

Fall 2017

THE WILDSIDE

A newsletter for the supporters of the International Wildlife Refuge Alliance and the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge

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PHOTO CREDIT: JAKE BONELLO



The Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge (DRIWR) is located along the lower Detroit River and western shoreline of Lake Erie. Established in 2001 as the first International Wildlife Refuge in North America, it includes islands, coastal wetlands, marshes, shoals, and waterfront lands along 48 miles of shoreline. Its unique location in a large urban area allows significant opportunities for the public to experience fish, wildlife and plants in their natural habitat.

The International Wildlife Refuge Alliance (IWRA) is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization - a "Friends" organization that works to support the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in the development of the DRIWR. We invite you to become a supporter of IWRA.

Visit iwralliance.org, www.fws.gov/refuge/detroit_river and www.drhawkwatch.org for more periodic updates.

IWRA Email: iwr_alliance@yahoo.com
IWRA Office: 734.692.7671

DRIWR Office: 734-362-7736

General Information: 734-265-0219

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Staff

- Dr. John Hartig • Refuge Manager
- Steve Dushane • Assistant Refuge Manager
- Jody DeMeyere • Visitor Services Manager
- Jennifer Braatz • Visitor Services Park Ranger
- Greg Norwood • Biologist
- John Nicely • Maintenance Mechanic
- Anna Cook • Administrative Assistant
- Jake Bonello (Pathways) • Biological Support
- Robert Primeau • Landscape Designer

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A Message from the Alliance Chair

Another ABD (Annual Benefit Dinner). Sold Out!

What a great success. Thank you to all those who attended and volunteered. We appreciate all of our sponsors who make the event possible. Planning for the next dinner is underway.

Each year presents its own set of circumstances but we prevail. Our goal remains the same – Support the Refuge!

Richard G. Micka, Chair
International Wildlife Refuge Alliance Board



Staff Feature:

Name: AnnaMaryLee Cook (Anna)

Title: Administrative Assistant

Job Description:

Help DRIWR leaders to manage refuge operations through budget, field work, visitor services and other administrative duties

Years at DRIWR: 8 happy years!



Career goals:

Move into the management series, get management experience at both rural and urban refuges, spend some time at headquarters working on policies and initiatives I'm passionate about (Urban Refuges and future FWS leadership policies are at the top of my list!)

Favorite thing about the Refuge:

The amazingly supportive and curious community

Favorite animal:

Virginia Opossum (Ask me why, anytime! I love to explain)

Favorite plant: Goldenrod

Meet Our Newest Naturalist!



Baby Leopold!

Refuge staff, Jennie and her husband Nick welcomed their baby Leopold Ocie to the world on April 29th.

We look forward to Leo growing up surrounded by nature and the kind people who protect it! He is named after the great conservationist Aldo Leopold and his great grandmother on his paternal side. Congratulations, Jennie and Nick!



From the Refuge Manager John H. Hartig



U.S. Silica, National Park Service, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Partner on History and Conservation at the Mouth of the Huron River

In another great example of public-private partnerships, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, and U.S. Silica have joined forces to preserve and celebrate a corduroy road dating back to the War of 1812 and 95 acres of coastal wetlands at the mouth of the Huron River. U.S. Silica owns 95 acres of high quality coastal wetlands along the lower Huron River and Silver Creek in southern Wayne County that were part of a historical freshwater delta at Pointe Mouillee – one of the most significant freshwater coastal wetland areas in the Great Lakes.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Silica have entered into a Cooperative Management Agreement for conservation of these high quality fish and wildlife habitats as part of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge.

These wetlands contain a state-threatened plant (giant arrowhead - *Sagittaria montevidensis*) and exhibit a high quality coastal ecosystem with relatively high biodiversity.

This biologically diverse and historically significant site contains a ¼ mile long remnant of corduroy (log) military road constructed by over 2,300 U.S. troops to supply food, weapons, and other goods to the Michigan Territory during the War of 1812. The road followed well established Native American trading routes and stretched over 200 miles linking Ohio to the Post of Detroit.

U.S. Silica is planning to donate the approximately two-acre Hull's Trace to the National Park Service for the River Raisin National Battlefield Park to preserve, protect, and interpret the internationally significant history relating to the Battles and their Aftermath.



Representatives from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, U.S. Silica, IWRA, and Brownstown Charter Township pose with Congresswoman Debbie Dingell and Former Congressman John D. Dingell after the announcement of the Cooperative Management Agreement on June 26.

