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\$20,000 Secured for Restoring a Natural Shoreline at the Kayak Landing Being Created Along the Elizabeth Park Canal

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: TRENTON, MI – The International Wildlife Refuge Alliance announces that it has received a \$20,000 grant from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to restore a natural shoreline using soft engineering techniques at the kayak landing being created along Wayne County's Elizabeth Park canal. Soft engineering uses ecological principles and practices to achieve stabilization of shorelines and safety, while enhancing habitat, improving aesthetics, and saving money. It incorporates native plants and other materials to soften the land-water interface, thereby improving ecological features without compromising the engineered integrity of the shoreline. Local school children will be participating in this project by planting the native plants.

Commenting on the significance of this project, Congressman John D. Dingell noted, "This is an excellent example of restoring much needed coastal wetlands in North America's only International Wildlife Refuge, while promoting wildlife compatible recreation. This project will result in a net gain in coastal wetland habitat in our river and refuge where we have lost 97% of our historical wetlands to development."

This habitat rehabilitation project will benefit both native fish and wildlife in the area. Restoring the shoreline back to a more natural state will provide habitat for migratory birds, reptiles, and amphibians, and will provide nursery habitat for fish. In addition, this shoreline project will reduce erosion and runoff into the Detroit River system, thus reducing the sediment loads that can be detrimental to fish spawning areas. Less sediment entering the river means better fish habitat.

The mission of the IWRA is to support the first International Wildlife Refuge in North America by working through partnerships to protect, conserve and manage the refuge's wildlife and habitats, and to create exceptional conservation, recreational and educational experiences to develop the next generation of conservation stewards. Major IWRA funding partners in 2006 include DTE Energy Foundation, BASF Corp., DaimlerChrysler, Ford Motor Company/AutoAlliance, General Motors Corp., ITC Transmission, Hamilton Anderson Associates, Praxair, and Wade Trim.

The Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge covers 48 miles of shoreline along the lower Detroit River and the western basin of Lake Erie. It focuses on conserving, protecting and restoring habitat for waterfowl, fish and migratory birds, see <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/detroitriver/index.html>.

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