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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Fishing Pier at O'Sullivan's Island Moving Forward

City of Derby Mayor Dr. Anita Dugatto announced today that a \$325,000 grant has been awarded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on behalf of the Connecticut Housatonic Natural Resource Trustee Council to construct an accessible fishing pier at O'Sullivan's Island Recreation Park. Although previously planned, the project was unable to be approved due to ongoing environmental issues at the site. The Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG) was able to secure the funding after conducting extensive analysis of the soils and groundwater. Based on those studies NVCOG requested a report on potential public health risk from the Connecticut Department of Public Health (CTDPH). Meg Harvey, Epidemiologist with the CTDPH and author of the June 2015 [Health Consultation](#) for the site concluded that, "the available site information indicates that the intended construction and engineering work can proceed as planned in a safe manner."

Working with the Derby Board of Aldermen, NVCOG staff developed the project at the direction of Executive Director Rick Dunne and Derby Mayor Dugatto. During construction a Licensed Environmental Professional will sample and review conditions of all soils excavated and disturbed to properly manage any potential contamination that is known to exist below the surface layer. President of the Board of Alderman, Art Gerckens, says, "securing this grant is a fine example of local government working together with other agencies to achieve a positive goal. This is a win for the citizens of Derby and will give our fishermen a better opportunity to land some huge stripers". The pier will be designed and permits secured this year with construction slated for completion in early fall 2016. Mayor Anita Dugatto states, "This opportunity, the result of successful collaboration among community partners, brings us one step closer to our goal of restoring recreational use to O'Sullivan's Island."

The grant was made possible by funding set aside specifically for sites along the Housatonic River like O'Sullivan's Island. According to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, "An October 2000 Consent Decree required GE to provide \$15 million to the Natural Resource Trustees for natural resource damages; these were associated with the environmental harm caused by releases of PCBs into the Housatonic River watershed in western Massachusetts and Connecticut. The funds were roughly divided so that \$7.5 million would be available for restoration projects in each state's portion of the Housatonic River watershed." The Derby project was originally selected for funding in 2010 under the Housatonic River Restoration program but not funded due to an inability to secure environmental clearances.

"We look forward to working with the NVCOG and the City of Derby to improve public access to the Housatonic and Naugatuck Rivers," said Tom Chapman, Supervisor of the USFWS New England Field Office. "The new path and accessible fishing pier will re-connect people with these extraordinary rivers."

O'Sullivan's Island is a peninsula at the confluence of the Housatonic and Naugatuck Rivers, located south of Derby's downtown commercial district. The addition of an accessible fishing pier will provide an elevated place to view the river and create equitable access to the Housatonic's increasingly rich fish stock. In the coming years the City of Derby and NVCOG will continue making O'Sullivan's Island safer, cleaner, and more accessible for all who enjoy fishing, walking, biking, boating, and spending time in this singular place at the union of two rivers. Updates on the project will be available on the NVCOG website at www.nvcogct.org.