



Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

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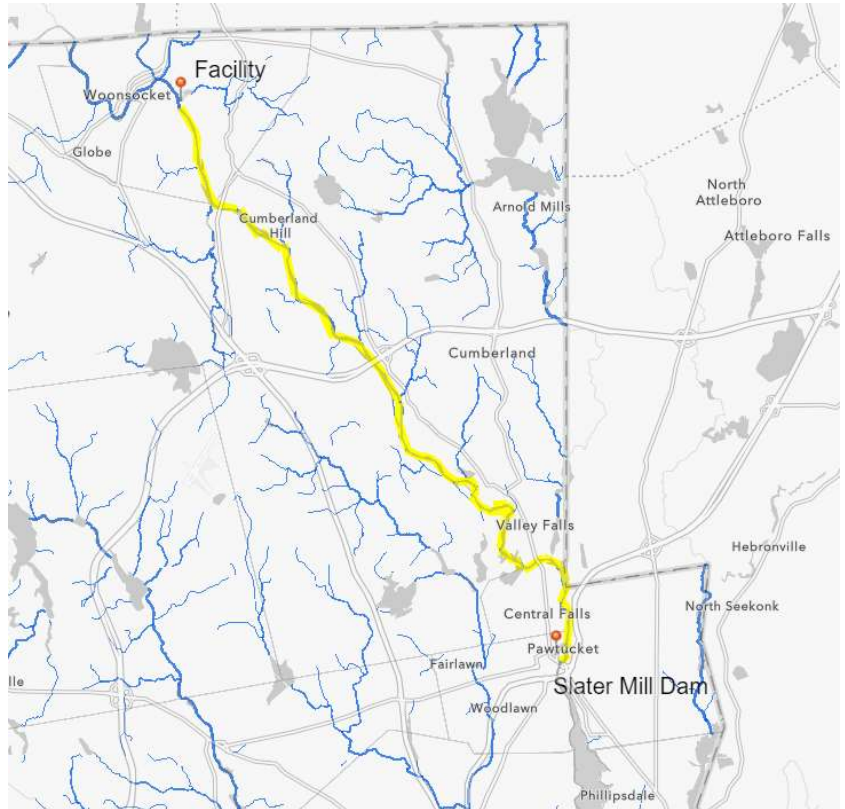
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Friday, March 10, 2023

ONGOING PROCESS FAILURE AT WOONSOCKET SEWAGE PLANT CAUSES DEM TO CONTINUE NO-CONTACT ADVISORY ON BLACKSTONE RIVER

PROVIDENCE, RI – The no-contact advisory on the Blackstone River that the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) announced March 1 because of partly treated wastewater being discharged by the Woonsocket Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility will continue as the plant's operators try to correct an ongoing process failure, DEM is announcing today.

DEM inspected the wastewater treatment facility (WWTF) today and found that although the quality of the discharge from the plant has improved, the City of Woonsocket and its contract operator have been unable to consistently reduce solids levels in the secondary clarifiers to acceptable levels. Until the plant's solids levels are controlled, DEM is extending the advisory that residents refrain from both primary contact recreational water activities (such as wading and swimming) and secondary contact activities (such as canoeing, kayaking, rowing, and fishing) and to avoid consuming any fish from the Blackstone and any waters that receive flow from the river. These include but are not limited to the Blackstone Canal and Scott Pond, from the location of the discharge, at 11 Cumberland Hill Road in Woonsocket, to the Slater Mill Dam in Pawtucket (see map). This advisory is in effect until further notice.



The city owns the treatment facility and contracts its operations and maintenance to Jacobs, a Texas-based consulting and engineering firm, and related sludge treatment systems to Synagro Technologies Inc., which is headquartered in Baltimore. The facility treats between six and nine million gallons of sewage from Woonsocket and nearby areas daily. Wastewater from city residences and commercial and industrial establishments is continually collected and conveyed underground to the plant, which removes pollutants in accordance with its state discharge permit before the water can be discharged to the Blackstone River. At

DEM's direction, plant personnel have made process changes and installed supplementary solids treatment equipment. The plant also is in the process of installing additional solids treatment equipment.

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