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Conservation Commission
Town of Greenwich

Press Release

Earth Day Proclamation Celebrates Clean Water

First Selectman Peter Tesei was joined by town staff, local environmentalists, and residents today to proclaim April 2009 as Earth Day Celebration Month in the Town of Greenwich. This year the annual event took place at the Grass Island Wastewater Treatment Plant. "As a community, we should be proud of our commitment to protecting the waters of Long Island Sound. Our wastewater facility is extremely well managed," stated Tesei. "As we celebrate Earth Day, it is important to recognize our successes."

In the 1990's the Grass Island plant was upgraded to remove nitrogen. According to Amy Siebert, the Commissioner of Public Works, the Town's Sewer Division made a concentrated effort to manage and improve the operation and the results are impressive. In 2008, the nitrogen limit established by the DEP permits was 581 lbs. of nitrogen. The Town discharged 479 lbs. At 102 lbs. less than allowed, this meets the 2014 limit, six years ahead of schedule. Grass Island was rated 6th overall in Connecticut for plants receiving nitrogen credits and will receive over \$167,000 from the State.

"Excess nitrogen has been identified as a leading cause of hypoxia in Long Island Sound" stated Denise Savageau, Conservation Director. "The effort made by our Sewer Division deserves to be recognized. Clean water is important for all life in the Sound and especially for our quality of life."

The newest upgrade to the facility is the Ultraviolet Disinfection System, which came online in November 2008. This replaces the chlorine disinfection system that had been in place. "This new upgrade is important for water quality in that it provides for disinfection without the negative impacts of chlorine byproducts" explained Richard Feminella, Wastewater Division Manager. "Residual chlorine can be toxic to aquatic life. With UV disinfection, chlorine is no longer needed resulting in a cleaner discharge."

Cheryl Dunson, League of Women Voters of Connecticut Public Issues VP acknowledged the Town's achievements. "Today the League is here to applaud the significant improvements the Town of Greenwich has made to our Wastewater Treatment Plant to minimize negative impacts to Long Island Sound." She continued "Environmental protection – along with many other endeavors – depends upon public and private efforts. As citizens we need to continue to advocate for and support public investments in Clean Water."

In addition to the Earth Day proclamation, each year the Conservation Commission compiles a calendar of events that are scheduled to take place during April and early May. The calendar is posted on the Town website at <http://www.greenwichct.org/ConservationCommission/ConservationCommission.asp>.

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