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Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 10, 2011

FRIENDS OF THE RIVERFRONT KEY IN MAKING PITTSBURGH ONE OF THE “SIX BEST CITIES TO KAYAK”

PITTSBURGH, Pa. – (June 10, 2011) Friends of the Riverfront (FOR) is proud of its role in helping make Pittsburgh one of the “6 Best Cities to Kayak,” recently named by National Geographic in their Traveler magazine’s July/August issue.

To address the growing appeal of kayaking and introduce more people to the recreational and environmental renewal of the three major rivers of Allegheny County, Friends of the Riverfront created the Three Rivers Water Trail System in the mid 1990’s. “The Three Rivers Water Trail is a shining star in the Pennsylvania Water Trails Program, which is a nationally recognized system of 21 paddling trails. Friends of the Riverfront and other partners in Pittsburgh have provided a spectacular urban paddling experience that is on par with the best in the country” states Hannah E. Hardy, Pennsylvania Environmental Council.

The Three Rivers Water Trail is a network of 19 kayak/canoe launches in the Pittsburgh region, developed and managed by Friends of the Riverfront. Three access points are on the Ohio, eight on the Allegheny, seven on the Monongahela, and one at the mouth of the Youghiogheny River. Another 22 access points are proposed. These access points include beach, ramp or dock entrance; directional signage from both the land and water; racks for stowing craft; and access to parking. These were created as public amenities in response to the increasing popularity of non-motorized recreational boating. The goal is to make all three of our rivers easily accessible to anyone that is looking for a water adventure.

With that in mind, Friends of the Riverfront created a printed and online Three Rivers Water Trail Map & Guide. The map assists paddlers in experiencing the natural and historic landmarks along the rivers. Users can plan a short paddle or a day-long adventure, view the city skyline from the water or escape to a more serene rural setting. The more experienced paddler can try locking through at one of the local dams that control river level. Whatever the interest or experience level, this map can be used to explore and enjoy the Three Rivers Water Trail.

The Three Rivers Water Trail Map is available by calling Friends of the Riverfront at 412-488-0212 or emailing friends@friendsoftheriverfront.org. The map can also be found on the Water Trail section at www.friendsoftheriverfront.org.

Last year, Friends of the Riverfront applied for and received the prestigious National Recreation Trail designation for the Three Rivers Water Trail. The announcement was made jointly on May 3, 2010 by Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior Ken Salazar and Director of the National Park Service Jonathan Jarvis. Authorized by the National Trails System Act of 1968, the Three Rivers Water Trail joins an elite few trail systems that exemplify regional significance that connect people to local resources and improve quality of life for citizens.

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Founded in 1991, Friends of the Riverfront is dedicated to the development, expansion, promotion, and stewardship of the Three Rivers Water Trail and Three Rivers Heritage Trail in the Pittsburgh region.

The twenty year old membership-based nonprofit is committed to increasing awareness and engagement with the Pittsburgh region's rivers and riverfronts through activities, stewardship and expansion of water and land trails. Friends of the Riverfront works tirelessly throughout Allegheny County to reconnect communities with their rivers and riverfronts, and is the water trail manager of the Three Rivers Water Trail, a network of non-motorized craft access points in the Pittsburgh region. The organization has been instrumental in the development and stewardship of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail -- a dedicated biking, hiking, and walking trail around Pittsburgh. Extending over 22 miles along both sides of the Allegheny, Monongahela and Ohio

Rivers, it is an almost complete public route for cyclists, walkers, runners, and in some places roller bladders. Additional mileage is planned, including continuation along the Allegheny River as part of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance. Once a year, Friends of the Riverfront highlights use of both trails by hosting the Pittsburgh Triathlon & Adventure Race, more information can be obtained by visiting www.friendsoftheriverfront.org/files/triathlon.html

Information about the Three Rivers Water Trail, Three Rivers Heritage Trail, and Friends of the Riverfront can be found at www.friendsoftheriverfront.org, by calling 412-488-0212, or by joining Friends of the Riverfront's social network on Facebook and Twitter.

For more information about Pennsylvania Water Trails, visit the PA Fish & Boat Commission's water trail page at <http://fishandboat.com/watertrails/index.htm>