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**STATEWIDE NEWS RELEASE      Attention: Butler, Logan, Muhlenburg counties**

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**Mud River and Town Branch Fish Consumption Advisory Issued**

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (May 26, 2004)** - The Kentucky departments for Public Health, Environmental Protection and Fish and Wildlife Resources today amended a fish consumption advisory for the Mud River and Town Branch in Logan, Butler, and Muhlenberg counties. This modifies the advisory that has been in place since 1999 for fish species caught in those streams and is intended to inform the public about the possible risks of eating unrestricted amounts of fish from these waterways. Do not be discouraged from fishing these waterways, but follow the new guidelines before consuming fish.

This advisory is based on the agencies' review of 2000-2003 fish contamination information provided by the Department for Environmental Protection and Rockwell International Corporation. Fish were collected by various methods from diverse areas of the streams and tested for organic chemical contaminants, such as PCBs and chlordane, and heavy metals (mercury, cadmium and lead).

"Many contaminants found in the environment, unfortunately, do not go away overnight; so it is good to see some encouraging signs for this watershed," said Guy Delius, Assistant Director for Public Health's Division of Public Health Protection and Safety. "This advisory reflects the most current information and allows a more generous consumption rate for many fish in this watershed. It is our public health responsibility to provide timely, accurate information and warnings regarding our food supply so Kentuckians can make informed, intelligent choices about the foods they consume."

The following are consumption precautions recommended for various tested species in Mud River and Town Branch. (**NOTE:** For purposes of this advisory, "one meal" is equal to one-half pound of fish, weight before cooking, eaten by a 150-pound individual).

**(more)**

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**Town Branch**—This advisory remains the same and fish should not be consumed from any portion of Town Branch. This includes all species and all sizes.

**Mud River—From Hancock Lake Dam to Wolf Lick Creek** - Fish that feed on the bottom, such as catfish, carp, suckers, and drum, should not be eaten. Game fish such as bass, sunfish and crappie may be eaten, but not more than one meal per month. *Special Population:* Women of childbearing age and children should not eat any bottom-feeding fish from this segment of the Mud River, but may eat six meals per year of game fish from this segment of the Mud River.

**Mud River—From Wolf Lick Creek to the Green River** - no more than one meal per month should be eaten of bottom-feeding fish, such as catfish, carp, suckers, and drum. Game fish such as bass, sunfish, and crappie may be eaten, but not more than one meal per week. *Special Population:* Women of childbearing age and children should eat no more than six meals per year of bottom-feeding fish within this segment and may eat one meal per month of game fish.

Women of childbearing age and children are particularly susceptible to contaminants, such as PCBs, that build up in the body. Women beyond their childbearing years and men face fewer health risks from contaminants. However, they also should follow the advisory to reduce their total exposure and space meals consisting of fish over time. Spacing meals consisting of fish helps prevent contaminants from building up to harmful levels in the body.

Fish is an excellent source of protein and low-saturated fat. Proper cleaning, skinning, trimming, and cooking can reduce some contaminant levels in fish. Eat only skinless, boneless fillets with as much fat removed as possible. Larger fish tend to have higher levels of contaminants. Do not eat the skin, which can contain higher levels of fat. Eggs should be discarded. Roasting, baking and broiling have been found to reduce levels of PCBs more than other cooking methods. Cooking does not destroy contaminants or lower their toxicity, but it can eliminate some contaminants as fat cooks away. Do not eat or reuse the fat and juices that cook out of the fish.

Kentucky fish consumption advisories are issued using a risk-based approach to consumption, which, among other things, better protects women of childbearing age, unborn and infant children. This approach also provides more specific information on amounts of fish that may be safely consumed.

“By issuing these advisories, we hope to provide better information to the public on the species and amounts of fish which can be consumed safely,” said Jeff Pratt, director of the Division of Water.

Tissue residue levels in fish from Mud River and Town Branch are monitored as an ongoing program of the state agencies.