

Maryland

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## Navy monitors chemical waste

By Debra Murphey  
Staff Reporter

INDIAN HEAD — Naval Ordnance Station officials are monitoring three suspected chemical waste sites which drain into Mattawoman Creek.

The sites were discovered through testing for chemical waste mandated at all U.S. naval installations under the federal "Superfund" environmental law.

County officials, including Indian Head Mayor Warren Bowie and town manager David Spinney, gathered at the base Wednesday to hear the results. CH2M Hill, a Reston, Va., consulting engineering firm which "evaluates remedial actions for 'Superfund' sites," conducted the study.

Of the 500 suspected sites examined nationwide, 24 were in Maryland, said Pat Pauliukonis, head of the Environmental Protection Section of the Department of the Navy.

The sites identified on the base are the X-ray building, the nitroglycerin plant and the "town gut" landfill. The base has proposed that it will remove most of the sediments by 1986.

Approximately four gallons — or 488 pounds — of mercury have been found at the nitroglycerin plant,

and 700 pounds — or eight gallons — of silver have been located at the x-ray site, according to Henry Harris, hydrogeologist for CH2M Hill.

Jerry Volman, NOS safety director, said the waste covers a one-square-mile area and was deposited over a 30-year period. About three years ago a containment system was installed at NOS to prevent these elements from entering the drainage system that leads into the Mattawoman Creek.

The study was the most extensive investigation of hazardous wastes ever conducted at the base, which first was used as a gun testing range after the proving ground in Annapolis became crowded in the late 1800s. Capt. James Tadlock, NOS commanding officer, said following World War I the base was "left...primarily in the business of manufacturing gun powder and gun propellants."

Tadlock added the base now produces smaller quantities of materials, but at a greater cost and through the efforts of more employees. The base employs 2,400 people, compared to 1,500 people in the 1950s.

"We still depend very heavily on people in Charles County to accomplish our mission....What we found as a result of our confirmation study is some good news and some bad news," he said.

The purpose of the study, said Lawrence Sparks, See Chemical, A-10



Photo by Gary Smith

Charles County Public Works' Director Roy Hancock looks over U.S. 301 interchange proposals at the State Highway Administration's public meeting.



## State studies U.S. 301 traffic

By John Galski  
Staff Reporter

lanes or by acquiring 10 additional feet from landowners along the

There are a number of special events and activities scheduled for the month. Some dates to keep in mind.

Dec. 8: A free performance by the Southern Maryland Concert Band will feature traditional Christmas music, marches and show tunes. The concert will be held at the Fine Arts Center of Charles County Community College at 3 p.m. The program will last two hours. Call the Office of Government Services at 870-3775

## highlights

or 934-3776 for reservations.

Dec. 10: The Waldorf K mart is sponsoring a special shopping day for seniors. From 8-11 a.m., seniors will be entitled to a discounted breakfast, free gift wrapping, help with mailing and addressing packages and assistance to their cars. A \$50 gift certificate will be given away as a door prize. All customers 55 and over are asked to present an iden-

...Distribution will serve senior citizens from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. at the following sites: Indian Head City/Senior Center (Old Route 210); Metropolitan Methodist Church (near Parks Elementary in Pomonkey); Good Shepherd United Methodist Church (on Smallwood Drive in St. Charles); Cobb Island Baptist Church.

Eligibility requirements include:

- Food Stamp Card (green card from Social Services).
- Medical Assistance Card (red

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tance Program).

• Verification of your income (check stubs, copy social security check, green check from government, copy of unemployment check.

Dec. 12: The Greater Waldorf Jaycees will be sponsoring its annual Christmas Party. A turkey dinner will be served and entertainment will be provided by the La Plata High School Show Troupe. For reservations, call Of-

...tomato juice, pork with raisin sauce, stewed apples, green peas with mushrooms, bread and Swiss creme sandwich.

Tuesday — Pineapple juice, sauteed chicken livers with onions mushrooms, fluffy rice, salad with dressing, roll and apple pie.

Wednesday — Apple juice, meatball stew, stewed vegetables, seasoned turnip greens, biscuit and lemon parfait.

Thursday — Orange juice, oven-

...er salad with dressing, and canned mixed fruit. Day — Grapefruit juice, macaroni au gratin, harvard beets, broccoli cuts, bread and canned apricots.

All meals include bread, butter or margarine, tea, coffee or milk. The Senior Citizens Fellowship Program operates weekdays at six sites. There is no charge, but a 75-cent donation is suggested to help perpetuate the program. Anyone 60 years old or older may attend. If your spouse is under 60, he/she may attend with you. Income is not a criteria for this program.

## Chemical

environmental engineer for the Navy, was to identify potential problems and to protect personnel and citizens who may be affected.

Mike Ward, public information officer for the base, said the materials were deposited before there was any government regulation of wastes. "EPA comes along, and we can't do what we did before," he said. "Heck, before EPA came along I guess we did a lot of things we can't do now."

The study had four phases: interviewing "old timers" to find former dump sites; studying the area's geology and water table; taking samples and verifying the findings; and making recommendations as to how to clean up the wastes, Sparks said.

The results of the study have been sent to EPA and the Maryland Waste Management Administration in Baltimore for approval of the base's cleanup pro-

posals.

In addition to the silver and mercury found on the sites, the landfill was studied for the possibility of paint and varnish waste which may have been dumped there years ago, but no significant amount of varnish has been found.

Most of the sediments have been located near the outfall (the area closest to the buildings at the sites) and in the wetland and lowland areas.

The most serious threat exists at the nitroglycerin plant, said Sparks, who explained mercury presents the greatest hazard to human and aquatic life of the three substances.

Base operations have restricted access to this area, which is being monitored. If a health threat is found to exist, NOS has proposed sediment removal near the outfall and treatment at the Noble Road culvert, which eventually flows

into the Mattawoman Creek.

Officials said the sediments were found near the surface and should not affect the area's wells, which tap water supplies 300 feet below the earth's surface. Constant monitoring of the base's drinking water would indicate if there was a problem with the county's drinking water because the water comes from the same aquifer, Volman said.

The waters surrounding the

base are the Potomac River on the west and north of Indian Head, and the Mattawoman Creek on the south and east. Base officials added if any waste has escaped into the Mattawoman Creek, the amount has been undetectable.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Administration has taken samples from the aquatic life to determine what — if any — marine life has been affected by the presence of the chemicals.

Cont'd from A-1

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