The News-Messenger

WETLANDS STUDY

The Little Portage Wildlife Area in Ottawa County was among the nearly 8,000 acres of wetlands improved through conservation efforts by Ducks Unlimited and other partners in 2020. SUBMITTED

Ducks Unlimited to launch $2.1 million project

Jon Stinchcomb
Port Clinton News Herald
USA TODAY NETWORK

BAY TOWNSHIP - Following extensive conservation efforts last year to restore or protect nearly 8,000 acres of natural wetlands and grasslands throughout Ohio, including several locations in Ottawa County, Ducks Unlimited and other partners plan a multimillion dollar study to find areas in need of improvement next.

In 2020, Ducks Unlimited, partnering with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and Ottawa County Soil and Water Conservation District, improved 7,765 acres of native habitat at 21 project sites across Ohio.

The conservation efforts were achieved despite the COVID-19 pandemic, as field staff took extra precautions and found creative solutions, according to a news release from Ducks Unlimited.

The projects were funded through Ducks Unlimited donors, the H2Ohio program, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, Energy Transfer and North American Wetlands Conservation Act grants.

Ducks Unlimited has invested $39 million over the past 30 years to conserve wetland habitats, reaching more than 101,000 acres in Ohio.

According to Russ Terry, state regional biologist for Ducks Unlimited, over 90% of Ohio's wetlands have been lost to human development, reduced from about 5 million acres to just around 483,000 acres.

"Our landscape-level conservation efforts help more than ducks," Terry said. "Wetlands benefit local residents by reducing flooding risk, improving water quality and boosting the econo-

my."

The research

On Wednesday, Ducks Unlimited announced plans to launch a $2.1 million international study aiming to connect how Great Lakes wetland habitats can reduce harmful algae blooms and improve the population of mallard ducks, which are described as one of the region's most important waterfowl.

The study looks to identify wetland restoration projects that would improve water quality for not only mallards and the hundreds of other wildlife species that rely on clean water, but also the over 30 million people for which the Great Lakes serve as the primary source of drinking water.

The research project, which is being

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Council eyes changes to map of revitalization district

Daniel Carson
Fremont News-Messenger
USA TODAY NETWORK

FREMONT - The city could change its downtown revitalization district boundaries to allow for possible new development on West State Street.

Fremont City Council members are considering an ordinance to amend those boundaries, after downtown property owner Rich Farmer reached out to the city and asked for a change.

Bob Gross, the city's economic development director, said Farmer has expressed interest in possibly opening a restaurant and had proposed a shift in the revitalization district.

"We thought it made sense to shift it north and west a little bit," Gross said.

Farmer owns property from 340 to 418 Justice Street through Speedway Rentals LLC and in the 500 block of West State Street under B&F Rentals LLC.

In a Feb. 25 letter to Mayor Danny Sanchez, Farmer pointed out that some of the revitalization district's current map included acreage from unusable residential areas and the Sandusky River.

He asked the mayor to consider removing the river and some of the residential areas in the district's southern part, while adding areas on the north side of West State Street.

"These changes would not only use the district to better suit the current buildings in the area but it would also reduce the total area used in the district, making opportunity to grow even beyond my request,' Farmer wrote.

Fremont City Council held a first reading Thursday on an ordinance that would incorporate Farmer's suggestions.

In 2015, city council approved the establishment of the district.

Gross said local businessman Tom Kern had approached then-mayor Jim Ellis about creating a district to encourage more restaurant development in the downtown area by offering more liquor permits.

Ellis wrote to city council members and urged the approval of the district, which was created using a section of

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Put-in-Bay police chief under investigation

Craig Shoup
Fremont News-Messenger
USA TODAY NETWORK

PUT-IN-BAY - An island village under fire for numerous claims of police misconduct is facing another claim, this time alleging its acting police chief assaulted a man.

Last September, Patrick McCann, the grandson of former mayor Bernard "Mac" McCann and son of current councilman Michael McCann, was involved in an altercation in which he said he was shoved by acting police chief James Kimble.

Kimble, whom Put-in-Bay Mayor Jessica Dress recommended to be

named full-time police chief during a council meeting this month, vouched for Kimble, saying he has been a great addition to a department looking for structure.

"So our legal counselor reviewed the incident and paired with our policy in procedure and did not see where there was a violation of that policy or procedure," Dress told the News Herald this week. "It's that simple."

Kimble declined to comment on the incident involving McCann as it remains under investigation, with Paul Dobson, Wood County prosecutor, in charge of the case. Dobson said the in-

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James Kimble, middle, Put-in-Bay Police Chief, is seen walking towards Patrick McCann last Sept. 19 during an incident in which he is alleged to have shoved McCann. SUBMITTED