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Milwaukee Riverkeeper launches new phase in efforts to remove the Estabrook Dam
New efforts encourage Milwaukee County residents to contact the County Board; includes radio and digital advertising push

MILWAUKEE — Today, Milwaukee Riverkeeper launches a new phase in an effort to engage Milwaukee County residents in deciding the future of the Estabrook Dam. This will include a two week push of brand new radio and online advertisements that ask Milwaukee County residents to visit www.savethemilwaukeeriver.com to learn more about why removing the Estabrook Dam is the best decision for Milwaukee County and to take action by contacting their County Supervisors.

The radio ads specifically draw attention to the Milwaukee County Board, which has continually failed to capitalize on opportunities to change the current policy from repairing the dam to removal, which is the best option for the environment as well as the taxpayer. Just a few months ago, the Milwaukee County Board had the opportunity to change the County’s policy and remove the dam for a one-time cost of $1.6 million dollars, but instead decided to vote against the best interest of their constituents and the environment and increase spending to over $6 million taxpayer dollars to repair the dam. The increased spending is for fish passage, but it is not clear whether an effective fish passage can be designed at that cost and whether it will increase flood elevations upstream.

In deciding to repair the dam, the County Board ignored the expert opinion of their own Parks Department staff as well as the results of a County-hired engineering firm’s analysis, which recommended removing the Estabrook Dam after consideration of several solutions to resolving the problems associated with the dam. The 80-year old dam is currently non-functional, degrades the health of the Milwaukee River, impedes fish movement, and contributes to flooding for homeowners that live upstream of the dam.

“This issue affects all Milwaukee County residents,” said Milwaukee Riverkeeper’s Cheryl Nenn. “Spending $6 million on this Dam means less financial resources to restore and maintain our ailing County Parks system. With this advertising campaign, we’re able to help more residents understand the issues associated with the Estabrook Dam. We want to encourage concerned residents to contact their County Representatives and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources during an expected public comment period in June to take action to solve this problem, once and for all.”

Repairing the Estabrook Dam will provide a handful of homeowners with an artificial lake in their back yards, while removing the Estabrook Dam will save Milwaukee County taxpayers over $5 million dollars over the next 20 years. Furthermore, repairs on the Estabrook Dam are estimated to prolong its life expectancy an additional 20 years, at which time County taxpayers will be presented with a similar costly decision to remove or rebuild the dam.

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"Removal is a one-time cost that ensures taxpayers do not have to pay for operation and maintenance over the next 20 years, and will help restore the health of the Milwaukee River," said Nenn. "We would love to see the Milwaukee County Board make decisions based on the best information available to ensure the Milwaukee River remains an asset for all Milwaukee County residents."

Milwaukee Riverkeeper encourages all Milwaukee County residents to visit www.savethemilwaukeeriver.com to learn more and join more than 1,250 Milwaukee County residents who have already taken action to remove the Estabrook Dam.

The audio for the radio ads can be found on www.savethemilwaukeeriver.com/news

About Milwaukee Riverkeeper
Milwaukee Riverkeeper's mission is to protect, improve and advocate for water quality, riparian wildlife habitat, and sound land management in the Milwaukee, Menomonee, and Kinnickinnic River Watersheds. We envision a future in which people from all walks of life can enjoy the healthy waterways of the Milwaukee River Basin.

Milwaukee Riverkeeper advocates for compliance with environmental laws and is licensed by the Waterkeeper Alliance, a network with over 266 organizations worldwide dedicated to clean water and healthy communities. For more information about Milwaukee Riverkeeper, visit www.milwaukeeriverkeeper.org