

For immediate release
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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service accepts donation of Dunn property in Derby, Vermont

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has officially agreed to acquire the Michael Dunn property in Derby, Vt., as the Eagle Point Unit of Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge, based in Swanton, in accordance with the terms of the Michael Dunn Trust. The 420-acre parcel, located on the shore of Lake Memphremagog, was offered to the federal government as a donation by the Trust.

The property consists of wetland, upland and lakeshore habitats and supports a diversity of wildlife species. It also offers wildlife-oriented public use opportunities.

The Service is developing a cooperative agreement with Vermont's Agency of Natural Resources' Department of Fish and Wildlife for long-term management of the property in a manner similar to a wildlife management area.

Public use activities – hiking, limited primitive camping, fishing access, hunting and wildlife observation – will be more fully available once the Service takes title to the property and a management agreement with Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife is completed. Until then, the public's traditional use of the property while under Mr. Dunn's stewardship will continue.

The real estate transaction to transfer the property is under way, and will be completed by year's end.

The Vermont congressional delegation applauded the agreement.

Sen. Patrick Leahy said, "Securing this treasured piece of Vermont for Vermonters, forever, and at no cost to taxpayers is the conservation and recreational opportunity of a lifetime on Lake Memphremagog. I thank the Dunn family, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Vermont Land Trust, and the Agency of Natural Resources for making it happen. Michael Dunn has left a perpetual legacy to be enjoyed by generations to come."

Sen. Bernie Sanders said, "This generous donation of land along the shore will go a long way in both conserving the wildlife habitat around Lake Memphremagog and allowing greater public use of treasured woodlands. Vermont's forests and lakes have always been vital to our economy and critical to our character as a state. I am very

pleased that by working together with local, federal and state partners, we have protected this beautiful and valuable natural resource for users today and for generations to come.”

“Throughout this process, public input has been critical in the discussion and the ultimate decision to go forward with this property transfer,” Rep. Peter Welch said. “Hearing from local officials, property owners, state representatives and the general public it became clear that preserving public access to this land was important to all those involved. This decision does that and ensures future generations will continue to enjoy the recreational opportunities of this unique property for years to come.”

Michael Dunn was a native of Montreal who emigrated to the family property in the 1970s with his family and later became an American citizen. He was active in local affairs and served as a selectman in Derby in the 1990s. He passed away in 2007. He left most of the property to the U.S. and Canadian governments for conservation and the use of the public, and he made substantial donations to the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.

Acquiring this property has been a collaborative conservation effort between several public and private organizations. Working in partnership with the Vermont Land Trust, Community Financial Services Group (Trustee of the Michael Dunn Trust) and Vermont’s Agency of Natural Resources, the Service prepared a draft environmental assessment and solicited public comment on the proposed donation. More than 175 comments were received. A property tour and public meeting were held. The Service carefully reviewed and considered all comments.

The Service prepared a final EA, and the Service’s Northeast Regional Director Marvin Moriarty approved the project, completing the National Environmental Policy Act process. The final EA can be found at <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/planning/eaglepoint>.

The Service has declined acceptance of a 10-acre lakefront tract with several structures that was part of the Dunn property. The trustee will handle disposition of the parcel. Farmstead buildings on the property the Service is acquiring will be removed prior to transfer to the federal government.

For information regarding this conservation effort, please contact Janet Kennedy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, at janet_kennedy@fws.gov or 413-253-8553; Tracy Zschau, Vermont Land Trust, at Tracy@vlt.org or 802-748-6089; or Jonathan Wood, Agency of Natural Resources, at jonathan.wood@state.vt.us or 802-241-3600.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and a trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more

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