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# NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Wellfleet stormwater improvements underway

HYANNIS, Mass. (January 4, 2012) -- A stormwater treatment project that will significantly improve the water quality of Duck Creek in Wellfleet is in progress and, as a result, motorists may encounter construction work along Commercial Street between Bank Street and Holbrook Avenue. The project is part of the Cape Cod Water Resources Restoration Project, spearheaded by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in partnership with the Cape Cod Conservation District and Barnstable County Commissioners.

Construction crews will be removing pavement in sections along Commercial Street and digging holes for catchment and treatment basins through January 2012. This temporary disturbance will soon result in cleaner water running off roads into Duck Creek and flowing into the groundwater.

Like many asphalt roads and parking lots near open water, the paved surfaces of Commercial Street and Holbrook Avenue have been channeling untreated surface water – stormwater – into an important water body because of their large impervious surface areas. Stormwater usually carries contaminants such as fertilizer and bacteria that flow directly into surface water if not first caught and filtered.

The problem is being addressed by installing underground containment and purification centers. Each system consists of a catchment basin that collects untreated stormwater runoff. Water then flows into connected leach basins where it trickles slowly downward through porous material that removes pollutants.

Funding for the construction comes primarily from American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) money designated for the Cape Cod Water Resources Restoration Project, begun in 2010. The town of Wellfleet is covering 25 percent of the cost.

“Stormwater treatment along Duck Creek is important to restore water quality, improve wildlife habitat, and potentially allow shellfish harvesting in the future,” said Donald Liptack, District Conservationist in the NRCS Barnstable field office. “Duck Creek is a central feature in Wellfleet’s historic downtown, and the stormwater treatment sites are all being installed in front of well-known Wellfleet sites and businesses such as Uncle Tim’s Bridge, Left Bank Gallery and the Mid-Cape Home Center.”

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During construction, large concrete cylinders can be seen along the road, ready to begin their important work once buried underground. Other equipment waiting to be installed includes floating debris traps, oddly shaped green plastic devices that will be positioned over the discharge pipe leading from the stormwater catchment basins into the infiltration systems. Their job is to collect oil and large debris that can impair the function of the sand and fabric that treats the contaminated water. The oil, debris and other sediment will be removed when the Town empties the catch basin twice a year.

The area will be repaved after installation and the only visible sign of the underground treatment systems will be new grates and manhole covers on the road.

The Cape Cod Water Resources Restoration Project is an estimated \$30 million project that, if fully implemented, will restore 1,500 acres of degraded salt marsh, improve fish access to 4,200 acres of spawning habitat, and improve water quality for 7,300 acres of shellfish beds over 10 years.

Some \$6.5 million in Recovery Act funding allowed work to begin in 2011 on 25 of the 76 proposed sites; nine projects have been completed. In addition to the environmental benefits, short-term economic benefits are also expected from the creation of construction jobs.

The Barnstable County Commissioners, Coastal Resources Committee; Cape Cod Conservation District; Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs; all 15 towns across Cape Cod; and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Additional federal, state and local agencies are cooperating.

For more information on the Cape Cod Water Resources Restoration Project, visit <http://www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/CCWRRP/index.html>.

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