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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Scituate High School Students GET WET! & Forest Management Unveiling May 26th

Scituate High School students are working together to increase the awareness, understanding, and interest in water resources within the Scituate Reservoir Watershed by participating in the GET WET! Program developed and provided through the University of Maine. GET WET! stands for Groundwater Education Through Water Evaluation and Testing.

After receiving introductory instruction by the Project Manager from the University of Maine, Theresa Thornton, explained the basic principles of groundwater, well construction, threats to water quality, and proper sampling methods, students were provided sample bottles to bring home to collect water from their tap. One hundred and four students from Ms. Donovan's Environmental Science Class, Mrs. Denise Collins' Chemistry Class, and Mr. Brian Wentworth's Applied Science Class are participating in the program. The student's returned to the chemistry lab and tested their samples for nitrate, alkalinity, chloride, conductivity, pH, and hardness. The locations of wells were mapped into a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) program by the students with the help of Shane White, State of RI, Statewide Planning, GIS Coordinator, while Dr. Kraus and his undergraduate students from Rhode Island College, Crista Straub, UMaine PhD candidate, Gina DeMarco, District Manager and Elizabeth Berg, Education and Outreach Coordinator both from Northern RI Conservation District helped students with the chemical analysis.

While the results of the project will provide a baseline screening of water quality in the town, the building of the community's awareness of the need to have well water tested regularly is the higher goal. While managers of public water supplies are required by law to test regularly, private well owners are only required to test upon the transfer of property. Unless the home owner has their well water analyzed by a certified laboratory, they may never know of potential health threats. Many contaminants cannot be detected by sight or smell.

The next step for the students included participating in a full day of research when several professionals in the community, including those listed above along with Richard Blodgett, Land Management Specialist and Christopher Riley, Forest Supervisor both from Providence Water, Patrick Kraft from the RI Department of Health, Paul Dolan, Assistant State Forester from the RI Department of Environmental Management and Mike Sugrue from Sugrue Engineering will offered their time for the day to work with the students to develop a public summary of their research.

The GET WET! Summary will be presented to the public on May 26th at the Scituate High School. All town leaders, home owners, parents, and interested parties are encouraged to attend. On the same evening the Environmental Science students will also be unveiling their Tree Farm Forest Management Plan developed over the course of the year under the direction of Forester's Christopher Modisette, RI RC&D Coordinator and Paul Dolan. Activities will begin at 5 PM with students leading the public on tours of the Tree Farm and will be followed by a formal indoor presentation at 6 PM.

The GET WET! Program and the Tree Farm Program have been coordinated by the Scituate Reservoir Watershed Education Program, a collaboration of Providence Water and Northern RI Conservation District. Call Gina DeMarco 401-949-1480 or Richard Blodgett at 401-521-6300 for more information, or go to www.landwaterconnection.org

