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Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge Grows

Waste Management donates 358 acres of wetlands to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

GIBRALTAR, Michigan. – Congressman John Dingell today joined local officials and Downriver community leaders to celebrate the contribution of 358 acres of wetlands by Waste Management to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for protection as part of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge (DRIWR).

“Waste Management’s donation of these wetlands to the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge will enhance and preserve the area’s natural habitat,” said Congressman John Dingell. “The Downriver community, wildlife and those who enjoy the outdoors will benefit from this addition for generations to come.”

Established in 2001, the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge is the first international wildlife refuge in North America and one of the few urban ones in the nation. The refuge grew quickly in its first five years, going from 304 acres to 4,982 acres. Today, thanks in large part to its nationally recognized public-private partnerships, the refuge now encompasses over 5,600 acres.

“The Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge is a national success story and one of the jewels of the National Wildlife Refuge System,” said John Hartig, Refuge Manager of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge Manager. “The refuge has used innovative public-private partnerships to dramatically grow the refuge and restore habitats for waterfowl, fish, and migratory birds.”

Waste Management has worked to create the 358 acre wetland as part of a mitigation project since it acquired the property.

“Nationwide, Waste Management has provided more than 17,000 acres of protected habitat for wildlife through partnerships like the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge,” said John Myers,

Compliance and Engineering Manager - Michigan Market Area, Waste Management. “We would like to thank Congressman Dingell for his leadership in creating and expanding this refuge, and for all the work put into the project by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and dozens of state and local officials.”

Myers noted officials from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources assisted in making the donation a reality.

Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge History

On December 21, 2001, President Bush signed legislation establishing the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge as the first International Wildlife Refuge in North America. The refuge includes islands, coastal wetlands, marshes, shoals, and riverfront lands along 48 miles of the Detroit River and western Lake Erie.

The Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge is one of the few urban refuges in the nation. Over 300,000 diving ducks, 75,000 shorebirds, and hundreds of thousands of landbirds and fall raptors frequent the area to rest, nest, and feed along the unique shoreline habitats, including many islands and marshes. Over 30 species of waterfowl, 23 species of raptors, 31 species of shorebirds, and 160 species of songbirds are found along or migrate through this corridor. In addition, 117 species of fish are found in or migrate through the Detroit River.

This biodiversity and the diversity of habitats to support these animals and plants have given the region international acclaim. The Detroit River and western Lake Erie have been recognized for their biodiversity in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, the Western Hemispheric Shorebird Reserve Network, and the Biodiversity Investment Area Program of Environment Canada and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

More information about the refuge is available at:

<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/detroitriver/index.html>

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

Waste Management of Michigan, based in Wixom, has provided solid waste collection and recycling services to lower Michigan communities for almost 40 years and is the largest residential and commercial recycling and waste services provider in Michigan.

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