

## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

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# News Release



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**DTE Energy**



## THOUSANDS SCHEDULED TO ATTEND WORLD WETLANDS DAY EVENT AT GIBRALTAR'S CARLSON HIGH SCHOOL

**GIBRALTAR, MICHIGAN** – The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual celebration of World Wetlands Day will take place on Friday, January 31<sup>st</sup> at Oscar A. Carlson High School in Gibraltar, Michigan, from 9:00AM to 3:00PM. An anticipated 1,500 students from around Wayne County will participate in next week's event, featuring a number of interactive activities, presentations and demonstrations, as well as a Wetlands Exposition slated to showcase over 20 displays dedicated to wetland conservation. The celebration will be open for public visitation beginning at 12:30PM.

Each February, World Wetlands Day (WWD) is observed worldwide in recognition of the date the international treaty for the conservation and sustainable utilization of wetlands was signed at the Ramsar Convention in 1971. The Ramsar Convention maintains a list of wetlands across the globe that have been deemed worthy of international importance; a list totaling nearly 2,000 sites, including southeast Michigan's own Humbug Marsh.

As the last mile of natural shoreline along the U.S. mainland portion of the Detroit River and a celebrated unit of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, Humbug Marsh has been the driving force behind the popular World Wetlands Day event hosted each year at Carlson High School since its designation as Michigan's only "Wetland of International Importance" in 2010.

Located a mere two miles downriver of the marsh, Oscar A. Carlson High School sits adjacent to the Gibraltar Wetlands Unit of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge. This proximity to nature helped cultivate a long-standing relationship between the refuge and school, known throughout the region as a leader in conservation education, who now work together to provide special educational access to the site's wetland ecosystem. WWD Event Coordinator Crystal Fowler has played a significant role in the development of this meaningful partnership. Her role as the lead wetland ecology instructor at Carlson HS prompted her interest in the establishment of the annual WWD event; "We work hard to develop meaningful experiences to engage our students in science, nature and environmental stewardship. Hosting the World Wetlands Day event each year gives us new opportunities to provide kids with more hands-on activities and lessons focusing on the sustainability, restoration, and conservation of our natural resources."

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service supports a myriad of efforts designed to keep wildlife conservation and recreation relevant to the changing culture of America. "With 80% of Americans living in urban areas, we need to bring conservation to cities to help develop the next generation of conservationists," notes Dr. John Hartig, Refuge Manager of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge. "The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is proud to

work with Gibraltar Carlson High School and other partners to celebrate World Wetlands Day throughout the world and make wetland conservation exciting for high school students.”

The Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge incorporates more than 5,700 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 waterfront lands.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s vision for the National Wildlife Refuge System, entitled *Conserving the Future*, established an Urban Wildlife Refuge Initiative to increase conservation relevancy to urban citizens. This initiative is helping make nature part of everyday urban life through fostering urban conservation partnerships in strategically selected cities throughout the U.S. and by helping define and achieve excellence in making conservation relevant to urban residents.

The 2014 World Wetlands Day celebration will take place on Friday, January 31<sup>st</sup> at Oscar A. Carlson High School located at 30550 W. Jefferson Avenue in Gibraltar, Michigan from 9:00AM to 3:00PM. The event is open to the public from 12:30PM to 3:00PM. All school visitors *must* enter the building at the front entrance and sign in at the office.

This event is subject to cancellation in the event of inclement weather. Please contact Crystal Fowler at Carlson High School for event status at 734.379.7100.

For more information about this and other Refuge events, contact the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge at 734.692.7649, or visit: [http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Detroit\\_River](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Detroit_River).

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