ANSONIA, CONN.
SENTINEL
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HEARINGS

A pre-trial hearing probably will be in Birmingham sometime in February on the $1-billion class-action suit against Monsanto and General Electric. It was filed by 21 residents, mostly from Cherokee County, who say GE released polychlorinated biphenyls into the Coosa River and ruined their fishing and marine businesses. Another related suit has been filed in Atlanta federal court for half as much money, but for the same reason.

Feb. 10 is the date for the pre-trial hearing in Washington, D.C., on the R. L. Harris Dam shoreline access controversy. The hearing will be among the Federal Power Commission, Alabama Power Co. and six intervenors from a citizens' group. Essentially, the power company and the citizens object to the FPC requirement that Alabama Power must purchase a "buffer zone" — as much as 50 feet in some locations — between the lake the dam will create near Wedowee and private property.

On another front, Heflin residents may learn next month whether their mayor for the next four years will be 28-year incumbent John Gaither or his challenger in last year's election, Lowell White. It all has to do with the charge by five Heflin voters that Gaither's Sept. 14 election by a small margin over White came about by illegally cast absentee ballots. Circuit Judge Cyril Smith of Gadsden, who has had the matter under study for several weeks now, is expected to announce his decision soon.

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