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CONTACTS:

Januari Smith (IDNR)

(217) 558-1544

Maggie Carson (IEPA)

(217) 558-1536

Robyn Ziegler (AG)

(312) 814-3118

State Announces Natural Resources Settlement for former Indian Refinery site near Lawrenceville

\$1.7 million settlement will protect waterways, expand public land and preserve wildlife habitat on 2,300 acres of land

SPRINGFIELD, IL – The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) and Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan today announced the settlement of a natural resource damages case that will result in ecosystem restoration projects to preserve waterways and enhance wildlife habitat on and near the former Indian Refinery south of Lawrenceville.

The site was listed on the National Priorities List, or Superfund, in 2000, due to contamination from various hazardous substances resulting from decades of operation as a refinery. The contamination affected wetlands that are hydraulically connected to the nearby Embarras River.

The IDNR and IEPA reached the settlement agreement with Texaco Inc., a former owner of the refinery. Represented by the Illinois Attorney General, the State of Illinois entered into a Consent Order with Texaco in U.S. District Court that will preserve and enhance ecological features in the area south and east of the former refinery.

The Consent Order includes provisions for the transfer by Texaco to IDNR of approximately 2,300 acres of land south of the former refinery, and for the IDNR and IEPA to restore and enhance habitat on those tracts, which are located in the Embarras River watershed. Texaco will provide more than \$1.7 million for habitat enhancement and related costs, plus groundwater management assistance to the City of Lawrenceville.

“As a result of this agreement, the public will receive new public outdoor recreation opportunities in a restored area near the former refinery,” said IDNR Director Marc Miller. “Areas such as floodplain forest habitat that saw damages to the soil, plants, trees and wildlife from refinery operations during the last century will be restored for future generations to enjoy.”

“I am pleased to see a settlement reached for this important natural resource issue,” said IEPA Director Doug Scott. “The Agency is continuing oversight of the cleanup at Indian Refinery, but the Natural Resource Damage Assessment process provides compensation for the natural resource damages that cannot be restored by cleanup.”

“This agreement makes way for critical restoration projects that help preserve our waterways and renew natural habitat,” Madigan said.

The settlement includes funding for the IDNR and IEPA to undertake ecological restoration activities, groundwater management assistance, and related expenses as compensation for releases of oil and hazardous substances into the environment at and near the 990-acre former refinery, which ceased operation in 1995. Environmental cleanup activities on the refinery property – directed by the U.S. EPA and IEPA – have been ongoing since the mid 1990s.

Much of the area targeted for restoration work will provide habitat for songbirds, marsh birds and migratory birds as well as a number of other wetland-dependent animals. A number of animal and plant species of conservation concern, including several on the state list of threatened or endangered species, have been documented in the area.