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NEWSPAPER ARTICLE "PUBLIC SEEKS ANSWERS ABOUT CONTAMINATION" NSB KINGS
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Public Seeks Answers About Contamination

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Staff Writer

Over 100 Crooked River Plantation residents attended a public hearing last week on the potential problem of vinyl chloride contamination in ground water.

The discovery of the vinyl chloride resulted from Navy testing of wells around an old county landfill located across from the subdivision on federal property.

"I want to welcome everyone to this public hearing on a problem we hope doesn't exist," St. Marys Mayor Jerry Brandon said as he opened the meeting.

Environmental experts were on hand to help explain the make up and dissipation of vinyl chloride, with no exact determination yet if those with wells in the housing development have dangerous lev-

els of the contaminant.

Residents have been asked to complete a survey delivered to the door and passed out at this meeting to indicate if they have a well.

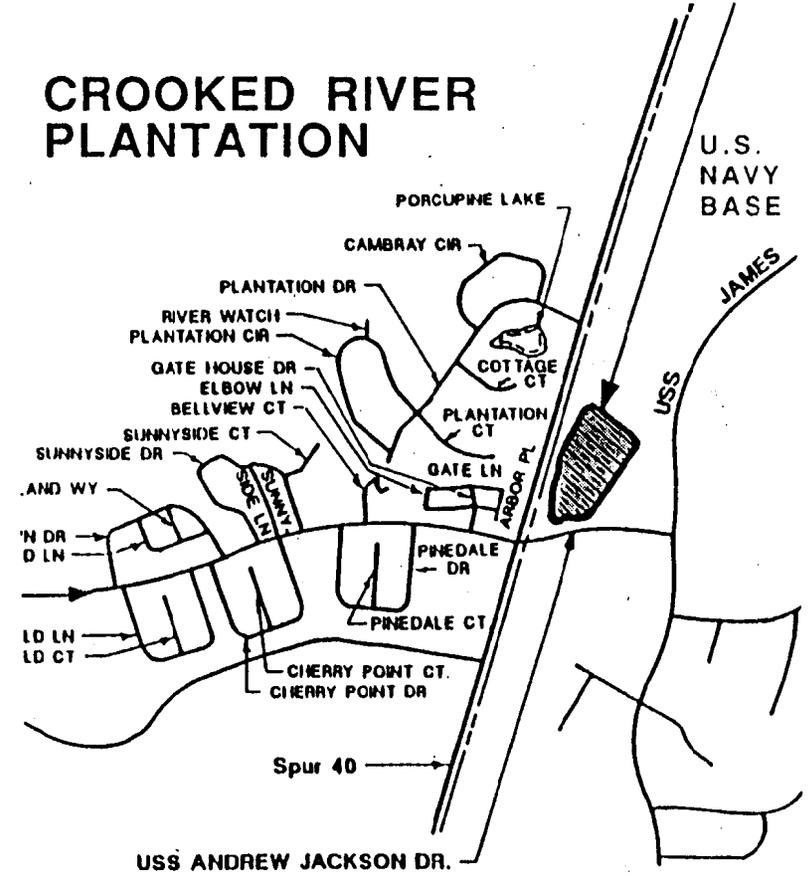
The Navy will be testing residents' well water at no charge.

The discovery of vinyl chloride is not an unusual occurrence across this country, since laws requiring monitoring of items placed in landfills has only recently been implemented.

"Some of our nation's past disposal practices are not acceptable by today's standards; they were not regulated to the extent they are today at the time that the landfill was in operation," said Captain Len Scullion, Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base Public Works

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CROOKED RIVER PLANTATION



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CROOKED

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 THE KINGS BAY 5720/1 (Rev. - 7/91)

Hearing

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Officer.

Maps of the housing area showing house numbers were provided for residents to mark their residence if it contained a well. Approximately twenty-five wells were marked at the end of the meeting.

The contaminant has been discovered at a depth of nine feet to 25 feet. Captain Scullion referred to this level as a "superficial aquifer" with the aquifers used for drinking water at much deeper levels from 200 to 800 feet deep.

An impervious layer separates shallow aquifers from the deeper aquifers.

Crooked River Plantation residents receive their drinking water from St. Marys Water Department which comes from wells as deep as 800 feet. Residents who have shallow wells in the neighborhood are generally using them for lawn watering and recreation, such as filling swimming pools.

Residents have been asked to stop using private well water to keep the "plume" of contamination from accelerating until testing can be accomplished. Testing is to begin in October.

The measurable discharge of contaminant from a given point of origin was referred to as a "plume".

Vinyl chloride is a by-product of solvents such as cleaning fluids. Vinyl chloride is believed to be a carcinogen which mixes with water but evaporates when it is exposed to the air such as in lawn watering.

The wells around the old landfill tested at levels of 30 to 120 parts of vinyl chloride per one billion parts. The Environmental Protection Agency's acceptable level is no more than three parts per billion. Harmful consequences are also based on a person drinking contaminated water over a long period of time.

If unsafe levels of vinyl chloride are established after the Navy collects data and performs a risk assessment, then a remediation clean up program would be established.

Citizens addressed St. Marys City Manager Mike Mahaney and Mayor Brandon with questions concerning real estate values and assessment, and monetary compensation for using city water to water lawn if they voluntarily stop using their shallow wells.

"These are questions to take back to the council," replied Mr. Mahaney.

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END