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Environmental News

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EPA ANNOUNCES DIOXIN DETAILS AND ACTION PLAN

NORTH PROVIDENCE.....The detailed results of sampling at properties along the Woonasquatucket River in North Providence, RI, confirm high levels of dioxin at three locations, John P. DeVillars, the Environmental Protection Agency's New England Administrator announced today at a meeting of community residents and public officials at the North Providence high school.

DeVillars also announced the next phase of EPA's action plan, including further sampling of the contaminated sites, a strategy for determining future cleanup actions, and the formation of a Management Committee to guide the agency's work in North Providence. EPA will also continue to restrict access to the contaminated sites and staff the hotline it established Wednesday in North Providence to respond to citizen concerns.

"We have found high levels of dioxin -- not everywhere, but in enough places to warrant both concern and prompt action. The results are not cause for excessive alarm or panic, but they do call for a very focused and aggressive response. That is what EPA has been providing and will continue to provide," said DeVillars.

"We have moved quickly to put in place precautionary measures to insure that residents are protected. We have also undertaken an aggressive sampling program to further characterize the extent and significance of the contamination and we have begun the steps necessary to develop an appropriate long term remedy," DeVillars added.

DeVillars released the results of the sampling at a community meeting hosted today by Congressman Patrick Kennedy and Mayor Ralph Moillis.

The results announced today detail the specific concentrations of dioxin in 45 samples taken by EPA last September. Earlier this week, immediately upon receiving preliminary results, EPA announced that three locations -- Centredale Manor, the riverbank next to the Lee Romano ball field, and the riverbank immediately upstream of the Allendale Dam -- had dioxin concentrations above EPA's action level of one part per billion.

Today's results -- which have undergone an expedited quality assurance review in EPA's Kansas City, KS, laboratory -- indicate that 14 samples taken at the three locations had concentrations of

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dioxin ranging from 1.5 parts per billion to 14.8 ppb. The highest concentrations were from a sample taken from a drainage ditch behind the Centredale Manor in an area inaccessible to the public. The remainder of the samples did not exceed EPA's action 1 ppb action level.

EPA took 20 additional soil samples Friday at Centredale Manor, the Lee Romano ball field, and the Boys and Girls Club, as well as water samples from the private wells at the Pied Piper Nursery School and Yacht Bottling Club. Preliminary results from the samples will be available within 10 days to two weeks, and final results in about a month.

DeVillars also said that beginning on Monday and extending over the next week to ten days EPA will work with state and local officials to design and undertake a sampling plan that will address data gaps and more thoroughly investigate the priority areas of concern. The results of the sampling program will be the basis for deciding appropriate remedial actions which are anticipated to commence this spring.

A management committee will be established by EPA to oversee the sampling and remedy selection, according to DeVillars. It will include representatives from EPA, the Rhode Island Department of Health, the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, as well as from the community. The community representatives will be appointed by Mayor Mollis and local legislators.

Since 1996 when EPA sampled fish caught in the Woonasquatucket River and discovered high concentrations of dioxin in fish tissue, the agency has warned residents not to consume the fish. EPA has also conducted a broad public education campaign including bilingual signs and brochures to warn residents against swimming and wading in the river. After receiving preliminary results this week of sampling of riverfront properties conducted in September 1998, EPA put snow fencing and warning signs in the contaminated areas to restrict the public from having access to those areas.

DeVillars pledged that EPA would continue to work closely with community leaders and residents, as it has done since initiating fish sampling and public health protection measures in the summer of 1996.

"There are three promises I will make to you and that you have every right to hold us to," DeVillars told those in attendance at the high school.

"We will bring the best expertise available to us from anywhere in the country to address this problem.

"We will gather all of the information we need as quickly as possible and we will immediately share it with you.

"We will deal honestly and forthrightly with every citizen in this community. You will be full partners in all our efforts.

"This is a complicated problem that defies quick and easy solutions. But we are fully committed to working with you so that together we can protect your health and restore your community," DeVillars said.

