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Tonight: EPA plans for Woonasquatucket River cleanup

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Insider Reporter

The Environmental Protection Agency has announced that it will hold several informational meetings regarding its proposed plan for the cleanup of the Centredale Manor Restoration Project Superfund Site in North Providence. The proposed plan presents multiple long-term cleanup alternatives for the cleanup of sediment, soil, surface water and groundwater contamination.

The site is located along Johnston's eastern border.

A meeting will be held tonight (Wednesday, Nov. 9) at 7 p.m. at the Johnston Senior Center, 1291 Hartford Ave.

"It will involve upland deposits in Johnston," said Town Planner Pam Sherrill on Thursday, Nov. 3, during a meeting of the town Planning Board.

"It's great to get the river cleaned up, but we need to make sure they take care of Johnston," she continued, adding that she had met with EPA officials a week earlier.

Information regarding the Superfund site is available for review at the Mohr Library on CDs (the information was until recently available only in hard copy form, taking up multiple shelves in the old library, according to Assistant Director Grayce Moorehead).

EPA's preferred cleanup alternative generally includes:

- Removing buried waste material from the source area (where contamination originally occurred), and majority of contaminated Woonasquatucket River sediment and floodplain soil near and downstream of the source area, using a combination of containment and treatment methods;

- Installing new hazardous waste isolation caps over remaining source area contaminated soil and placing thin soil covers over contaminated wetlands and floodplain areas to speed up natural recovery processes and preserve valuable habitat;

- Placing restrictions to permanently prevent use of groundwater and to temporarily prohibit eating fish, as well as restricting other activities that could potentially expose remaining contamination;

- Long-term monitoring to assess cleanup's effectiveness and recovery of Woonasquatucket River and its floodplain, and to evaluate potential need for other response actions in the downstream reaches beyond Lyman Mill Dam into Providence area; and

- Minimizing contribution of site contaminants to Woonasquatucket River's surface water.

It is recommended that the approximately 120,000 cubic

yards of contaminated soil and sediment would be disposed of in an Upland Confined Disposal Facility (an area located on higher land designed to permanently and securely contain excavated contaminated sediment/soil), with the highest levels of contaminated material taken off-site for treatment. An Upland Confined Disposal Facility can be designed to accommodate beneficial reuses such as recreational fields and paths.

EPA's proposed cleanup plan would be implemented through additional investigations, design, construction, maintenance and five-year reviews. The estimated total present value for this proposed cleanup plan is about \$101 million.

The public is invited to attend any of the public informational meetings. At each meeting, EPA and RIDEM staff will be available to address specific topics during the poster session prior to the proposed cleanup plan presentation. A future meeting will be held on Thursday, Nov. 11, at 2 p.m. in the Centredale Manor, located 2074 Smith St., North Providence; a meeting was held previously on Tuesday, Nov. 8, at North Providence Town Hall.

EPA will be accepting public comments on this proposed cleanup plan from Nov. 14 through Jan. 12, 2012.

The Centredale Manor Site includes portions of Johnston and North Providence.

The main part of the site, referred to as the source area, is located on Smith Street (Route 44), in North Providence, on approximately nine acres where contamination was historically released to the environment. This area is now a residential area occupied by the Centredale Manor and Brook Village apartment complexes. The site also includes free-flowing reaches and ponds of the river next to and downstream of the source area. In the soil and sediment at the site, dioxin and PCBs are the most wide spread contaminants. The source area was used from the early 1940s to the early 1970s to manufacture chemicals and to recondition drums. The primary sources of contamination included handling, storage and disposal of chemicals associated with these activities. Chemicals were apparently released directly to the ground, buried, and emptied directly to the river resulting in contamination of soil, groundwater, surface water and sediment in the adjacent and downstream river and ponds. Evidence indicates that buried waste material may still be present in a portion of the source area.

For more information, visit www.epa.gov/region1/superfund/sites/centredale



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