U.S. Silica also helped start the Ticket-to-Float Youth Kayak Explorer program there over the past three years where 3,600 Metro Detroit youth have enjoyed full-day kayak, history, and natural resource based field trips touring the 95 acre coastal wetlands area, Huron River, and corduroy road.

National Park Service is also working to rehabilitate the public access site located at the mouth of the Huron River. This site will become a unique stop on the regional greenway trail system, a launch site of kayaking and canoeing, and a unique destination for learning about history and conservation of natural resources through interpretive panels.

Volunteers improve Humbug trails

June was a busy month for volunteers in Humbug Marsh! First, volunteers from Ford Motor Company helped to rebuild walking planks over wet areas in the Green Trail. They installed new boards wrapped with netting to create a slip-resistant surface along the trail. The team worked well together and enjoyed the outdoors while improving the refuge's more rustic paths.

The following week, students from Summit Academy tested their strength by distributing tons of gravel along the Orange Trail. The goal of this project was to help the Orange Trail reach ABA accessibility standards. Later on, members of the Stewardship Crew used rollers to compact the gravel. Summit students also picked up trash along W. Jefferson, moved rocks at the Refuge Gateway, and enjoyed a hike through the old growth forest where they learned about Humbug history.



Ford Volunteers install slip-resistant walking planks on the Green Trail at Humbug Marsh.



Summit Academy Students take a hike through the old growth forest at Humbug Marsh after a hard day of work.

We love our volunteers!



John D. Dingell Friend of the Refuge Awards and the IWRA Annual Benefit Dinner in support of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge



On Monday, May 15th at Gibraltar City Hall, three John D. Dingell Friend of the Refuge Awards were given in recognition of leadership and dedication to conservation on the Detroit River and western Lake Erie Basin. This year's honorees were:

Dr. Russell G. Kreis, Jr (Individual Award)

Dr. Russel G. Kreis, Jr. is an award-winning Great Lakes scientist whose career has spanned nearly 40 years. Russ received both his Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Eastern Michigan University in Biology, Chemistry, and Geology and his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan in Natural Resources. Russ has worked at the University of Michigan's, Great Lakes Research Division; the University of Minnesota at Duluth; and for the USEPA's, Office of Research and Development at Grosse Ile, Michigan and for the past 20 years, he also served as the Station Director and Branch Chief at Grosse Ile. Russ has authored or co-authored over 80 publications and reports, and has given about 300 technical presentations. He has recently retired from the USEPA after over 30 years of federal service.

Dr. Kreis has had an enormous impact on the refuge, from providing the ecological rationale for saving Humbug Marsh, to performing the research necessary to clean up contaminated sediments in the Black Lagoon and Monguagon Creek, to helping undertake the Detroit River-Western Lake Erie Indicator Project that led to the implementation of many refuge projects. As Director of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Large Lakes Research Station, Dr. Kreis provided office space for the Refuge at his Station for 13 years and provided office space to IWRA since their inception in 2006. Russ has always been there for the Great Lakes and the Refuge, and we can think of no more worthy individual to receive this 2017 John D. Dingell Friend of the Refuge Award.



Award recipient Russ Kreis (bottom right) with his wife Donna, Refuge Manager John Hartig, IWRA Chairman Richard Micka, and former Congressman John D. Dingell, Jr. Photo by Mark Messer.

Michigan Sea Grant (Non-Profit Award)

Michigan Sea Grant is a cooperative program of the University of Michigan (UM) and Michigan State University (MSU). It is also part of a national network of more than 30 university-based Sea Grant programs in coastal states across the country, administered through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Each Sea Grant program has three components: research, education, and outreach. Nearly 110,000 students and adults have learned more about the Great Lakes since 1991 through the Great Lakes Education Program. Designed through a collaboration involving MSU Extension, Michigan Sea Grant, the Huron-Clinton Metroparks, and the NOAA, the program provides students with an unforgettable on-the-water learning experience. The school ship Clinton will soon provide this experience from the newly constructed fishing pier in the Refuge Gateway.

Michigan Sea Grant staff has been involved in the DRIWR and IWRA since their inception in variety of ways. Today we recognize Michigan Sea Grant for their continued efforts in providing 26 years of classroom and vessel-based education in southeast Michigan and their commitment to furthering the mission of IWRA and the Refuge.

