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## News Release

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### **AMERICA'S GREAT OUTDOORS: Secretary Salazar, Congressman Dingell Visit Michigan, Celebrate Conservation Efforts Underway**

MONROE AND TRENTON, MI—Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar and Congressman John Dingell were in Michigan today to announce land acquisitions intended to preserve the country's newest National Park System unit, River Raisin National Battlefield Park, and enhance the first international Wildlife Refuge in North America, the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge.

At two separate events in Monroe and Trenton, the Secretary Salazar and Congressman Dingell highlighted public-private partnerships as the driving force behind today's announcements and a critical component in achieving the conservation goals set forth in President Obama's *America's Great Outdoors Initiative*.

"As the newest addition to the National Park family, it is important that we help leverage the necessary support to preserve and share the story that rests at the River Raisin," said Salazar. "Under the leadership of Congressman Dingell and in partnership with state agencies and the community of Monroe, the restoration of the Battlefield illustrates the vital role partnerships play in land conservation efforts."

"Today, we showed what community involvement, public-private partnerships, and togetherness can do," said Dingell. "Because of enormous contributions and goodwill efforts of local officials, private donations and cooperative management agreements, we have not only quadrupled the size of a revered battlefield, we have made more space for more people to enjoy and help preserve history."

Established as the 393<sup>rd</sup> unit of the National Park System in October 2010, the River Raisin National Battlefield Park commemorates one of the bloodiest battles fought between American and British forces during the War of 1812. At the ceremonial signing in Monroe today, 143 acres of purchased and donated land were added to the existing 42.2 acres of the Battlefield for the continued restoration and development of the historical and cultural landscape. The Port of

Monroe will hold the property until it is determined who the ultimate landowner should be and how it should be used to benefit the Battlefield. It is possible that portions of the property could be transferred to the National Park Service, the City of Monroe, and/or the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge. Funding for the acquisition of 65 acres of this land was made possible through a \$1.2 million United States Department of Transportation earmark and a matching land purchase of \$325,000 made by the Monroe County Historical Society. In addition, 78 acres of land are being donated by the property owner, Roger Homrich.

Following the event at River Raisin National Battlefield Park, the Salazar and Dingell visited the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge where they announced land acquisitions from private parties that will protect valuable habitats and provide wildlife oriented public use and recreational opportunities at the urban refuge.

“The Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge serves as a gateway to the outdoors for the more than 5 million people in the Detroit metro area,” Salazar said. “With each tract of land being restored to natural habitat, this refuge will provide additional opportunities for youth to discover the natural world around them and help create a new generation of conservationists.”

“I’m pleased that Secretary Salazar joined me today to recognize the importance of land conservation. These acquisitions of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge reflect a new paradigm for conservation to better protect wildlife and enhance community appreciation for our beautiful land. This is a new way we are going to save land and preserve our great outdoors,” said Dingell.

Located along the lower Detroit River and western shoreline of Lake Erie, the Detroit International Wildlife Refuge includes 5,732 acres of islands, coastal wetlands, marshes, shoals, and waterfront lands. The 28-acre Blanchette tract was acquired with the help of Ducks Unlimited with North American Wetlands Conservation Act and U.S. Department of Transportation funding, and the 47-acre Holloway tract was acquired with U.S. Department of Transportation funding, in fiscal year 2011. These land acquisitions put the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge front and center as the National Wildlife Refuge System steps up to meet President Obama’s *America’s Great Outdoors* Initiative—giving the American public more opportunities to connect with the natural world.

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