



News from

Congressman Ron Kind

*REPRESENTING WISCONSIN'S THIRD
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT*

For Immediate Release – Contact: Scot Ross
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Kind Calls for Bush Administration, Congressional Action on National Wildlife Refuge Shortfall

Nearly \$1.8 Billion Needed to Protect Natural Resources, Critical Tourism Component

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI) called for action by the Bush Administration and Congressional leaders to aid national wildlife refuges, which are \$1.8 billion underfunded for routine maintenance and operations. Kind made the request appearing before the centennial celebration of the Upper Mississippi National Wildlife Refuge celebration.

“Not only do our national refuges help protect our precious natural resources, but also, they provide jobs and badly-needed tourism dollars for Wisconsin,” said Kind, a member of the House Resources Committee. “This is an investment in our economy and our children’s futures.”

The national refuge system, which was created 100 years ago by President Theodore Roosevelt, provides an oasis of habitat and protection to the plants and animals that reside in them. Kind’s western Wisconsin district includes three national wildlife refuges and nationwide there are 549 refuges that are home to millions of migratory birds, hundreds of endangered species and an enormous variety of other plants and animals.

“Through the bold and visionary determination of President Theodore Roosevelt and leaders in Wisconsin like John Muir, Aldo Leopold and Gaylord Nelson, America today enjoys the natural treasures preserved in the largest and most varied conservation system in the world,” said Kind. “Much like the pyramids of Egypt, our National Wildlife Refuge system will stand as a triumph of American vision and commitment to responsible stewardship of our unparalleled natural heritage.”

The investment in national wildlife refuges means economic opportunity for Wisconsin, according to Kind. In 2002, tourism in Wisconsin generated \$11.7 billion in revenue and supported 323,000 full-time jobs.

Kind added that the Upper Mississippi National Wildlife Refuge enjoys more tourists annually than the famed Yellowstone National Park and its attraction “Old Faithful.”

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