"I am truly honored to accept this 2017 John D. Dingell Friend of the Refuge Award on behalf of the Michigan Sea Grant College Program. It is through the collaborative efforts of so many that great things are accomplished, and the establishment of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge is one such great thing", said Michigan Sea Grant Representative Steve Stewart, Senior Sea Grant Extension Educator.



Michigan Sea Grant representatives Steve Stewart and Mary Bohling with John D. Dingell, Jr., IWRA Chairman Richard Micka, and Refuge Manager John Hartig. Photo by Mark Messer.

CN (Corporate Award)

Spanning three coasts, CN is the only transcontinental railroad in North America offering a unique network reach. CN is North America's true supply chain enabler and takes pride in building for the future of their customers, employees, partners, community, and shareholders. They are shaped by what they stand for, by what they do best, by the lessons they've learned, and the values they've developed during a remarkable business transformation. They have gone from a business focused primarily in Canada to a full-fledged North American railway - serving customers across North America and beyond.

In 2012, CN generously provided financial support for the fishing pier at the Refuge Gateway to help provide compelling experiences meant to inspire and educate the next generation of conservationists. We graciously thank CN today for their continued support in helping us strive to achieve that goal with the 2017 John D. Dingell Friend of the Refuge Award.



CN Rail representative Phillip Tassin, Jr. with John D. Dingell, Jr. Photo by Mark Messer.

Annual Benefit Dinner

The International Wildlife Refuge Alliance (IWRA) celebrated the continued support for the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge (DRIWR) with its annual benefit dinner on Saturday, May 20th. This year's sold out event was held in the Refuge community of Monroe at the Monroe Golf and Country Club, and fun was had by all.

2017 Annual Benefit Dinner Sponsors:

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Joann Van Aken
Marc Verge
Walt Disney World® Resort
Wayne County Parks
William Huntley
Vicky Eberly: Wines For Humanity
Wyandotte Boat Club



A Bunche of Naturalists!

Jennie Braatz

The Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge and Detroit Public Schools Community District's Ralph J. Bunche Academy have come to the end of their partnership pilot year. A year filled with migration games, habitat exploration, and beaver dam building flew by as enthusiastic students grew as young naturalists. And this is just the beginning!

This partnership plans to continue for years to come. Each year, 4th, 5th, and 6th graders will get multiple in-class visits from refuge staff and a fieldtrip to the Refuge each fall and spring. All of the programs that are presented through the partnership are curriculum-based on the Next Generation Science Standards. Students have the opportunity to explore the natural world and all aspects of nature through fun and hands-on educational activities.

The objective of this partnership is to help students to recognize that each and every one of them is a naturalist. We discuss what a naturalist is and we learn about famous naturalists, both historical and modern. The point we want to drive home is that no matter what the future holds, no matter what careers the students go into as adults, they can all be naturalists. It can be a fun hobby -- a way of life that keeps them connected to nature and can infiltrate every aspect of their lives. We want the students to walk away from this program knowing that they are part of an ecosystem that includes all the nature around them. We envision a future of doctors, teachers, stay-at-home parents, grocers, bus drivers, auto workers, and more who are all connected to the natural world and will always be safe and at home in nature.

The students began the year by making their own nature journals and studying other naturalists who kept nature journals. The journals the students made were incorporated into the program throughout the year in hopes that the students would become accustomed to writing and drawing about the environment around them. They were encouraged to observe nature everywhere they went, not just at the refuge or other parks. On the refuge staff's first visit to the school after they discussed the traits of a naturalist, the students came up with their own guidelines on how they should conduct themselves as naturalists. They called this their "Naturalist Oath". It was placed on the wall in their classroom and visited before each fieldtrip as a reminder of their own roles as naturalists.

Diana Koss, a 6th grade Science teacher says, "I believe what the Refuge is doing with the students has increased their awareness of their carbon footprints on the environment. They are much more aware of their surroundings and how they are responsible for taking care of our Earth. The refuge has brought them out of their neighborhoods and into another world. They love it! Thank you so much for choosing our school. We are truly blessed!"



A group of Bunche 6th grade Naturalists take a moment to pose for the camera while exploring Belle Isle.



6th graders from Bunche Academy explore the wilds of Belle Isle for their Spring Field Trip.

The students are able to visit the refuge thanks to bus funds provided by the Bruce Jones Foundation Fund through the International Wildlife Refuge Alliance.

