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595SERBSF10,634

Site Name (Subject):	ULAH BATTERY/BATTERY PILES
Site ID (Document ID):	NCD981864614
Document Name (DocType):	Images/Maps/Presentations (IMG)
Report Segment:	
Description:	Maps and Press Clippings
Date of Document:	10/6/1988
Date Received:	
Box: *Enter SF and # with no spaces*	SF10,634
Access Level:	PUBLIC
Division:	WASTE MANAGEMENT
Section:	SUPERFUND
Program (Document Group):	SERB (SERB)
Document Category:	FACILITY

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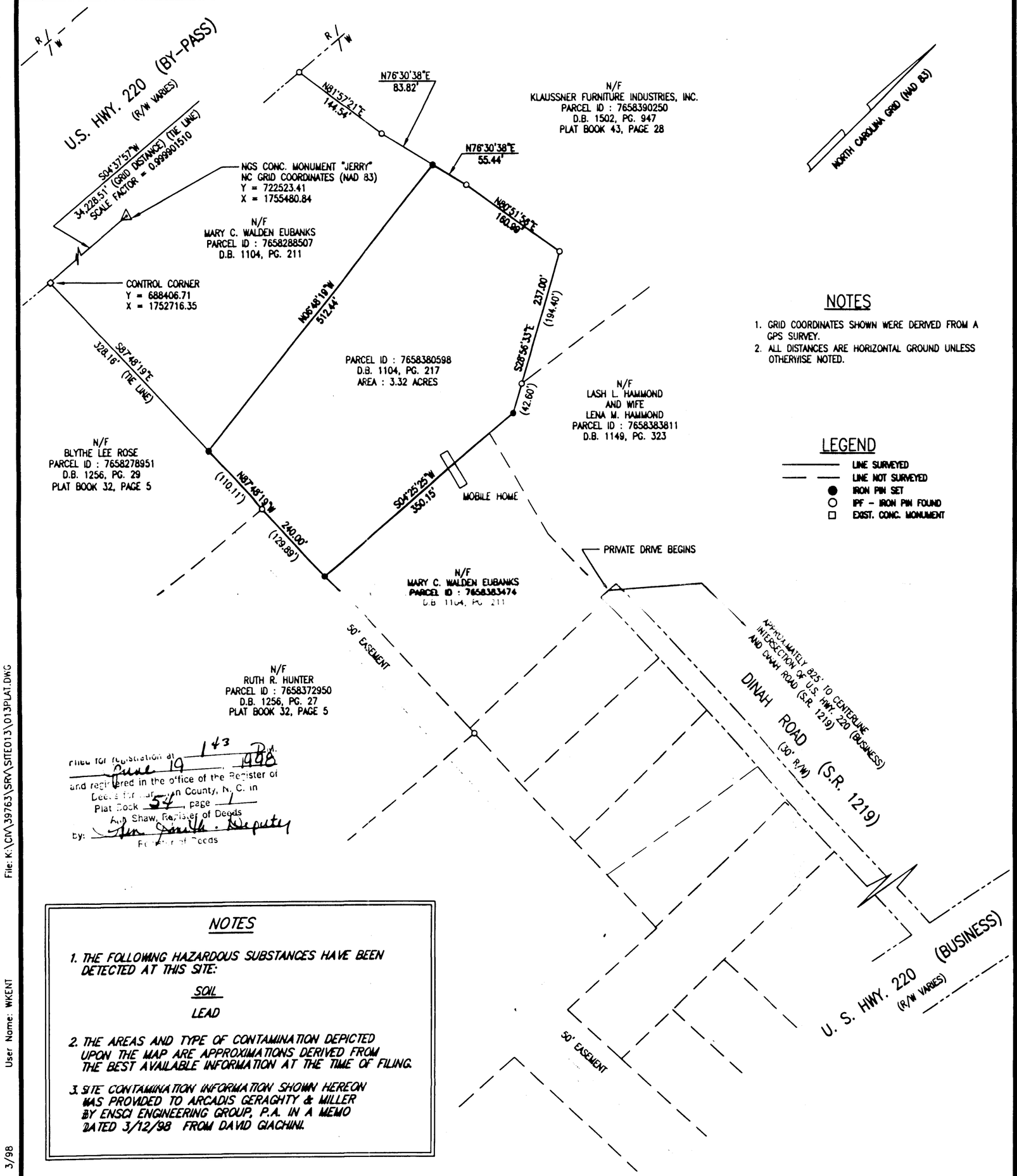


NOTES

1. GRID COORDINATES SHOWN WERE DERIVED FROM A GPS SURVEY.
2. ALL DISTANCES ARE HORIZONTAL GROUND UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

LEGEND

- LINE SURVEYED
- LINE NOT SURVEYED
- ● IRON PIN SET
- ○ IPF – IRON PIN FOUND
- □ EXIST. CONC. MONUMENT

Filed for registration at 1:43 P.M.
June 19, 1998
and registered in the office of the Register of
Deeds for Randolph County, N. C. in
Plat Book 54, page 1
Ann Shaw, Register of Deeds
by: Jan Smith · Deputy
Assistant Register of Deeds

NOTES

1. THE FOLLOWING HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES HAVE BEEN DETECTED AT THIS SITE:

   SOIL

   LEAD

2. THE AREAS AND TYPE OF CONTAMINATION DEPICTED UPON THE MAP ARE APPROXIMATIONS DERIVED FROM THE BEST AVAILABLE INFORMATION AT THE TIME OF FILING.
3. SITE CONTAMINATION INFORMATION SHOWN HEREON WAS PROVIDED TO ARCADIS GERAGHTY & MILLER BY ENSCI ENGINEERING GROUP, P.A. IN A MEMO DATED 3/12/98 FROM DAVID GIACHINI.

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THIS PLAT IS OF AN EXISTING PARCEL OF LAND.

William Kent
REGISTERED LAND SURVEYOR NC L-3708

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA, WAKE COUNTY

I, WILLIAM KENT, CERTIFY THAT THIS PLAT WAS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION IN PART FROM DEEDS AND MAPS OF RECORD REFERENCED HEREON AND IN PART FROM AN ACTUAL SURVEY; THAT THE BOUNDARIES NOT SURVEYED ARE SHOWN AS BROKEN LINES; THAT THE RATIO OF PRECISION AS CALCULATED IS 1 : 10,000+ ; THAT THIS PLAT WAS PREPARED IN ACCORDANCE WITH G.S. 47-30 AS AMENDED. WITNESS MY ORIGINAL SIGNATURE, REGISTRATION NUMBER AND SEAL THIS 4th DAY OF May, 1998.

