



## ***NEWS RELEASE***

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### **WETLAND RESTORATION AT BRANCHEAU UNIT WILL BE THE FOCUS OF NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY ON SEPT. 26, 2009**

Newport, Michigan – On September 26, 2009 over 130,000 Americans will grab shovels, pruning sheers and gloves to help improve the nation’s public lands as part of National Public Lands Day, an annual event held at over 2,000 sites across the country.

“Wherever Americans go outdoors to explore, hike, fish, paddle, jog or just enjoy nature, that location is likely to be a candidate for a National Public Lands Day event,” said Robb Hampton, director of National Public Lands Day, a program of the National Environmental Education Foundation. “For 2009, we will have a special focus on the connection water has on our public lands.” Volunteer efforts totaled an estimated \$13 million worth of time and in-kind contributions.

As part of celebrating National Public Lands Day this Saturday in southeast Michigan, over 50 volunteers from the Refuge, Friends of the Detroit River, and International Wildlife Refuge Alliance will be seeding and mulching newly created wetland dikes at the Brancheau Unit of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in partnership with Ducks Unlimited (DU), DTE Energy (DTE), Waterfowl USA, Southwestern Lake Erie Chapter (WUSA), The International Wildlife Refuge Alliance (IWRA), and The Metropolitan Affairs Coalition (MAC), is just completing the restoration of approximately 65 acres of coastal wetland habitat in the Brancheau Unit near the mouth of Swan Creek as it enters western Lake Erie. This unit is the site of the second National Public Lands Day event hosted by the refuge. Volunteers will help to seed the newly constructed dikes and place straw to help prevent erosion.

“This restoration project is especially important in this area because we have lost over 90% of our historical wetlands,” noted Steve Dushane, Assistant Refuge Manager. “Once completed, this project will not only restore wetlands and enhance wildlife habitat for migratory birds and other wetland-dependent wildlife, but it will help reduce

nonpoint source loadings of pollutants to western Lake Erie and help reduce the risk of flooding to local residences and businesses.”

For more information please contact Kristi Thiel (734-692-7649) or Steve Dushane (734-692-7604) of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or David Howell (734-675-0141) of the Friends of the Detroit River.

*Discover Our Wild Side*