Thank you, Mosaic Mural Donors!

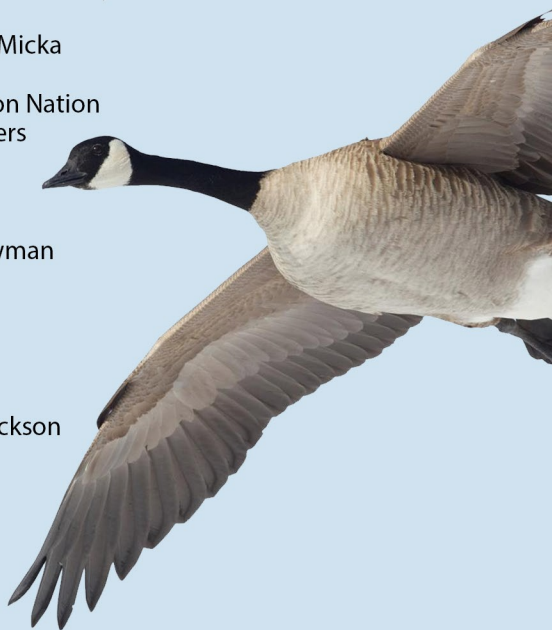
Thank you one and all for your generous donations towards the Project S.N.A.P. Mosaic Mural soon to be revealed in the John D. Dingell Visitor Center of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge. The 6' by 7' mural is focused to finding nature in your daily life, and is being recognized as a community engagement project that will serve as a permanent tribute to the importance of environmental stewardship and is sure to remain a legacy for generations. Watch for upcoming announcements for the big reveal in 2018!

Recognized sponsors:

- Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation
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Early signs of success at the Ford Marsh Unit By Jake Bonello



Nestled between the River Raisin and Sterling State Park, lies one of the largest wetland restoration projects the Refuge has undertaken. The Ford Marsh Unit is a 241 acre wetland that was formerly a sand-spit embayment and part of the greater River Raisin river delta. The wetland was surrounded by dikes around the turn of the 20th century and hydrologically cut off from Lake Erie, creating conditions similar to that of an inland lake. Fast forward over a hundred years later to today, and you will see a landscape totally different than what was seen at the site as recently as two years ago. What was a former manmade inland lake, has now become a mosaic of different micro habitats scattered across the entire unit.

The interior of the unit houses deeper pockets of water containing white water lily and American Lotus, but the shoreline now has some of the greatest biodiversity seen on any of the Refuge Units, including species like: arrowheads (one of which being the State Threatened giant arrowhead (*Sagittaria montevidensis*), bur reed, cattail, river bulrush, water plantain, smartweeds, and many many more.

This was all made possible by the Refuge's partnership with Ducks Unlimited to develop a management plan to restore Ford Marsh's hydrologic connection with Lake Erie. The plan involved a pump that can now be used to emulate the dynamics of Lake Erie's seasonal changes in water levels, and to help manage invasive species within the unit.

Once the pump was installed, it granted Refuge staff the capability to lower the water in the unit for the first time since the dikes were installed. This allowed plants to germinate by exposing the over 100 year old seed bank to the ingredients needed to break dormancy, such as oxygen and freeze thaw cycles. Results began to show in just its first year after the project was completed, and Ford Marsh is now providing even more habitat and wildlife food sources for generations to come.

Native emergent vegetation dominates Ford marsh after a year of water level control and management.

MATCH THE ANIMAL TO ITS HOME!



1. BOBOLINK
(*DOLICHONYX ORYZIVORUS*)



2. MONARCH CATERPILLAR
(*DANAUS PLEXIPPUS*)



3. CANVASBACK DUCK
(*AYTHYA VALISNERIA*)



4. OSPREY
(*PANDION HALIAETUS*)



5. WHITE-TAILED DEER
(*ODOCOILEUS VIRGINIANUS*)



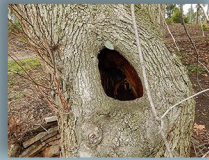
6. RACCOON
(*PROCYON LOTOR*)



A. WETLAND



B. PRAIRIE



C. TREE HOLE



D. FOREST



E. MILKWEED



F. NEST

KEY: 1-B, 2-E, 3-A, 4-F, 5-D, 6-C



International Wildlife Refuge Alliance
9311 Groh Road
Grosse Ile, Michigan 48138
iwralliance.org

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