



News Release

Midwest Region

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New Park Ranger at Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge Hopes to Bring People Closer to Nature

After spending the last 10 years helping visitors understand some of our Nation's most cherished places, newly hired Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge Park Ranger Kisti Thiel is excited about the opportunity to help Detroit-area residents learn about what she hopes will become one of their most cherished places: the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge.

Prior to moving to the Detroit River Refuge, Thiel worked at Valley Forge, Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty, and most recently at the National Mall in Washington, D.C., rotating between the seven monuments and memorials that bring millions of visitors to our Nation's Capitol each year.

While Detroit River Refuge doesn't host thousands of visitors daily like the National Mall, Thiel sees that as an opportunity to take more time and help build a closer personal connection between visitors and the natural history and beauty of the Refuge. "Being so close to a major urban area makes it easy for many people to take just a couple hours out of their day to visit the Refuge and reconnect with nature," says Thiel.

"This Refuge is here for both wildlife and people," says Thiel. "I'm here to help people – especially children – lose any fear they may have of nature and begin to really understand its importance and feel comfortable just taking a walk in the outdoors."

"I look forward to having Kristi join a very talented team as the first park ranger at the refuge," said Congressman John D. Dingell. "I think she can help families see and experience all the wonderful opportunities there are within the refuge. Some of my favorite memories of my father come from our time spent in the outdoors and I tried to share those same experiences with my children. I do believe the refuge can -and will- become a common place shared by generations of family members over time. Kristi's presence will help turn that vision into a reality."

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The Refuge has not yet developed a comprehensive community involvement or outdoor education plan and Thiel is excited about starting to develop those plans with no preconceived ideas. “I can get out in the community and talk with kids, educators, parents and local citizens to find out what they really need,” said Thiel. “Then I can begin to develop the programs our community really wants and needs, right from the beginning.

The Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge 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 experience fish, wildlife and plants in their natural habitat.

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 <http://www.fws.gov>.