

**For Immediate Release
For More Information:**

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**URI to Hold Workshop on Public Drinking Water
Protection, Volunteer Opportunities to Follow**
Bristol, Warren & Barrington, RI Public Water Supplies

KINGSTON, R.I. – January 4, 2002-- The University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension (URI CE) is working cooperatively with the Rhode Island Department of Health to implement the Source Water Assessment Program as required by the federal Safe Drinking Water Act. This Program is now underway for the towns of Bristol, Warren & Barrington.

The URI CE Home*A*Syst Program, a voluntary residential pollution prevention education program, is holding an informational workshop about drinking water protection, the water cycle and land use impacts to water quality on **Tuesday, January 22nd, 2002 from 7-9 PM at the Barrington Public Library Gallery Room, 281 County Road (Routes 114, 103) in Barrington.** This workshop is free and open to the public.

URI CE and the RI Health Department have two volunteer opportunities following this workshop. **Land Use Inventory** volunteers will use computer-generated land use maps to identify potential pollution threats to public water supply protection areas, which include the Kickemuit, Swansea, Shad Factory, and Anawam Reservoir Watersheds

(Warren, RI and Swansea, Rehoboth, Dighton & Seekonk, MA), as well as the Nayatt Wellhead Protection Area in Barrington, RI. Volunteers will work in pairs or teams and will have three weeks to work on their own time. Instructions & maps will be provided immediately following this informational workshop (ending by 9 PM).

Assessment volunteers will attend two, 2-hour work sessions—one in March and one in April 2002, which will be held locally and led by staff from the URI CE Municipal Training/NEMO Program. Volunteers will provide input on the assessment process through identifying local land use issues, selecting management options for analysis, and reviewing assessment results to identify and develop future planning needs.

“This project is unique to involve local citizen participation,” noted Holly Burdett, Home*A*Syst Program Assistant. Burdett further explains, “Not only do the local residents have the most at stake in protecting their local drinking water supplies, but their knowledge about the surrounding landscape, as well as the existing concerns and protection efforts are so valuable to the success of this program.”

URI CE and the RI Health Department will use the information provided by each group of volunteers to complete the Source Water Assessments, which is a systematic study of natural and land use related factors that affect pollution risks to drinking water supplies.

“The goal is to tailor each community’s Assessment based on their existing efforts and future needs”, explains Burdett. Future assistance will

also be available from URI CE to help communities with planning and education needs identified through this project.

For more information, to register for the workshop and/or to **volunteer** for this project as it begins in Bristol, Warren & Barrington, call **Holly Burdett, URI CE Home*A*Syst Program Assistant at (401) 874-5398.** For more information about Rhode Island's Source Water Assessment Program contact Clay Commons, Program Coordinator, RI Health Department, Office of Drinking Water Quality at (401) 222-7769.