



NEWS RELEASE

Great Lakes/Atlantic Regional Office
1220 Eisenhower Place, Ann Arbor, MI 48108-3281
734.623.2000 • www.ducks.org



DU AND PARTNERS RESTORE WETLANDS AT DETROIT RIVER INTERNATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

NEWPORT, Mich. Sept. 25, 2010 – Today, the conservation group Ducks Unlimited, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and many partners dedicated a 67-acre coastal wetland restoration at the Brancheau Unit of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge. Such coastal wetlands are critically important for wildlife, water quality, and recreation.

Visitors will be able to enjoy these unique habitats and better appreciate their value and benefits.

“This project is another fine example of conservation by design. First, we were able to purchase the land, and then a great group of partners led by Ducks Unlimited was able to restore it back to what nature intended,” Congressman John Dingell (MI) said. Rep. Dingell’s legislation established the DRIWR in 2001. “This project embodies a great partnership among federal, state, local and private agencies and conservation groups, and I am pleased to be a part of it all.”

Other speakers included representatives of the FWS, Monroe County and Berlin Township.

“This restoration project is especially important in this area because we have lost more than 90 percent of our historical wetlands,” Steve Dushane, assistant refuge manager, noted. “This project has not only restored wetlands and enhanced wildlife habitat for migratory birds and other wetland-dependent wildlife, but it has reduced nonpoint source loadings of pollutants to western Lake Erie and helped reduce the risk of flooding to local residences and businesses.”

Michigan DU State Chair David Shefferly took a moment to recognize the value of partners in effectively delivering valuable habitat. He also discussed the Michigan PRIDE program (Putting Resources Into Ducks Everywhere) and the potential for local protection and restoration.

“The reason we can dedicate properties like Brancheau is the commitment of so many partners to the task,” Shefferly said. “Without the combined resources of all of our partners and DU supporters, we wouldn’t be able to enhance this productive area. We’ve really done something big here.”

DU partnered with FWS, Waterfowl USA, the International Wildlife Refuge Alliance, Michigan Duck Hunters Association, Metropolitan Affairs Coalition, DTE Energy, and the North American Wetlands Conservation Council to complete this restoration on the DRIWR. The work was completed in two phases and involved the creation of a low earthen dike, ditching, and water control structures that allows FWS to emulate the natural conditions that historically existed on the site.

Ducks Unlimited is the world's largest non-profit organization dedicated to conserving North America's continually disappearing waterfowl habitats. Established in 1937, Ducks Unlimited has conserved more than 12 million acres thanks to contributions from more than a million supporters across the continent. Guided by science and dedicated to program efficiency, DU works toward the vision of wetlands sufficient to fill the skies with waterfowl today, tomorrow, and forever.

The DRIWR incorporates more than 5,700 acres along a 48-mile stretch of shoreline on the lower Detroit River and western Lake Erie (www.fws.gov/midwest/detroitriver/). The Refuge focuses on conserving, protecting, and restoring habitat for 29 species of waterfowl, 23 species of raptors, 31 species of shorebirds, over 100 species of fish, and over 300 species of birds. The DRIWR is the first international refuge in North America and one of only a few urban ones in the nation. Unique habitats being managed within the Refuge include islands, coastal wetlands, marshes, shoals and waterfront lands.

-30-

Kristin Schrader 734.623.2000 kschrader@ducks.org

Steve Dushane 734.692.7604 steve_dushane@fws.gov