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Careless Construction Practices Harm Wetlands and Waterways Along the Enbridge Pipeline Construction Route

Madison, WI. On September 14th the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) sent a Notice of Violation to Enbridge Energy Inc. documenting numerous problems, and 117 outright violations, of wetland and waterway protection permit conditions along the Southern Access construction route. Stretched 321 miles between Douglas and Jefferson Counties, the project lays parallel 42" and 20" pipes in trenches cut 6-12' deep and from 12-24' wide through more than 750 wetland complexes and 242 rivers and streams.

Wisconsin Wetlands Association (WWA) has and will continue to urge WDNR to file for a temporary injunction to stop construction until Enbridge has a) taken adequate steps to prevent future avoidable wetland and waterway permit violations, and b) provided a full accounting of restoration actions Enbridge crews will take to remediate damage to wetlands and waterways along the construction corridor. WWA has also encouraged the state to refer this case to the Wisconsin Department of Justice (WDOJ) for prosecution. After thoroughly reviewing more than 500 reports submitted by WDNR-assigned Independent Environmental Monitors, WWA concluded that the wetland and waterway violations are comparable, if not worse, than those seen between 2002 and 2003 along the Guardian natural gas pipeline construction corridor in Washington and Jefferson Counties. At WWA's urging, the WDNR referred the Guardian project to WDOJ, resulting in a \$200,000 settlement to cover supplemental wetland restoration efforts.

WWA Board Chair and Wetland Consultant Alice Thompson, who has led WWA's pipeline oversight efforts for years, points out the similarities between the Guardian and Enbridge projects. "On the best day, restoration of pipeline construction poses significant environmental challenges, but again and

again we see these companies stretching their crews thin to meet construction deadlines and cutting corners on their obligations to protect wetlands and waterways. It's unacceptable."

WWA's Wetland Policy & Conservation Specialist, Erin O'Brien, who reviews daily environmental compliance monitoring reports for the Enbridge project adds this, "Accidents and extreme weather account for a handful of these incidents, but the vast majority involve flat-out negligence. Now Enbridge needs to tell the public how it intends to repair potentially irreversible damage to wetlands and waterways that should have been easy and inexpensive to avoid."

Summaries and photographs of common Enbridge Pipeline wetland and waterway permit violations and more information on WWA's oversight efforts of this and other pipeline construction projects can be viewed at www.wisconsinwetlands.org/pipelines.htm. Among other activities, WWA was party to a 2006 lawsuit challenging WDNR's determination that the Enbridge pipeline construction would have no significant adverse impact on Wisconsin's wetlands and waterways.

Wisconsin Wetlands Association (WWA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the protection, restoration and enjoyment of wetlands and associated ecosystems through science-based programs, education and advocacy. Established in 1969, WWA is the only statewide organization focused exclusively on wetland protection. Our more than 1500 members include wetland experts, natural resource professionals, conservationists, hunters and anglers, educators, concerned citizens, and local and regional organizations. Visit WWA online at www.wisconsinwetlands.org.

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