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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TRIBE'S WATER QUALITY STANDARDS ARE EPA-APPROVED

Today, the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa proudly announces its Water Quality Standards have been approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). These standards build upon a rich tradition of conservation and a recognition that access to clean and healthy water is an inherent human right and the foundation of life.

Chairman Mike Wiggins commented: "Our water quality standards are our Nation's proud proclamation of how we value our waterways and wetlands. From just north of the Penokee Mountain area to Lake Superior, our Tribe is ready to stand up and protect Nibi (water) for all peoples and future generations."

Guiding these standards is an awareness that rivers and streams are the lifeblood of the earth, connecting the past and the present with the fate of future generations. The Bad River Reservation is a water-rich environment located in the downstream portion of the Bad River Watershed. The Reservation contains diverse water resources that are both culturally and ecologically important. The Bad River Band has, therefore, sought to exercise its sovereign rights, and those rights under the Clean Water Act, to adopt its own Water Quality Standards. The U.S. EPA recently reviewed the Tribe's standards and concluded that the Tribe's water quality standards are consistent with the Clean Water Act and federal regulations.

The Tribe's water quality standards contain a set of designated uses, numeric and narrative criteria designed to protect those uses, and an antidegradation policy to protect waters from becoming unnecessarily degraded. Wild rice (Manoomin) waters, such as the Kakagon/Bad River Sloughs, are classified as Outstanding Tribal Resource Waters (Chi minosingii), which require the highest level of protection.

The Bad River Band is excited its federally-approved standards will enhance protection of its precious water resources, especially in the face of a multitude of health and environmental challenges, such as industrialization, loosening of environmental regulations, and a changing climate. As a sovereign nation, the Bad River Tribal Government is committed to preserving and enhancing its natural resources for future generations and believes clean water should not be sacrificed for short term speculative economics.

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