**Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge Coastal Restoration**

(Ohio)

**Project statement:** The Nature Conservancy has partnered with The US Fish and Wildlife Service and Ducks Unlimited to restore and enhance 2,937 acres of coastal wetlands and uplands at Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge along western Lake Erie’s shoreline in order to:

* Conserve significant migratory bird habitat within a globally significant Important Bird Area
* Provide habitat for rare, threatened, and endangered species of flora and fauna
* Provide for fish passage from Lake Erie and its tributaries into newly restored coastal wetlands via fish passage structures and reconnection to lake hydrology
* Expand the riparian buffers of the Toussaint River and Crane Creek floodplains, leading to reduction in sediment levels and nutrient loading
* Increase natural cover, water-retention capacity, and ultimately water quality within the southwestern Lake Erie basin by restoring row-crop agricultural fields into uplands and wetlands.
* Contribute to the delisting of three Maumee AOC BUIs; 3, 6, and 14.

Implementation of restoration at eight different locations allows for the management of a variety of habitat types, while at the same time providing effective control of invasive species and monitoring of the ecological outcomes of the restorations. Monitoring will include assessments of water quality, macroinvertebrate communities, native fish, amphibian, and avian populations.

* At the Blausey Restoration 171 acres of former farmland were restored to wetland habitat through the installation of levees and bi-directional pump stations. This wetland was also reconnected to the Toussaint River and thus Lake Erie through the installation of a fish-passage structure and box culverts. It has the ability to accept stormwater from the adjacent county ditch for flood abatement and nutrient cycling. Restoration was completed in 2013.
* At the Helle, Kontz and MS2 tracts 341 acres of former farmland were reforested to native, bottomland forest species. Restoration was completed in April 2014.
* At Cedar Point National Wildlife Refuge 1,460 acres of coastal marsh in Pool 1 will be reconnected to Lake Erie via box culverts and a fish-passage structure. Restoration will be completed in 2015.
* Within the Crane Creek estuary 340 acres of coastal marsh in Pool 1 will be reconnected to Crane Creek and thus Lake Erie via box culverts and a fish-passage structure. Pool 1 will also be connected to the 90-acre Show Pool and Goose Pen units, expanding the floodplain and enhancing water level management in the latter units. Additionally 30 acres of former farm field will be reforested with native trees and shrubs. This restoration will be complete in 2016.
* An additional 465 acres of coastal marsh along Crane Creek will be enhanced with a new bi-directional pump station and inter-unit connectivity via new water control structures. These restorations will be completed in 2015.
* At the Boss Restoration 40 acres of wet meadow recently reverted from farmland will be enhanced through contouring, installment of a new water control structure, and replanting with native vegetation. Restoration will be completed in 2015.

The Nature Conservancy is working on the Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge Coastal Restoration Projects in collaboration with these key partners: US Fish and Wildlife Service – Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, Ducks Unlimited, NOAA, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.