

# METRO

## Navy waste could threaten local wells

By Beverly Keneagy

Staff writer

Hazardous wastes from two of Jacksonville's Navy bases could threaten the drinking water of 2,500 residents who have private wells within three miles of those bases, an official with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said yesterday.

But while the EPA warns that the potential for contamination exists, state environmental officials said no evidence of contamination has been found outside the bases.

At the Cecil Field Naval Air Station on the Westside, contamination could threaten the drinking water of 2,200 persons who

have private wells, the EPA said.

At the Jacksonville Naval Air Station, which is on the western bank of the St. Johns River near Orange Park, contamination could threaten the drinking water of an estimated 300 people.

However, Mike Fitzsimmons, waste program administrator with the Florida Department of Environmental Regulation's Jacksonville office, said he does not know of any groundwater contamination off of Navy property.

"As far as I know, there have been no private wells contaminated by the Navy bases," Fitzsimmons said.

Navy officials said yesterday they do not

think any contamination has spread off the base and no private drinking water wells are at risk.

"Testing of groundwater on the base and the identification of contamination plumes will be part of the Navy's investigation," said Veronica Schauer, a spokeswoman at the Jacksonville base.

Ms. Schauer said "the groundwater contamination moves at a slow pace, making it unlikely that the contamination has spread off the base."

The EPA announced last week it is proposing to add both bases on its Superfund list of the nation's worst hazardous waste sites.

NAS Jacksonville has 41 known sites where wastes have been dumped and Cecil Field NAS has 19 sites of contamination. Waste sites at both of the bases are the result of improper disposal procedures practiced in the past.

At Cecil Field, the soil and water are potentially contaminated at the surface and in the ground, according to the EPA.

The EPA believes that the water supplies to 2,200 people could be threatened because there is no continuous clay layer in the shallow rock aquifer where those resi-

(See EPA, Page B-6)

**E** official says  
Navy waste a threat

(From Page B-1)

dents have their private drinking water wells.

A shallow rock aquifer is the intermediate aquifer that is between the surficial aquifer and the Floridan aquifer, which is the major drinking water source for Cecil Field.

Cecil Field spokesman Bert Byers said the Navy tests its water frequently and sends those samples to the DER.

At the Jacksonville NAS, the potential exists for contaminated groundwater to migrate off the site and endanger local water supplies, according to the EPA. About 300 people have private drinking water wells in the shallow groundwater within three miles of the hazardous substances.

In both cases, the EPA has drawn a three-mile radius around the bases and considers anything inside that circle to be threatened by groundwater contamination, said Michael Hartnett, chief of the EPA's federal facilities unit for the Superfund program in Atlanta.

Hartnett said the EPA is investigating to determine the extent of the groundwater contamination. He said the state plans to test private wells in that area to determine if there is any contamination present.

Wastes at the Jacksonville NAS consist of a variety of pollutants, including PCBs, cadmium, chromium, lead, copper, mercury, solvents, oil and fuel, paint wastes and heavy metals.

According to the EPA, wastes have been directly deposited into the St. Johns River. A Navy study has found lead, chromium and cadmium in the river within three miles of the base.