William Kent
REGISTERED LAND SURVEYOR NC L-3708

NORTH CAROLINA REGISTERED L-3708 LAND SURVEYOR WILLIAM KENT

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA, WAKE COUNTY

I, A NOTARY PUBLIC OF THE COUNTY AND STATE AFORESAID, CERTIFY THAT William Kent PERSONALLY APPEARED BEFORE ME THIS DAY AND ACKNOWLEDGED THE EXECUTION OF THE FOREGOING INSTRUMENT. WITNESS MY HAND AND OFFICIAL STAMP OR SEAL, THIS 4th DAY OF May, 1998.

Janie G. Griffin
NOTARY PUBLIC
MY COMMISSION EXPIRES October 20, 1999

JANIE G. GRIFFIN NOTARY PUBLIC WAKE COUNTY, N.C.

Approved FOR THE PURPOSES OF N.C.G.S. 130A-310.8

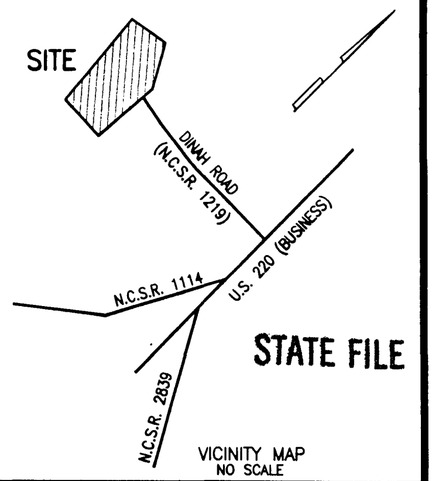
William L Meyer
WILLIAM L. MEYER, DIRECTOR
DIVISION OF WASTE MANAGEMENT

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA, WAKE COUNTY

I, A NOTARY PUBLIC OF THE COUNTY AND STATE AFORESAID, CERTIFY THAT William L Meyer PERSONALLY APPEARED BEFORE ME THIS DAY AND ACKNOWLEDGED THE EXECUTION OF THE FOREGOING INSTRUMENT. WITNESS MY HAND AND OFFICIAL STAMP OR SEAL, THIS 3 DAY OF June, 1998.

Sharon Lee Brinkley
NOTARY PUBLIC
MY COMMISSION EXPIRES August 30, 1999

SHARON LEE BRINKLEY NOTARY PUBLIC WAKE COUNTY, N.C.



VICINITY MAP
NO SCALE

NOTICE OF INACTIVE HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCE OR WASTE DISPOSAL SITE

ON PROPERTY OF

MRS. BERTHA COBLE

KNOWN AS

ULAH BATTERY
COBLE SITE

CEDAR GROVE TWP. RANDOLPH COUNTY NC
DATE: MARCH 24, 1998 SCALE: 1"=100'
DEED BOOK 1104, PAGE 217
RANDOLPH COUNTY REGISTRY

0 100 200 300
1" = 100'

ENSCI ENGINEERING GROUP, P.A.
2521 Schieffelin Road, Suite #106 Tel: (919) 303-8080
Apex, North Carolina 27502 Fax: (919) 303-8044

PROJECT MANAGER	DEPARTMENT MANAGER
D. GIACHINI	E. PETER BURGER, P.E.

ARCADIS GERAGHTY & MILLER
2301 Rexwoods Drive
Post Office Box 31388, Raleigh, NC 27622-1388
Tel: 919/782-5511 Fax: 919/782-5905

PROJECT MANAGER	DEPARTMENT MANAGER
W. KENT	A. HALL
PARTY CHIEF	CHECKED
B. RICHARDS	A. HALL
DRAWN	DATE
W. KENT	4/30/98
PROJECT NUMBER	DRAWING NUMBER
NC039763.0000	SRV1

File: K:\CIV\39763\SRV\SITE013\013PLAT.DWG
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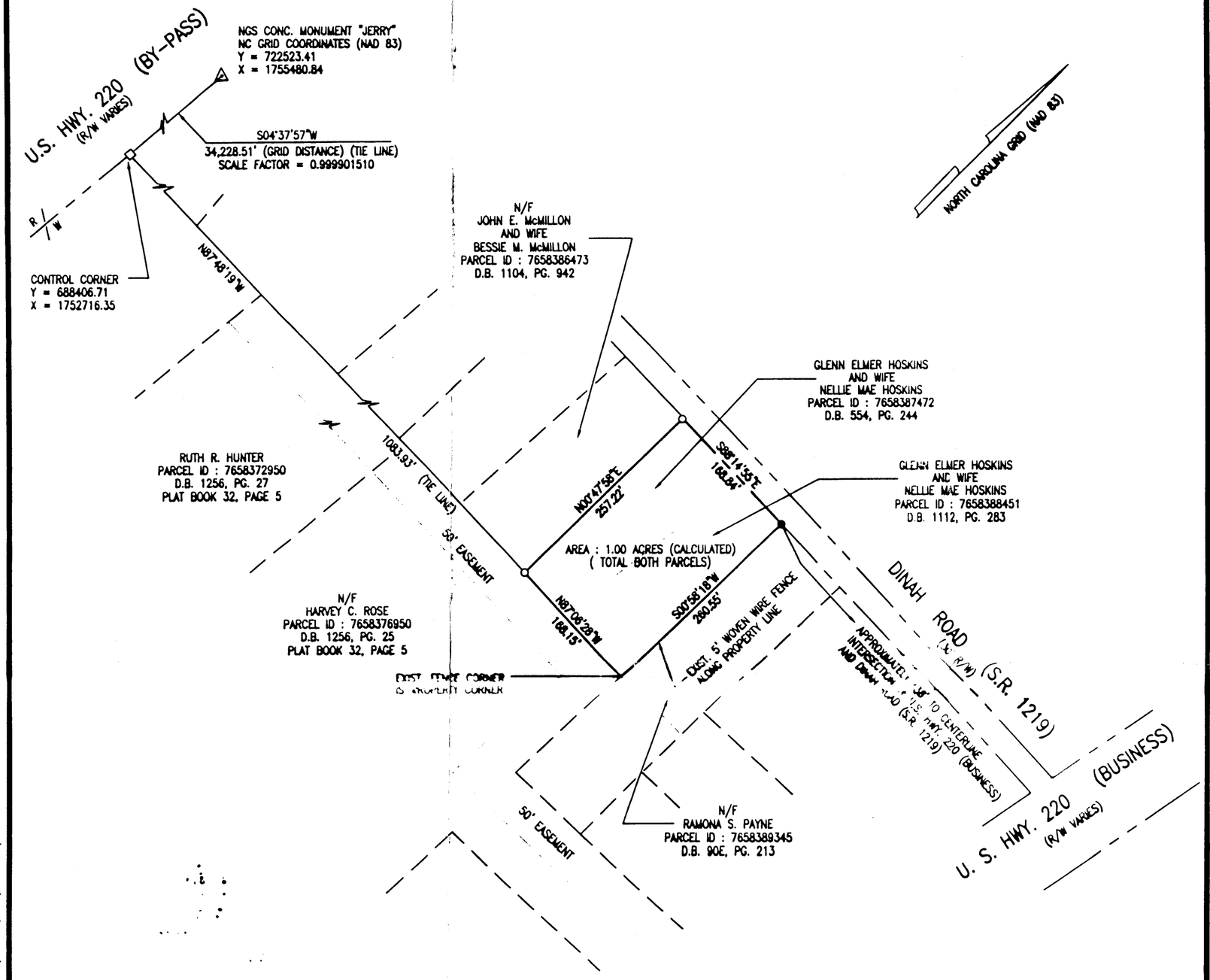

