

THE WILDSIDE

SPRING/SUMMER 2011

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



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Common Tern • Photo: Jerry Jourdan



**ABOUT
DRIWR
& IWRA**



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" group 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 and fws.gov/midwest/DetroitRiver for more periodic updates.

Email: iwr_alliance@yahoo.com
Office: 734.692.7671

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Message from the Alliance Chair:

Plans and preparations are underway for the 6th Annual Benefit Dinner to be held on Fighting Island, thanks to BASF of Wyandotte. The May 21, 2011 event will be the first of its kind held in Canada. We are looking forward to working with our Canadian counterparts to make this a memorable occasion. See our website for more information - www.iwralliance.org See you there!



Richard Micka, Chair

International Wildlife Refuge Alliance Board

IWRA hosting the 6th Annual Benefit Dinner
Saturday, May 21, 2011 on BASF's Fighting Island
Please see the website or contact the office for your dinner reservations!

Summer Job Opportunity

We are seeking motivated and enthusiastic individuals for paid employment opportunities in the 2011 Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) program.

YCC is a summer employment and education program for young men and women ages 15-18 that will run from mid-June to mid-August. Participants gain hands-on conservation work experience and will learn about the natural and cultural resources of the region while completing priority management projects on a National Wildlife Refuge.

YCC work encompasses a variety of projects, including wildlife habitat improvement, trail work and building, and grounds maintenance projects. Five youth crew member positions will be filled at Detroit River IWR this summer. The primary work area will be the Humbug Marsh Unit in Trenton, MI.

To be eligible for employment, applicants must be 15 to 18 years old (can't have reached their 19th birthday during the term of employment); U.S. citizens, have a social security number and state work permit (15 year olds).

This is a non-residential program and participants will be required to provide their own transportation to and from the refuge in Trenton, MI on a daily basis. Applications are available on our website or by emailing Anna Cook at Anna_Cook@fws.gov.

Photo - 2010 DRIWR YCC crew learns about urban farming at the U of M Dearborn Environmental Interpretive Center - Photo credit: USFWS



From the Refuge Manager...

As I write this article there is still snow on the ground. I have had people come up to me several times in the past few weeks stating that it must be nice to slow down in winter. Well, I want you to know that it really doesn't. Construction equipment has mobilized on site at the Refuge Gateway to begin a \$1.1 million shoreline restoration. It is another major step in the transformation of this site from an industrial brownfield to a Refuge Gateway with exceptional fish and wildlife habitat. In 2011, we are also submitting three proposals for Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funding to complete the restoration of the Refuge Gateway. In addition, we have several land acquisitions underway that will further grow the Refuge. We will also be celebrating the opening of a greenway trail linking our cooperatively managed unit at Lake Erie Metropark with Humbug Marsh Unit and the Refuge Gateway. Our Hunt Plan went out for public review. Once approved, this Hunt Plan will increase hunting opportunities in our region. We will continue to place a high priority on monitoring and research by working with partners like Eastern Michigan University, Rouge River Bird Observatory, Detroit Zoo, U.S. Geological Survey's Great Lakes Science Center, and others. On November 2nd of this year we will convene another U.S.-Canadian State of the Strait Conference at Eastern Michigan University. The theme of this year's conference is "Use of Remote Sensing and Geographical Information Systems to Better Manage the Huron-Erie Corridor." Finally, it is our hope that we will again grow our Visitor Services' Program by working with all of you to provide a world-class conservation experience in this urban refuge. Thank you for caring about your Refuge and for helping develop the next generation of conservationists!

John Hartig, Refuge Manager

Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge

John H. Hartig
Refuge Manager



Refuge and Detroit Zoological Society Host Common Tern Roundtable

Greg Norwood



Photo: Jerry Jourdan

There are approximately 550 pairs of common terns (*Sterna hirundo*) nesting in the Detroit River and the southern western Lake Erie basin in recent years. The Refuge, in partnership with the Detroit Zoological Society, hosted a roundtable at the zoo on December 14, 2010 that included experts in common tern conservation from across the Great Lakes. These included Ohio DNR, Canadian Wildlife Service, Michigan DNRE, Central Michigan University, Lake Superior State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Riverside Associates.

