

Refuge Reporter

Volume 10, Issue 4

Fall 2007

Refuge Open House Weekend Is September 8–9

by Becky Goche, Visitor Services Manager

Yes, it's time again for our annual Refuge Open House Weekend! This is the only time during the year that visitors are free to hike, bicycle and deer scout ANYWHERE on the refuge, during daylight hours. This is normally the time when we have our self-guided auto tour available, too. Unfortunately, there will be NO AUTO TOUR again this year because a portion of the route that was damaged during a flood in Spring 2006 still needs to be repaired. The refuge did get funding to repair it and we hope to begin construction still this year, as long as the weather holds. If all goes well, it will be available next year.

We have lots of fun activities planned

Steve Gasser Named 2006 Refuge Volunteer of Year

by Becky Goche, Visitor Services Manager

In 2006, 115 people donated 4,335 hours helping out on the refuge. These volunteers and Friends Board of Directors were honored at a dinner on June 27 at the Old Country Buffet in Saginaw. Twenty-one people attended.

throughout the weekend to fill in the gap of no auto tour. Guided bird hikes, guided bicycle tours, a butterfly walk, free tree give-away, photo contest judging and a first-ever Virtual Geo-caching activity on the refuge. Majority of these activities will take place on Saturday only. Read on for more information...

Guided Bird Hikes—Saturday and Sunday

Refuge volunteers Steve Gasser and Larry Abraham will lead a guided bird hike on **Saturday at 8:00 a.m.** at the Ferguson Bayou Trail parking lot.

Steve will also lead a bird hike on **Sunday at 8:00 a.m.** at the Woodland Trail parking lot. Bring your binoculars, wear

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Special Points:

- *Goose and deer hunting will cause some trail closures, see our website for the times.*
- *Over 4,000 hunters applied for the 2007 refuge deer hunts. Packet pick-up dates are October 19, 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.; October 20, 7:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.; and October 26, 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Hunters can get their packets by mail at any time. All packets must be picked up by October 26*

Refuge Open House Weekend Is September 8–9 Continued

comfortable shoes, and water to both.

Guided Bicycle Tours—Saturday and Sunday

Refuge Manager Steve Kahl will lead bicyclists along a 7-mile, gravel route to see wildlife two times each day. If you're an early bird, try the **6:30 a.m. ride on Saturday and Sunday**. If you want to sleep in late, try the **6:00 p.m. ride on Saturday and Sunday**. On either ride you should have several opportunities to see wildlife since they are more active at these times. All bicyclists should meet at the Ferguson Bayou Trail parking lot at the west end of Curtis Road.

Butterfly Walk—Saturday

Stan Lilley of the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy will point out butterflies, give life history information and identification tips. He will also bring his net to capture and demonstrate how monarchs are tagged to track their migration. The walk begins **10:00 a.m. on Saturday** at the Ferguson Bayou Trail parking lot.



The bronze copper is one of the butterflies you may encounter during the Butterfly Walk on Saturday. They can be found in the refuge's marshes. Photo by Kim LeBlanc

Free Tree Give Away—Saturday

The Saginaw Correctional Facility in Freeland grew white and black oak trees from acorns for the State. Well, they were very successful and now have too many trees. From **9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.** (or until they're gone) on **Saturday**, you can stop by the refuge headquarters on the corner of Curtis and Mower Roads and pick one up.

Photo Contest Judging—Saturday

You can pick the winners of this year's Refuge Photo Contest. Amateur photographers enter their photos into one of the four categories. Stop by the refuge headquarters on **Saturday** between **9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.** to pick your favorite one in each category. Winners will be announced at the Nurturing Nature Series program on October 3 at the Green Point Environmental Learning Center.

