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September 19, 2006

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Black Warrior **RIVERKEEPER**® turns 5

Black Warrior Riverkeeper celebrates its Fifth Anniversary on September 25, 2006. Birmingham's David Whiteside founded the non-profit organization in 2001. Whiteside wrote the Waterkeeper Alliance proposal to start Black Warrior Riverkeeper while staying in New York with Waterkeeper Alliance's President, Robert F. Kennedy Jr. (his godfather), and sometimes with comedian/actor Robert Klein. Kennedy and Klein remain major supporters of Black Warrior Riverkeeper. Roger Conville departed the organization in 2004; David Whiteside remains involved.

Whiteside was finishing the Black Warrior proposal when terrorists attacked our great nation on September 11, 2001. Understandably, many charitable donations after 9/11 went to large organizations involved in disaster relief. This trend siphoned donations away from more localized, grassroots charities. It is a milestone for any non-profit to make it through the first five years, let alone flourish in the immediate aftermath of 9/11.

There was, and is, a tremendous need for Black Warrior Riverkeeper. The Black Warrior is the largest river system entirely contained within Alabama, "the River State." Home to more species of freshwater fish, snails, mussels and crawfish than any other state, Alabama paradoxically features America's lowest-ranked environmental protection agency, ADEM.

Our valuable but vulnerable Black Warrior Basin is so important to biodiversity, recreation, and public health that we have received widespread help from across the country. During our first five years, we received generous support from foundations as well as celebrities like Laurie & Larry David, Lorraine Bracco, Edward James Olmos, and Jon Fishman. However, we could not protect the Black Warrior without local support from Alabama citizens.

Robert F. Kennedy Jr., and Robert Klein will be available for interviews regarding this release.



Black Warrior **RIVERKEEPER®**

712 37th Street South - Birmingham, AL 35222

www.BlackWarriorRiver.org

(205) 458-0095

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Riverkeeper is a registered trademark of Waterkeeper Alliance, Inc.

With tremendous citizen support, Riverkeeper has assisted the Black Warrior Watershed on many fronts. Before 2001, Alabama lacked a non-governmental organization solely focused on protecting the entire Black Warrior River Basin. Since then, your local Riverkeeper, Nelson Brooke, has patrolled a remarkable portion of the basin's 6,276 square miles, while making countless educational presentations to schools, officials, and civic groups. Using evidence that Nelson collects, our Chief Prosecuting Attorney, Mark Martin, has filed legal actions — when necessary — to address over 11,000 Clean Water Act violations in the Black Warrior River Basin.

The 2006 *Alabama Watershed Group of the Year*, Black Warrior Riverkeeper now employs six (FT/PT) staff members: Nelson Brooke (Riverkeeper), Brantley Fry (Executive Director), John Kinney (Legal Program Coordinator), Mark Martin (Chief Prosecuting Attorney), and David Whiteside (Founder). Over 85 inspiring volunteers have worked over 200 hours in 2005 and over 500 hours already in 2006. A testament to democracy in action, Black Warrior Riverkeeper is only as strong as our membership base. We look forward to increasing that base, and the scope of our advocacy, over the *next* five years.

Come celebrate our 5th Birthday parties in two Black Warrior River Basin cities:

Birmingham: Sept. 27th (7:30-12:00) at Bottletree w/Rollin in the Hay live! (3719 3rd Ave S.)

Tuscaloosa: Nov. 10 (9:00-1:30) at "4thand23rd" w/Baak Gwai live! (401 23rd Ave)

For questions or to make birthday donations: cscriver@blackwarriorriver.org

or (205)458-0095

Black Warrior Riverkeeper is the first and only citizen-based organization devoted to protecting the entire Black Warrior River and its tributaries. The Black Warrior River and its tributaries are a major source of drinking water in Alabama, serving as the primary source of water for Tuscaloosa and supplying over 50% of Birmingham's water. The Black Warrior Riverkeeper program advocates compliance with environmental laws. As a result of our patrols, research, and legal actions the Black Warrior Riverkeeper organization has addressed over 8,500 Clean Water Act violations since 2002.



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