

NARR. TIMES

Water³⁻²¹⁻⁰⁸ coalition hosts forum on April 2

The Coalition for Water Security, a partnership of many of the state's leading environmental and economic groups, will join the Aquidneck Island Planning Commission to host a special forum on water issues on Wednesday, April 2 from 7 - 9 p.m. at the CCRI Newport Campus Auditorium in Newport.

"Our Water Future: Rhode Island and Aquidneck Island," will discuss the challenges of managing the state's shared water supplies to equitably support a vibrant economy and a healthy environment, with a closer look at the issues from the vantage point of the residents of Aquidneck Island.

"Rhode Island's water belongs to all of us," explained Sheila Dormody, the Coalition's coordinator. "Our healthy and clean rivers and streams not only provide our drinking water, but also support fisheries, recreation, tourism and economic development. With relatively generous rainfall here in the Northeast, our water supply should be a competitive advantage for the state's communities and businesses, while still providing available and high quality water for residents."

The issue of the state's shared water supplies, how much water the state has, and how it can be properly used and allocated is expected to be a major issue at the General Assembly this year. The Coalition for Water Security has introduced legislation to provide a framework for managing this critical shared resource.

The forum will feature two panels.

The first panel will explore the essential elements of responsible and effective water supply policies—policies which will provide a safe and reliable water supply to meet current needs, reduce waste, provide for economic growth, and protect our rivers and streams.

The panel will be made up of representatives of the Coalition for Water Security, including Ted Clement of the Aquidneck Island Land Trust.

The Coalition consists of 19 environmental and economic groups in the state who have been focusing on the issue of the efficient use of the state's shared water resources from a variety of perspectives for more than two years.

Water supply issues with a direct Aquidneck Island focus will be featured in a second panel moderated by Tina Dolen of the Aquidneck Island Planning Commission.

It will include Keith Stokes of the Newport Chamber of Commerce, Julia Forgue, Director of Utilities for the City of Newport, Jesse Rodrigues, owner of the R.I. Nurseries, and Joanne Galuska of the Naval Station, Newport.

An open question and answer session will follow the presentations and panel discussions.

Registration is free and open to the public.

To register for the forum, go to: www.community.savebay.org/NetCommunity/Page.aspx?pid=842&srcid=683.

For questions and further information, contact Jane Austin at (401) 272-3540 x123, or jaustin@savebay.org. CCRI's Newport Campus is located at One John Chafee Boulevard in Newport.