The roundtable overviewed the current knowledge of the common tern population in the region, compiled a few key research priorities, agreed to a population goal, and established a consistent monitoring protocol. This information will be summarized in a report that will adaptively guide research and management of common terns in the region.

Photo: Jessica Jozwiak



UPCOMING

Updated program information can be found at www.iwr.org

APRIL

- 10 Gibraltar Bay Open House 1pm-3pm
- 16 Humbug Marsh Open House & Garlic Mustard Pull* 10am-2pm
Shoreline Restoration Talk in Education Shelter during Open House with Allison Krueger, Landscape Designer
- 20 Introduction to Native Plant Entry Garden • Refuge Gateway 6pm-7pm
- 28 Humbug Marsh Open House 3pm-7pm
- 30 Garlic Mustard Pull in Gibraltar Bay Unit 10am-2pm*

Volunteers needed - please register at iwr_alliance@yahoo.com or 734.692.7671

JUNE

- 5 Gibraltar Bay Open House 1pm-4pm
- 9 Humbug Marsh Open House 4-7pm
Planting Native Species in Your Own Backyard with Allison Krueger, Landscape Designer in the Education Shelter
- 12 Gibraltar Bay Open House 1pm-4pm
- 19 Gibraltar Bay Open House 1pm-4pm
- 21 Humbug Marsh Open House 4pm-7pm
History of Humbug Marsh with Dr. John Hartig, FWS in the Education Shelter
- 26 Gibraltar Bay Open House 1pm-4pm

AUGUST

- 6 Humbug Marsh 9am-12pm
Buckthorn Removal** & Open House 12pm-4pm
- 7 Gibraltar Bay Open House 1pm-4pm
- 14 Gibraltar Bay Open House 1pm-4pm
- 18 Humbug Marsh Buckthorn Removal 6:30pm-8:30pm**
- 21 Gibraltar Bay Open House 1pm-4pm
Humbug Marsh Open House 12pm-4pm
Photography Scavenger Hunt in Humbug Marsh
- 28 Gibraltar Bay Open House 1pm-4pm

***Please register for Buckthorn Removal at least 2 days prior to the event at iwr_alliance@yahoo.com*

**Please register if you plan to help with any Garlic Mustard Pull*

EVENTS

www.iwralliance.org or www.fws.gov/midwest/detroitriver

MAY

- 4 Wyandot of Anderdon Smudging Ceremony
- 7 Bird Tour/Humbug Marsh Open House 7am-5pm
- International Migratory Bird Day: Early Bird Walk 7am, Lazy Bird Walk 11am, Program in Education Shelter 10am • See www.iwralliance.org for more details
- 8 Gibraltar Bay Open House 1pm-4pm • International Migratory Bird Day at Lake Erie Metropark 7am-5pm
- 12 Garlic Mustard Pull 5:30pm-7:30pm*
- 15 Gibraltar Bay Open House 1pm-4pm
- Refuge Gateway/Humbug Spring Clean Up in Humbug Marsh Unit 1pm-4pm
- 21 IWRA Benefit Dinner - see www.iwralliance.org
- 22 Gibraltar Bay Open House 1pm-4pm
- 26 Garlic Mustard Pull • Humbug 5:30pm-7:30pm*
- 28 Humbug Marsh Open House 10am-3pm • Plant Identification in the Education Shelter
- 28 Gibraltar Bay Open House 1pm-4pm

JULY

- 3 Gibraltar Bay Open House 1pm-4pm
- 9 Humbug Marsh Open House 10am-4pm
- City of Trenton Festival shuttles to Humbug
- 10 Gibraltar Bay Open House 1pm-4pm
- 17 Gibraltar Bay Open House 1pm-4pm
- 21 Humbug Marsh Open House 4pm-8pm
- Photography Scavenger Hunt
- 24 Gibraltar Bay Open House 1pm-4pm
- 31 Gibraltar Bay Open House 1pm-4pm

