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New England Region

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EPA Region 1, New England

Environmental News

Contact: Peyton Fleming, EPA Press Office, 617-918-1008

For Immediate Release: Monday, February 15, 1999

EPA Launches New Round of Sampling of Woonasquatucket River

BOSTON - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency tomorrow will launch the largest sampling effort to date to further define the extent and nature of dioxin contamination in the Woonasquatucket River and the Centredale Manor area. Beginning tomorrow morning, EPA contractors will begin collecting sediment, riverbank and surface soil samples, focusing exclusively on a half-mile section of river near the Centredale Manor area in North Providence.

"EPA continues to move aggressively and quickly to further define the scope of the dioxin problem in North Providence. The start of this largest and most comprehensive sampling effort on the river to date is a giant step forward in that effort," said John P. DeVillars, EPA's New England Administrator.

The sampling plan has been approved by the Management Action Committee.

This latest round of sampling is the first phase of comprehensive surface sampling program that EPA will conduct in the Centredale Manor area, the property where the highest dioxin levels have been found to date.

Over the next week, contractors will collect more than 200 soil and sediment samples in the Centredale Manor area. Samples will be collected as far north as Route 44 and as far south as the north end of Allendale Pond. The samples will be tested for dioxin and the results will be available in early summer 1999.

EPA's extensive sampling is in response to data from samples collected last fall showing elevated levels of dioxin contamination at three locations along the river. EPA initiated fish tissue sampling in the Woonasquatucket in 1996 upon learning that people were consuming fish caught in the river. EPA has conducted an aggressive sampling and public information campaign since that time. Precautionary measures have been taken as well, including snow fencing and warning signs to restrict the public from having access to areas where elevated dioxin levels have been found.

Copies of the sampling plan are available for the public to review at the following locations: the

Town Clerk's Office in the North Providence City Hall; the Mayor Salvatore Mancini Union Free Library at 1810 Mineral Spring Ave. in North Providence; the Town Clerk's Office in the Johnston Town Hall; and the Marian J. Mohr Library at 1 Memorial Ave. in Johnston.

DeVillars reminded the public to heed public warnings that have been issued about the contamination problem. "Adults and children should remember to avoid areas of the Woonasquatucket River where we have identified elevated levels of dioxin in river soils and sediments and not to eat any fish caught from the river," DeVillars said.

For health related questions and information, please contact the Family Health Information Line at the R.I. Department of Health. The Information Line, which is taking calls for EPA's Woonasquatucket River Hotline, is 1-800-942-7434. The Family Information Line operates Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. On evenings and weekends, callers may leave a name and telephone number. Hotline staff will return the call on the next business day.

