lakes Basin and looking forward to meeting the exciting challenge of serving both Detroit River IWR and Ottawa NWR.

Law enforcement is essential to virtually every aspect of wildlife conservation. Refuge Law Enforcement Officers contribute to Service efforts to manage ecosystems, save endangered species, conserve migratory birds, preserve wildlife habitat, restore fisheries, combat invasive species, and protect natural, cultural, and historic resources by fostering understanding and instilling in the visiting public an appreciation of refuge resources, laws, and regulations. Refuge Law Enforcement Officers encourage voluntary compliance through education, outreach, and law enforcement actions while creating a welcome and safe environment.

“The law enforcement work at Detroit River IWR is critically important because it has over six million people living in the watershed, it receives extensive public use, it lies on a major international border, and it preserves some of the most ecologically important habitat available along this riparian corridor,” notes Service Law Enforcement Zone Officer Kevin Shinn. “Frank’s unique background and proven track record of delivering effective law enforcement at multiple refuges will help him meet the challenges of serving both Detroit River IWR and Ottawa NWR.”

"This appointment is another milestone in our collective efforts to build the Refuge’s capacity to deliver in its mission of safe and responsible land and wildlife management in this major metropolitan area,” noted Congressman John D. Dingell. "The employment of a Law Enforcement Officer in the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge is further proof of its growth, importance, and success, as well as its ability to create jobs in the region. We are very fortunate to attract someone with Frank Polyak’s experience and skill, and I look forward to his contribution to the great team in place at the Refuge now.”

The Detroit River IWR covers 48 miles of shoreline along the Detroit River and western Lake Erie (www.fws.gov/midwest/detroitriver/). The Refuge focuses on conserving, protecting and restoring habitat for 30 species of waterfowl, 117 kinds of fish, and 300 species of birds. The Detroit River IWR is the first international refuge in North America. Unique habitats being managed in the Refuge include islands, coastal wetlands, marshes, shoals and riverfront lands.

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.

For more information, contact Zone Officer Kevin Shinn (989-280-2468) or Refuge Manager John Hartig (734-692-7608).

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