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   SOIL

   LEAD

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Filed for registration June 19 1998 1:43 P.M.
in Book of the Register of
Randolph County, N.C. in
Page 53 Date 100
Fee Waived, Register of Deeds
By: John Smith - Deputy
Register of Deeds

NOTES

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- □ EXIST. CONC. MONUMENT

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THIS PLAT IS OF AN EXISTING PARCEL OF LAND.

William Kent
REGISTERED LAND SURVEYOR NC L-3708

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA, WAKE COUNTY

I, WILLIAM KENT, CERTIFY THAT THIS PLAT WAS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION IN PART FROM DEEDS AND MAPS OF RECORD REFERENCED HEREON AND IN PART FROM AN ACTUAL SURVEY; THAT THE BOUNDARIES NOT SURVEYED ARE SHOWN AS BROKEN LINES; THAT THE RATIO OF PRECISION AS CALCULATED IS 1 : 10,000+ ; THAT THIS PLAT WAS PREPARED IN ACCORDANCE WITH G.S. 47-30 AS AMENDED. WITNESS MY ORIGINAL SIGNATURE, REGISTRATION NUMBER AND SEAL THIS 4TH DAY OF MAY, 1998.

William Kent
REGISTERED LAND SURVEYOR NC L-3708

NORTH CAROLINA REGISTERED L-3708 LAND SURVEYOR WILLIAM KENT

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA, WAKE COUNTY

I, A NOTARY PUBLIC OF THE COUNTY AND STATE AFORESAID, CERTIFY THAT William Kent PERSONALLY APPEARED BEFORE ME THIS DAY AND ACKNOWLEDGED THE EXECUTION OF THE FOREGOING INSTRUMENT. WITNESS MY HAND AND OFFICIAL STAMP OR SEAL, THIS 4 DAY OF May, 1998.

Janie G. Griffin
NOTARY PUBLIC
MY COMMISSION EXPIRES September 23, 1999

JANIE G. GRIFFIN NOTARY PUBLIC *** WAKE COUNTY, N.C.

approved FOR THE PURPOSES OF N.C.G.S. 130A-310.8

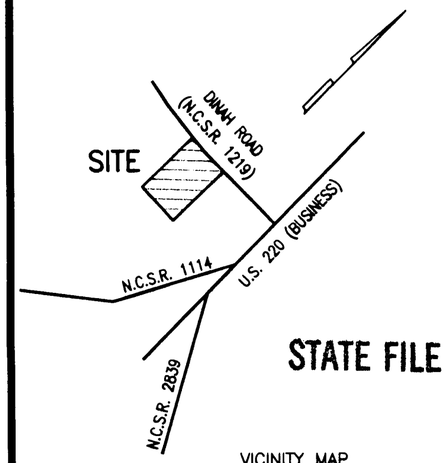
William L Meyer
WILLIAM L. MEYER, DIRECTOR
DIVISION OF WASTE MANAGEMENT

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA, Wake COUNTY

I, A NOTARY PUBLIC OF THE COUNTY AND STATE AFORESAID, CERTIFY THAT William L. Meyer PERSONALLY APPEARED BEFORE ME THIS DAY AND ACKNOWLEDGED THE EXECUTION OF THE FOREGOING INSTRUMENT. WITNESS MY HAND AND OFFICIAL STAMP OR SEAL, THIS 3 DAY OF June, 1998.

Sharon Lee Brinkley
NOTARY PUBLIC
MY COMMISSION EXPIRES August 30, 1999

SHARON LEE BRINKLEY NOTARY PUBLIC *** WAKE COUNTY, N.C.



STATE FILE

VICINITY MAP
NO SCALE

NOTICE OF INACTIVE HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCE OR WASTE DISPOSAL SITE

ON PROPERTY OF

GLEN ELMER HOSKINS
AND WIFE
NELLIE MAE HOSKINS

KNOWN AS

ULAH BATTERY
HOSKINS SITE

CEDAR GROVE TWP. RANDOLPH COUNTY NC
DATE: MARCH 24, 1998 SCALE: 1"=100'
DEED BOOK 554 PAGE 244
DEED BOOK 1112, PAGE 283
RANDOLPH COUNTY REGISTRY

0 100 200 300
1" = 100'