Virtual Geocaching—Saturday

Virtual Geocaching is a high-tech scavenger hunt. Virtual Geocaching involves locating a specific landmark or feature on the refuge. It does not involve finding or leaving an item in a cache. This is a family-friendly activity, using a Global Positioning System (GPS) unit to find a specific place on the refuge. You can pick up your clue sheet at the refuge headquarters, 6975 Mower Road, from **10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Saturday**. You will need a clue sheet, your own transportation, a GPS unit, and a pencil or pen to write your answers. If you find all the answers and report back to the headquarters by 3:00 p.m., you will receive a prize. Private Lands Biologist Michelle Vander Haar will be available to provide general guidance in using a GPS unit if needed.



A Hiding Place by David M. Blanford, winner of the Refuge Manager's Choice award in the 2006 Refuge Photo Contest.

Refuge Partners with Detroit Edison and The Conservation Fund to Reduce Greenhouse Gases

by Steve Kahl, Refuge Manager

To address the many concerns over climate change, the U.S. Department of Energy established the Global Climate Challenge Program. One important aspect of the program calls for a reduction in the amount of greenhouse gases (GHG) in the atmosphere. A portion of the GHG reduction program calls for the sequestration of carbon in biomass. One of the methods of GHG reduction utilizes trees, which are natural carbon sinks because they take carbon dioxide out of the air and sequester it in living plant tissue. Thus, reforestation is a scientifically recognized way to sequester carbon from our atmosphere.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has entered into a partnership with Detroit Edison and The Conservation Fund to restore native forest habitat at Shiawassee Refuge that in turn will result in carbon sequestration. This effort was launched on the ground on Arbor Day 2007 when crews began planting 180 acres of refuge lands with over 53,000 tree seedlings. Tree species included American sycamore, bur oak, white oak, northern red oak, red maple, silver maple, black walnut, and common hackberry. Gaps between existing

refuge woodlands will fill in to create larger forest blocks to benefit numerous wildlife species, including wood duck, barred owl, eastern wood-pewee, wood thrush, American redstart, and scarlet tanager.

Additionally, this partnership will yield a fund to acquire land for reforestation and addition to Shiawassee Refuge. This fund is critical because land acquisition is one of the refuge's greatest challenges. The refuge is authorized to acquire an additional 7,000 acres. Further, in the last two years the refuge has been approached by the sellers of 14 tracts totaling over 1,100 acres. However, our land acquisition funding has been almost nonexistent and almost all of these tracts have since been sold. This fund gives us a better chance to protect lands in the future.

Many thanks to Detroit Edison and The Conservation Fund in their efforts to reduce GHGs, improve refuge habitats, and acquire new refuge lands.

National Public Lands Day Clean-Up at Green Point Scheduled for September 29

The refuge will be cleaning-up as area residents join the largest annual coast-to-coast, single-day volunteer restoration effort for America's public lands.

We are in need of volunteers who are willing to roll up their sleeves and devote three hours to cleaning and landscaping at Green Point Environmental Learning Center as part of the 14th annual National Public Lands Day (NPLD) on **Saturday, September 29 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.** The national cleanups give Americans an annual chance to make public lands in local communities safer, prettier, and more desirable.

Last year 100,000 volunteers participated nationwide. At Green Point, we had two Girl Scout Troops and several refuge volunteers who helped out. It's a great pro-

ject for Scouts, high school students and others!

For the fourth year in a row, volunteers who work at a site managed by any of the five federal agencies will be rewarded with a pass good for free entry any day during the next year at public land sites managed by those agencies: National Park Service, USDA Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

For more information, contact Becky Goche at (989) 759-1669 or see a list of NPLD sites, activities, contacts, and downloadable photos from past events in the Media Center section of www.publiclandsday.org.

Shiawassee Refuge Conducts First NABA Butterfly Count

by Steve Kahl, Refuge Manager

The first Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge NABA Butterfly Count was conducted on July 6. The refuge count is one of hundreds coordinated by the North American Butterfly Association (NABA) in the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

Counts are conducted for one day within a 15-mile diameter circle. Shiawassee Refuge is at the center of its circle and occupies a large part of the geographic area.

