

News From Congressman John D. Dingell

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Plum Creek Bay Donation Leverages \$250,000 for Land Acquisition in Monroe County

Washington, D.C. – Congressman John D. Dingell (D-MI15) announced today that the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission, of which Congressman Dingell serves as the senior member, approved \$1 million dollars in federal funding for a grant to Duck's Unlimited and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). \$250,000 of that grant will be used for land acquisition in Monroe County, Michigan. These funds were leveraged by the recent donation of Plum Creek Bay by Monroe County. The Commission allocated more than \$26 million to protect, restore, improve and manage more than 135,000 acres of vital wetland areas and associated wildlife habitats across the U.S. under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA). The NAWCA funds will provide for the purchase of lands in Monroe County which will join Plum Creek Bay as an excellent addition into the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, North America's only International Wildlife Refuge.

“This could not and would not have happened but for the foresight and commitment of the Monroe County Board of Commissioners,” said Congressman Dingell. “I once again want to thank Chairman Sisk, Vice Chairman Dale Zorn and Commissioners Henry Lievens, Al Potratz, Floreine Mentel, Jerry Oley, John Fowler, Connie Velliquette and LaMar Frederick for a great deed that is already paying major dividends to the citizens of Monroe County. Of course, the acquisition would not have been possible without the efforts of our good friends at Duck's Unlimited who helped secure the NAWCA grant benefitting Southeast Michigan.”

In July, Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne joined Congressman John D. Dingell (D-MI15), Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur (D-OH09), and Michigan Lt. Governor John D. Cherry, Jr. (D) at the Monroe County Community College to commemorate the transfer of Plum Creek Bay from Monroe County to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. That donation was used as the nonfederal match requirement necessary to secure the NAWCA funds.

“Our refuge continues to grow and flourish,” said Dingell. “But it is not just the birds and wildlife that benefit. By protecting our wilderness, we secure for ourselves a quality of life that cannot be manufactured where it does not exist and is nearly impossible to reclaim once it is gone. We are blessed to live in a beautiful and unique area in the country. The refuge helps ensure it remains that way.”

On December 21, 2001, President Bush signed legislation authored by Congressman Dingell establishing the first International Wildlife Refuge in North America. The Refuge symbolizes the region's rebirth. Over the past seven years, the Refuge has grown from 304 acres to 5,173 acres on the lower Detroit River and western shore of Lake Erie. Michigan Senators Carl Levin (D) and Debbie Stabenow (D) shepherded the bill through the Senate. Senator Levin was the bill's lead sponsor and would later work on legislation that transferred a former NIKE missile site on the southern tip of Grosse Ile from the Environmental Protection Agency to the Department of the Interior for inclusion in the Refuge.

The Refuge, which includes islands, coastal wetlands, marshes, shoals, and riverfront lands along 48 miles of the Detroit River and western Lake Erie, will protect and restore habitat for 29 species of waterfowl, 65 kinds of fish, and 300 species of migratory birds in Michigan and Ontario, Canada.

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