

# News Release



**Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge  
Large Lakes Research Station  
9311 Groh Road  
Grosse Ile, Michigan 48138**

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 29, 2012

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### **Youth Work Crew Join in Support of America's Great Outdoors Initiative**

Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge welcomed four local teenagers to its ranks this month to take part in the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC), a federally funded youth employment program facilitated by the Departments of Interior and Agriculture. The effort is a significant component of the *America's Great Outdoors* initiative launched by President Obama to develop a 21st Century conservation and recreation agenda.

As an agency within the Department of the Interior, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works to employ, educate and engage young people from all backgrounds in exploring, connecting with and preserving America's natural and cultural heritage. Working with the State of Michigan, the U.S. Department of Interior has identified engaging youth in Detroit River restoration as one of only two Michigan priorities under the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. The employment of students and young adults as Youth Conservation Corps 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.

Crew members selected to participate in this exciting Refuge program were chosen randomly from a pool of more than 50 eligible applicants that hail from communities across the greater Detroit metro area. Drake LaFleur, 16, of South Rockwood, worked with last year's YCC crew and has been asked to return this year as acting youth leader. LaFleur will assist in the supervision and management of three other crew members: Kamaria Mickles, 18, of Detroit; Courtney Cunningham, 15, of Southgate; and Quinton Furman, 18, of Southfield as the team works to accomplish a number of significant conservation projects on refuge lands.

Refuge staff are also excited to welcome Adult Leader David Locher to the crew. Locher hails from Monroe County, is a recent graduate of Michigan State University and a veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps. He will oversee the group of youth employees as they take part in the completion of tasks incorporating general refuge operations, wildlife research, trail maintenance and visitor access concerns, environmental education and recreation programs, and basic grounds upkeep and repair.

The Youth Conservation Corps program is challenging, educational and fun and gives individuals the chance to play an active role in protecting the nation's precious resources. Crew members will learn about career opportunities in the conservation field, gain valuable work skills and develop lifelong friendships with other young adults from all walks of life. Participants will also enjoy educational field trips, hands-on experiences and activities both on-site and within the greater Detroit community.

For more information on the Midwest Region of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service visit <http://midwest.fws.gov>.

*The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, 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, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov).*

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