NABA counts are usually held in the few weeks before or after July 4th. NABA publishes an annual report of all count results. These reports provide important information about the geographic distributions and population sizes of the species counted. Comparisons of the results over the years monitor changes in butterfly populations and reveal effects of weather and habitat change on the different species.

Five participants found 30 species of butterfly and counted 1,311 individuals. The most common species were red admiral (249), cabbage white (223), common wood nymph (199), monarch (189), and clouded sulphur (131).

The rarest species found was one American snout. Other uncommon species included banded hairstreak, American lady, and tawny emperor. Four new species for the refuge's butterfly list were found, including eyed brown, Appalachian brown, northern broken-dash, and dun skipper.

The complete list includes black swallowtail (21), eastern tiger swallowtail (2), cabbage white (223), clouded sulphur (131), orange sulphur (86), bronze copper (11), banded hairstreak (4), eastern tailed-blue (4), American snout (1), great spangled fritillary (10), pearl crescent (4), question mark (4), eastern comma (6), mourning cloak (2), American lady (5), red admiral (249), viceroy (40), tawny emperor (1), northern pearly-eye (16), eyed brown (5), Appalachian brown (1), little wood-satyr (3), common wood-nymph (199), monarch (189), silver-spotted skipper (2), European skipper (5), north-

ern broken-dash (5), little glassywing (10), Delaware skipper (36), dun skipper (36).



The American lady was one of the more uncommon butterflies seen on the count. Photo by Kim LeBlanc

The Big Sit! Coming to Shiawassee

by Becky Goche, Visitor Services Manager

The Big Sit!™ is coming to Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge. This program started in 1992, when the New Haven, Connecticut, Bird Club began holding an annual event called The Big Sit!™. By 2006, the idea had spread to 164 circles registered in 36 states and nine countries besides the United States. Now the idea is coming to Shiawassee Refuge for National Wildlife Refuge Week. This free event is a fun way to collect data and bring together our community as we form circles – literally – to count birds and get to know a part of the refuge.

Refuge staff and volunteers will start the 24-hour watch of The Big Sit! at midnight on Sunday, October 14 and continue all day until midnight. They will monitor birds within a 17-foot circle around the Greffe Tower at the end of Ferguson Bayou Trail, off of Curtis Road. Visitors are invited to come out anytime during daylight hours on Sunday, April 14, to view their progress and help out. Please be aware that you will need to walk or bicycle to the tower. You may want to bring a chair, refreshments, binoculars and a birding guide. The results will be sent to the official Big Sit! Website at: www.birdwatchersdigest.com/site/funbirds/bigsit/bigsit.aspx.

Eagle Scout Takes on Woodland Trail Parking Lot Project

by *Becky Goche, Visitor Services Manager*

Boy Scout Jeff Wojewoda of Troop 312 in Saginaw, completed a rehab project at the refuge's Woodland Trail parking lot on June 19, as part of one of his requirements in earning his Eagle Scout rank. Jeff began meeting with me last fall to discuss possible refuge projects for him to work on. The Woodland Trail parking lot was in dire need of a facelift and Jeff decided that he wanted to take it on.

Jeff and his crew of 22 helpers, most of which were other Boy Scouts, spent four days over three months beginning in April, working on this project. Altogether, 23 volunteers donated 122 hours. Jeff worked with local Master Gardener and refuge volunteer Susan Scott to determine what wildflower species would work well and what was the best way to prepare and plant the gardens that are scattered around the parking

area. He then got donations of plants, mulch, compost and fertilizer. After the plantings were done, Jeff and his crew stained all the parking lot posts, rails, and the kiosk and entrance sign structures. He also painted two metal gates. The refuge provided 7 gallons of stain and some brushes to complete the project. Jeff got donations for the paint, rollers, and food for the hungry crew.

The Woodland Trail is Shiawassee's most used hiking area. Several thousands of hikers, bicyclers, bird watchers, and others who love nature use these trails each month. The "look" of the parking area and that of the refuge is vastly improved thanks to the efforts and leadership of Jeff Wojewoda.