ENSCI ENGINEERING GROUP, P.A.
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B. RICHARDS	A. HALL
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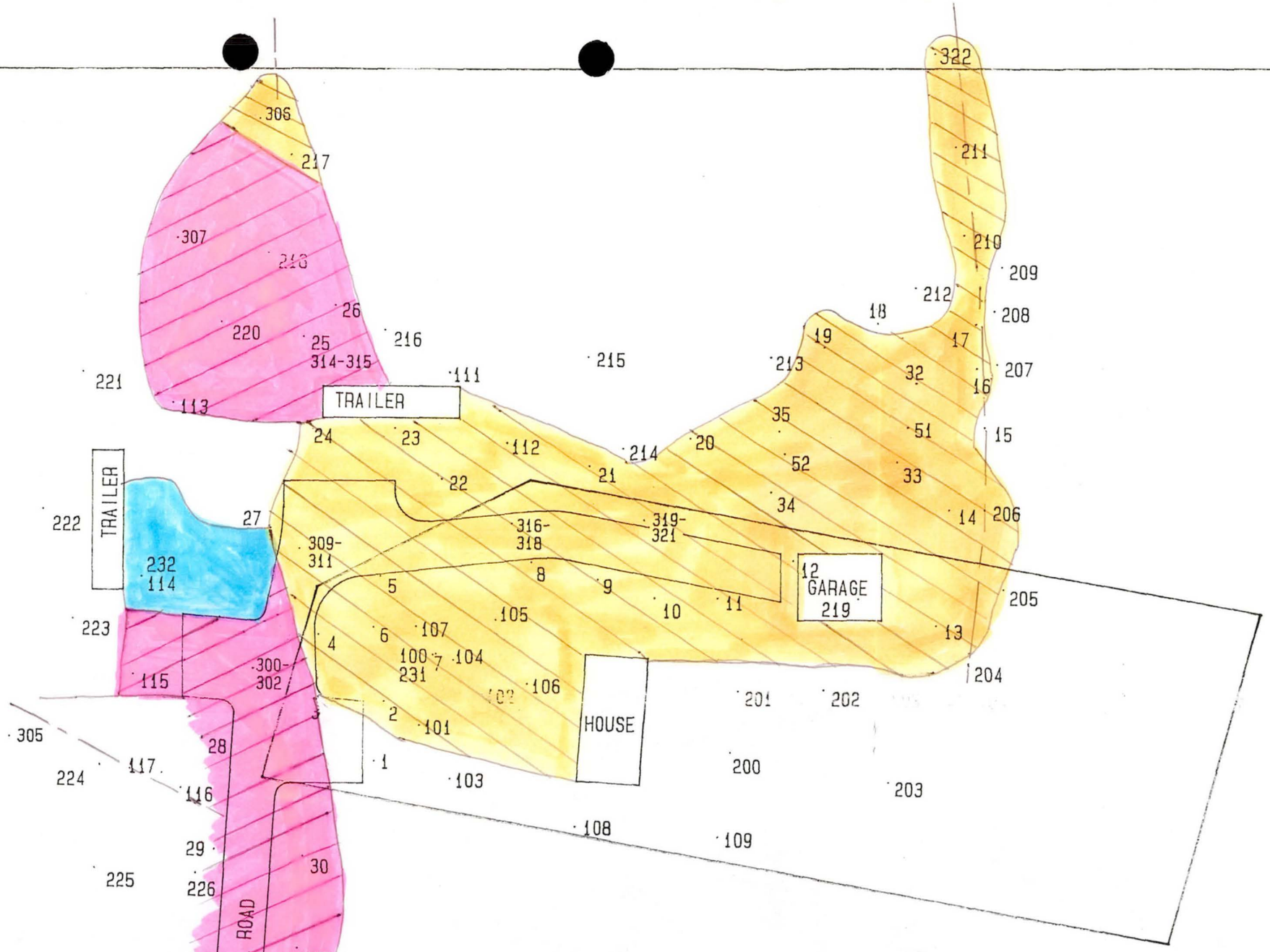
W. KENT	4/30/98
PROJECT NUMBER	DRAWING NUMBER
NC039763.0000	SRV1

File: K:\Civ\39763\SRV\SITE013\013PLAT.DWG
User Name: WKENT
Date: 3/98



North

Proposed Excavation Depths

- less than 6 in.
- 6 in.
- 18 in.
- ditch

25 0 50

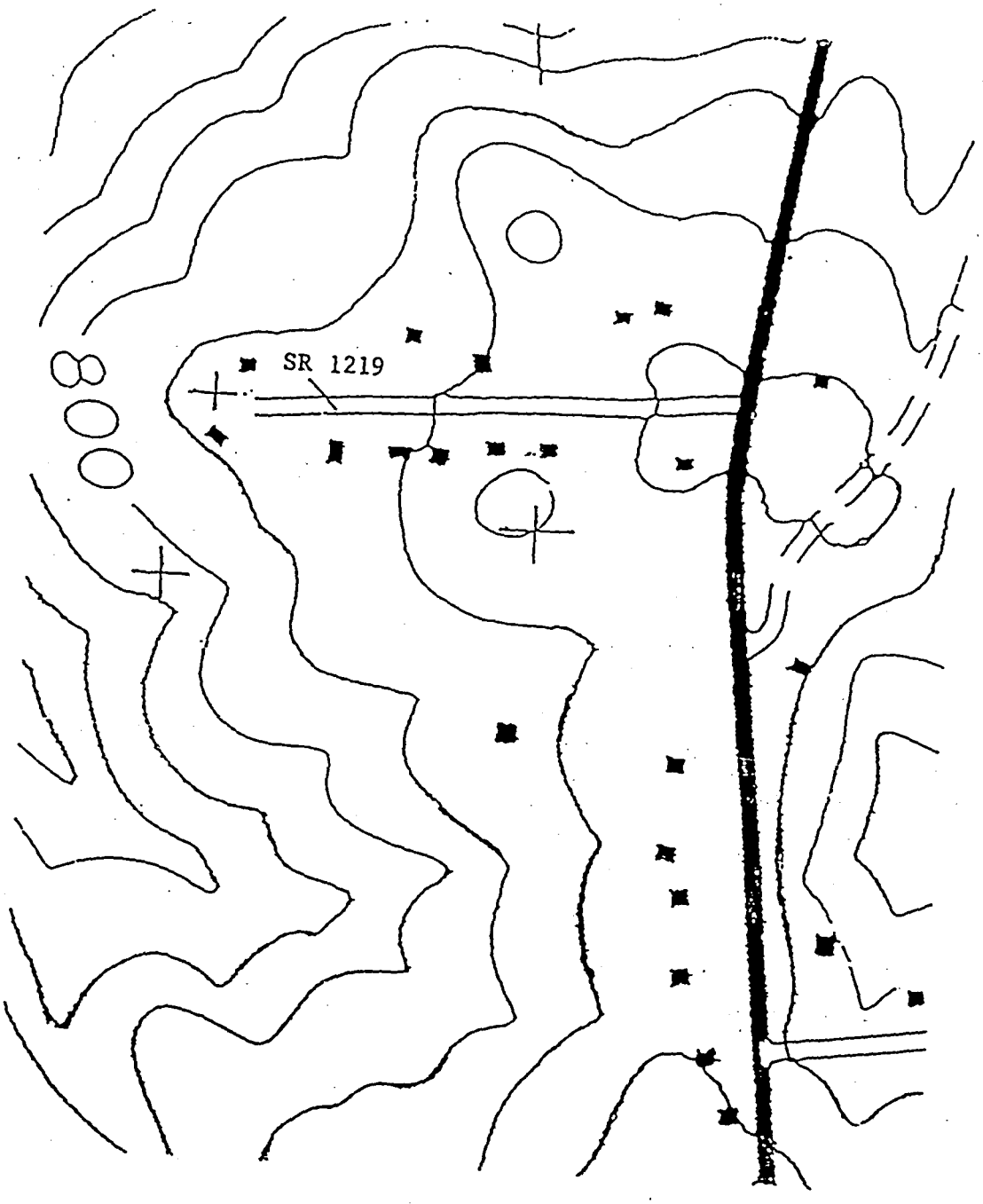
SCALE: 1" = 50'

