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**Local Conservation Groups Claim Victory for the Rush River,
Praise State Settlement with Jon De Farm, Inc.**

Baldwin, WI – In a settlement agreement signed yesterday, advocates for the Rush River scored a major victory in protecting the river from Jon De Farm, Inc. a livestock factory that had caused polluted runoff to tributaries of the Rush River for the past several years. The Rush River is a highly prized trout stream in northwestern Wisconsin and receives special protection under state law.

In November 2002, the Wisconsin Department of Justice, at the request of the Department of Natural Resources, filed a lawsuit against Jon De Farm for violating federal environmental and public health protections by illegally discharging untreated animal waste directly into the Rush River.

Several local groups from over four counties have been working together to raise thousands of dollars to help pay for stream projects on area streams including Rush River. According to Harold Fosmo, Jr., of the Western WI Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America, the restoration efforts led by the DNR are being completed with money and labor from the area sportsmen's clubs.

“This settlement is great news for the Rush River and other streams,” said Fosmo. “Hopefully, from now on, everyone will work together to prevent development from ruining our natural resources. If you observe a pollution problem along streams, report it to the DNR or a sportsman club member.”

“With this settlement agreement, the Wisconsin Department of Justice has taken one more step towards protecting our public waters from careless manure management by industrialized agriculture” said Andrew Hanson, attorney with Midwest Environmental Advocates, Inc., the law center that had represented local chapters of the Izaak Walton League of America and Sierra Club in their efforts to obtain a strong settlement agreement that would protect the Rush River.

The Sierra Club's John Muir Chapter and the Izaak Walton League of America originally planned to file a federal lawsuit against Jon De Farm but delayed it after the Wisconsin Department of Justice initiated its lawsuit.

"Our goal is a clean and healthy Rush River for everyone to enjoy," said Caryl Terrell, Director of the Sierra Club - John Muir Chapter. "This settlement requires improved manure handling practices to ensure protection of the Rush River."

State v. Jon De Farm, Inc. Settlement Agreement Quick Facts

The settlement agreement requires Jon De Farm to:

- Pay \$42,898 in penalties for past discharges of manure to tributaries to the Rush River;
- Establish and maintain vegetative buffers and grassed waterways adjacent to the fields on which it spreads manure to prevent pollutants from getting into nearby waters;
- Improve manure separation technology to capture polluted runoff and perform daily inspections of the conveyors to remove any solid accumulations;
- Stop spreading manure on frozen ground or snow;
- Arrange for a crop nutrient management consultant to inspect landspreading manure plans to ensure compliance with the law.