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Media Release

### **SCIENTISTS, MANAGERS TO DISCUSS BENEFITS OF HABITAT MODIFICATION**

*Windsor*– More than 200 scientists, government managers, students, members of environmental organizations, and concerned citizens are expected to meet on **Tuesday, April 28, 2009** at the University of Windsor’s C.A.W. Centre for the 4<sup>th</sup> biennial, binational *State of the Strait* Conference. The theme of this year’s conference is “Ecological Benefits of Habitat Modification”.

Twelve speakers from the U.S. and Canada will highlight numerous efforts to rehabilitate and restore habitat in the Detroit River and western Lake Erie. These projects include building fish spawning reefs, softening shoreline, restoring wetlands, and rehabilitating wildlife habitats. Presentations will focus on the ecological responses of habitat modification across a diverse range of habitat types and will provide knowledge and lessons for future habitat rehabilitation, restoration, and enhancement projects throughout the region.

“We need clear scientific information on what is known and unknown about the ecological benefits of habitat modification,” explains Dr. John Hartig, International Wildlife Refuge Manager and conference co-chair. “This information is necessary in order to support an ecosystem approach to management and to provide compelling rationale for further restoration of the Detroit River and western Lake Erie.”

Almost 97% of the coastal wetland habitat has been destroyed due to centuries of industrial, urban, and agricultural development in the region. “The loss of fish and wildlife habitat is still a key environmental issue for the Detroit River Area of Concern,” says Natalie Green, Remedial Action Plan Coordinator for the Detroit River Canadian Cleanup. “These habitat projects are instrumental in restoring impaired beneficial uses under the U.S.-Canada Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.”

Previous *State of the Strait* Conferences have explored the status of key environmental indicators for the Detroit River and western Lake Erie, monitoring for sound management, and strengthening science-management linkages.

Registration is free but anyone interested in attending the *State of the Strait* Conference is asked to register by **April 14, 2009**. To register for the conference or for more information, visit [www.stateofthestrain.org](http://www.stateofthestrain.org) or contact Ellen Green at 519-253-3000 x4760.

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#### Media Contacts:

<p><b>Dr. John Hartig</b> <i>Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge</i> Phone: 734-692-7608 E-mail: <a href="mailto:john_hartig@fws.gov">john_hartig@fws.gov</a></p>	<p><b>Dr. Lynda D. Corkum</b> <i>University of Windsor</i> <i>Department of Biological Sciences</i> Phone: 519-253-3000 X 2717 Email: <a href="mailto:corkum@uwindsor.ca">corkum@uwindsor.ca</a></p>
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