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NEWSPAPER ARTICLE "EXPERTS: CONTAMINATION AT CROOKED RIVER IS NOT
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Experts: Contamination at Crooked

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TRIBUNE STAFF REPORTER

Groundwater contaminants in the Crooked River Plantation subdivision pose little health risk to residents, but the U.S. Navy will begin a cleanup of the area in June.

Navy officials made the announcement while updating residents on the contamination at a public hearing on Thursday.

A mass of ground contaminated with vinyl chloride was discovered in the Crooked River Subdivision area last summer during a groundwater testing by

the Navy. The source of the contamination was traced to an old county landfill on Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base near Spur 40.

Vinyl chloride results from the breakdown of solvents and is a carcinogen when inhaled or ingested in high concentrations over a period of time. Preliminary testing indicated that the plume had higher vinyl chloride concentrations than environmentally acceptable so the Navy conducted further testing.

Ed Lohr, technical project manager for Naval Facilities Engineering Command in Charleston, SC, said that the Navy has

River is not serious health risk

already spent \$2 million on cleanup costs in the area and will spend more.

"We are in the process of negotiating the price of cleanup, but we have no idea at this point how much it will cost," he said. "It depends on how effective the method is."

According to ABB Environmental Services, the company hired by the Navy to conduct testing, preliminary tests revealed 16 contaminants in addition to vinyl chloride were present in the plume.

However, officials said quantities and toxicity of these contaminants did not combine to produce a substantial health

threat to residents living in the area. Their results are based on hypothetical risk analysis of the area and field testing.

Dr. Marlin Delaney of ABB said that testing revealed there was not any evidence of increased cancer or non-cancer health risks due to vinyl chloride exposure. Delaney said investigators calculated health risks by multiplying a family's exposure to the substance by the toxicity of the substance.

"There is no evidence of increased cancer risk or non-cancer health effects,"

See CLEANUP, page 10A

-1-
CONT'D

Cleanup: Water testing uncovers

■ continued from page 1A

he said.

Delaney said the risk of cancer for people living in Crooked River is well below the Environmental Protection Agency's rate of one to 100 cases per one million people exposed.

By using risk analysis of the largest amount of exposure reasonably possible in the area, researchers concluded that less than one adult and 88 children would develop cancer after three years of expo-

sure to the contaminants.

In the screening risk evaluation, the exposed groundwater was not used for drinking water.

"The screening risk evaluation was just an estimate of the probability of an individual developing cancer over a lifetime in response to exposure to a concentration of a potential carcinogen," Delaney said. "We looked at worst case scenarios."

All homes in Crooked River Plantation are connected to the St. Marys water

low health risk for residents

system for drinking water which is not exposed to vinyl chloride. However, many residents have shallow groundwater wells that are used for irrigation purposes.

Since vinyl chloride was detected in the area, Navy officials urged residents to discontinue use of the shallow wells until the exposure risks could be identified.

In order to determine the extent of the groundwater plume and its contamination, the investigation also included field testing of private wells and groundwater

sampling using hydrocone technology in designated right of ways and roadways. In hydrocone testing, a large truck pushes a metal probe into the ground to retrieve samples.

Captain Len Scullion said that the Navy expects to begin field work cleanup by early fall.

"The ultimate goal is to correct what's been done in the past," Scullion said. "Even if the risks are minimal we aren't walking away from the sight."

- 5 -
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