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Dated: April 30, 2010

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How much is a Healthy Delaware River Worth? New Report Documents

April 30, 2010, Bristol, PA, the Delaware Riverkeeper Network announced release of a new report titled ***River Values-The Value of a Clean and Healthy Delaware River***. According to the organization the report begins to document the economic value of a healthy and clean Delaware River, in terms of jobs, property values, tourism, commercial fisheries, and it paints a clear picture that tax rateables and the economies of a healthy River are far too significant to be forgotten during economic down-turns.

Maya van Rossum the Delaware Riverkeeper asserts: "When local, state and federal governments are being pressured to create jobs, jobs, jobs, the River and environment are often undervalued and their value as a job creator and economic engine vital for the region gets downplayed and forgotten as the special interests fight for their pet projects. This report demonstrates that protecting and restoring the Delaware River is fundamental to healthy jobs, economies and communities in our region and if sacrificed to achieve short term political or industrial ends will result in the undermining of the health, enjoyment and economic vitality of our region's children, families and communities."

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van Rossum continues, “So often we hear about the need to deepen the Delaware to support big oil or industry, or that the state and local regulations that protect our waterways are too great a burden and must be relaxed or eliminated, or that the River is needed to support power plants regardless of the number of fish they slaughter, or that we have to continue to allow industries and communities to dump sewage, toxins, and other pollution into the River. What gets lost in all of these conversations is the reality that a clean, healthy and free flowing river is essential for the jobs of others, to protect us from illness, to prevent us from suffering unnecessary flood damages. Big business, politicians and bureaucrats are so busy worrying about whether Dupont will sue them or the ports will oppose them in an election that they forget the River can benefit many more when we protect it for the benefit of all.”

The report includes case studies documenting individuals and businesses that benefit economically from a clean and healthy Delaware River. Individuals highlighted in case studies available for interview regarding this report include:

Dan Breen, Owner, Bucks County River Country (Pt. Pleasant, PA), Cell-215-850-6003

Michael Hogan, Owner, Michael Hogan Photography (Dorothy, NJ), 609-476-2086

Blaine Mengel, Owner, Backwoods Angler Fishing Guides (Black Eddy, PA), Cell-610-392-1790 or 610-868-9349

Some of the documented facts included in the report:

- ✓ In 1986 the Upper Delaware attracted 232,000 whitewater paddlers who spent \$13.3 million, adding \$6.2 million to local economy and supporting 291 local jobs.
- ✓ In just one year the Upper Delaware and Delaware Water Gap brought to our local communities 367,400 whitewater paddlers, who spent over \$20 million (20,229,000), contributed almost \$10 million (9,895,000) to our local economies, and supported 447 jobs.
- ✓ Trout fishing in the Upper Delaware River resulted in one year in \$17.69 million in local business revenue. This revenue supporting 348 jobs, providing \$3.65 million in wages and \$719,350 in local taxes. This investment translates into an ongoing \$29.98 million in local economic activities.
- ✓ River festivals generate as many as 75,000 visitors to small riverside towns, giving an important boost to local businesses.

- ✓ Over 2.1 million bushels of clam and oyster shells have been harvested in the Delaware Bay from 2005 thru 2009. For the region, oyster harvest resulting from this federal investment is projected to generate up to and over \$80 million of annual economic benefit, much of this in some of New Jersey's poorest communities who could not tolerate the loss of associated jobs, revenue and benefit.
- ✓ The annual economic value of migratory bird and horseshoe crab phenomenon in the Bayshore area provides \$25 million in benefits to the Delaware Bayshore area and \$34 million regionally. Because most of these expenditures occur in the "off-season," they are particularly valuable to local economies.
- ✓ Protecting, restoring and valuing the ecosystems of the Delaware River is not just of economic import, but is also important to the health and safety of our region.
- ✓ The biomedical industry dependent on the horseshoe crabs found in the Delaware Bay is said to provide \$150 million of value in addition to the life saving tests they provide for medical devices, intravenous drugs and to detect life threatening illness such as spinal meningitis. The LAL needed for these tests is irreplaceable, found only in the blood of the horseshoe crab, cannot be created synthetically.
- ✓ In the United States trees planted on private properties have generated over \$1.5 billion in tax revenue and can increase the value of nearby homes by 6 to 15%.
- ✓ Trees in just four of our local watersheds saved a combined \$6 ½ billion in otherwise needed infrastructure. (Big Timber, Cobbs, Mill, & Frankford-Tacony)

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