CHARLESTON, S.C.
POST
Q. $5,560

AUG 14 1980

Louisiana Fishing Grounds To Reopen

4371

SHELL BEACH, La. (AP) — If final tests for chemical contamination prove negative, fishing can resume early next week in some 400 square miles of waterways and marshes closed since a PCP spill last month, a state official said.

Joe Colson, secretary of the state Wildlife and Fisheries Department, gave fishermen the news Wednesday. He said scientists were about to make final tests of the water for residue of pentachlorophenal, and if the results were negative, fishing could resume.

Some 12½ tons of PCP, a wood preservative and herbicide, fell into the Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet in a ship collision July 22. The channel links New Orleans and the Gulf of Mexico.

Marine specialists working for the Coast Guard vacumed contaminated mud from the bottom of the channel in a cleanup estimated to have cost more than $1.1 million.

The Coast Guard reopened the outlet to normal shipping on Tuesday after water tests showed PCP residue at low levels that specialists did not consider a health threat.

"Now that they've opened it (the outlet) to full traffic, we're going to send the scientists in and make a last analysis of the water, and it looks like we're going to open on Monday," Colson said.

While fishing may not be permitted immediately in the outlet itself, "most of the other areas definitely will be opened."

PCB-ARCH-EXT0376282