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DETROIT RIVER HONORED WITH FIRST HISTORICAL MARKER FOR THE MICHIGAN CONSERVATION TRAIL

At 10:00 AM on Saturday, September 1, 2007, Wayne County Parks, Michigan Environmental Council, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Friends of the Detroit River, and International Wildlife Refuge Alliance will unveil the first historical marker on Michigan's Conservation Trail at the Refuge Gateway in Trenton, Michigan. This marker will celebrate the recovery of the Detroit River. Michigan Environmental Council, in partnership with the Michigan Department of History, Arts, and Libraries, is creating the Michigan Conservation Trail to commemorate and promote knowledge of conservation history in Michigan. The Michigan Conservation Trail emphasizes three themes: citizen activism, Michigan's special place globally, and bold leadership. When complete, the Michigan Conservation Trail will be a series of linked historical sites and associated educational materials.

Clearly, Michigan has a very rich conservation history and the recovery of the Detroit River is significant. For example, the Detroit River has a long history of sewage, oil, phosphorus, and mercury pollution because it is located within a major metropolitan and manufacturing area. In recent years, however, the Detroit River has experienced substantial environmental improvements that have resulted in a return of bald eagles, peregrine falcons, lake sturgeon, and lake whitefish. This recovery is now receiving international acclaim.

Congressman John Dingell, Congressman John Conyers, Wayne County Executive Robert Ficano, and other dignitaries will be on hand to unveil the sign at the Refuge Gateway in Trenton. The Refuge Gateway will include the future visitor center for the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, trails, wildlife viewing stations, natural prairie gardens, a kayak landing, a fishing pier, school ship dock, and more. It is strategically located adjacent to the 410-acre Humbug Marsh Unit, the last mile of natural shoreline on the U.S. mainland of the Detroit River. Humbug Marsh is an important part of our conservation history and is now preserved in perpetuity as part of North America's only International Wildlife Refuge.

"The recovery of the Detroit River is truly an amazing story of international significance," notes Congressman John D. Dingell. "This historical marker will forever commemorate this unique conservation history and encourage future generations to be good stewards."

"We are honored to have the first historical marker for Michigan's Conservation Trail located in Wayne County on the banks of the Detroit River," notes Wayne County Executive Robert Ficano. "The ecological recovery of the Detroit River is not only an important part of our history, but an important element in maintaining and enhancing quality of life for future generations."

Immediately following the ceremony, volunteers from the International Wildlife Refuge Alliance and Friends of the Detroit River will give guided tours of Humbug Marsh and the new wildlife observation deck, complete with spotting scopes and interpretive panels. Citizens are invited to participate in the ceremony and to go on a guided tour.

For more information on Michigan's Conservation Trail see:

<http://www.mecprotects.org/MiConservationTrail.pdf>

Directions to the Refuge Gateway in Trenton: From I-75 either going north or south, exit at West Road heading east toward Trenton. Take West Road east for approximately three miles through Trenton to Jefferson Avenue (the main road along the Detroit River). Turn right on Jefferson Avenue and head south. You will first jog around Wayne County's Elizabeth Park and then pass the Trenton Channel Power Plant and Solutia (both on the east side of Jefferson Ave.). Wayne County's Refuge Gateway is immediately south of the Solutia Plant on the East side of Jefferson. There is a Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge sign on the fence and people will be stationed at the gate to direct traffic and welcome people to the ceremony.

The Detroit River has the distinction of being one of 14 rivers in the U.S. to be honored with an American Heritage River designation. In 2001, the Detroit River also received a Canadian Heritage River designation, making it the first international heritage river system in North America. Also in 2001, the Detroit River became home to the first international wildlife refuge in North America.

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