

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Large Lakes Research Station
9311 Groh Road
Grosse Ile, MI 48138
Phone: (734) 692-7608
Fax: (734) 692-7603
<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/detroitriver>
<http://www.facebook.com/DetroitRiverIWR>

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 26, 2014

Contact: Anna Cook (734-692-7672)
or John Hartig (734-692-7608)

YOUTH WORK CREW MAKES A DIFFERENCE AT DETROIT RIVER INTERNATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Grosse Ile, Michigan – During the summer of 2014, the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge employed five local teenagers as part of the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC), a federally funded youth employment program facilitated by the Departments of Interior and Agriculture. The employment of students and young adults as YCC crew members enables the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to complete projects that could have otherwise been delayed due to a lack of funding or available staff and fulfills a significant component of the President's priority to engage local youth in river restoration work. The program ran for eight weeks, from mid-June to mid-August. This year youth from the Steve Harvey Mentoring Program were also hired as part of the YCC. In September 2013, refuge staff participated in the Steve Harvey Mentoring Program for Young Men in Detroit. The goal of this mentoring program was to teach leadership skills and provide positive male role models to 13-18 year old young men from the Detroit Metropolitan Area to help them realize their potential and help them envision and prepare for a future where they are strong, responsible, and productive men.

The 2014 YCC team included two youth leaders (Devin Lang of Gibraltar, MI and Alexis Gundick of Trenton, MI), three other crew members (Stacy Alvarez of Lincoln park, MI, Malik Jones of Warren, MI, and Roblyn Franklin of Gibraltar, MI), and an adult leader (Mr. Norman Clement of Detroit, MI). Highlights of major YCC accomplishments this summer included:

- Removing invasive plants;
- Constructing and maintaining trails;
- Restoring upland habitats;
- Banding Canadian Geese;
- Performing fishery surveys, including bottom otter-trawling, electrofishing, shore seining, and set-lining for adult lake sturgeon; and
- Sampling and identifying macrobenthic invertebrates to help gauge river health.

Clearly, the work of the YCC is challenging, but also very educational, rewarding, and fun. YCC members get a unique opportunity to play an active role in protecting the nation's precious natural resources. They also learn about career opportunities in the conservation field, gain valuable work skills, and develop some lifelong friendships.

The Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge represents a new model for conservation – one that both restores habitats for wildlife in an urban area through innovative public-private partnerships and provides a blueprint for bringing conservation to cities across the nation. The Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge extends along 48 miles of lower Detroit River and western Lake Erie, and focuses on conserving, protecting, and restoring habitats for 30 species of waterfowl, 117 kinds of fish, and over 300 species of birds. The Refuge currently owns or cooperatively manages 5,817 acres of unique habitats that include islands, coastal wetlands, marshes, wet prairies, shoals and riverfront lands. To date, 3,797 acres of Essex Region Conservation Authority lands and 981 acres of City of Windsor lands have been added to a Canadian registry of lands, and 7,897 acres of Michigan Department of Natural Resources lands have been added to the U.S. registry of lands for conservation purposes. When totaled between Canada and U.S., 18,492 acres of land in southwest Ontario and southeast Michigan are now being collaboratively managed and protected for the benefit of wildlife and outdoor recreation in the spirit and intent of the 2001 Conservation Vision and the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge.

More than 80 percent of Americans live in urban or suburban communities and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service values the role that urban refuges play in bringing conservation to urban areas and in providing innovative educational programming and volunteer opportunities. The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is “working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, and dedication and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.



YCC Crew with Congressman John Dingell and refuge staff. **Photo Credit:** USFWS

##