

Congressman Rothman Receives 2004 National Great Blue Heron Award Rothman Recognized for His Efforts

For Immediate Release

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Rothman Recognized for His Efforts to Preserve the
Hackensack Meadowlands

(Lyndhurst, NJ) Congressman Steve Rothman (D-Fair Lawn) yesterday was the proud recipient of the 2004 National Great Blue Heron Award for his work to preserve the 8,400 undeveloped acres in the Meadowlands. The award was presented to the Congressman by the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, an international conservation organization that protects migratory birds throughout the continent. This organization has previously presented this award to, among others, The Anheuser-Busch Companies, The Williams Companies, former Minnesota Governor Arne Carlson and Vermont's Senator Patrick Leahy. Rothman was nominated for the award by Clifford Day of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

"Mr. Rothman has become the lynchpin for ecological conservation activities in the Meadowlands. His unstinting efforts on behalf of the Meadowlands are encyclopedic in volume and scope..." Mr. Day wrote in his award nomination form in support of Rothman. "...[H]e has consistently empowered Federal, State, and environmental agencies to work together for the preservation of the Meadowlands. The New Jersey Field Office is proud to nominate him for the 2004 National Great Blue Heron award."

Congressman Rothman, a lifelong resident of Bergen County, has made preservation of the 8,400 undeveloped acres of the Hackensack Meadowlands one of his top priorities. This land, which is ten times the size of New York City's Central Park, lies less than half a mile from the Continental Arena/Giants Stadium property and just three miles from the Empire State Building. Congressman Rothman has led the effort to spare these undeveloped wetlands, landfills, and toxic sites from development, instead offering a vision for the future that includes a massive clean-up, revitalization, and transformation of the site into an environmental park offering opportunities for canoe trips, nature walks, bird watching, eco-tourism, other recreational activities, and an environmental education center for students.

"We have saved these 8,400 acres from development. They are being cleaned up and brought back to their more

natural condition. And, most importantly, it is now firmly established in everyone's minds that this ecosystem will remain open, remediated, revitalized, cherished and enjoyed forever," Congressman Rothman said.

During his acceptance of the 2004 National Great Blue Heron Award, Rothman pointed out, "Just as birds are realizing the wonder and beauty of the Meadowlands, so are the residents. Now, people do not need to leave the New Jersey/New York metropolitan area to enjoy the beauty of nature because we have a wonderful environmental masterpiece right here in our own backyard. I am proud of the work that we have done and will do to make our dream of the Meadowlands Environmental Park a reality."

Congressman Rothman, a member of the House Appropriations Committee, most recently secured federal funds for the Hackensack Meadowlands Environmental Park. The Committee allocated \$800,000 for the Army Corps of Engineers to continue an ongoing restoration study and \$1.5 million to continue remediation of polluted sites in the area. The Committee also allocated \$180,000 for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to continue its joint studies with the Army Corps on how best to remediate those 8,400 acres and turn them into an environmental park. To date, Representative Rothman has secured almost \$9.5 million in federal funds that have been spent on land acquisition, remediation, environmental studies and research, and to enlist the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a partner in these efforts.

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Pictured: Marvin Moriarty, the Northeast Regional Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, presents Congressman Rothman with the 2004 National Great Blue Heron Award.