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4 companies comply with Superfund-site cleanup order

- Work to remove dioxin-contaminated soil from the site along the Woonasquatucket River could begin in August.

By RICHARD SALIT
Journal Staff Writer

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NORTH PROVIDENCE -- Four businesses have begun complying with a federal order to conduct the next phase of the cleanup of the Superfund site on the Woonasquatucket River, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

The companies have hired a contractor to remove some dioxin-contaminated soil and sediment from the river and to restore the badly breached Allendale dam, said Anna Krasko, project manager for the EPA. She said the work is being designed now and could begin as early as August.

"They have been cooperative so far," Krasko said. "We've been meeting with them every month."

The EPA issued the clean-up order in March because of what the agency described as the businesses' "unwillingness ... to do the work voluntarily."

The companies were ordered to excavate, treat and truck away 2,500 cubic yards of contaminated soil and sediment from an area between Route 44 and the Lymanville Dam. They have also been directed to restore the dam, which was breached nearly 10 years ago and deteriorated significantly during spring floods this year.

"The dam was to be replaced completely anyway so it's the same amount of work," Krasko said.

The EPA announced earlier this year that this phase of the cleanup will safeguard public health and prevent contaminants from spreading downstream while the agency studies a permanent response to the dioxin problem at the site.

The project involves repairing the dam so that the water level in Allendale Pond returns to historic levels and submerges most of the contaminated soils. The tainted soils left exposed, the estimated 2,500 cubic yards, would be removed and trucked to an incinerator. What EPA will do about the underwater contaminants will be decided during later phases of the cleanup.

The interim work is estimated to cost about \$2.6 million. EPA officials have said they are ordering entities they have identified as "potentially responsible parties" to do the work to spare taxpayers the expense.

Krasko said that the businesses complying with the order chose Loureiro Engineering Associates, of Plainville, Conn., to do the work. She didn't know how much the businesses were going to pay Loureiro.

"They are not required to disclose that information to us," Krasko said.

Those identified by EPA as responsible for the pollution are property owners and former industrial companies, including barrel reclamation and chemical manufacturing operations.

The March order was served to Brook Village Associates Limited Partnership and Centredale Manor Associates Limited Partnership, the owners of the two high-rise, senior citizens complexes at the site, and Crown Metro Inc., Emhart Industries Inc., and New England Container Company Inc., the former industrial companies.

Krasko said that Crown Metro did not respond to the EPA order. Because the other four companies have agreed to do the work, the EPA is not seeking a response from Crown Metro, she said.

"It seems like it's an internal issue for them," she said.

All five companies complied with an order last year to cap contaminated soils south of the Centredale Manor parking lot with soil and vegetation. The measure is intended to prevent the material from spreading for several years, until EPA develops a permanent solution to the problem.

Loureiro was hired to do that work as well, said Krasko, and the firm "did a good job."

Loureiro has begun contacting owners of property that will be affected by the work that will begin this summer. The

company will be overseeing the removal of soils and sediments from the eastern bank of the river, near residences on side streets off Woonasquatucket Avenue. The material will be trucked to an out-of-state incinerator.

For more information on the project, call the EPA at 1-888-372-7341 or visit the agency's Web site at www.epa.gov/region01/superfund/sites/centredale

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