REVISED 6/6/88
REVISED 6/27/88
REVISED 8/15/88

ULAH BATTERY
ULAH, NORTH CAROLINA

STATE SUPERFUND
SITE CHARACTERIZATION

SURVEYED BY: HHA	DATE: MAY 25/26, 1988
DRAWN BY: KMA	CHECKED BY: HHA



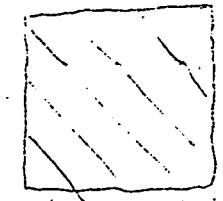
Ulah Battery Site

Battery Processing Areas

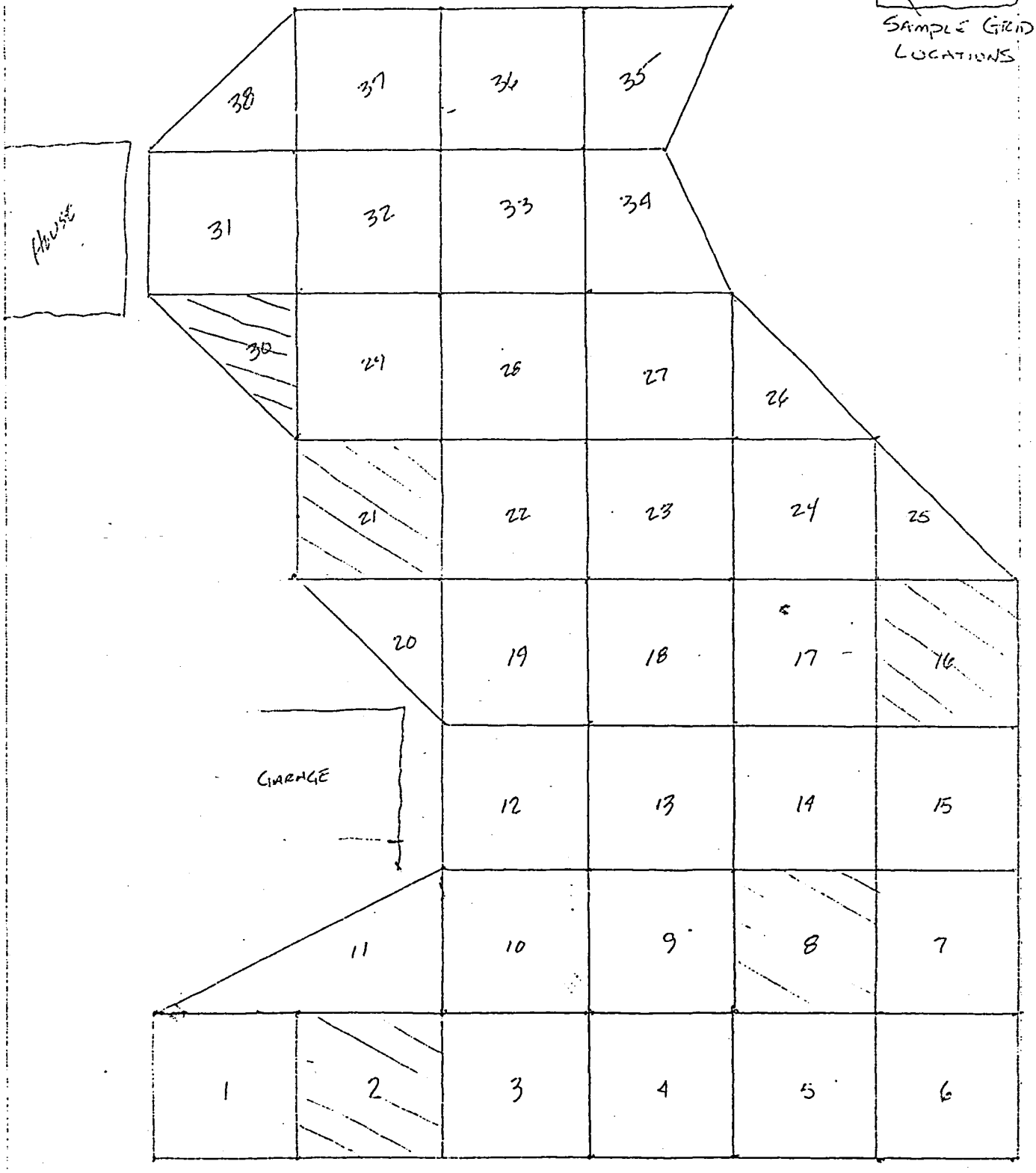
N

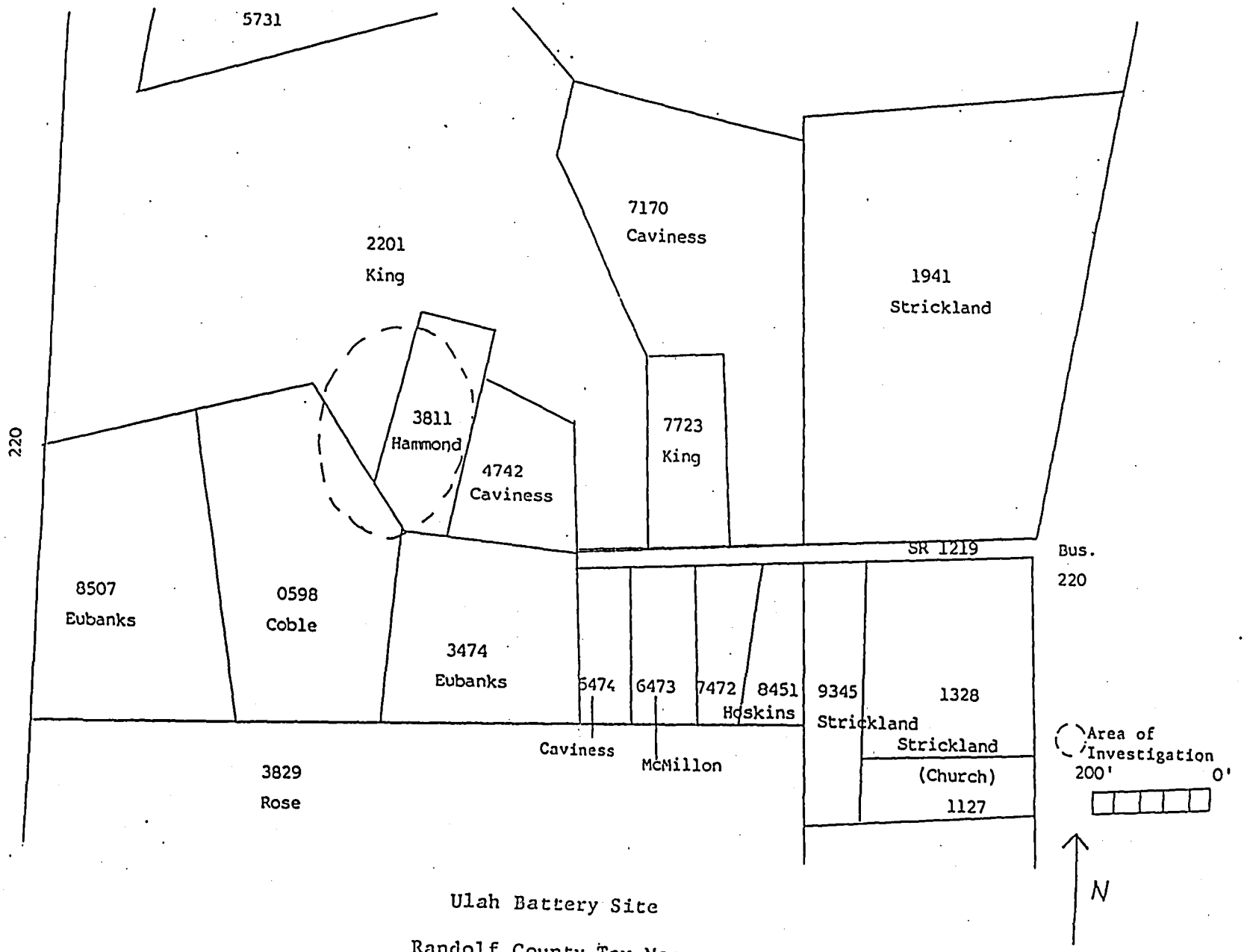
1" = 20'

