



**John D. Dingell Friend of the Refuge Awards and the
IWRA Annual Benefit Dinner in support of the
Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge**

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GROSSE ILE, MICHIGAN – The International Wildlife Refuge Alliance (IWRA) is celebrating the continued support for the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge (DRIWR) with its annual benefit dinner Saturday, May 20th. This year's sold out event will be held in the Refuge community of Monroe at the Monroe Golf and Country Club.

On Monday, May 15th at Gibraltar City Hall, three **John D. Dingell Friend of the Refuge Awards** were given in recognition of leadership and dedication to conservation on the Detroit River and western Lake Erie Basin. This year's honorees were:

Dr. Russell G. Kreis, Jr (Individual Award)

Dr. Russel G. Kreis, Jr. is an award-winning Great Lakes scientist whose career has spanned nearly 40 years. Russ received both his Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Eastern Michigan University in Biology, Chemistry, and Geology and his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan in Natural Resources. Russ has worked at the University of Michigan's, Great Lakes Research Division; the University of Minnesota at Duluth; and for the USEPA's, Office of Research and Development at Grosse Ile, Michigan and for the past 20 years, he also served as the Station Director and Branch Chief at Grosse Ile. Russ has authored or co-authored over 80 publications and reports, and has given about 300 technical presentations. He has recently retired from the USEPA after over 30 years of federal service.

Russ is a past Secretary of the International Association for Great Lakes Research; Co-Director of the Lake Erie Millennium Network; and has received 2 USEPA Bronze Medals for his Great Lakes research. During the past couple of years, he has been involved with Lake Erie Nutrients for the 2012 Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement; the Interagency Working Group on Great Lakes Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia for a Report to Congress; a Co-Chair for the NOAA-GLERL 2016 Review Panel, the USEPA Technical Response Representative for the Lake Erie Science Advisory Board, and a Journal of Great Lakes Research Guest Editor for the 2016 Lake Erie Modeling Group Special Section.

Dr. Kreis has had an enormous impact on the refuge, from providing the ecological rationale for saving Humbug Marsh, to performing the research necessary to clean up contaminated sediments in the Black Lagoon and Monguagon Creek, to helping undertake the Detroit River-Western Lake Erie Indicator Project that led to the implementation of many refuge projects. As Director of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Large Lakes Research Station, Dr. Kreis provided office space for the Refuge at his Station for 13 years and provided office space to IWRA since their inception in 2006. Russ has always been there for the Great Lakes and the Refuge, and we can think of no more worthy individual to receive this 2017 John D. Dingell Friend of the Refuge Award.

“I am very proud to receive this 2017 Friend of the Refuge Award and I do not take it lightly, especially when it is named in recognition of the Honorable John D. Dingell. What it means to me is that we have to continue to support the Refuge, continue to pursue conservation, and continue to safeguard the environment and human health,” said award recipient Russ Kreis.



Award recipient Russ Kreis (bottom right) with his wife Donna, Refuge Manager John Hartig, IWRA Chairman Richard Micka, and former Congressman John D. Dingell, Jr. Photo by Mark Messer.

Michigan Sea Grant (Non-Profit Award)

The Great Lakes – Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie and Ontario- and their connecting channels form the largest surface fresh water system on earth. Michigan is at the heart of that system, surrounded by four of the five Great Lakes. Through research, education, and outreach, Michigan Sea Grant is dedicated to the protection and sustainable use of the Great Lakes and coastal resources.

Michigan Sea Grant is a cooperative program of the University of Michigan (UM) and Michigan State University (MSU). It is also part of a national network of more than 30 university-based Sea Grant programs in coastal states across the country, administered through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ([NOAA](#)). Each Sea Grant program has three components: research, education, and outreach.

Nearly 110,000 students and adults have learned more about the Great Lakes since 1991 by participating in the Great Lakes Education Program. Designed through a collaboration involving Michigan State University Extension, Michigan Sea Grant, the Huron-Clinton Metroparks, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the program provides students, their teachers, and adult chaperones with an unforgettable on-the-water learning experience. The school ship Clinton will soon provide this on-the-water experience from the newly constructed fishing pier in the Refuge Gateway allowing thousands who share a common ownership of, and stewardship responsibility for, our great lakes.

Michigan Sea Grant staff has been involved in the DRIWR and IWRA since their inception in variety of ways. Today we recognize Michigan Sea Grant for their continued efforts in providing 26 years of classroom and vessel-based education in southeast Michigan and their commitment to furthering the mission of IWRA and the Refuge.

“I am truly honored to accept this 2017 John D. Dingell Friend of the Refuge Award on behalf of the Michigan Sea Grant College Program. It is through the collaborative efforts of so many that great things are accomplished, and the establishment of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge is one such great thing. We are grateful for having had the privilege of being involved and contributing a small part, and we look forward to continuing our collaborative work with all of the incredible, dedicated people who will make the Refuge even greater moving forward,” said Michigan Sea Grant Representative Steve Stewart, Senior Sea Grant Extension Educator.



Michigan Sea Grant representatives Steve Stewart and Mary Bohling with John D. Dingell, Jr., IWRA Chairman Richard Micka, and Refuge Manager John Hartig. Photo by Mark Messer.

CN (Corporate Award)

Spanning three coasts, CN is the only transcontinental railroad in North America offering a unique network reach. CN is North America's true supply chain enabler and takes pride in building for the future of their customers, employees, partners, community, and shareholders. They are shaped by what they stand for, by what they do best, by the lessons they've learned, and the values they've developed during a remarkable business transformation. They have gone from a business focused primarily in Canada to a full-fledged North American railway - serving customers across North America and beyond.

In 2012, CN generously provided financial support for the fishing pier at the Refuge Gateway to help provide compelling experiences meant to inspire and educate the next generation of conservationists. We graciously thank CN today for their continued support in helping us strive to achieve that goal with the 2017 John D. Dingell Friend of the Refuge Award.



CN Rail representative Phillip Tassin, Jr. with John D. Dingell, Jr. Photo by Mark Messer.