WOONASQUATUCKET RIVER

EPA Sampling September 1998

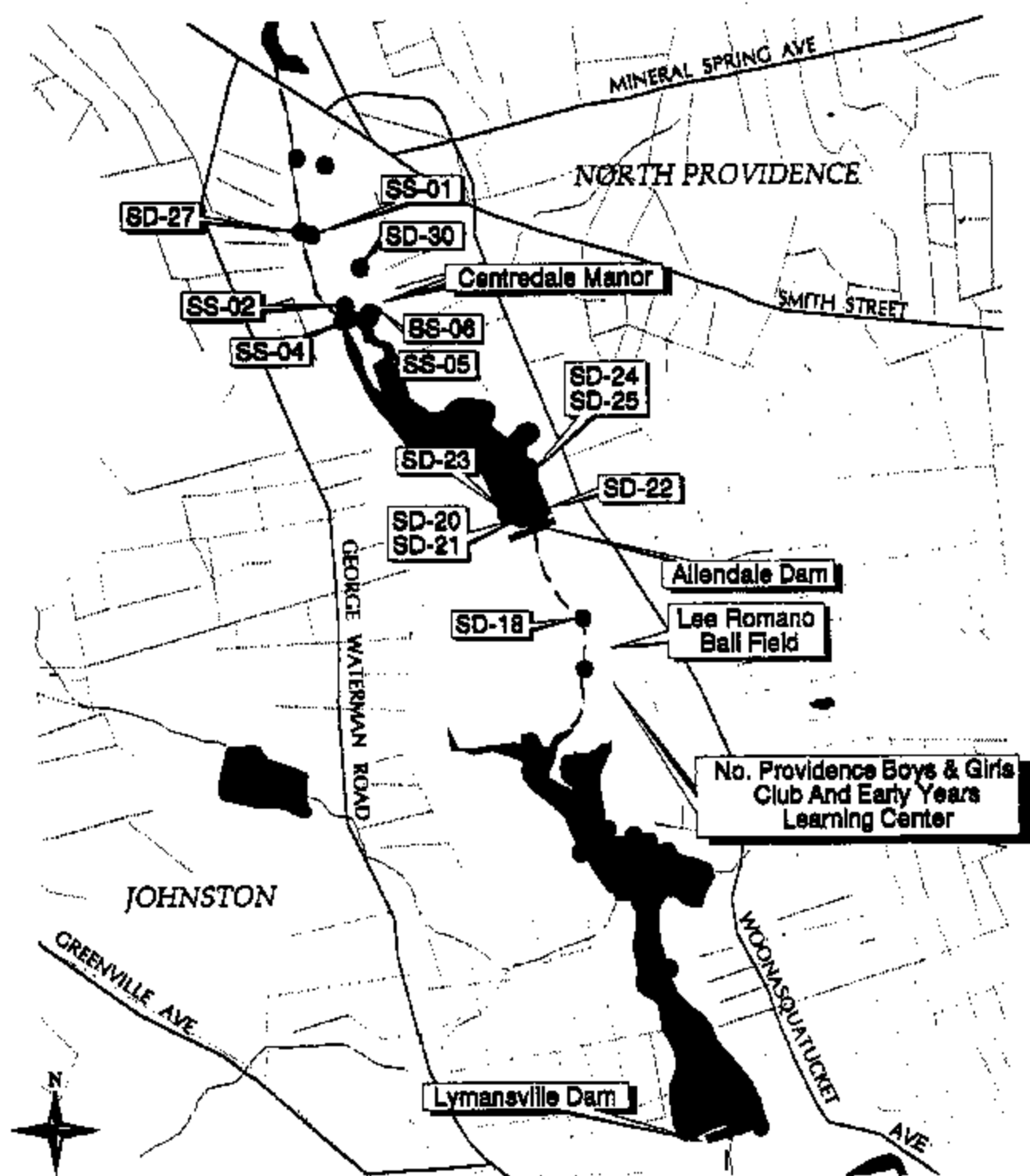
Sample Number and Location	Sample Type	Concentration ¹ - TEQs ² (ppb, parts per billion)
SS-01 Centredale Manor	Soil	Not Reviewed ³
SS-02 Centredale Manor	Soil	4.7
SS-04 Centredale Manor	Soil	8.1
SS-05 Centredale Manor	Soil	3.4
SS-06 Centredale Manor	Soil	2.7
SD-18 near Lee Romano Ballfield	Sediment	8.0
SD-20 Allendale Dam	Sediment	3.6
SD-21 Allendale Dam	Sediment	4.4
SD-22 Allendale Dam	Sediment	8.8
SD-23 Allendale Dam	Sediment	10.3
SD-24 Allendale Dam	Sediment	5.3
SD-25 Allendale Dam	Sediment	7.8
SD-27 Centredale Manor	Sediment	1.5
SD-30 Centredale Manor	Sediment	14.8

¹All data has undergone quality assurance review in EPA's Kansas City Laboratory, and is under review by experts at our Quality Assurance Office in New England.