SAMPLE GRID LAYOUT
ULAH BATTERY SITE
ULAH NORTH CAROLINA



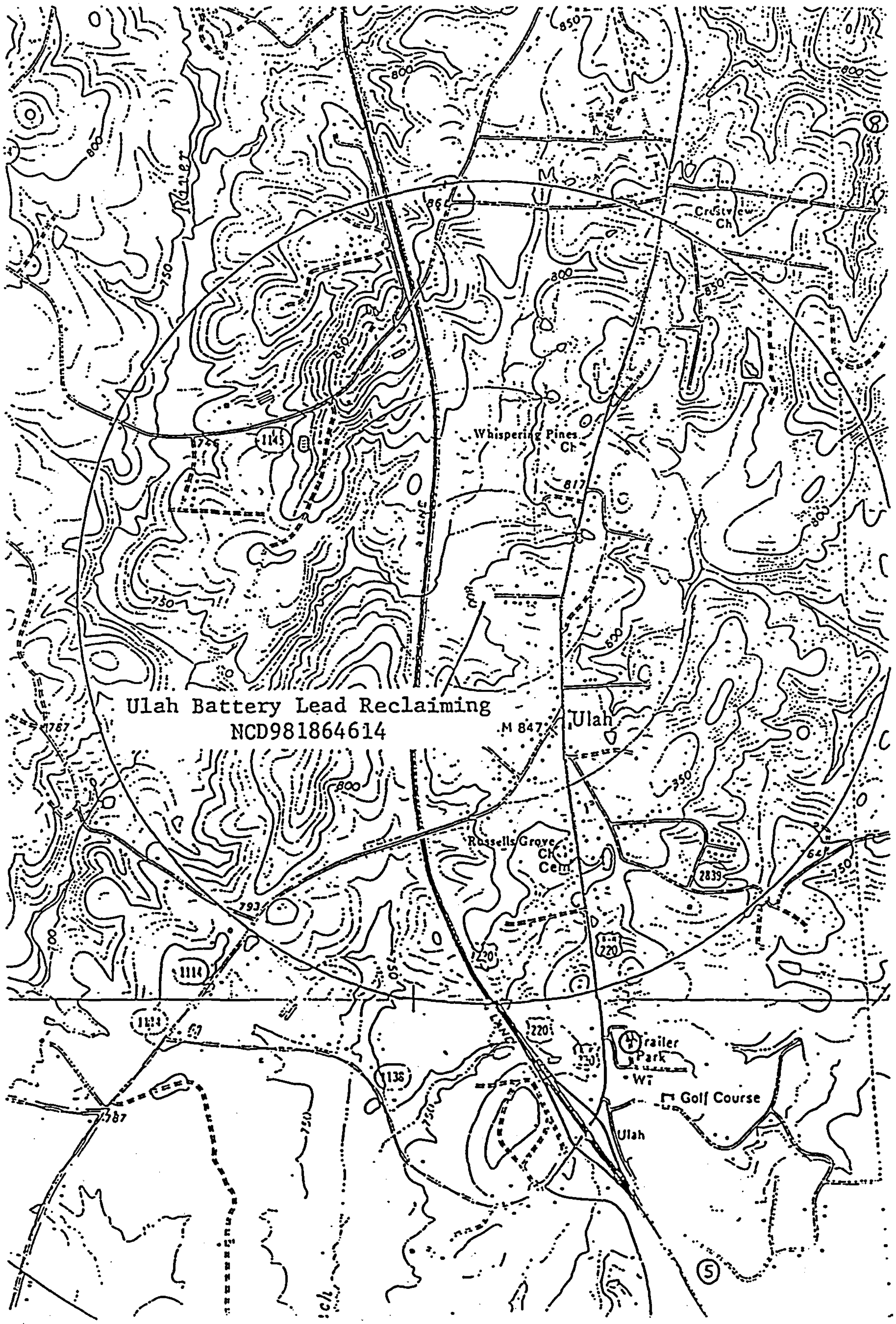
SAMPLE GRID LOCATIONS





Ulah Battery Site

Randolf County Tax Map



Ulah Battery Site N

TAX.BILL ACCOUNT INQUIRY PTX11

ACCOUNT : 24773

TYPE : R - RESIDENT
NAME : KING,FRANKIE & BEVERLY
ADDR 1 : P O BOX 894
ADDR 2 :
CITY : ASHEBORO
STATE : NC
ZIP : 27204-0894

SS # : 238-76-0865

TOWNSHIP : 04 - CEDAR GROVE
COMMENT :

ABS LIST
A. 2 765801392201

PARCEL LIST
B. 765801392201

C. TAX BILLS: 0 TOTAL DUE 0.00
AMB BILLS: 0 TOTAL DUE 0.00

FOR SUMMARY...ENTER 'A' FOR ABSTRACTS..'B' FOR PARCELS..'C' FOR BILLS....OR
ENTER PARCEL#...ABSTRACT#...OR (CR) TO EXIT?

