



[Home](#) » [Uncategorized](#) » Agreement between ERCA and US Fish & Wildlife to be Signed

## Agreement between ERCA and US Fish & Wildlife to be Signed

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*Lasalle* – American and Canadian partners gathered at Riverdance Park in LaSalle today to sign an agreement between the Essex Region Conservation Authority and the US Fish and Wildlife Services to ensure that lands on both sides of the border will be managed collaboratively in the spirit and intent of the 2001 Conservation Vision, the US Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, and the Western Lake Erie Watersheds Priority Natural Areas initiative.

“It was less than a year ago that we gathered on Fighting Island with our partners from Environment Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, the Nature Conservancy of Canada and Ducks Unlimited Canada to form a historic collaborative agreement making the Western Lake Erie Watersheds a Priority Natural Area,” ERCA Chair Joe Bachetti reminded the guests gathered.

“This first-in-Canada Priority Natural Area was designed precisely to focus public and private partner investments into projects with a higher-level of coordination and impact,” said Jeff Watson, MP Essex. “In addition the PNA provides the vision and geographic focus to better engage the broader community as stewards in restoring, enhancing and conserving the area’s unique environmental values and health, making Windsor-Essex-Pelee Island the place to live, work and visit.”

As a next step towards realizing this ultimate goal, today, an Agreement between the Essex Region Conservation Authority, on behalf of its partners, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service was signed. “Canadian and U.S. partners have a strong history of working together, and this Agreement is the next step in continued cooperation and collaboration across political boundaries,” added Dr. John Hartig, Refuge Manager for the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge.

As part of this agreement, ERCA and its partners have created a Canadian Registry of Lands, similar to the US Detroit River’s International Wildlife Refuge. This registry does not result in a transfer of ownership, but instead, recognizes a voluntary commitment to manage lands that have been registered with conservation and habitat protection and restoration as top priorities.

“Today, we will make the first additions to that Registry of Lands, and sign 3,800 acres of ERCA conservation lands in the Detroit River and Lake Erie watersheds to the registry,” announced Bachetti. “We will also work with our PNA partners, municipalities, and private landowners to recognize their commitments to conservation as part of this Registry. In total, there are more than 11,300 acres of

existing protected areas in the watershed, and our goal is to recognize them as part of this shared conservation vision for the Detroit River and Western Lake Erie watersheds.”

Since 1973, the Essex Region Conservation Authority has served as a community-based organization dedicated to protecting, restoring and managing the natural resources of the Essex Region.

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2 days ago

We're thankful for this Blue-headed Vireo that we got to band this weekend at Holiday Beach Conservation Area! Hope everyone had a terrific Thanksgiving!



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