SEPTEMBER

- 4 Gibraltar Bay Open House 1pm-4pm
- Humbug Marsh Open House 12pm-4pm • Butterflies with Karen Hofmann in the Education Shelter
- 10 Waterfowl Festival at Pte. Mouillee State Game Area 9am-5pm
- 11 Gibraltar Bay Open House 1pm-4pm
- Waterfowl Festival 9am-5pm
- 17 Hawkfest at Lake Erie Metropark 10am-5pm
- 18 Gibraltar Bay Open House 1pm-4pm
- Hawkfest at Lake Erie Metropark 10am-5pm
- 22 Humbug Marsh Open House 4pm-8pm
- Trees & Shrubs of Wetlands with Anna Cook, FWS in the Education Shelter
- 25 Gibraltar Bay Open House 1pm-4pm

Pull events at iwr_alliance@yahoo.com at least 2 days prior

Help Build Habitat!

Allison Krueger

Landscape Designer at DRIWR

A primary goal of the DRIWR is to manage and restore habitat for wildlife. An important step in this habitat management and restoration is to **maintain and establish native plant cover**. Our landscape is constantly threatened by invasive plants like *Phragmites*, buckthorn, and garlic mustard, plants which do not provide adequate food or shelter for wildlife. The DRIWR staff works to limit the dominance of these invasive plants by planting and maintaining native species.

By adding native plants on your home property, you can also help increase food and shelter resources for wildlife. Planting with natives, sometimes referred to as 'Nativescaping', is a way to design our yards to support your family's needs as well as wildlife habitat. The more native plants you add to your landscape the better chance of observing wildlife near your home.

Interested? Here are some lovely, 'easy-to-use' natives:

Red Twig Dogwood (*Cornus stolonifer/sericea*): Red Twig Dogwood, a 'tough' plant, good for wet or dry site conditions requiring little maintenance beyond pruning. Red Twig Dogwood has bright green leaves, white flowers in the spring, berries, and is prized in winter when the plant display's bright red twigs. Dogwoods are known to be a host for numerous butterfly species and produce berries for birds to consume. This plant would work wonderfully as a hedgerow or as an accent in a decorative border.

New England Aster (*Symphyotricum/Aster novae-angliae*): The New England Aster displays bright purple flowers during the late summer months and into fall. The purple flowers both stand out and compliment common fall colors like yellow, red, and orange. The nectar is a source of food for migrating monarch butterflies. After the plant has been established for a few years you can divide the plant to spread to other areas in your yard (or to give to friends!). New England Aster is useful in any sunny area.

Landscaping with native plants requires less maintenance than non-natives, a bonus for you and yard work. Benefits include: reduced irrigation, reduced fertilizers and pest controls as native plants are adapted to our region's weather conditions, resulting in less physical maintenance (i.e. mowing) compared to typical lawns.

Red Twig Dogwood photo: Michael Sisinger

Monarch Butterfly photo: Rodney Laura



Shoreline Restoration at the Refuge Gateway

The shoreline restoration project is occurring in the southeastern corner of the Refuge Gateway (just north of Humbug Island). In total, over 32,000 cubic yards of fill will be removed from the Detroit River. The fill pulled from the shoreline will be used to build upland habitat at the Refuge Gateway. The end result for the Shoreline Restoration will be a net gain of over 2 acres of coastal wetlands; this is a substantial given that 97% of all historic wetlands in this area have been removed. To the north, a vegetated buffer will be added to the shoreline, which will act to 'soften' the shoreline and increase habitat for fish and waterfowl. This project will strengthen and add to the wetland habitat existing in Humbug Marsh. Specifically, the restored emergent and submergent wetland habitat will provide nursery ground for young fish. Before heading into the strong currents of the Detroit River, young fish can gain strength in the shallow waters provided in wetland habitat.

