

## **City Logs to City Lumber mini-grant**

Becca Sowder, Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge

November 18, 2008

During October 2008 the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge constructed a rustic stream crossing on its Humbug Marsh Unit. This unit is the cornerstone for educational outreach within the Refuge, and the stream crossing is part of a large master plan for the site and the adjacent brownfield, called the Refuge Gateway. The Refuge Gateway will be the site of a visitors' center, parking lot, fishing pier, boat dock, and restored shoreline along the Detroit River. The stream crossing will connect visitors to the trails, environmental education shelter, wetland boardwalk, observation deck, and 410 acres of forested land on the Humbug Marsh Unit from the Refuge Gateway.

In keeping with our goals of sustainability and innovation in all built work on the Refuge, the design for the stream crossing incorporates the reuse of materials that would otherwise be discarded. The posts for the wooden railing structure, which spans the entire crossing, are recycled utility poles from DTE Energy, while the railing structure itself is made from ash lumber milled from a dead ash tree from Detroit. Richard Mills, of Logs to Lumber and Beyond, completed the milling of the wood, as well as assisted in design work for the railing. He was an excellent resource and did a very thorough job. I highly recommend him for future projects, and we would certainly like to work with him again.

In total, the material costs for this project were approximately \$20,000. The labor to build the crossing was kindly donated from Mid American Group, the Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 26, and NTH Consultants, Inc. The design for the crossing was completed by Becca Sowder of the DRIWR and members of the NTH Consultants, Inc team. Costs of labor and design work total approximately \$10,000.

We are thrilled with the outcome of this project. The crossing was debuted at our ribbon cutting event held on October 31, 2008. Over 200 people arrived on the Refuge Gateway and entered the Humbug Marsh Unit by walking over the stream crossing, where they enjoyed unique views of the Detroit River and the unique shoreline and forest communities that exist here.

Thank you for this opportunity! An invoice statement of expenses for the project is being mailed to you from the International Wildlife Refuge Alliance and photos from the project are attached.

Humbug Marsh Stream Crossing:  
Sustainable re-use of ash trees to build a rustic hand rail.

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Richard Mills, of Logs to Lumber and Beyond in Flat Rock, Michigan, milled a large dead ash tree into the components needed to build a rustic hand rail for a stream crossing in the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge's Humbug Marsh.



Pieces of the bark and boring marks on the tree were left in order to create an educational opportunity or "teachable moment" out of the railing project. The Navy Seabees (Battalion 26) helped to install the railings in late October, 2008.



The stream crossing and railings were a part of our ribbon cutting celebration held on October 31, 2008. The railings help us showcase the innovative and sustainable re-use of materials in the public-access features within the Marsh.