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NEWS RELEASE

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UMaine researchers seek local knowledge of Lamoine, Hancock, Ellsworth environment

Many residents of Lamoine, Hancock, and Ellsworth get their water from wells drilled into sand and gravel deposits, remnants of the glaciers that once covered the state. These deposits store large volumes of clean groundwater. In many areas, however, these deposits are also a source of sand and gravel for use in construction and road building, and it is not known how much material can be mined before water resources are affected.

Researchers from the Senator George J. Mitchell Center for Environmental and Watershed Research at the University of Maine are studying the relationship between sand and gravel mining and groundwater in the towns of Lamoine, Hancock, and Ellsworth in order to ensure that those communities have clean, plentiful groundwater supplies while maintaining commercial use of sand and gravel. The project is funded by the Island Foundation, New England Grassroots Environmental Fund, Maine Community Foundation, Maine Drinking Water Program, Cold Spring Water Company, Lamoine Alliance for Water, and Lamoine Conservation Commission.

Researchers are seeking volunteers to help collect historical information about gravel pits and water wells in the region, in particular knowledge about sand and gravel pit mining, historical environmental changes in Lamoine, Hancock, and Ellsworth, and knowledge of the location of wells on or near sand and gravel deposits. Data collection will be completed by December 2004. Anyone interested in participating in the study, or learning more about the use of natural resources in their town, is invited to contact Teresa Thornton at 581-3233 (teresa.thornton@umit.maine.edu) or John Peckenham at 581-3254 (jpeck@maine.edu).

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