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NEWS RELEASE

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Dubuque Water Trail Opens June 23

DUBUQUE, Iowa – The City of Dubuque, Friends of the Mines of Spain, Dubuque County Conservation Board, and Iowa Department of Natural Resources are pleased to announce the opening of the Dubuque Water Trail, developed with the support of a Water Trails Development Grant from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

A water trail is defined as a path on a waterway connected through signs, maps and access points providing a scenic and educational experience for recreational users. Located in the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, the Dubuque Water Trail is 11 miles of shoreline along the western edge of the Mississippi River and the Catfish Creek. Beginning at the A.Y. McDonald Park and Boat Ramp and concluding at Massey Marina Park and Boat Ramp, the trail can be enjoyed by both the novice and experienced paddler. Whether paddling the shoreline of the main channel or enjoying backwater excursions, the trail is an exceptional sightseeing and recreational opportunity where history, nature, commerce and recreation come together. The trail can be enjoyed in its entirety in a day or in segments as time allows. Five access points are offered along the trail, allowing paddler access to the river or an opportunity to exit the river and enjoy on-land recreational opportunities.

The Water Trail will be designated at a ceremony at the American Trust River's Edge Plaza in the Port of Dubuque on Saturday, June 23, at 9:00 a.m. Paddlers are invited to join the designation ceremony and bring their paddlecraft. Immediately following the ceremony, paddlers are invited to depart on a guided inaugural paddle of the Water Trail from the River's Edge Plaza and up Catfish Creek.

There will be two paddling options for the designation ceremony. More experienced paddlers comfortable with a 6.5-mile trip are encouraged to organize and depart from the River's Edge Plaza in the Port following the designation ceremony. Novice paddlers or people seeking a

shorter 4-mile trip can organize at the Catfish Creek Canoe Launch in the Mines of Spain at 11:00 a.m. where the group from the River's Edge Plaza will convene and all will enjoy the trip together up the scenic Catfish Creek.

Award-winning singer/songwriter Erica Wheeler will join the paddlers at the Catfish Creek Canoe Launch and offer a sense of place activity at the Julien Dubuque Monument during. Wheeler has a background in environmental studies and, as part of her Soulful Landscape programs, she helps people reconnect with places. Paddlers who wish to do so are invited to participate in the activity. Wheeler will also present a public concert at the first annual National Mississippi River Boat Fest that evening at 5:00 p.m. at the National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium public courtyard. The concert will relate to the paddling experience on the Mississippi River and Catfish Creek.

The inaugural paddle will officially conclude upon return to the Catfish Creek Canoe Launch but paddlers are encouraged to enjoy additional segments of the Water Trail. Massey Marina Park, four miles downriver from the Catfish Creek Canoe Launch, offers numerous backwater sloughs to explore. Paddlers may want to return to the River's Edge Plaza in the Port of Dubuque to enjoy the National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium Boat Fest, June 23-24. Boats of all kinds from canoes to yachts will arrive in the Port for the weekend to participate in the festivities that include a Sailboat Regatta, Boat Contest, Children's Village, Rock n' Rollin' on the River Party, birch bark canoe, knot tying and paddle making demonstrations and more!

However your day or weekend enjoyment on the Water Trail is scheduled, life vests are always mandatory and paddlers are responsible for arranging transportation.

For more information on the Dubuque Water Trail Designation Ceremony and inaugural paddle, contact David Johnson, assistant planner for the City of Dubuque, at djohnson@cityofdubuque.org or (563) 589-4210.

For additional information and a schedule of events for the National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium Boat Fest, contact Jan Feltes at jfeltes@rivermuseum.com or (563) 557-9545.

For more information on the Iowa Water Trails Program or Water Trails Development Grants, contact John Wenck, Water Trails Coordinator with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, at John.Wenck@dnr.iowa.gov or (515) 281-8085.

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