New Federal Lands Park Pass

The new National Parks and Federal Recreation Lands Pass for seniors and people with disabilities are now available at the refuge. These passes cover the entrance and standard amenity fees charged for using federal recreation lands. The new "America the Beautiful—The National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass" series includes Interagency Senior Passes, \$10, for U.S. citizens 62 and older; and Interagency Access Passes, free for U.S. citizens who are permanently disabled. The new program also introduces an interagency admissions pass for volunteers who donate 500 hours during a year, for hours accrued after January 1, 2007.

Paper versions of the Golden Age and Golden Access Passports should be exchanged for the new Senior or Access passes. However, plastic Golden Age or Access passes are valid for the pass holder's lifetime and do not need to be exchanged. The Senior and Access passes are good for the lifetime of the holder and make available to the pass holder 50 percent discounts on some expanded amenity fees.

For more information about these passes, contact the refuge at (989) 777-5930 or visit www.recreation.gov.

REFUGE REPORTER

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Editor: Becky Goche

Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge

Established in October, 1953 and administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Shiawassee NWR provides resting, nesting and feeding habitat for waterfowl and other birds. Its mission is to preserve or manage an undeveloped expanse of floodplain forest, marshes, rivers, and associated habitat within an agricultural and urban landscape through habitat management, encouraging public stewardship, educational programs, and private lands activities.

Refuge Manager—Steve Kahl

Assistant Refuge Manager—Ed DeVries

Biologist—Jim Dastyck

Private Lands Biologist—Michelle Vander Haar

Visitor Services Manager—Becky Goche

Administrative Officer—Mary Ann Gillette

Maintenance Staff—Marion "Butch" Nowosatko and David Peters

Friends of Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge

A nonprofit 501 (c)(3) organization established in 1999 to promote the preservation of the natural and historical resources of the Refuge, foster its use and enjoyment by the public consistent with the protection and preservation of its environment, and engage in such educational, scientific and civic activities as will assist the management of the Refuge in carrying out its mandates.

Refuge Website: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/shiawassee>

Shiawassee NWR
6975 Mower Rd.
Saginaw, MI 48601
Phone: 989-777-5930
Fax: 989-777-9200
Hours: M - F, 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

We're on the web!

[Http://www.fws.gov/midwest/shiawassee](http://www.fws.gov/midwest/shiawassee)



Lots of Events Planned for this Year's Refuge Open House Weekend

Schedule Your Fall Field Trip

By Becky Goche, Visitor Services Manager

Attention teachers: Fall is a great time to visit Green Point Environmental Learning Center. We have a number of programs for all ages. A few of our more popular ones are a habitat study, insect safari and food webs. Visit our website at www.fws.gov/midwest/shiawassee and click on the "Environmental Education" button. From here you can download a copy of the "Educator's Guide."

We also have several programs that can be brought to your school, like a Careers program or a "Virtual" Refuge tour. All of our programs are free. Call me at (989) 759-1669 or email me at Becky_Goche@fws.gov to set up your trip today.

2007 Trail Closures Due to Hunting

Ferguson Bayou Trail at Curtis Road*

October 27-31

November 1-5, 15-20, and 24-25

December 1-5, 7-10, 14-15, and 27-31

Woodland Trail at Stroebel Road

October 27-31

November 1-5, 19-20

December 7-10, and 14-15

Cass River Unit in Bridgeport

October 27-31

November 1-5

December 1-5 and 27-31

*Please note that the goose hunting schedule has not been set yet for October.

Nurturing Nature Wednesday Series

- All programs begin at 7:00 p.m. and last 60 – 90 minutes.
- Held at the Green Point Environmental Learning Center, 3010 Maple Street, Saginaw, unless otherwise noted.
- Admission: \$2 for individuals. FREE for members of the Friends of the Shiawassee NWR.

