Paper Company Agrees To Short-Term Cleanup

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WAYNESBORO, Tenn. — A paper company cited by the Environmental Protection Agency for dumping chemicals which contaminated Beech Creek here signed a contract yesterday for short-term cleanup of the dump.

Champion International Corp. contracted with Chemical Wastes Management Inc. of Marietta, Ga., to work on the four-acre site formerly used as the Waynesboro city dump, according to Champion attorney Benjamin Bilus.

BILUS SAID the work is expected to begin in about a week and require approximately a week for completion.

"We asked the engineers to do it full-speed-ahead," Bilus said. "Champion will pay out-of-pocket for these steps, but our cross-suit in U.S. District Court, Columbia Division, is asking for full restitution for the costs incurred from the defendant companies."

Champion, which now owns the dump site property, is named along with Dart Industries, Allied Industries and the city in a federal court suit filed by the EPA over the dumping.

THE SUIT charges that cancer-causing polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) deposited in the city dump by the firms seeped from the dump site into Beech Creek, causing about 115 times the minimum level of concentration of the chemical that the EPA considers is enough to cause one additional cancer case in every 100 humans who might drink the water or eat aquatic life from it.

Representatives for the city and the three firms met with EPA officials in Atlanta Wednesday and arrived at an agreement for containing the wastes.

The project will cost an estimated $250,000, plus an additional $20,000 annual maintenance expense, according to Waynesboro city attorney Charles Peterson.

BILUS SAID the work contracted yesterday will accomplish roughly half what is called for in the agreement.

Included, he said, will be basic removal of the sediment in the dump's settling pond, repair of run-off ditches, enlargement of a containment dam and lining of the dam with clay to stop leakage of PCB contaminants into the creek.

The sediment will be hauled to a hazardous waste field in Alabama, officials said.

MEANWHILE, Wayne County environmentalist Jack Davidson said yesterday that eight private wells near the dump being tested for PCB contaminants have shown no signs of the chemical.

"I was notified earlier this week by (Public Health) Commissioner Eugene Fowinkle's office that there was no PCB found in any of these samples," Davidson said. "But we're still awaiting results of 14 other test samples, which should come early next week."

"I don't really expect them to be any different," he added.

He said that while the results should "relieve the minds of the people involved," officials are continuing to order no swimming or fishing in Beech Creek.

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