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New England Region

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Environmental Sampling in Woonasquatucket River to Occur

Boston - EPA this week will begin additional sampling of Lyman Mill and Manton Ponds in the Woonasquatucket River. The sampling effort, which is expected to take between one and two weeks to complete, will augment similar investigations conducted in 2002 to characterize the sediment deposits in Allendale and Lyman Mill Ponds. Results are expected later this summer.

The survey team will take samples from ten locations in Lyman Mill Pond and five locations in Manton Pond. These samples will be analyzed for a variety of chemicals, including dioxin. In Lyman Mill Pond, the crew will use a tool to extract a 3 – 4 foot long core of sediment from the bottom of the pond. In Manton Pond, the crew will take surface sediment samples from five locations.

Also this construction season, EPA will make repairs to areas of the fence along Allendale Pond. EPA representatives will be contacting the affected property owners to discuss the specific work anticipated for each area.

The approaching spring weather is an opportunity for the EPA to remind residents of North Providence, Johnston and Providence, and the public to use the Woonasquatucket River responsibly and to follow the "Do's & Don't's for the Woonasquatucket River." Responsible uses of the river include:

- do not eat fish, turtles, eels or plants from the Woonasquatucket River;
- do not wade in the shallow water or swimming in the river;
- avoid coming into contact with exposed sediments in the river; and,
- obey the warning signs posted along the river.

"While we continue to make progress on this important project, we need teachers and parents to help us make sure that children are protected from contaminants remaining in the water and in sediments," said Robert Varney, regional administrator of EPA in New England.

Walking, running, or bike riding along the river, and paddling a canoe or kayak on the river are ways to safely enjoy the river. However, people should wash thoroughly after any contact with the river water or sediment.

Over the winter, EPA released a draft baseline human health risk assessment and a draft ecological risk assessment for the Centredale Manor Restoration Project. The respective studies looked at the potential risks to members of the public who come into contact with sediment, soils, or surface water, or consume fish from the Woonasquatucket River; and the potential impacts to wildlife, including birds and fish, which come into contact with contamination at the site. The risk assessments can be reviewed at libraries and folks are welcome to comment.

Also this winter, EPA awarded a \$50,000 Technical Assistance Grant to the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council which includes representatives from the communities of Gloucester, North Smithfield, Smithfield, Johnston, North Providence and Providence. The Council, which is

part of the Management Action Committee created in 1999 to coordinate work at the Centredale Manor Restoration Project, will use the grant towards hiring technical expertise to help the group communicate the scientific information generated from EPA's studies of the site.

EPA and the Watershed Council encourage members of the public, especially residents abutting the river, to contact the Council and to become involved with the grant activities. For more information on the Technical Assistance Grant, contact Jenny Pereira, Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council at 401-861-9046 or visit <http://www.woonasquatucket.org>. For more information on the Centredale Manor Restoration Project, visit EPA's website www.epa.gov/region01/superfund/sites/centredale .

The Management Action Committee continues to meet monthly at the North Providence Town Hall on the first Tuesday of the month.

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