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Centredale Manor
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Environmental News

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For Immediate Release: May 31, 2000 Release # 00-5-62

EPA Reminds Public to Use Woonasquatucket River Responsibly

BOSTON – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's New England Office is reminding the public to avoid both swimming in the river and contact with river sediments, including exposed sediments behind the Allendale Dam.

"With summer fast approaching, the Woonasquatucket River is an appealing spot for children seeking to escape the heat," said Mindy S. Lubber, EPA's New England Administrator. "Residents should be reminding their children to refrain from swimming and wading in the river, to avoid areas where we have identified elevated levels of dioxin in river soils and sediments, and most importantly, not to eat fish caught from the river."

Five potentially responsible parties are completing an interim cap at the Centredale Manor property in North Providence, RI to prevent dioxin and other contaminants from migrating into the Woonasquatucket River and to limit human exposure to contaminated areas. They are conducting the construction in response to an Administrative Order issued by EPA last month.

EPA has spent approximately $2 million to conduct widespread sampling in and along the Woonasquatucket River to cap contaminated soils south of the Centredale Manor parking lot and to fence and limit access to areas with elevated levels of dioxin.

"While we are moving ahead to clean up the contaminated areas, we want to make sure we are protecting our children. They need to be reminded not to cross fenced off areas," added Lubber.

EPA reminds the public to use the river responsibly. This includes:

- not eating fish, turtles, eels or plants from the Woonasquatucket River;
- not wading in the shallow water or swimming in the river;
- avoiding coming into contact with exposed sediments in the river; and,
- obeying the warning signs posted along the river.

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Walking, running or bike riding along the river are acceptable activities, as are paddling a canoe or kayak on the river. However, people should wash thoroughly after any contact with the river water or sediment.

For health related questions and information, including the *"Do's and Don't's"* brochure, please contact the Family Health Information Line at the R.I. Department of Health at: 1-800-942-7434. The Family Information Line operates Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM. On evenings and weekends, callers may leave a name and telephone number. Hotline staff will return the call on the next business day. In addition, health related questions about dioxin can be directed to Dr. David Hewitt at ATSDR's hotline: 1-800-42-ATSDR.

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