



News Release

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency New England Regional Office

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With Summer Approaching, Rhode Islanders Reminded About Woonasquatucket River "Do's and Don'ts"

(Boston, Mass. – June 6, 2008) - As the end of the school year nears, and warm summer temperatures begin to tempt area youth to find a place to swim, EPA reminds the public to use the Woonasquatucket River responsibly. Specifically, residents of the cities of North Providence, Johnston, and Providence should keep in mind that dioxin contaminated sediment in the river may pose a health risk.

EPA asks that people keep in mind the following Do's & Don'ts for the Woonasquatucket River:

Don't eat fish, turtles, eels, other wildlife or plants from the Woonasquatucket River;

Don't wade in the shallow water or swim in the river;

Don't dig into the river banks; and,

Do obey the warning signs posted along the river.

With summer weather arriving, the Woonasquatucket River is an appealing spot for children. While EPA continues to make progress in cleaning up contaminated areas, teachers and parents should remain vigilant to ensure that children are protected from contaminants remaining in the water or sediment.

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.

EPA has begun to evaluate potential cleanup alternatives for addressing contamination in Allendale and Lyman Mill Ponds and will continue this evaluation process through 2008. In November 2005, EPA released a human health risk assessment report and preliminary remediation goals 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, soil, or surface water, or consume fish from the Woonasquatucket River; and begin to outline preliminary ideas for cleanup of the contamination in the river between Route 44 and Lyman Mill Dam. Since then, EPA has been meeting with stakeholders to discuss these findings and cleanup options. The reports can be reviewed at the North Providence and Johnston public libraries.

More information:

Find out about the “do’s and don’ts” about the river by contacting: EPA at 617-918-1010.

Background information on the Woonasquatucket River <http://www.epa.gov/region1/ra/woonas/>

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