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ENVIRONMENT

Superfund Records Center

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EPA gives update on Woonasquatucket contamination

By Nicole Friedman
PBN Staff Writer

NORTH PROVIDENCE — The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency explained the results of a remedial investigation of the Centredale Manor Restoration Project Superfund Site and presented possible cleanup strategies at a public informational meeting July 21.

The investigation, begun in 1999, found high levels of contaminants throughout the site, including dioxin, polychlorinated biphenyls and volatile organic compounds.

Those who come in direct contact with sediment or soil from the site, or who eat fish from the Woonasquatucket River - which forms the border between Johnston and North Providence - could face health risks.

The EPA has already covered — or “capped” — the contaminated soil, built fences around the area, removed some soil and restored the Allendale Dam. The state health department warns against eating fish caught in the contaminated part of the river.



COURTESY EPA

VIEW of the Centredale Manor Restoration Superfund site looking north along the Woonasquatucket River.

In a feasibility study completed this year, the EPA examined various long-term cleanup solutions ranging from taking no action to capping, removing or cleaning soil.

The EPA will propose a cleanup plan this fall to the public, and citizens will have 60 days to comment before a decision is made.

The site, which stretches more than nine acres along the Woonasquatucket River, includes the Allendale Dam, the Lyman Mill Pond dam and the Centredale Manor and Brook Village apartment complexes, which provide affordable housing for around 230 seniors.

Dioxin was first found at the site in 1996, and it was named a federal Superfund site in 2000. The contamination traces back to Centredale Worsted Mills, which operated on the property before 1936, Atlantic Chemical Company (later Metro-Atlantic), which was located there between 1943 and the early 1970s, and New England Container Company, which held an incinerator-based drum reconditioning facility on the property from 1952 to 1971.

The Brook Village and Centredale Manor apartments opened in 1977 and 1983, respectively. But as the current tenants, the complexes are responsible for cleaning up the Superfund site.

The complexes reached a settlement with the EPA in 2005 establishing a payment plan that allows the apartments to continue operating as affordable senior housing.

Representatives from the EPA, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management and Rhode Island Department of Health attended the meeting at North Providence Town Hall.



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