

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

What are people doing to clean up the river?

People are concerned about the quality of water in our urban rivers — especially the Woonasquatucket River.

Organizations are working with the public to clean up the river and help citizens understand immediate environment and public health risks:

Warning Signs: Signs are posted along the Woonasquatucket River warning residents not to eat fish caught in the river.

Clean-up Programs: Many environmental groups, citizens, and federal, state and local officials have hosted and participated in litter cleanups and trash removal in and along the banks of the river.

Meetings: If you are interested in learning more about the Woonasquatucket, contact **Kristi Rea** at **(617) 918-1595**.

What can you do to help?

Despite contamination in the Woonasquatucket River, it is cleaner today than it was five years ago. The Woonasquatucket River needs your help to keep litter, tires, trash and garbage off the banks and out of the water. Together we can make our American Heritage River safe for swimming, wading, and fishing in the future. Until then — follow this brochure's "Do's and Don'ts" and safely enjoy the river!

Remember to do your part. Don't litter, dump trash, tires, shopping carts or put any waste on the banks or in the water of the Woonasquatucket River.

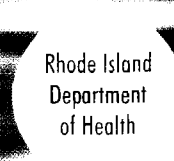
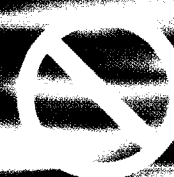
Questions

If you have any questions or concerns, please call toll free at **1-888-372-REG1 (7341)** for more details.

For information on New England's environment, visit the EPA's Web site at: **<http://www.epa.gov/region01>**.

If you have any health questions, please contact the Rhode Island Department of Health at: **(401) 222-5981**.

**DO's
and
DON'T's**
*to help you
better enjoy the
Woonasquatucket
River*





swim in, wade in, bathe in, or play in the Woonasquatucket River

The EPA found dioxin, mercury and PCBs in the river's soil. Dioxins are a group of waste chemicals produced by manufacturing.

The highest concentrations are near the Allendale Dam and Lymansville Dam.

Short term health risks from dioxin and PCBs are severe headaches, skin rashes, digestive and nervous system problems, and muscle aches and pains.

Long-term exposure to dioxin can cause cancer.

Heavy rains cause high levels of bacteria and fecal coliform in the river. This can cause nausea and diarrhea.



eat fish, eels, animals, or any plants that you find in the river

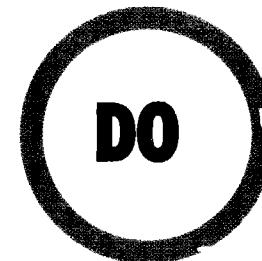
Contaminated fish, eels, other animals or plants may look, smell or taste fine but they will harm anyone who eats them.

*Fishing along the banks of the river is OK for fun, but you **MUST** throw back whatever you catch or find. This will make sure that you and your family won't get sick.*



drink the river water

Do not drink any water from the Woonasquatucket River because it may make you and your family sick.



feel confident to enjoy:

Fishing for fun
(Catch and release only)

Walking

Running

Biking

Bird Watching

Canoeing

Kayaking

Sailing

The Woonasquatucket River is a valuable resource that offers many fun opportunities for recreation. Just always remember:

Wash up! To reduce risks to you and your family and be safe everyone must wash with soapy water after touching river water.

Why is our American Heritage River contaminated?

Historically, the river was used by mills and the textile industry for power, fresh water and dumping byproducts from manufacturing. It has also suffered from illegal dumping of trash.