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For immediate release

\$43M Cleanup of Milwaukee River at Lincoln Park to be Celebrated May 5

Milwaukee, WI (May 3, 2016) – Milwaukee County Parks Director, John Dargle, Jr., along with state and local officials, will celebrate the completion of the \$43 million sediment remediation of the Milwaukee River at Lincoln Park, Thursday, May 5, with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 10:30 a.m. The ceremony will take place at Picnic Area #1 (North Green Bay Avenue and West Stark Street). Guided tours focused on the project will follow the ceremony.

To accelerate remediation of the site and restoration of habitat, The Great Lakes Legacy Act provided the mechanism for the cost-sharing partnership between the EPA, Wisconsin DNR, and Milwaukee County Parks. Federal funding was provided through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

From 2011–2015, workers removed 171,000 cubic yards of sediment from targeted zones contaminated with PCBs (industrial chemicals), PAHs (hydrocarbons), and NAPLs (liquid contaminants that do not dissolve in water). According to the EPA, the contamination comes from both point and nonpoint sources including historic industrial discharges, wastewater treatment plants, combined sewer overflows, and agricultural and urban runoff.

Habitat restoration during this time reestablished 12.5 acres. Restoration is expected to be completed in spring.

In response to the environmental cleanup, members of the community formed the Friends of Lincoln Park. The group brings neighbors and the larger community together to celebrate the park. Stewardship activities, including litter cleanups and invasive-weed pulls, as well as social activities have been organized by the group. Their next event is the 2nd Annual Spring Fest, at Blatz Pavilion on Saturday, May 7, from 9 a.m.–noon. This open-house event will feature community resource tables, food, and fun for the whole family.

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The sediment remediation and habitat restoration project at Lincoln Park is part of the larger effort to clean up the Milwaukee Estuary. Under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA) of 1987, the Milwaukee Estuary, which is considered a source of pollution to Lake Michigan, was designated as an Area of Concern. The GLWQA is a commitment between the United States and Canada to restore and protect the waters of the Great Lakes. Impairments to use of the river included restrictions on fish and wildlife consumption, eutrophication or undesirable algae, degradation of fish and wildlife populations, beach closings, fish tumors or deformities, degradation of aesthetics, bird or animal deformities or reproduction problems, degradation of organisms that live in the river bottom, degradation of phytoplankton and zooplankton populations, restriction on dredging activities, and loss of fish and wildlife habitat.

Additional projects in the estuary must be completed before beneficial uses of the environment can be considered restored and the Area of Concern can be delisted.

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