



**February 5, 2015
Media Release
For Immediate Release**

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\$2.85 million Secured for Boat Dock and Fishing Pier at Refuge Gateway in Trenton

Trenton, Michigan -- Wayne County and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announce that \$2.85 million has been raised to construct a school ship dock and world-class fishing pier at the Refuge Gateway in Trenton, Michigan. As the future site of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge's (DRIWR) Visitor's Center, the Refuge Gateway will welcome thousands of projected annual visitors and serve as a hub for outdoor recreation, including, fishing, birding, hunting, kayaking/canoeing, wildlife observation, environmental education, and interpretation in southeast Michigan.

Located just south of a warm water discharge and adjacent to DRIWR's Humbug Marsh, Michigan's *only* 'Wetland of International Importance' designated by the Ramsar Convention and the last mile of undeveloped shoreline along the U.S. mainland of the Detroit River, the Refuge Gateway's unique location boasts of high biodiversity. The chosen site for the boat dock and fishing pier is famous for trophy walleye fishing in the Great Lakes. The site is part of the "walleye capital of the world" and is easily accessible to nearly seven million people living within a 45-minute drive. This facility will provide one of the premier shore-fishing experiences in the Great Lakes and will also provide vessel-based environmental educational opportunities for school children.

The boat dock and fishing pier will extend 775' into the Detroit River to provide a free, universally accessible, shore-based fishing experience. The project includes a universally-accessible boardwalk, fishing pier, and floating dock with seating areas, shade structures, and interpretive signage. Habitats accessible from the boardwalk include shallow waters rich with panfish for youth and family fishing, and deeper waters for experienced walleye fishermen. The shore-based entrance to the boat dock and fishing pier will allow the public to fish in water depths currently only available to those with a personal watercraft. Visitation will be enhanced by local sport fishing organizations, like the Downriver Walleye Federation, who plan to use the facility to host annual shore-based fishing tournaments.

The project was made possible through funding support of numerous partners. Major funders include the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, Wayne County, the Great Lakes Fishery Trust, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Jon Mayes of the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund commented: "Given the outstanding natural resources present within the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, it is entirely fitting that the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund is a funding partner in the construction of the Boat Dock and Fishing Pier at the Refuge Gateway. These improvements will benefit research and outdoor recreation for decades to come and will help the next generation to experience firsthand the benefits of scientific natural resource management in a scenic part of southeast Michigan."

"The Great Lakes Fishery Trust is proud to join with other funders and community partners to support this important project that will provide world-class fishing access on the Detroit River," said William Moritz, chair of the board of trustees for the GLFT and deputy director of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

Additional funding support is provided by Funding support from numerous partners is being pooled within the Downriver Community Conference to undertake construction. Funding partners include: Great Lakes Fishery Trust, Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, Wayne County, CN, Downriver Community Conference, International Wildlife Refuge Alliance, Consumers Energy, DTE, Carl's Foundation, Quicken Loans, Metropolitan Affairs Coalition, Colina Family, World Heritage Fund - Prechter Family Fund, R.L. Easterbrook, ITC, BASF, Bottom Line Bait & Tackle, Cardno JFNew, Monroe Bank & Trust, Wyandot of Anderdon, Wyandot of Oklahoma, ASTI, Karmazin Family, Grosse Ile Bridge Company, Ducks Unlimited, LimnoTech, Eastman Chemical, Niswander Environmental, Meyer Family Foundation, St. Thomas Lutheran Church, Trenton Exchange Club, Dr. Noel and Debbie Jackson, and Friends of the Detroit River.

Contracting for project construction will begin in early-2015, with construction beginning later this year. The timing of construction has been carefully considered so to minimize negative effects on adjacent habitats in Humbug Marsh. A grand opening for the fishing pier and boat dock will occur in either fall 2015 or spring 2016. Project partners and funders and local community members will be invited to celebrate at the project's opening.

The Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge incorporates more than 5,800 acres along 48 miles of the lower Detroit River and western Lake Erie. The Refuge focuses on conserving, protecting, and restoring habitat for 29 species of waterfowl, 23 species of raptors, 31 species of shorebirds, over 100 species of fish, and over 300 species of birds. It is the first international refuge in North America and one of the few urban ones in the nation. Unique habitats being managed within the Refuge include islands, coastal wetlands, marshes, shoals, and riparian waterfront lands. Visit <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/DetroitRiver> for additional information.



Birdseye view rendering of the completed dock and fishing pier (Hamilton Anderson Associates)



Rendering of visitors enjoying the experience on the pier (Hamilton Anderson Associates)