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Pittsburgh, PA -- Resource Environmental Solutions, LLC (RES), announced today the opening of the Robinson Fork Mitigation Bank, a watershed-scale stream and wetland restoration project on a site in Washington County, which will result in clean water and restoration of the natural habitat that has been overlooked for many years.

“Mitigation Banking is mostly new to Pennsylvania, but is popular and highly utilized in other areas of the U.S.,” said Elliott Bouillion, President and CEO for RES. “Simply, it is the restoration, creation, enhancement, or preservation of a wetland, stream, or other habitat area undertaken expressly for the purpose of compensating for unavoidable resource losses in advance of development actions, when such compensation cannot be achieved at the development site or would not be as environmentally beneficial. Mitigation banking at a watershed-scale has been shown to be a more sustainable mitigation approach.”

Bouillion continued, “The lack of large scale mitigation banks and wetland and stream credit supply in Pennsylvania has been a challenge that federal, state and local resource agencies have been working together to address. The Robinson Fork Mitigation Bank is the largest mitigation bank to be approved in Pennsylvania and the first to deliver ecological offset solutions to southwestern Pennsylvania. RES continues to invest to make mitigation resources available to support economic development activities across the Commonwealth.”

Speaking at the Opening were, DEP Acting Secretary, Patrick McDonnell, DCED Executive Deputy Secretary Neil Weaver and Washington Chamber of Mary Stollar Vice President of the Washington County Chamber of Commerce. Additionally, in attendance were land owners,

local environmental non-profits, a large variety of DEP staff, local government officials and members of the private sector.

The Robinson Fork Mitigation Bank provides positive ecological and economic benefits for Pennsylvanians. RES’ investment in ecological restoration improves the degraded state of a fragile ecosystem by restoring and preserving over 136,000 linear feet of self-sustaining, functional headwaters, main-stem streams and their tributaries and associated wetlands and riparian corridors in the Upper Ohio River Subbasin and in Washington County.

Robinson Fork Mitigation Bank ecological restoration project activities will occupy a significant portion of the Robinson Fork Watershed, nearly 7¼ square miles, and are planned to result in net gains of over a mile of new streams and 46 acres of new wetlands. Ecological restoration activities will create an integrated stream and floodplain system; restore localized groundwater aquifers; reconnect floodplains to the water table and streams; optimize and diversify habitat; and create a hydrologic system that allows for the retention of nutrients, stream bed material and organic carbon. The planned restoration approach will increase ecological complexity and long-term hydraulic stability at the site.

This ecological restoration project balances environmental stewardship and economic development. The project provides a direct source of replacement of aquatic environmental resource impacts within the Ohio River Subbasin. Wetland and stream mitigation credits are available to Permittees whose projects require ecological offsets to comply with regulatory agency permitting conditions.

In addition, Senator Bartolotta, Pennsylvania Senator representing the 46th District (Washington/Greene/Beaver Counties, PA) stated, "Today's announcement provides a unique example to all of Pennsylvania how we can utilize private sector funds to promote private investment that will improve our environment. This is the type of responsible investment that will improve our local waterways and encourage recreation and economic development."

RES efforts to enable this complex environmental project were closely coordinated with an Interagency Review Team comprised of the Baltimore, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh Districts of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, the US Environmental Protection Agency, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the US Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission and the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Each of these environmental protection agencies provide direct input on how the bank is created; therefore, closely regulating this industry and ensuring that a holistic environmental project is built.

Mary Stollar, Vice President of the Washington County Chamber of Commerce said, "Washington County is fortunate to have abundant supplies of natural resources - the most precious being water. The Robinson Fork Mitigation Bank will preserve critical habitat for wildlife, provide flood control protection and improved water quality for the area. We appreciate the private investment made by CONSOL Energy and Columbia Pipeline Group in this important project that will protect our environment for years to come."

The Robinson Fork Mitigation Bank phase one project is well along its way to be completed. Soon the second phase of the project will begin.

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