

The weather

Thick white clouds are blowing the rain out of Alabama, but they're blowing the cold in. Tonight, here will drop into the low 40s over most of the state. The high today, under cloudy skies, will be in the 50s.

Ala. 57	UNC 24	Miss. State 28	Maryland 28	Kansas 41	Ohio State 48
Ark. 57	UCLA 14	Ohio State 11	Virginia 6	Mass. 14	Iowa State 21
Calif. 57	Florida 28	Kentucky 28	Chadron 28	Nebraska 27	Wayne 27
Colo. 57	Ill. 28	Wisconsin 28	Utah 28	Missouri 27	Texas 27

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HURTING BUSINESS

Weiss a ghost lake from PCB plague

BY OLIVIA BANTON

News staff writer

CEDAR BLUFF.—Fishing boats sit high and dry on the lakeshore, like pieces of driftwood washed up and abandoned in the sun.

The marina tackle shop is piled high, almost except for the soft whirring of a motor on the motor launch. A nearby cafe, its counters stacked with potato chips and candy, is empty.

The marina owner, Tommy Oliver, has been out picking cotton since a

neighbor all day. This time last year, Oliver was too busy to think about cotton, much less pick it.

IN A SMALL country store, Harold Gilliam warms his backside near a wood-burning stove and shakes his head when he talks about business.

Although a homemade wooden sign outside says the store sells minnows and bait, Gilliam has sold only four boxes of minnows to three weeks, and his minnow tank is dry.

Gilliam says Cedar Bluff has become a ghost town.

Why would people, especially fishermen, who normally flock to the mountain-enclosed Weiss Lake at Cedar Bluff, suddenly vanish, leaving the lake bottom and the one-voyage hotel here empty?

The answer is hard for the local mariners and store owners to swallow. But it's something they've seen coming—like a plague—for two months now.

IN EARLY September, the Coosa

river was closed to fishermen in Georgia, from Rome to the Alabama state line. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources issued a warning not to eat fish from the river, because high levels of a chemical called PCB had been found in them.

PCB, labels standing for polychlorinated biphenyls, is a chemical used in so many things that General Electric Co. in Hazle Park is transformers, according to Bill Buchanan, GE community relations officer in Rome. GE has been sued by both and

store owners in Georgia, said Buchanan, because PCBs in the soil where the company dumped the field have washed into the river from a drainage ditch and small creek.

The company now has contracted the runoff area and reseeded storage areas to prevent further leakage, said Buchanan.

The U. S. Food and Drug Administration, which found PCB can cause liver cancer in mice, has set limits on the amount of PCBs permissible in fish that turn to page A-6, column 1

Fun at home

© The fun of shopping and home entertainment. Today The News spotlights these shopping items which can make life at home a lot more fun—TV sets, movie cameras, stereo and the like. See Section G.

Guilt?

© A sense of guilt on the part of the businessmen of the country. The News spotlights these shopping items which can make life at home a lot more fun—TV sets, movie cameras, stereo and the like. See Section G.

Politics

© Who will serve as Jimmy Carter's link with governors? See Page 2-A.

HEW

© Dr. David Matthews' term as secretary of Health, Education



In swine flu program State aims 'needle' at healthy children

BY ANITA BRYAN

News staff writer

Alabama's swine flu vaccine campaign will be the most in the

grade children," said Carbone. "But I don't know yet if that's what we'll be doing." Carbone said he has made

HE SAID if the decision is made to give the vaccine to first graders, health classes likely will be set up

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PCB ruining business

(Continued from Page 1)

are to be eaten: Five parts per million.

Fish from the upper Coosa have at times had more than the limit of PCB allowed by FDA, according to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) officials.

Once PCB gets in the water, it settles to the bottom and can get into plants, eaten by insects, then minnows and on up the food chain into larger fish which may be eaten by people, according to Howard Zeller, EPA deputy chief of enforcement.

PCB accumulates in the body tissue of humans, and does not go away, said Zeller.

