

## **APPENDIX B**

### **RIDEM/RIDOH Advisory for Safe Uses of Mashapaug Pond**



August 23, 2002

Dear Stakeholder:

I am writing this letter to inform you of **Mashapaug Pond's water quality and safe uses of the pond**. The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM), in cooperation with the Environmental Protection Agency and a private consultant, completed a monitoring program at Mashapaug Pond during the Summer of 2001. The preliminary analyses of these data were presented at a public meeting at the Charles N. Fortes Magnet School in June of this year. Dr. Robert Vanderslice of the Rhode Island Department of Health (HEALTH) was also present at the meeting to inform the public of safe uses of the pond. Unfortunately, the attendance at this meeting was sparse, and therefore we were not able to reach as many members of the community as we had hoped.

This letter is intended to reiterate the information conveyed at the meeting in June, and to reinforce the public health concerns associated with the pond's pollution problems, as well as the safe ways in which the pond can and should continue to be used and enjoyed. In summary, preliminary analyses of the data indicate three areas of concern:

- **Fish** caught in Mashapaug Pond are contaminated with PCBs and dioxin and are not safe to eat
- Bacteria (Fecal Coliform) levels are high following rainstorms rendering the pond **unsafe for swimming**
- Bluegreen algae (cyanobacteria) found in the pond can produce toxins that can harm humans and animals that swim in or drink pond water during algae blooms, further rendering the pond unsafe for direct contact and consumption at those times.

DEM, with our partners, is developing water quality restoration strategies to address pollution caused by bacteria, which are causing unsanitary conditions, and nutrients, which are causing the algae blooms. These strategies will be presented in parameter-specific plans, also known as a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). We expect delivery from the consultants of the first Mashapaug Pond TMDL for nutrients in September and will make the plan available for public review and comment later in the fall. Further monitoring will be conducted to better characterize bacteria sources to the pond. Upon collection of these data, a TMDL for bacteria will then be developed. In both cases, the objective of the water quality restoration plans is to identify the pollution sources and the actions necessary to reduce pollutant loads to acceptable levels. Unfortunately, due to budget and staffing constraints DEM has no current plans for follow-up investigations of the sources of fish contaminants.

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In the mean time, **HEALTH** recommends that contact with the pond be limited. DEM has incorporated these precautions for humans and pets into a poster and the enclosed "Do's and Don'ts" flyer which will be distributed in the neighborhoods and to stakeholders. We have also notified several of the public agencies that currently conduct activities in or on the pond such as the Paddle Providence program of the Providence Recreation Department and the Groundwork Providence agency.

Enclosed is a copy of the flyer. Please take the time to read it to ensure that you understand the recommended cautionary measures. We also ask that you help us to get the message out to family, friends and neighbors so that all may safely enjoy the pond. Note that while the pollution problems in the pond mean that certain activities should be limited or curtailed, there are still many safe uses of the pond that should be encouraged, such as catch-and release fishing and boating.

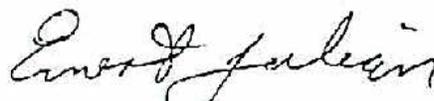
If you should have any questions regarding the restoration plans please contact Cindy Hannus, DEM at 222-4700 ext. 7241. If you have questions regarding the safe uses of Mashapaug Pond, please contact Dave Burnett at 222-2749 or via email at [RIbeaches@doh.state.ri.us](mailto:RIbeaches@doh.state.ri.us).

Thank you for your attention to this important issue, and we look forward to working with you in improving water quality in Mashapaug Pond.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Scott  
Deputy Chief of Water Quality and Standards  
Office of Water Resources  
Rhode Island Department of  
Environmental Management



Ernest Julian, Ph.D.  
Chief, Office of Food Protection  
Rhode Island Department of Health

cc. Alicia Good, RIDEM/OWR  
Angelo Liberti, RIDEM/OWR  
Robert Mendoza, USEPA  
Bob Vanderslice, HEALTH  
Dave Burnett, HEALTH  
Walter Combs, HEALTH  
Ernest Julian, HEALTH

# Mashapaug Pond Do's and Don'ts

## Enjoy Mashapaug Pond Safely

**Catch and release fish.**

**Canoe and boat when pond conditions allow.**

**Walk, bicycle or enjoy other recreational activities in the watershed.**

**Picnic and bird watch.**

### WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT MASHAPAUG POND FROM A RECENT STUDY

#### **BACTERIA:**

Swimming in the Pond is NOT SAFE because Fecal Coliform levels are high following rain storms.

#### **FISH:**

Analysis of carp & bass samples indicate that fish from the Pond ARE NOT SAFE TO EAT

#### **ALGAE:**

Some types of Algae (Cyanobacteria) found in the Pond can produce toxins that can harm humans and animals.



**To keep you and your family safe until we learn more, Please**

### **DO NOT:**

**Drink pond water.**

**Eat fish caught in Mashapaug Pond.**

**Swim, wade, play or bathe in pond water.**

**Boat whenever thick scum, algae mats, or foul odors occur on the pond.**

### **What Should You Do?**

Wash your hands with soap and water if you come in contact with pond water.

DO NOT eat fish caught in the pond.

Watch for increased algae in the pond, and avoid contact with pond water during algae blooms

Wipe your feet after leaving the pond to prevent tracking contaminated sediments into your car or home.



State of Rhode Island  
Department of Environmental  
Management  
Office of Water Resources

For More Information Contact:  
RI Dept of Health,  
Office of Food Protection  
Dave Burnett at (401) 222-2749 or  
email at [RIbeaches@doh.ri.state.us](mailto:RIbeaches@doh.ri.state.us)

**HEALTHri**



Rhode Island Department of Health  
Patricia A. Nolan M.D., MPH, Director & Lincoln Almond, Governor