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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Milwaukee Riverkeeper Files Suit to Bring Down Estabrook Dam

MILWAUKEE – Today, Milwaukee Riverkeeper filed a lawsuit against Milwaukee County, the owner and operator of the Estabrook Dam, for failing to maintain the dam in good repair and condition. Milwaukee Riverkeeper is requesting that the court declare the structure a public nuisance, and order that it be removed.

The Estabrook Dam, located on the Milwaukee River just south of Hampton Avenue between Glendale and Milwaukee, has been in decline for decades and Milwaukee County has not addressed numerous outstanding maintenance and repair requirements pursuant to state dam safety regulations, as well as orders issued by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR).

In July 2009, based on a determination that the dam was “*dangerous to life, health, and property*,” the WDNR issued Milwaukee County a “Formal Order to Repair or Abandon,” requiring that the dam be drawn down immediately and kept open until completion of all repairs. The County was also required to provide written notification to the WDNR of its intent to repair or abandon the dam by January 29, 2011. The County failed to meet that deadline, instead noting that it was still considering its options.

According to Milwaukee Riverkeeper Executive Director Karen Schapiro, “as far back as 1995, WDNR ordered the County to make repairs to the dam. Sixteen years later necessary repairs have still not been made.” Ms. Schapiro added, “the County has failed to maintain the dam in good condition as required by Wisconsin laws and it is presenting a serious hazard for all who recreate in the area. After decades of inaction, we have no choice but to push for its permanent removal through a lawsuit.”

Cheryl Nenn, Milwaukee Riverkeeper, further explained, “removal of the Estabrook Dam will not only help to improve water quality and fish passage in the Milwaukee River, it will also save taxpayer dollars.”

Nenn noted that it will cost the Milwaukee County an estimated \$1.5 million to properly repair the dam to extend its lifetime for 20 years. In addition, the County would need to spend at least \$1.3 million in maintenance costs over 20 years and \$2 -3.5 million for removal of contaminated sediment behind the dam. In contrast, at an estimated \$650,000 for dam removal, plus \$2 – 3.5 for sediment removal, it would cost the County far less to bring the dam down. Plus, the County would be eligible to apply for federal and state grants for dam removal.

“Clearly, removal of the Estabrook Dam is in the best interest of the Milwaukee River and the community,” Nenn added.

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Milwaukee Riverkeeper:

Milwaukee Riverkeeper’s mission is to protect water quality and wildlife habitat in the river corridors and to advocate for sound land use in the Milwaukee, Menomonee, and Kinnickinnic River Watersheds. Riverkeeper’s core programming involves patrolling, monitoring and advocating on behalf of the rivers. Milwaukee Riverkeeper is a member of the Waterkeeper® Alliance, an international coalition dedicated to clean water and healthy communities. As Riverkeeper, the organization identifies sources of pollution, responds to citizen concerns, and works collaboratively to find solutions to problems affecting our local rivers.