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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Margaret Frisbie, Executive Director  
(312) 939-0490, ext. 22

### *1<sup>st</sup> Annual River Blue Ribbon Awards Winners Announced*

Chicago—Friends of the Chicago River is pleased to announce that the winners for the 1<sup>st</sup> annual *Blue Ribbon Awards* will be presented tonight at Friends’ annual fundraiser, the Big Fish Ball. A new Friends’ initiative, the *Blue Ribbon Awards* honor the work of developers, designers, municipalities and others for their creative approaches to river sensitive design along the Chicago and Calumet rivers and their tributaries. Beginning in 2010, each year Friends will recognize those who strive for the ideal in sustainable design for humans (public access), water (hydrology) and wildlife (ecology). This year, six recipients were chosen for awards by an independent jury of professionals and community leaders.

“The *Blue Ribbon Awards* recognize environmental leaders and the ecological precedents they set,” said Margaret Frisbie, Friends’ executive director. “As part of our new program, Chicago River Blue, we want to educate, encourage, and reward developments and redevelopments that take people, wildlife, and clean water into account, and make sensitive river-edge development accessible to everyone. The awards help us do that.” Chicago River Blue also includes many on-line resources at [www.chicagoriver.org](http://www.chicagoriver.org) that promote and explain sustainable practices, and a Green Directory for the companies that provide them.

The award recipients will be celebrated tonight at Friends’ Big Fish Ball along the river at the Merchandise Mart with honorary chairs Illinois Governor Pat Quinn, Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley and Merchandise Mart Properties President Christopher G. Kennedy. Susan Hedman, recently appointed by President Obama as Regional Administrator for US EPA’s Great Lakes office, will be in attendance and make remarks at the event.

The mission of Friends of the Chicago River is to foster the vitality of the Chicago River for the human, plant, and animal communities within its watershed. Friends’ priorities are to provide public access to the Chicago River and to show that the Chicago River can be both ecologically healthy and a catalyst for community revitalization. Friends of the Chicago River was founded in 1979 and has 2,000 members and 4,000 volunteers and on-line advocates who support its work.

*Blue Ribbon Awards—add on*

*Blue Ribbon Award Winners for 2010*

**Blue Ribbon Award  
Mayor Richard M. Daley**

Although the awards were created to honor projects, the jury decided that the first Blue Ribbon Award, the highest honor possible, should be awarded to Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley. They said that it is without his environmental leadership over the past 20 years, that most of the projects that were be considered, would not even be possible. Much of the transformation of our second waterfront, the Chicago River, can be attributed to the Mayor's vision and initiatives.

**Silver Ribbon  
West Fork Corridor Habitat Project  
Glenview, Illinois**

Award Winner: Village of Glenview

Project Partners: V3 Companies, Ltd.; Hey and Associates, Inc.; Encap, Inc.; and Lake County Grading Co. LLC

Laying a strong foundation for continued river improvement, the West Fork Corridor Habitat Project is a multi-phased project that improves the Chicago River for wildlife while enhancing its role as a community asset. Utilizing a suite of best management practices, the project stabilized streambanks, naturalized and remaindered the channel, improved wildlife habitat through a sharp increase in plant biodiversity, and providing shelter and forage for adapted native animal species in areas that for years have offered little. It will ultimately include a series of 11 aquatic and wetland habitats in riffle-and-pool structures with native plants as well.

Publicly owned and accessible to the public, the West Fork Corridor Habitat Project includes interpretive signage to educate and celebrate the native landscapes and their significance to the community. It is an enormous boon to the river and its wildlife.

**Silver Ribbon Award  
Whole Foods Market Lincoln Park  
Chicago, Illinois**

Award Winner: Wolff Landscape Architecture, Inc.

Project Partners: Bentley Construction Corporation; CRM Properties Group, Ltd.; DLA Piper US LLP; Eriksson Engineering Associates, Ltd.; Gensler; and ICON Landscape Architecture LLC

The landscape project at Whole Foods Market Lincoln Park demonstrates a commitment to clean water through the innovative use of stormwater best management practices and native plant landscaping in a heavily built environment. Incorporating porous pavement, a green roof, and other urban detention methods, not only does the site design slow stormwater to reduce its impact on the river during rainstorms, it engages a demographic of people that wouldn't normally be aware of how rainwater can be managed.

Once an abandoned contaminated industrial site, the project establishes a new segment of the Chicago river trail and provides a people-friendly riverfront with outdoor terraces, benches, bike

***Blue Ribbon Awards—add on***

racks, and a view of the river. Located along the North Branch of the Chicago River, the riverbank is now full of life and full of people.

**Green Ribbon Award  
Fay’s Point  
Blue Island, Illinois**

Award Winners: Fay’s Point, LLC and OKW Architects, Inc.

Project Partners: Henderson Bodwell; Kestrel Design; Kinsella Landscape; Krause Construction; Marlin Environmental; R.I. Johnson; and The Structural Group

Located between the confluence of the Calumet-Sag Channel and the Little Calumet River, Fay’s Point is an excellent example of how residential development can utilize the river to enhance the quality of life for the residents—wild and human alike. The design solution was driven by the goal of creating a walkable, water focused community, imbedded in a restored natural landscape. It includes many eco-focused amenities such as walking trails, canoe launches, boat docks, river front terraces, and bird watching platforms which engage residents and provide opportunity for others to interact with the river.

In addition, 11 acres are dedicated as open natural space, over 1,000 feet of the Little Calumet River bank was restored to the highest environmental standards, including expanded and enhanced wetlands, and mature stands of trees were protected as the site was redeveloped.

**Green Ribbon Award  
Chicago Main Branch Riverwalk  
Chicago, Illinois**

Award Winner: Ross Barney Architects

Project Client and Partners: City of Chicago, Department of Transportation; Collins Engineering; Jacobs/Ryan Associates; Rausch Construction Company; and Walsh Construction Company

The first phase of the downtown Chicago Riverwalk celebrates the Chicago River and reconciles its vibrant life and pageantry within the more formal context of the Beaux Arts beauty of Wacker Drive and the Michigan Avenue Bridge. Drawing the public from above as if it has always been there, thoughtful design details like the use of native outcropping stone, interpretive signage artfully placed, and the cool reflective surface of the under-bridge connectors reflect the river’s natural history and provide pedestrians, diners or anyone passing by a continuous experience right upon the river

Designed to blur the edge between the river and the city, the riverwalk meanders along the river’s edge weaving between largely native gardens and cantilevered paths providing a unique view of both the river and the city.

*Blue Ribbon Awards—add on*

**Green Ribbon Award  
Chicago Riverwalk Main Branch Framework Plan  
Chicago, Illinois**

Award Winner: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP

Project Client and Partners: City of Chicago, Departments of Zoning & Planning and Transportation; AECOM; Construction Cost Systems, Inc.; Owner Services Group; Goodman Williams Group; Terry Guen Design Associates; and STS Consultants

Laying the foundation for phase two development of the Chicago Riverwalk the Main Branch Framework Plan is people-focused, walkable, bikeable and creates a new identity for Chicago and its river which was once a stinking alley uncared for and ignored. Employing river friendly principles to provide a public space that allows people to experience and interact with the river, the Main Branch Plan Framework is designed to include areas for passive and active recreation, dining, events and programs and honor and celebrate the river and the city's history.

With a complimentary goal to accommodate wildlife, the Framework Plan calls for the preservation of all existing greenscapes, adding more and introducing fish hotels along the Main Stem to increase habitat for fish and other aquatic creatures.

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