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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The MBNEP at Work: Another Big Milestone Reached in the Restoration of Baldwin County's D'Olive Watershed

With the restoration of a 750 linear-foot stormwater-degraded tributary to Tiawasee Creek near Montclair Loop in the Lake Forest community complete, the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program has reached another significant milestone. This project pushed the total length of streams restored in Baldwin County's D'Olive Watershed to more than two miles.

Like other streams in the D'Olive Watershed, this tributary has been plagued by damaging stormwater runoff and the nonpoint source pollution it carries. To address these issues, the MBNEP employed in-stream flow-reducing log and rock structures, rock-armored stream banks to control erosion, and native streamside vegetation to maximize benefits of a natural ecosystem and habitat opportunities for fish and wildlife. The primary goal of this restoration program was reducing dirt and sediment delivered downstream, where they degrade sea grass beds and nursery habitats for fishes. Less sediment means clearer, healthier water in D'Olive and Mobile bays, which support fisheries and recreational uses.

The D'Olive Restoration Program represents an investment of more than \$15 million, largely secured through *Deepwater Horizon* criminal penalty funds administered through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund. Additional D'Olive Watershed project funding and the primary funding for the Montclair restoration project were secured through the Alabama Department of Environmental Management's Clean Water Act Section 319 Program that addresses stormwater impacts and nonpoint source pollution, including excess sedimentation.

The project is a classic example of the MBNEP's model of transparency and community resource building. The MBNEP worked with more than a dozen adjacent landowners, the City of Daphne, and Daphne Utilities to complete the project. The MBNEP-funded *D'Olive Creek, Tiawasee Creek, and Joe's Branch Watershed Management Plan* (D'Olive) WMP), published in 2010, recommends extensive stream restoration to reduce the downstream delivery of silt and sediment clogging Lake Forest lake and compromising fishery habitats further downstream. The D'Olive WMP is currently being updated.

The mission of the MBNEP is to promote the wise stewardship of the quality and living resources of Alabama's estuarine waters.

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