



FOR RELEASE ON OCTOBER 11, 2007

CELEBRATE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE WEEK AT DETROIT RIVER INTERNATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Grosse Ile, MI – Join thousands of Americans in making a special connection with nature during National Wildlife Refuge Week October 7-13, 2007. The National Wildlife Refuge System, with 547 national wildlife refuges nationwide, protects approximately 97 million acres of fish and wildlife habitat. Scores of national wildlife refuges, including the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, are offering special programs to celebrate National Wildlife Refuge Week.

The week-long celebration is also part of a year-long commemoration of the 100th birthday of pioneering conservationist and writer Rachel Carson. “Sixty years ago, Rachel Carson wrote that wildlife refuges provide a ‘release from the tensions of modern life,’” said U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director H. Dale Hall. “They do that and more. National wildlife refuges also promise outdoor adventure to children growing up in a digital age, whose idea of nature might be watching animals on television. Refuges offer the real thing.”

In celebration of National Wildlife Refuge Week, Humbug Marsh will be open to the public for self-guided tours from 1 to 5 pm on Saturday, October 13th. During the open house, visitors can enjoy the fall colors, as well as the spectacular view of the marsh and Humbug Island from the new wildlife observation deck. A free full-color poster about Rachel Carson and her legacy will be available at the open house.

Also in celebration of National Wildlife Refuge Week will be “The Big Sit”, a special worldwide birding event on Sunday, October 14th. “The Big Sit” takes place in countries from Guatemala to India and is a first-of-its-kind on the Detroit River. Participants will be stationed for a 24-hour birding period at Humbug Marsh at the new wildlife observation deck. The goal is to count as many species of birds as possible from a seventeen-foot circle for a 24-hour period; high counts are expected as the site is located along the intersection of the Atlantic and Mississippi flyways and migratory birds are funneled over the numerous islands along the lower river to avoid flying over the open waters of Lake Erie. Shifts are still available on Sunday afternoon and evening for anyone interested. The event will be a positive learning experience for all involved and no prior bird watching experience is necessary. Contact the International Wildlife Refuge Alliance for more information.

The Humbug Marsh Unit of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge is a 410-acre natural area that harbors the last mile of undeveloped shoreline along the U.S. mainland of the Detroit River. The Humbug Marsh Unit is located between the cities of Trenton and Gibraltar off of Jefferson Avenue.

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The 35th anniversary celebration of the Clean Water Act and U.S.-Canada Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, first signed in 1972, will also be celebrated during National Wildlife Refuge Week. This celebration, being organized by U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, is to take place at Meyer Ellias Park in Trenton, Michigan on Saturday, October 13th at 1:00 PM. Congressman John Dingell, Canadian Member of Parliament Jeff Watson, Canadian Consul General Robert Noble, other dignitaries, and high school students from the area will celebrate the anniversary of this landmark legislation and international agreement. During the event, high school students will also release nearly 100 lake whitefish into the river symbolizing the significance of the recent cleanup of Ellias Cove. The release celebrates the fact that the Detroit River is now clean enough for whitefish to inhabit as a result of 35 years of progress under the Clean Water Act and U.S. Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, and the progress made in restoration of a heritage fishery. Meyer Ellias Park and Ellias Cove are located at the foot of Helen Street off Jefferson Avenue in Trenton, Michigan. For more information on this 35th anniversary celebration contact Sandra Morrison at U.S. Geological Survey at 734-214-9393 or smorrison@usgs.gov.

The International Wildlife Refuge Alliance is a non-profit 501(3)(c) organization that builds the capacity of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to deliver the mission of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge. Major Alliance funding partners in 2007 include ITC Transmission, BASF Corporation, DTE Energy Foundation, General Motors Corporation, and Praxair.

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.

Please contact the International Wildlife Refuge Alliance to register for “The Big Sit” or for more information – (734) 692-7671 or lisa_appel@fws.gov.

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