To protect the Detroit River during construction, a turbidity curtain will be placed in the water surrounding the construction site. Commonly referred to as a 'boom', the curtain will keep sediment from entering the Detroit River during construction.

Another exciting result of the Shoreline Restoration project is the construction of a kayak launch along the Refuge Gateway's southern shoreline. The launch will help visitors access the river and give kayakers the option of stopping to visit the Refuge Gateway and Humbug Marsh!

If you have any questions or concerns about the Shoreline Restoration project please contact Allison Krueger at Krueger.ali@gmail.com



Google Earth Aerial Image • 05.2010



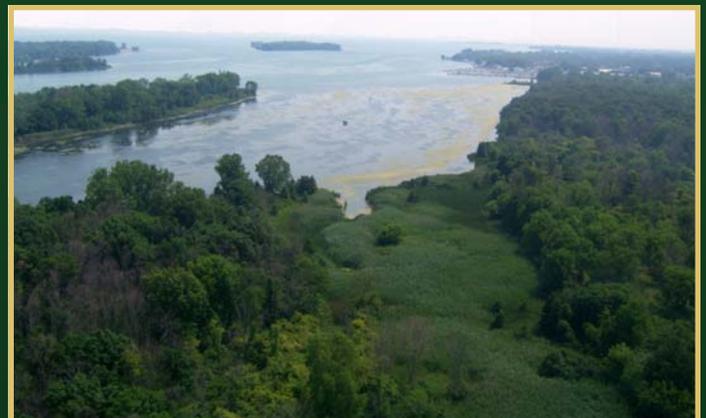
Anna Cook,
Biological Technician

A tradition between the United States and Canada, the *State of the Strait*, is a bi-national conference bringing together government managers, researchers, students, environmental and conservation organizations, and concerned citizens every two years. This year's conference will be held in the United States and hosted by Eastern Michigan University on November 2nd 2011. The theme will be "Use of Remote Sensing and GIS to Better Manage the Huron-Erie Corridor".

For more information about the State of the Strait conference, including registration and location, please visit www.stateofthestrait.org.

Updated Humbug Marsh Website

Did you know Humbug Marsh is the first RAMSAR designated wetland of *international* importance in Michigan? The Humbug Marsh section of our website has been updated with pictures and more information on why Humbug was chosen for this prestigious award. Check it out at <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/detroitriver/HumbugIndex.html>



Aerial of Humbug Marsh • Credit: IWRA

DID YOU KNOW?

Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) is native to Europe, not the United States, and is known as an **invasive species**? Brought over from Europe as an herb for the settlers gardens, it has no native threat here and can easily take over.

Dense stands of the Garlic Mustard in springtime threaten our woodlands by choking the forest floor not allowing such natives as the Trillium, Spring Beauty or maple tree seedlings to survive. Healthy forests need sunlight to allow seedlings to grow – the Garlic Mustard grows denser and faster resulting in overshadowing any seedlings. **Without forest regeneration we lose wildlife habitat.**



Can Invasive Plants Ever Become Native?

Greg Norwood, Biological Technician

The answer is NO. Native Refuge ecosystems include species that have interacted with each other over extremely long periods of time – this generally promotes species diversity. The result is an incredible array of species interactions that benefit and harm with lots of energy, originating from the sun, reaching the critters we like to see (plant - insect and spider - fish - bird - mammal). Think of all the specific routes!

A species isolated from afar and abruptly exposed to this well-established community has a different set of tools adapted to its native ecosystem. The tools may be useless and the non-native plant will not survive, or they may run into few constraints, which lead to invasiveness. The result is that interactions decline and less energy in the form of food gets to bugs, birds, fish, and mammals.

Please consider participating in the Refuge volunteer work days to remove these species and bring us closer to achieving ecosystem benchmarks on all our refuge units. It is some of the most important work we do! **2011 Calendar of Events inside!**



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