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Many youths among 86 held in PCB protest

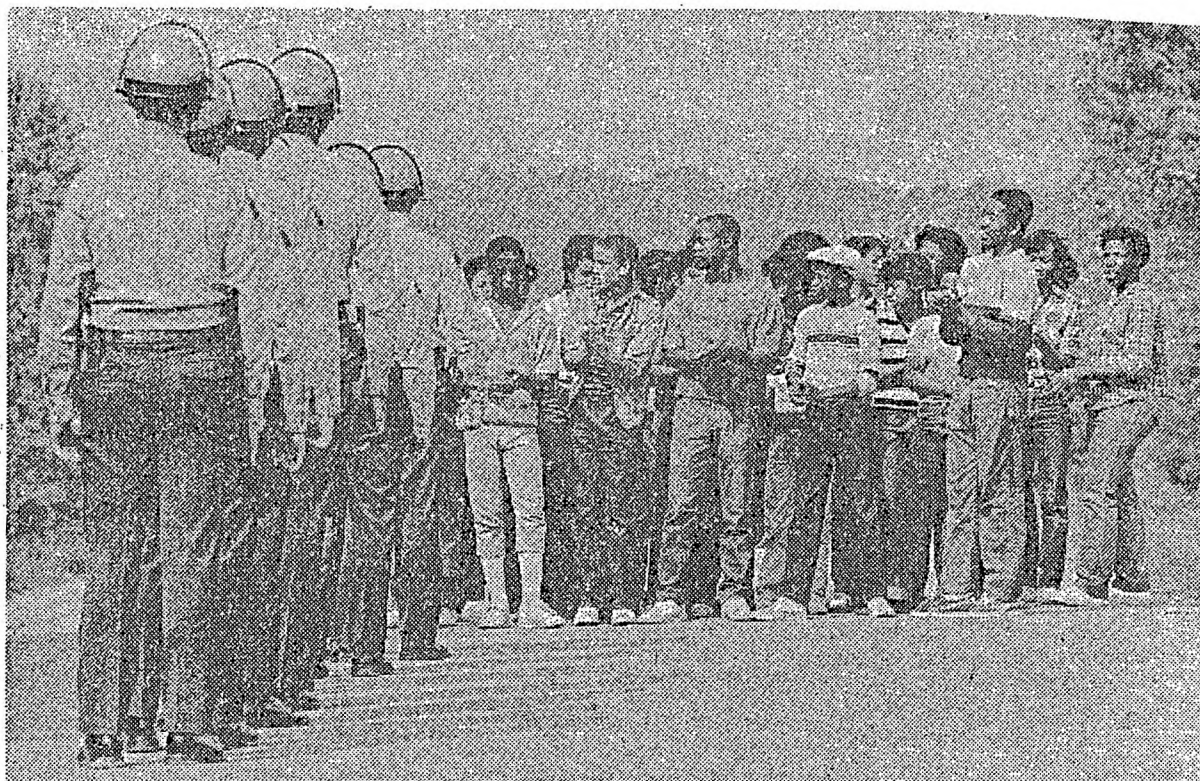
By CHARLES JEFFRIES
Staff Writer

AFTON — Their ranks swelled by college students and children, demonstrators against a PCB landfill in Warren County split into smaller groups and staged spread-out protests in an effort to halt trucks hauling contaminated soil to the dump.

The N.C. Department of Crime Control and Public Safety said 86 people were arrested during three sit-downs on roads leading to the landfill. Thirty-nine of them were juveniles — as young as 4 years old — who were released to the custody of their parents without being charged.

One man was charged with assaulting a state trooper who was kicked in the mouth, said William W. Phillips, assistant to the secretary of crime control and public safety. Eleven adults were charged with resisting arrest and impeding traffic, and 36 others were charged only with impeding the flow of trucks to the landfill.

Monday's arrests brought to 500 the total number of people taken into custody since Sept. 15, when the state began cleaning up PCB from 210 miles of roadsides where it was illegally dumped four years



Staff photo by Harry Lynch

Line of highway patrolmen wait for reinforcements and a bus before moving in

...this group of youths blocking entrance to PCB landfill were taken into custody

ago.

Among the people charged with impeding traffic were the Rev. Joseph Lowery of Atlanta, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and Kenneth Ferruccio, head of Warren County Citizens Concerned about PCB.

The demonstrators, totaling about 330, continued a strategy adopted on other days — dispersing into smaller groups to stage spread-out protests that splinter the forces of state troopers assigned to guard the landfill and guarantee the delivery of the truckloads of soil. The arrests oc-

curred on Secondary Road 1604, leading to the landfill, and on nearby U.S. 401.

Billed as a "Students Concerned about the Future" march, the demonstration involved students from Duke University, the Univer-

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Many youths held in protest at Warren County PCB dump

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sity of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and East Carolina University. Elementary, junior high and high school students also participated in larger numbers than in earlier protests.

One group of about 23 juveniles was arrested at 2:45 p.m. as they stood in a cluster in the road and blocked trucks for 10 minutes.

Nonetheless, the state hauled dirt from 18 miles of contaminated roadsides by the end of the day. The deliveries brought the total roadside area cleaned to 188.5 miles.

Phillips, who is coordinating the cleanup project, said the state hopes to complete deliveries of the PCB-laden soil and seal the landfill sometime next week.

The Warren County residents

have complained that PCB — banned by the federal Environmental Protection Agency after it caused cancer in laboratory animals — might leak from the landfill into the county's groundwater. State and federal authorities have issued assurances that the project is safe and the most economical way to handle the toxic chemical under approved federal regulations.

The protesters also have contended that Warren County was selected as the landfill site because the county is poor and predominantly black — about 57 percent. That claim has drawn civil rights activists such as Lowery to join the protest. The state says the site was selected because it was available for purchase, convenient to spill sites and located in a sparsely populated area.