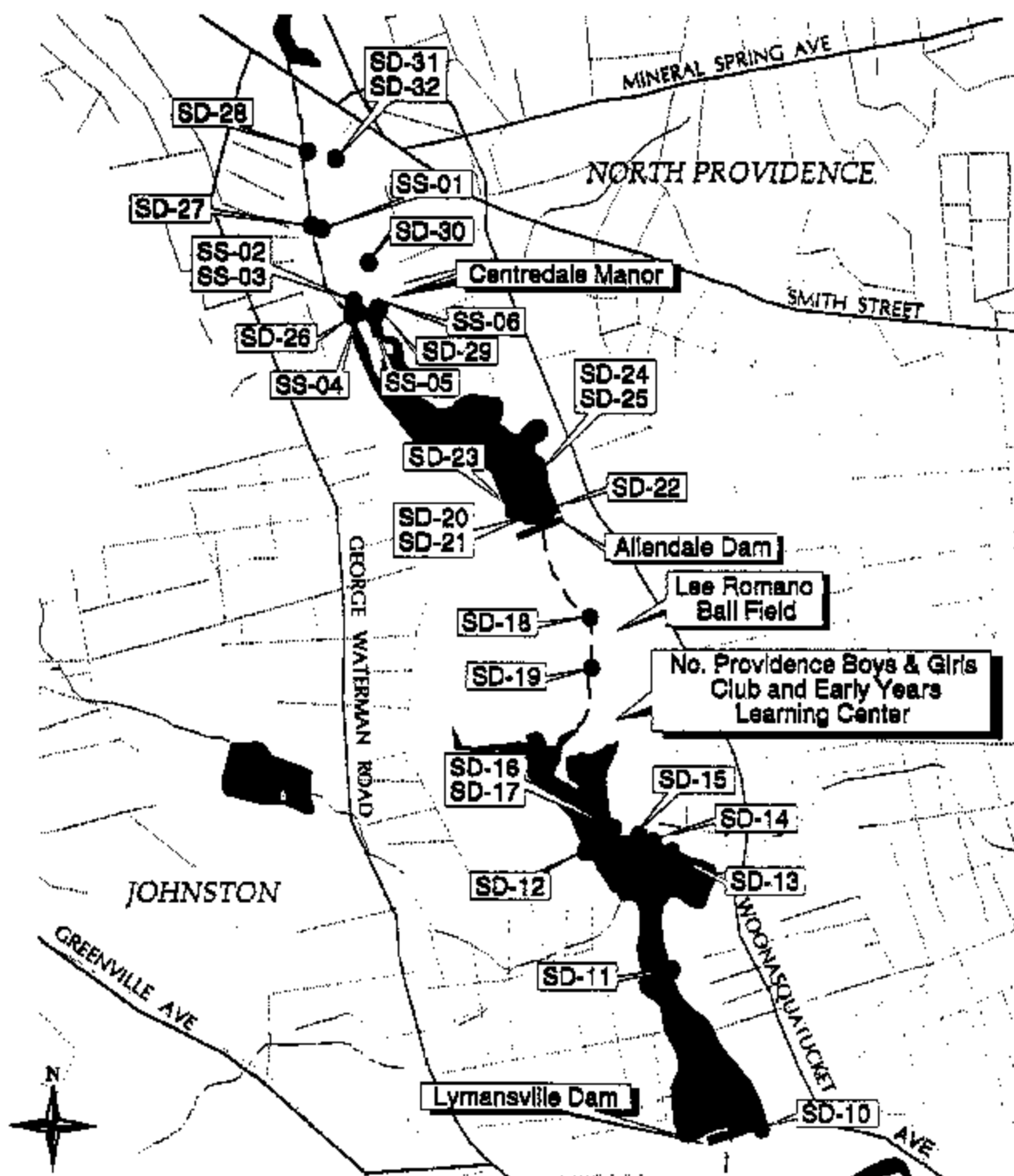
²TEQs represent 2,3,7,8 TCDD toxic equivalents for mixtures of different forms of dioxins and furans.