TAX.BILL ACCOUNT INQUIRY PTX11

ACCOUNT : 58062

TYPE : R - RESIDENT
NAME : HAMMOND,LASH LARUE
ADDR 1 : RT 7 BOX 380
ADDR 2 :
CITY : ASHEBORO
STATE : NC
ZIP : 27203-9145

SS # : 240-94-1640

TOWNSHIP : 04 - CEDAR GROVE
COMMENT :

ABS LIST
A. 2 765801383811

PARCEL LIST
B. 765801383811

C. TAX BILLS: 0 TOTAL DUE 0.00
AMB BILLS: 0 TOTAL DUE 0.00

FOR SUMMARY...ENTER 'A' FOR ABSTRACTS..'B' FOR PARCELS..'C' FOR BILLS....OR
ENTER PARCEL#...ABSTRACT#...OR (CR) TO EXIT?

TAX.BILL ACCOUNT INQUIRY PTX11

ACCOUNT : 13122

TYPE : N - NON RESIDENT
NAME : EUBANKS,MARY C WALDEN
ADDR 1 : 802 BILBRO ST
ADDR 2 :
CITY : GREENSBORO
STATE : NC
ZIP : 27406-1213

SS # : 237-42-4882

TOWNSHIP : 04 - CEDAR GROVE
COMMENT :

ABS LIST
A. 1 765801288507
2 765801383474

PARCEL LIST
B. 765801288507
765801383474

C. TAX BILLS: 0 TOTAL DUE 0.00
AMB BILLS: 0 TOTAL DUE 0.00

FOR SUMMARY...ENTER 'A' FOR ABSTRACTS..'B' FOR PARCELS..'C' FOR BILLS....OR
ENTER PARCEL#...ABSTRACT#...OR (CR) TO EXIT?

```
TAX.BILL                          ACCOUNT INQUIRY                          PTX11

     ACCOUNT   : 5974
                                                          ABS LIST
     TYPE      : N - NON RESIDENT                     A.  1  765801380598
     NAME      : COBLE,BERTHA B
     ADDR 1    : STAR RD
     ADDR 2    :
     CITY      : SILER CITY
     STATE     : NC
     ZIP       : 27344

     SS #      : 242-64-7624                           PARCEL LIST
                                                      B. 765801380598
     TOWNSHIP  : 04 - CEDAR GROVE
     COMMENT   :

C.   TAX BILLS:      0    TOTAL DUE        0.00
     AMB BILLS:      0    TOTAL DUE        0.00

--------------------------------------------------------------------------------
FOR SUMMARY...ENTER 'A' FOR ABSTRACTS..'B' FOR PARCELS..'C' FOR BILLS....OR
ENTER PARCEL#...ABSTRACT#...OR (CR) TO EXIT?
```

```
TAX.BILL                          ACCOUNT INQUIRY                          PTX11

     ACCOUNT   : 7461
                                                          ABS LIST
     TYPE      : R - RESIDENT                         A.  1
     NAME      : CAVINESS,MARVIN E & DAISY D             2  765801397170
     ADDR 1    : P O BOX 894
     ADDR 2    :
     CITY      : ASHEBORO
     STATE     : NC
     ZIP       : 27204-0894

     SS #      : 245-30-4085                           PARCEL LIST
                                                      B. 765801397170
     TOWNSHIP  : 04 - CEDAR GROVE
     COMMENT   :

C.   TAX BILLS:      1    TOTAL DUE      370.86
     AMB BILLS:      0    TOTAL DUE        0.00

--------------------------------------------------------------------------------
FOR SUMMARY...ENTER 'A' FOR ABSTRACTS..'B' FOR PARCELS..'C' FOR BILLS....OR
ENTER PARCEL#...ABSTRACT#...OR (CR) TO EXIT?
```

Quick toxic cleanup has long past

By LIBBY LEWIS
Randolph Bureau

ULAH — The bulldozers are gone. The bad dirt is out, and the clean dirt is in. The nine children and their parents who live around one of the state's deadliest hazardous waste sites, in this small settlement two miles south of Asheboro, are back home after spending nearly three weeks in a local motel during the cleanup.

As workers scooped up 2,000 tons of soil laced with lead and chipped battery casings from an old battery reclamation site, the scene was almost humdrum.

But a scant 18 months ago, legislators and lobbyists were waging a hot war of paper and influence in Raleigh over the legislation meant to help fill the gaps in the federal toxic waste cleanup program, dubbed Superfund.

While there are as many as 750 abandoned hazardous waste dump sites in North Carolina, only nine are targeted for federal Superfund cleanup. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency could add another 12 N.C. sites to the list.

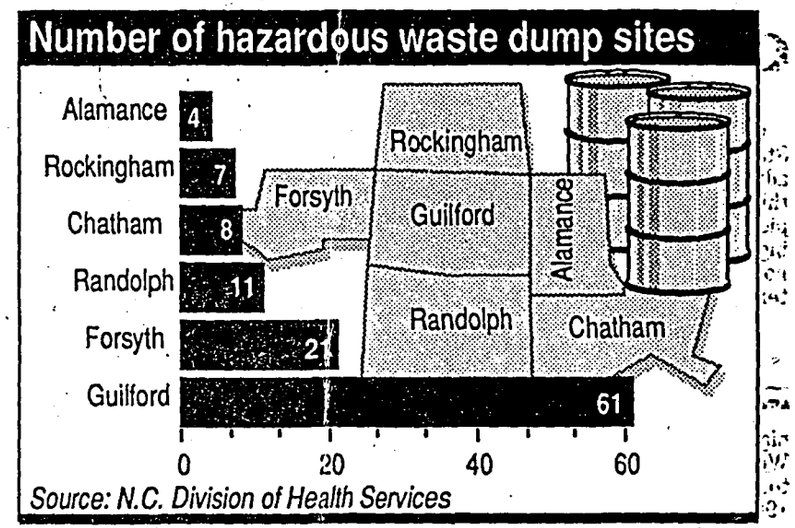
The Ulah cleanup is the first under the new state program enacted by the 1987 General Assembly. It calls for the state to identify and monitor the inactive sites, and it empowers the state to clean up the worst ones. A key provision of the law is it requires the state to try to recoup the costs of cleanups from the people and the companies who made the mess.

"It's a good, strong program," said State Sen. Joe Hackney, a Democrat from Chapel Hill and the bill's primary sponsor.

