

Grumman pollution spreads from Calverton plant

BY JENNIFER SMITH | jennifer.smith@newsday.com

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A plume of industrial pollution from the former Grumman naval weapons plant in Calverton is larger - and deeper - than was previously thought, according to new tests by the Suffolk health department.

The news prompted a stern letter this week to the Navy, the site's former owner, from three federal lawmakers, who urged an aggressive cleanup plan and said the Navy should reimburse Suffolk for tracking the plume "without inundating local taxpayers with the cost."

The plume is at least a quarter of a mile wide, based on groundwater samples taken at the Peconic River Sportsman's Club and along [Connecticut](#) Avenue, said Andrew Rapiejko, an associate county hydrogeologist.

The contamination is 35 to 60 feet deep. Trace levels were found 115 feet below the surface in one spot and have also turned up in the Peconic River.

News of the results first appeared in a Riverhead News-Review story last week.

The contamination contains industrial solvents and other chemicals used when Grumman made fighter jets at the site. The pollutants leached into groundwater and migrated southeast, triggering concern over damage to the Peconic River and to the aquifers that supply local drinking water.

But investigators still have not mapped the full extent of the plume, and they don't know where it hits the river.

"[Suffolk County](#)'s monitoring initiative has exposed glaring holes in the current monitoring and remediation plan and new action is sorely needed," said the July 8 letter from Sen. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.), Sen. [Kirsten Gillibrand](#) (D-N.Y.) and Rep. Timothy Bishop (D-Southampton).

Navy spokesman Jim Brantley said Thursday that he could not respond to the letter because he had not yet seen it.

But he said Suffolk's new data didn't change the Navy's view that the pollution would likely diminish on its own over time. In a statement, the Navy said monitoring was a preferable approach to more active cleanup "unless there is an unacceptable impact to the river."

Manorville resident Jean Mannhaupt, member of a Navy advisory board, said the Navy dragged its feet for more than a decade as the plume spread. "How much longer are we supposed to wait?" she said.

At the plume's core, concentrations of chlorinated solvents are between 40 to 200 times higher than state drinking water standards, Rapiejko said. Pollutants were detected in a well at the sportsman's club, which is now being treated, but no other public supply wells are thought to be at risk.

The Navy will install additional test wells this summer to gather more data for a cleanup plan, which must be approved by the state Department of Environmental Conservation.

County officials will meet with the DEC next week to discuss the cleanup, said Carrie Meek Gallagher, Suffolk's commissioner for energy and the environment.

 E-mail

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#1

12 hrs ago

NO-Bama

Patchogue, NY

Judged:



1



1



1

We can comment on this nonsense but not on REAL ISSUES!!!!!!!!!!!!

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#2

10 hrs ago

bah

*Middle Island,
NY*

maybe riverhead should have tested prior to buying the land back - sucks for riverhead, not for the navy its not on their hands now.

Surprized

Greenlawn, NY

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#3

10 hrs ago

Judged:



1

This is a "real" issue. These chemicals are going to get into our drinking water. The feds have to do something about it.

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#4

5 hrs ago

Judged:



1

Should have never stopped making those wonderful war birds on LI.

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#6

3 hrs ago

byondhlp
Patchogue, NY

MR OY
*Port Jefferson
Station, NY*

LEECHED into ground water??? They out and out just poured it right into the ground. What's going to happen when they use this polluted water to make snow for their brain storming ski slope? Probably will import water at an additional cost to taxpayers. Clean it up then cover it up with an airport & industrial area to make some real money for Riverhead & Long Island. God forbid a sensible idea will arise from the kickback brigade.

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#7

3 hrs ago

**THE FRITO
BANDITO**
*Port Jefferson
Station, NY*

Judged:



1



1



1

Surprized wrote:

This is a "real" issue. These chemicals are going to get into our drinking water. The feds have to do something about it.

Forget it. They said they have more important things to do like skim \$\$ for their next election. To them nothing is a "real" issue other than taking care of themselves and screw John Q. Where is Chuck the Schmuck on this one? Out to lunch? Not enough potential votes to open his mouth. Busy trying to get amnesty for illegals.

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#8

3 hrs ago

peachis

Judged:



1

The same thing happened at Grumman in Bethpage...it is a Federal Superfund Site...the Bethpage ballfield at the community park had to be dug up due to PCBs found there.

Grumman, the local politicians and business owners managed to hush it up, though, as usual. Money means more than people.

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#9

3 hrs ago

james
cressy
Huntington, NY

Judged:



1



1

Lets not forget that we live on a sole source aquifer. WE DRINK OUR GROUNDWATER. These chlorinated solvents are hazardous waste, no-indigenous, and move readily in groundwater. Furthermore, many of these solvents are denser than water and sink!!!!!!!!!!!!!! These impacts need to be removed ASAP because we are paying the price.

Sleepy
Riverhead
Riverhead, NY

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 Judge it!

#10

2 hrs ago

This is nothing new. 13 years ago, after the title changed hands, it was determined that there was leakage of solvents and other chemicals. It was further verified in 2000 when part of the property was excavated. They were fully cognizant of the waste that accumulated over the years. It was much cheaper to dump it on site, because back then, budgets wouldn't allow for removal. They had to push on with production, knowing that the plant was being shut down. Shame on the Navy for ruining the property and potentially ruining the micro-environment and shame on Riverhead for not stepping up to the plate. This needs to be brought to the Federal level. ASAP.

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#11

22 min ago

jeanne roth
*West Babylon,
NY*

it's about time to stop this pollution, everywhere, especially long island. this is all polluting our land and our water