³A problem with this sample analysis is still being worked out.

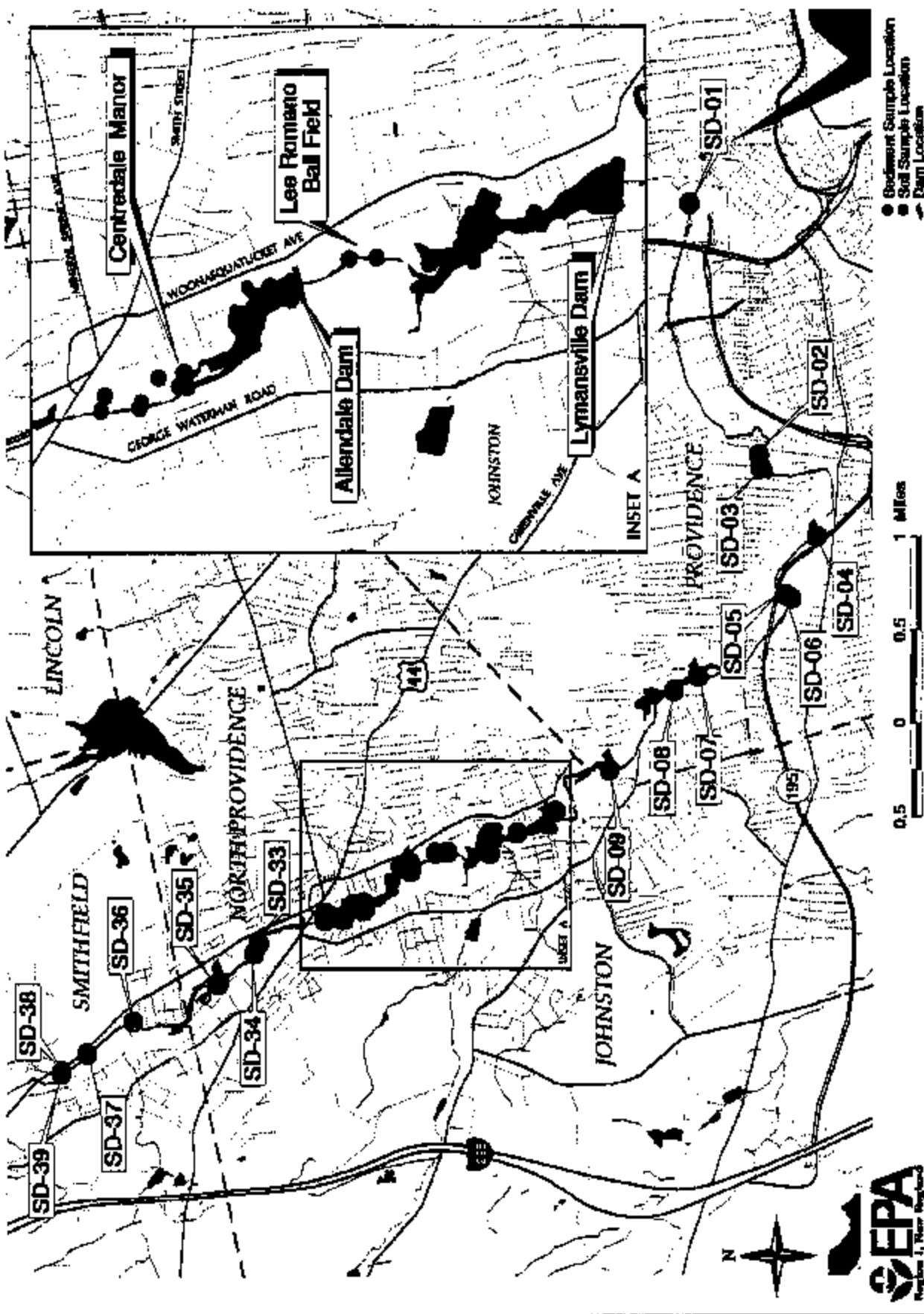
WOONASQUATUCKET RIVER EPA Sampling September 1998



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