"Eating fish with high PCB content is like smoking cigarettes. Maybe you'll get cancer, maybe not," said Zeller.

WHEN THE Coosa was closed to fishing in Georgia, Alabama immediately was notified about Weiss Lake, which thrives there.

Tests done by the Alabama Water Improvement Commission and the Pesticide Lab at Auburn showed concentrations of PCBs in Weiss Lake fish "considerably in excess" of the FDA limit, according to State Health Officer Dr. Ira Myers.

But, Myers stopped short of closing the lake as the Georgia Natural Resources Department had done at Rome.

"Dr. Myers doesn't consider it a serious enough public health problem to

close the lake," said W.T. Willis, director of the State Health Department's Environmental Health Division.

Myers said as long as people aren't on a "heavy diet of catfish" from Weiss, there is no need to worry about eating the fish, said Willis. A heavy diet, he said, is eating catfish three times a day, seven days a week.

EPA issued an advisory against eating fish from the lake, especially catfish, because of the chemical's tendency to accumulate, said Zeller. PCB levels were extremely high in catfish, and lowest in crappie, he said.

And with the river closed to fishing in Georgia, people like Stump Williams, whose livelihood depends on fishermen coming to his Cherokee Camper Site on the lake, aren't going to "experiment with eating the fish."

Williams privately hired chemists to test the fish in Weiss, and from those samples was convinced "the fish are in pretty bad shape."

But are they safe to eat? "EPA says don't eat them and Dr. Myers says don't eat too many of them. Now we're tired of that stuff. We want straight facts," said Williams.

THE PROBLEM boils down to a rift between EPA and the Alabama Health Department.

"It's an unusual situation, with differing opinions from different people," said Willis. "It never should have gotten to this stage, and we don't know how to get out of it."

EPA says it's not trying to close the lake, but only wants to warn people about the potential danger of PCBs.

Closing Weiss Lake as Georgia closed the Coosa River presents a legal question to the Health Department officials, who say they would need a legal reason to re-open it.

"We would have to know that all the fish had PCBs below the limit. It could be more than 10 to 15 years from now," said Willis. "This is serious. It's not like something that will pass through in a short time."

"We'll bankrupt everybody on the lake if Dr. Myers closes it down to fishing," said Williams.

BUT, FISHING tackle business in Cherokee County already has planned 80 per cent, according to tackle shop and grocery store owner Tom Harter. Other sales are down a fourth, he said.

The PCB scare has kept away fishermen, said Harter, even the ones who take back what they catch.

While GE has made plans to discontinue using PCBs by June 30, 1977, according to Buchanan, and Williams, the nation's sole supplier of PCBs, says it plans to stop producing the chemical by Oct. 31, 1977. Cedar Bluff residents want to know what's done the road for them.

"We built our business up from honeysuckle and briars. Now, it's going



FISHERMEN STOPPED COMING TO MOUNTAIN-STUDDED WEISS LAKE
Marina owner Oliver surveys empty lake after day of picking catfish

down and it's gotten us all upset," said Harter. "The county could lose \$20 million in revenues."

Even the bread deliveryman said his business is affected. "I'm wondering who's going to eat these 200 cakes I've just brought in," he said.

Commercial fishermen like Arzel Sharp who have fished Weiss for seven years and said their catch in Guntersville, are looking for other jobs and other places to fish.

SHARP WONDERS, though, if PCBs won't follow him down river in Gadsden, Neely Henry Lake and Logan Martin.

Weiss Dam works as a trap to collect PCB-laden sediment, and may halt the flow of PCB there.

But will it? "I can't tell you," says Zeller. "I don't know what will happen."



GILMAN



SHARP

IN SPAIN Rightists denounce reform

MADRID, Spain (AP) — Extreme rightists marked the first anniversary

with rightists marching on the parliament building to yell: "France yes, Spain no" — denounced them

for the rally run out after 25 minutes.

Led by young men with special bands, several hundred