



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE PARTNERS WITH ITC HOLDINGS CORP. TO CONTROL INVASIVE *PHRAGMITES* IN DETROIT RIVER INTERNATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

GROSSE ILE, MICH. May 18, 2011 – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) today announced an expansion of its partnership with ITC Holdings Corp. (ITC) to control invasive *Phragmites* (common reed) in the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge. ITC, the nation’s largest independent electricity transmission company, based in Novi, Mich., today contributed \$70,000 to the USFWS for use in expanding *Phragmites* control efforts within the refuge.

While there is a less vigorous, native type of this common reed in Michigan, an exotic, non-native variety of *Phragmites* is becoming widespread, threatening the ecological health of wetlands in southeast Michigan and other Great Lakes coastal shorelines. Invasive *Phragmites* creates tall, dense stands which degrade wetlands and coastal areas by crowding out native plants and animals, restricting light penetration for other plants that are more beneficial to wildlife, and blocking shoreline views and public access. The non-native *Phragmites* has become dominant in wetlands along the Detroit River and continues to expand into new areas, out-competing native types of the plant because of genetic advantages.

“I am grateful to ITC for this latest gift of \$70,000 for *Phragmites* control in the refuge,” said Congressman John D. Dingell. “This collaboration between ITC and the USFWS is another shining example of public-private partnerships for protection of fragile wetlands and wildlife habitats. Indeed, this new paradigm of cooperative conservation is a model for the world.”

John Hartig, refuge manager, Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, said “ITC’s most recent contribution will allow us to expand our efforts through the newly-formed *Phragmites* Strike Team of the Detroit River-Western Lake Erie Cooperative Weed Management Area. While we put ITC’s generous donation into action, we also will leverage this gift to encourage matching contributions from other sources for this most important ecological work,” Hartig said. He noted that current best management practices to control *Phragmites* include treating it with a selective herbicide, burning it through prescribed fires, and whenever possible increasing water levels to discourage its growth.

“Our commitment to environmental stewardship and practices naturally extends from our company culture into our operating philosophy,” said Linda Blair, executive vice president and chief business officer, ITC Holdings Corp. “We are proud to support this important work by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to maintain a healthy and vibrant environment for future generations.”

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ITC began its partnership with the USFWS in 2007 with a financial contribution and labor to remove invasive species including *Phragmites* in the Humbug Marsh Unit of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge. ITC's commitment extends beyond its financial contributions, as its staff has served on the board of directors of the International Wildlife Refuge Alliance, the refuge's friends group, since 2007.

The mission of the USFWS is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants, and their habitats, for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge spans 48 miles of shoreline along the Detroit River and western Lake Erie (<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/detroitriver/>). The refuge focuses on conserving, protecting and restoring habitats for 29 species of waterfowl, 23 raptors, 31 shorebirds, and over 100 fishes. It is the first international wildlife refuge in North America.

About ITC Holdings Corp.

ITC Holdings Corp. (NYSE: ITC) invests in the electricity transmission grid to improve electric reliability, expand access to markets, lower the overall cost of delivered energy and allow new generating resources to interconnect to its transmission systems. The largest independent electricity transmission company in the country, ITC currently operates high-voltage transmission systems and assets in Michigan's Lower Peninsula and portions of Iowa, Minnesota, Illinois, Missouri and Kansas, serving a combined peak load in excess of 25,000 megawatts through its regulated operating subsidiaries, ITC *Transmission*, Michigan Electric Transmission Company (METC), ITC Midwest and ITC Great Plains. ITC also focuses on further expansion in areas where significant transmission system improvements are needed through ITC Grid Development and its subsidiaries. For more information, please visit: <http://www.itctransco.com>.

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