A Taste of Honey... and Bee Keeping

September 12

Bee keeper Dan Keane tells the story of how honey is made and harvested, and then offers a chance to taste a variety of types of honey.

Bats, Bats, Bats - LIVE!

October 3

The Organization for Bat Conservation will bring their exciting multi-media presentation describing the unique lives of bats. See live U.S. bat, South American bats, and African fruit bats with 4-foot wingspans.

Michigan's Junior Duck Stamp Program

November 7

Michigan's Federal Junior Duck Stamp Program and Design Contest turned 15 this year. Each year in Michigan, it attracts hundreds of artists in grades K-12. Park Ranger Becky Goche, the State Junior Duck Stamp Coordinator, will offer an overview of the program and images of this year's winners.

No program in December.

Full Moon Hike

October 26, 2007, 7:00 p.m.

Green Point Environmental Learning Center

Explore the night world at Green Point by moonlight! This guided hike is geared for families with children. You will hike almost one mile along the winding, flat trails. Wear dark clothes and comfortable shoes, and bring a flashlight.

Calendar of Events

Refuge Open House

September 8 – 9, 2007, during daylight hours

The entire refuge

For this weekend only, the entire refuge is open to hiking, bicycling and deer scouting during daylight hours. There is no self-guided auto tour since repairs on part of the route are not completed. A number of programs are planned each day including guided bird hikes, guided bicycle tours, vote for your favorite photo in the refuge photo contest, tree give away, and a virtual geo-caching activity. See the newsletter for more details.

Public Lands Day Clean-Up

September 29, 2007, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Green Point Environmental Learning Center

Bring your gloves, rakes and pruning shears and help clean-up Green Point. This is a great community service project for scouts!

The Big Sit!

October 14, 2007, Daylight Hours

Grefe Tower on Ferguson Bayou Trail

See how the refuge staff and volunteers are doing with their 24-hour, round-the-clock bird count. Hike or bicycle to the Grefe Tower and check their progress.

For more information, contact Green Point ELC at (989) 759-1669.

FRIENDS OF SHIAWASSEE NWR MEMBERSHIP PAGE

Friends of Shiawassee NWR Membership

Renewal New membership

General Membership

\$10 – Individual (1) vote.

\$25 – Family (2) votes. (Member, spouse and children under age 18)

- Each membership receives quarterly newsletter - "Refuge Reporter."
- Each membership includes voting rights and opportunity to hold office.

Supporting Levels (includes 1 year individual membership): "Goose" \$50, "Blue Heron" \$75, "Owl" \$100, "Bald Eagle" \$125 & over

No membership at this time, but please accept my contribution.

*Membership is for calendar year. Dues paid after October 1 include remainder of current year plus the following year.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip code: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Make checks payable to "Friends of Shiawassee NWR", PO Box 20129, Saginaw, MI, 48602.

Contributions to the Friends of Shiawassee NWR, a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization, are tax deductible according to IRS guidelines.

Friends' Volunteer Opportunities

Do you have any of these skills?

_____ Staffing Trailhead Store

_____ Leading walking tours

_____ Helping with workshops

_____ Assisting with refuge auto tours

_____ Doing outreach events, i.e. fairs

_____ Assisting with First Wednesday

_____ Writing newsletter articles

_____ Writing/developing grants

_____ Serving as Committee member

_____ Leading children's activities

_____ Developing trails

_____ Computer skills

_____ Photography

_____ Carpentry skills

_____ Business organizational skills

_____ Research

_____ Artistic skills

_____ Fund raising

_____ Grant writing

_____ Researching/Ordering merchandise

_____ Other – please list:

Board meetings held on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Green Point Environmental Learning Center, 3010 Maple Street in Saginaw. General meetings with special programs are held at various times throughout the year. Friends Board of Directors Officers are:

President – Charles Hoover

Vice President – Susan Scott

Secretary – Janet Martineau

Treasurer – Wil Hufton II