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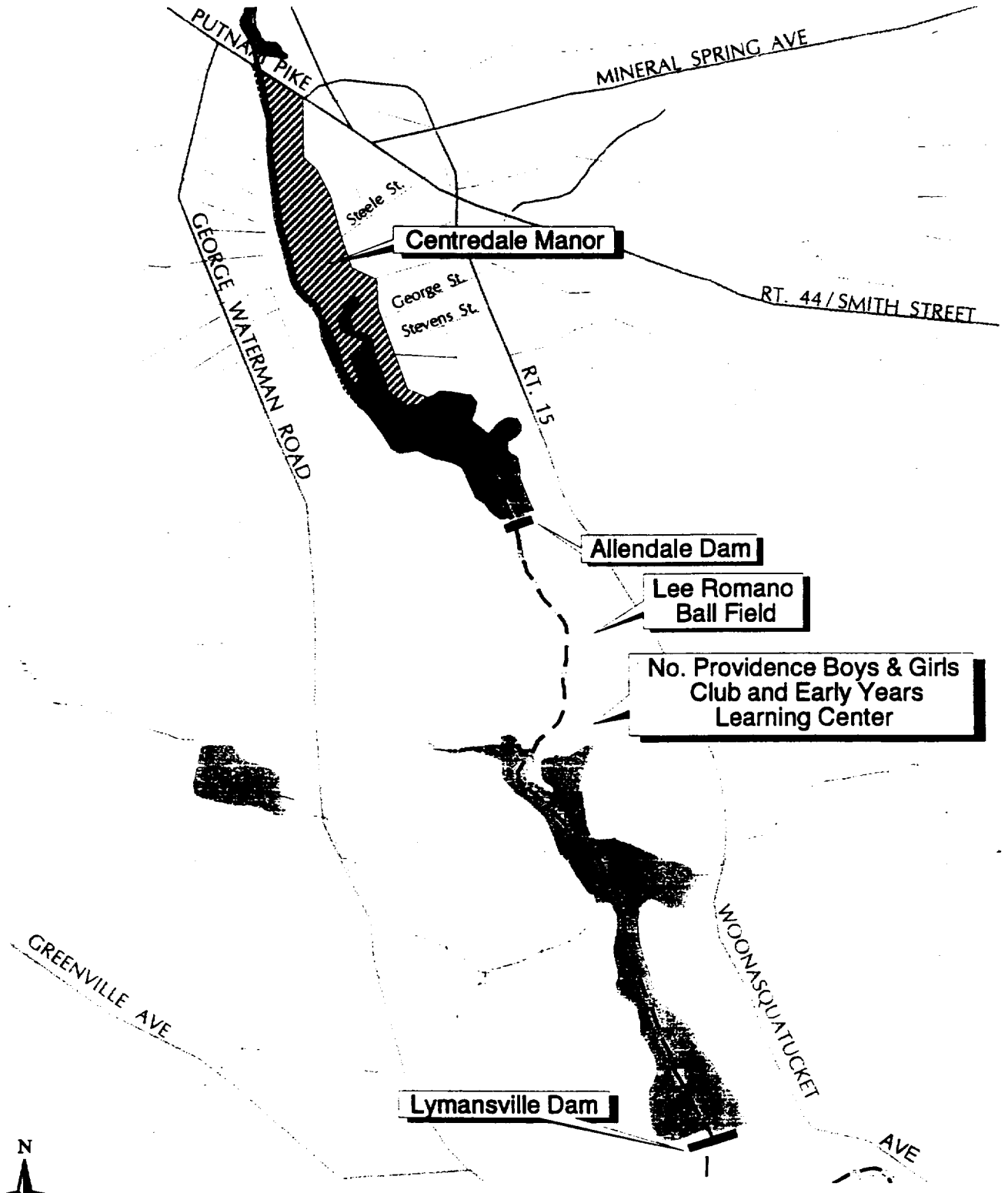
NOTE TO REPORTERS: PRESS AVAILABILITY 11 A.M. - 12 NOON ON TUESDAY 2/16 IN THE CENTREDALE MANOR PARKING LOT FOR INFORMATION ON SAMPLING PROGRAM AND PHOTO OPPORTUNITIES.

WOONASQUATUCKET RIVER
EPA Phase I Sampling Area



EPA
Region 1, New England

February 12, 1999

EPA ACTIVITIES IN THE WOONASQUATUCKET RIVER AND CENTREDALE MANOR AREA CONTINUE.

AN EPA SAMPLING CREW WILL BE COLLECTING OVER 200 SOIL AND SEDIMENT SAMPLES FROM THE RIVER, RIVERBANK, AND CENTREDALE MANOR AREA BETWEEN FEBRAURY 15 AND FEBRUARY 19, 1999.

DATA WILL BE AVAILABLE IN THE EARLY SUMMER.

SAMPLING WILL BE CONDUCTED IN SUCH A MANNER THAT THERE WILL BE NO ADVERSE HEALTH EFFECTS.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT:

ANGELA BONARRIGO
EPA COMMUNITY RELATIONS COORDINATOR
1-888-372-7341

February 15, 1999