

Environmental Journal

Conservation expert to open forum on local drinking water

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By Peter Lord

The head of a national organization that promotes the efficient use of drinking water will be the keynote speaker for a water supply forum hosted by a statewide water advocacy group and the state's water suppliers at 4:30 p.m. Monday, March 30, at the Save The Bay Center in Providence.

Mary Ann Dickinson, the founder and executive director of the Chicago-based Alliance for Water Efficiency, will talk about trends in water use and cost-effective options for conserving water.

She is an international expert on water conservation who has worked with the California Urban Water Conservation Council, the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority and the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection.

The forum, entitled "R.I.'s Water Supply: Conservation and Competitiveness," will address the challenge of managing the state's water supplies "in a way that supports a vibrant economy and a healthy environment, with a focus on the tremendous potential of efficiency and conservation to help meet Rhode Island's water needs."

The forum was organized by the Rhode Island Water Works Association and the Coalition for Water Security, an association of

environmental and economic groups concerned about the state's water supplies. The groups are supporting legislation this year designed to promote water conservation and avoid shortages that occur each summer when outdoor water use spikes.

Henry Meyer, president of the suppliers association, said the forum provides an opportunity to explore the benefits of efficiency and sound management. Sheila Dormody, coordinator of the water coalition, said conservation should be a high priority for successful water management.

A panel will address Rhode Island's challenges. Panelists will be Pam Marchand, general manager and chief engineer of the Providence Water Supply Board; Chris Woodcock, a water finance and rate expert who heads Woodcock & Associates; and Scott Wolf, executive director of Grow Smart Rhode Island, an anti-sprawl group.

For more information, go to www.coalitionforwatersecurity.org. To register, contact Jane Austin at (401) 272-3540, ext. 123, or at jaustin@savebay.org.

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