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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Oil Spill Highlights Stormwater Issue in Bronx River

Bronx, NY – An oil spill discovered on the Bronx River in White Plains on June 2, has been determined to be heating oil from a nearby apartment building. The oil entered the river through the storm drain system and has extended for three miles down the river, from South of Main Street in White Plains down to Crane Road in Scarsdale. Officials report that multiple containment booms were put into place as far south on the river as Mount Vernon, but the oil has not reached that far.

The oil was spilled in the basement of the building and flowed into an internal storm sewer which flushed it directly into the Bronx River. Stormwater poses a major threat to the health of the river, discharging untreated polluted runoff directly into the waterway on an ongoing basis. In the fall of 2009, an oil spill from a Con Ed substation in Yonkers resulted in hundreds of gallons of transformer oil flowing into the river. While spills such as these are relatively rare, runoff is a constant input to the ecosystem, with rainwater picking up pollutants as it runs over paved and hardened surfaces, ultimately flowing into storm drains which discharge to the Bronx River. These incidents serve as dramatic reminders of the vulnerability of our local waterways, and how increased coordination and cooperation across political boundaries are needed to protect the entire Bronx River watershed and ecosystem.

A private contractor under the supervision of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation is cleaning up along the shoreline, where reports of a foul odor were reported from at least three blocks away following the spill. Preliminary estimates were that hundreds of gallons were spilled into the river.

The Bronx River flows southward for 23 miles from Valhalla, New York near the Kensico Reservoir and empties into the East River between the Soundview and Hunts Point neighborhoods in the South Bronx. Encompassing an area of more than 56 square miles, the river's highly urbanized and multi-jurisdictional watershed spans two states, three counties, and fifteen municipalities, flowing through a landscape of reservoirs, suburban and urban development, and commercial and transportation corridors.

Progress on water quality improvement and watershed restoration has been underway for decades along the Bronx River. In 2009, the New York State Attorney General's Office contributed \$1.8 million to reduce water pollution and improve water quality in the Bronx River, as part of a \$7 million settlement with Yonkers, White Plains, Scarsdale and Greenburgh for polluting the river with raw sewage. These funds have been used for a variety of projects intended to capture or treat stormwater before it gets to the river.

The Bronx River Alliance serves as a coordinated voice for the river and works in harmonious partnership to protect, improve and restore the Bronx River corridor and

greenway so that they can be healthy ecological, recreational, educational and economic resources for the communities through which the river flows.



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