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NEWSPAPER ARTICLE "OFFICIALS OUTLINE RISKS OF GROUNDWATER
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Officials outline risks of

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The presence of a known carcinogen in groundwater around the Crooked River Plantation subdivision drew approximately 120 St. Marys residents to a public meeting last week.

U.S. Navy and St. Marys officials spent two hours explaining possible health risks associated with vinyl chloride, a solvent by-product detected in groundwater bordering the old Camden County landfill.

Recent tests indicated the substance was spreading west from the landfill on Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base property towards the subdivision located north St. Marys.

Subdivision residents were

asked last week to discontinue use of private wells for irrigation until the extent of contamination is determined.

A panel consisting of base commanding officer Captain Chuck Ellis, St. Marys Mayor Jerry Brandon and two environmental consultants answered questions from the audience at Thursday night's hearing.

The plume, or contaminated area, is estimated to be 475 feet wide and between nine to 25 feet in depth. Navy officials have confirmed that the plume crosses Georgia Highway Spur 40 and is present at the last right of way before Crooked River Plantation.

Panel members assured residents that the plume does not extend into the drinking water

reserve, which is drawn several hundred feet below the surface.

But residents of the neighborhood were asked to discontinue shallow well use until environmental specialists complete testing on private property.

Out of the 200 responses to questionnaires delivered door to door by Navy personnel early last week, about 50 to 60 of the responses have groundwater wells, said Trish MacMillan of the base Public Affairs Office on Monday. But officials estimate that 400 residents of Crooked River have not responded to the questionnaire.

"These people who responded with shallow groundwater wells

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Groundwater contamination

Meeting: Navy wants residents to return questionnaires on wells

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are the next group we will work with," MacMillan said. "It is so important that other people with these wells contact us."

With the owners' permission, groundwater tests will determine the extent of the plume on private property in the neighborhood, and officials will be able to implement strategies to alleviate the contamination.

Navy officials are calling the meeting a definite success, MacMillan said, and residents voiced concerns about issues from property value to cancer.

"We were very gratified to see as many people there," she said.

"The important thing is to allow residents to understand the issue as much as possible, and to let them know that we want to work together."

Testing on private property will begin around the first of October, Ellis said.