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The Louisville Times
LOUISVILLE, KY.
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MAR 20 1979 *SKL*

Traces of toxic PCBs found near 'valley of the drums'

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has found small quantities of the toxic chemical PCB at the bottom of Wilson Creek near the northern Bullitt County dumping site known as the "valley of the drums." The Courier-Journal reported today.

John C. White, regional EPA administrator in Atlanta, said test results his agency has done has found small quantities of polychlorinated biphenyls, but he did not know the amount or the type. An announcement of the findings has been scheduled for tomorrow morning at Frankfort, Ky.

It is the first time something as hazardous as PCBs has been found at the dump site. The chemical was not found in the water itself.

In February 1978, EPA banned the discharge of PCBs into rivers and streams. The only U.S. manufacturer of the chemical, Monsanto Chemical Corp., has agreed to stop producing it.

The chemical has been used in electrical equipment such as transformers, but between 1930 and 1970, it had been used in a variety of manufacturing processes.

It causes liver diseases, skin rashes and birth defects in humans and cancer in laboratory animals.

White would not discuss further EPA's test results, saying they would first be released to the Kentucky Department for Natural Resources and Environmental Protection. The results were sent yesterday.

Most of the chemicals identified in water samples taken from the dumping site have been identified as paint or grease solvents. One of the chemicals is benzene, a cancer-causing agent. Oil and the metals lead, cadmium and chromium have also been found.

environmental emergency by EPA March 2. Makeshift filtering and aeration systems were set up to remove chemicals from the water. The chemicals were flowing into Wilson Creek, from which water eventually empties into the Ohio River.

Arthur L. Taylor, who died last July, over a period of about three years put thousands of drums of chemicals on the 23-acre plot of ground.

The state Department for Natural Resources and Environmental Protection has scheduled a hearing next Tuesday against Taylor's widow, Neil, and Taylor's drum-cleaning business, claiming violations of water-quality and solid-waste disposal laws.

MONS 008876