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2.27.2002 00:29

Superfund site cleanup moves ahead at manor

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NORTH PROVIDENCE -- The first phase in cleaning up chemical contamination around the Centredale Manor has been completed, Mayor A. Ralph Mollis announced yesterday.

Mollis told U.S. Senators Jack Reed and Lincoln Chafee, U.S. Rep. Patrick Kennedy and federal and state environmental officials in a ceremony at the Allendale Dam that 650 tons of sediment have been removed from the site and trucked to a treatment facility in Canada.

The sediment came from a long-vanished chemical company that stood on land where a high-rise for the elderly, Centredale Manor, has been constructed.

The Superfund project is being carried out by Loueiro Engineering under the supervision of the Army Corps of Engineers, the federal Environmental Protection Agency and the state Department of Environmental Management. Work has been under way for six months on the Centredale Manor restoration project.

The Allendale Dam has been repaired as part of the project, Mollis said, and Allendale Pond has reached its original water level as a result.

The dam, which dated to 1822, collapsed several years ago, allowing the Woonasquatucket River to flush contaminants downstream.

"The residents of North Providence have waited a long time for this day," Mollis said.

"Today, we have the return and restoration of the Allendale Dam. Today, we have the return of water levels in the Allendale Pond, the return of waterfront property to many patient North Providence residents. Today, we have reduced the exposure to contaminated sediments on the bottom of the pond and have prevented contaminated sediments from moving further downstream. Today, we have found the silver lining in this unfortunate process of contaminated sediment and we have taken a giant step to improving the local environment and the quality of life of so many residents."

When tests showed high levels of dioxin and other poisons, the EPA last February declared the site eligible for federal Superfund assistance.

The focus is on the section along the Woonasquatucket River between Route 44 and the Lymansville Dam. Several companies identified by the EPA as responsible have agreed to pay for the cleanup, estimated to cost \$2.6 million.

Two years ago the EPA posted warning signs telling people not to swim in the river or eat fish from it. The agency ordered earthen caps over contaminated soil near Centredale Manor to reduce dioxin exposure and prevent its spread downstream.

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