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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **CATAWBA RIVERKEEPER RELEASES MOUNTAIN ISLAND LAKE HEAVY METAL AND PCB SAMPLING RESULTS**

June 16, 2010 (*Charlotte, NC*) – On Thursday, April 29, Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation collected independent water, sediment and fish tissue samples from the Catawba River at Mountain Island Lake. Catawba Riverkeeper received the raw data from this sampling effort and is pleased to announce the release of this information. “These results provide critical information the public deserves to receive regularly and in an appropriate timeframe,” stated Catawba Riverkeeper David Merryman.

Catawba Riverkeeper’s sampling effort focused on the present concentrations of eight heavy metals and total polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in the water, sediment and fish of Mountain Island Lake. The heavy metals included Arsenic, Barium, Cadmium, Chromium, Lead, Mercury, Selenium & Silver. These heavy metals are listed in the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) as hazardous wastes with toxicity characteristics, meaning that at various concentrations, several of these metals are toxic and potentially lethal to human and wildlife populations. The other chemical compounds we analyzed for are PCBs, which have been linked with various cancers, skin lesions, irregular menstrual cycles as well as cognitive and immune deficiencies. Despite the outlawing of PCB production in the mid-1970s, these chemicals can remain environmentally-persistent in sediment deposits for decades.

Catawba Riverkeeper’s heavy metals sampling shows the presence of two of the eight tested heavy metals in the water column: arsenic and barium. The sediment sample indicated the presence of arsenic, barium, chromium, lead, selenium and mercury. Fish tissue analysis of a composite largemouth bass sample (blended tissue from five fish within the same size range) confirms the presence of barium, selenium and mercury.

While the PCB sampling results indicate a water column free of PCBs, the sediment and fish tissue reveal a different story. Composite fish tissue analysis of largemouth bass collected by volunteer fishermen working with Catawba Riverkeeper on April 29 shows a total PCBs concentration of 70.7 parts per billion (ppb). This value exceeds both EPA’s PCB screening value of 12 ppb and North Carolina’s screening value of 50 ppb for fish tissue. Similarly, the analyzed sediment sample exhibits an elevated total PCBs concentration of 78.2 ppb.

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Comments and remarks regarding the results of this sampling will be provided by Catawba Riverkeeper David Merryman on Thursday, June 17 at 10am from Neck Road Access Area on the Catawba River at Mountain Island Lake in Huntersville, NC. “We are pleased to provide concise and comprehensible scientific facts and figures regarding heavy metals and chemical concentrations in our source of drinking water and aquatic recreation,” added Merryman.

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Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation advocates for and secures protection and enhancement of the Catawba River, its lakes, tributaries and watershed so that it will always sustain the human and wildlife populations that depend on it for life.