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CONTACT: Terry Brady
DCNR Deputy Press Secretary
(717) 772-9101

MIDDLE, LOWER SUSQUEHANNA SECTIONS NAMED DCNR'S 'RIVER OF THE YEAR' *Annual Event Salutes Community Involvement, Celebrates Waterway's Value*

HARRISBURG (March 23, 2009) — The middle and lower Susquehanna River, a watershed that has shaped countless community lifestyles in central Pennsylvania and is emerging as a recreational treasure of the future, was recognized today as Pennsylvania's River of the Year for 2009.

Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Michael DiBerardinis said the designation is the latest accolade for this section of the Susquehanna River.

"A lifeblood of the Chesapeake Bay, and already designated as a National Recreation Water Trail by the U.S. Department of the Interior, this 103-mile stretch of the Susquehanna draws our annual salute for so many reasons," said DiBerardinis.

"Pivotal in the natural and cultural heritage of central Pennsylvania, this section of the river has defined settlement patterns, the development of industry, transportation, agricultural, and a way of life for generations of Pennsylvanians," DiBerardinis said. "With its Native American legacies, early canal-boat transportation, and a wealth of architectural and industrial history, the Susquehanna River is a living museum of the natural and cultural treasures this region has to offer."

Flowing south from the junction of the West Branch, the middle Susquehanna River is roughly delineated as a stretch from Northumberland, Northumberland County, to Duncannon, Perry County. Portions of Union, Snyder, Juniata, and Dauphin counties also border this section of the Susquehanna.

From Duncannon south to the Maryland state line, the lower Susquehanna also borders sections of Perry, Dauphin and Cumberland counties, and separates York and Lancaster counties.

"The River of the Year celebrations that are planned in communities along the Susquehanna will help to raise public awareness of the river's value to the region and will draw attention to major initiatives in the region," said DiBerardinis. "Furthermore, our continuing efforts to revitalize the Susquehanna's river-town communities—Sunbury, Selinsgrove, Dauphin, Harrisburg, Columbia, Marietta, Wrightsville and others—will improve access to the river, increase tourism, and provide additional land and water-based recreational opportunities for local residents and visitors."

Rivers in Pennsylvania have long been used for transportation, as drinking water sources, and as resources that provide aesthetic beauty, recreation and economic vitality across the state. Waterways have been selected for state River of the Year honors annually since 1983.

"Each year we hope these celebrations will raise the awareness level of all Pennsylvanians to recognize the legacy of their rivers, participate in the revitalization of community riverfront parks, and assist in establishing trails and greenways along the waterways," DiBerardinis said. "We want newcomers to

join longtime Susquehanna River supporters in creating new access and recreational opportunities; preserving open space and wildlife habitat; and expanding heritage-, geologic-, and recreational-based tourism.”

The annual DCNR River of the Year award honors local residents, governments, non-profit and conservation organizations working to improve waterways and the quality of life in their watersheds across the state. DCNR’s key partners along the Susquehanna include the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, Lancaster County Conservancy, Susquehanna Greenway Partnership, Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper, National Park Service, Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network, Lancaster-York Heritage Region, PPL Corp., York-Lancaster Heritage Region, and Stewards of the Lower Susquehanna.

Conserving and protecting the greenway corridor of river lands along the Susquehanna River is a priority for DCNR and is supported by its Lower Susquehanna River Conservation Landscape Initiative—a multi-partner, cooperative effort to recognize, protect and enhance regional lifestyles and natural resources.

With this year’s designation, the middle and lower Susquehanna River will be the subject of a Rivers Month poster to be issued in June.

Planning is also under way for a Susquehanna Sojourn, kicking off with a June 24 celebration in Harrisburg and ending June 28 at the Holtwood Dam in Lancaster County. The five-day, four-night tour of the river and its corridor by boaters, hikers and bikers is designed to encourage active stewardship of the waterway and the Chesapeake Bay.

The Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay is coordinating River of the Year activities in partnership with DCNR. The first wild and scenic rivers film festival will be held in September at the Whitaker Center in Harrisburg. The alliance is also co-host of the sojourn.

For more event information, contact the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, (717) 737-8432, ext. 12., or visit www.acb-online.org.

For more information on DCNR’s rivers program, visit www.dcnr.state.pa.us and click on “Rivers.” For details on sojourns planned this summer on the Susquehanna and other state waterways, visit www.pawatersheds.org.

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