It may be, Ulah resident Lash Hammond said. But he said he can't understand why it took so long to get help. This summer, Hammond's 3-year-old daughter Crystal became the second child in the neighborhood to be diagnosed with lead poisoning.

The first, more serious case of lead poisoning in the neighborhood, a 4-year-old girl who liked to eat dirt, was documented in 1986. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency learned of it as part of a federal review last year, but the Ulah site wasn't placed on the federal cleanup list.

(See Waste, C4)



Tim Rickard/News & Record

Waste

From C1

"What I want to know is, do they have this type of condition in their front yard?" asked Hammond, 34, who works for Burlington Industries in Denton. In 1983, Hammond unknowingly bought an acre of land by the big oak tree, where for 15 years, the owner of the land, Marvin Caviness, and other residents cracked batteries for the lead inside. Some of the soil around the tree was 14 percent lead, according to state tests. Clean soil normally contains much less than 1 percent lead.

In North Carolina — where major environmental legislation had traditionally received the death penalty — enacting the state Superfund law was big news. Some lawmakers predicted it signaled a new day for environmental legislation. Sen. Tom Taft, a Democrat from Pitt County, called it a "mini-revolution."

But Hackney, who nearly made a career out of getting the law passed, disagreed.

"I don't see it as a watershed. It's just what it appears to be — a cleanup of past mistakes."

Similar bills were passed in the House in 1983 and in 1985, but failed to see the light of day in the Senate. In 1987, the climate in the Senate changed with the backing of the bill by Lt. Gov. Bob Jordan, legislators and lobbyists say.

Joining Hackney's bill was a separate measure, backed by the Governors Waste Management Board and molded by the N.C. Citizens for Business and Industry, the state's powerful business and industry lobby. The bill called for studying the sites to determine the cost of cleaning them up, but it did not provide for actual cleanups.

"We just wanted the most palatable bill possible," recalled Tom Graves, president of N.C. Citizens for Business and Industry. 'We wanted a bill that was protective of due process and reasonableness."

Libby Lewis/News & Record

Lash Hammond and daughter Crystal, 3, in front of their home at the Ulah cleanup site

Bill Holman, a lobbyist for several environmental groups who worked for the bill, said he saw business opposition to Hackney's bill differently.

"The bill meant to hold responsible parties accountable for cleaning up the sites — and the responsible parties were opposed to that concept," Holman said.

Critics said the alternate, administration-backed bill wouldn't do much, other than study the problem.

"People criticize the board for taking a phased approach, but ... the reason it didn't pass beforehand was too much was asked at once," said Linda Little, executive director of the waste management board. "I think the board deserves credit for trying to pull the different interests together." The final bill included elements backed by the board, which gave it bipartisan appeal.

The state's challenge now is to find a way to fund the program over the long haul, Hackney and Little say. The Ulah cleanup — which tackled only the worst spots of the battery site — chewed up more than half the $600,000 allocated for cleanups this year. Two giant piles of battery casings remain at the site.

Much more needs to be done, but the program is a good start, said George Givens, a legislative lawyer who helped draft the compromise bill. Givens drove down to Ulah last week to see the cleanup in action.

"I felt really good," Givens said from his legislative office in Raleigh. "You sit up here in this office, working — I spent several all-nighters on that bill. To get to actually see something getting done ... it's really neat."

For his part, Hammond is glad his front yard in Ulah was at the top of the state's list for cleanup. But he said he's sad it took two children getting sick to bring it about.

"If it had not been for the lead poisoning, they wouldn't be here," he said. "It would still be on the back burner — where it's been for eight years. Before action is taken, somebody has to get hurt. That's what gets attention."

State wrapping up lead cleanup in Ulah

By CRYSTAL BAITY
Courier-Tribune Staff Writer

ULAH — Again and again, dump trucks made eir way up and down SR 1219 Wednesday, bringing esh soil to the terminus of the dirt and gravel road.

Workers expect to complete Friday a $350,000, ree-week, soil excavation at the project site south of she[illegible], where for 15 years batteries were broken nd t[illegible]ad inside reclaimed for resale.

Residents evacuated from two homes during the leanup were expected to return home today, while families in two other homes evacuated as a result of the project returned home last Saturday.

"It hasn't been an inconvenience," said Dawn Peters, who returned to her home Saturday. She said it had been hard for her sister's son, James, to stay inside since he likes to play on the road.

Wednesday was the first day this week officials from the N.C. Department of Human Resources' (DHR) Solid Waste Management Section were in the area — which authorities have deemed the worst inactive hazardous substance or waste disposal site in North Carolina.

Officials had been waiting on the results of soi samples taken last Friday to determine if any contaminated dirt remained. They were also waiting out the heavy rain that moved through the area early this week, said Jack Butler, environmental engineer with DHR.

One or two areas in the less-than-one-acre site showed a small percentage of lead, which will be taken to a hazardous waste disposal site in Pinewood, S.C., today, Butler said.

Technically, the soil is no longer a hazard, said

See LEAD, page 8A

10-6-88

Lead

From page 1A

10-6-88

Charlotte Varlashkin, hydrogeologist with DHR.

"We have removed the contamination," she said.

The state's contract with GSX Services Inc., the Reidsville-based firm contracted to conduct the cleanup, called for a maximum 2,000-ton soil removal. The amount removed will be about 18 tons less than that figure, Butler said.

"Most of the contamination was to a depth of about six inches. Directly next to the homes (at the end of road) the contamination was only three inches, while in the roadway it went down a foot or more," he said.

Soil ranging from six-to 18-inches deep was removed in parts of the area.

GSX subcontracted with area hauling firms to bring in fresh Randolph County topsoil. Beginning Friday, grass will be re-sown in areas that were once yards.

"Things have gone remarkably well, considering everything that had to be coordinated," Butler said. "Getting people here and at the appropriate times, getting equipment here, getting trucks here and coordinating all of this with Pinewood, South Carolina (landfill site where the soil was transported). Things have gone well."

George Elliott, director of the Randolph County Health Department, said he is pleased with the cleanup project.

"I think it went real well," Elliott said this morning. "And, I'm in hopes the battery casings will be next."

There are two huge mounds of battery casings and pieces of casings — peaking at about 30 feet — left from the battery-cracking business, that were not removed.

One state official estimated there are 600 tons of casings left at the two sites.

"My choice would be for them to take the casings to South Carolina and get them out of Randolph County," Elliott said.

But, state officials previously determined the contaminated soil that has been removed posed the greatest threat to public health.

The N.C. Commission of Health Services will adopt a system in the next few months by which to rank hazardous waste sites in the state. If the battery casing piles rank high enough, the state would pay for their removal.

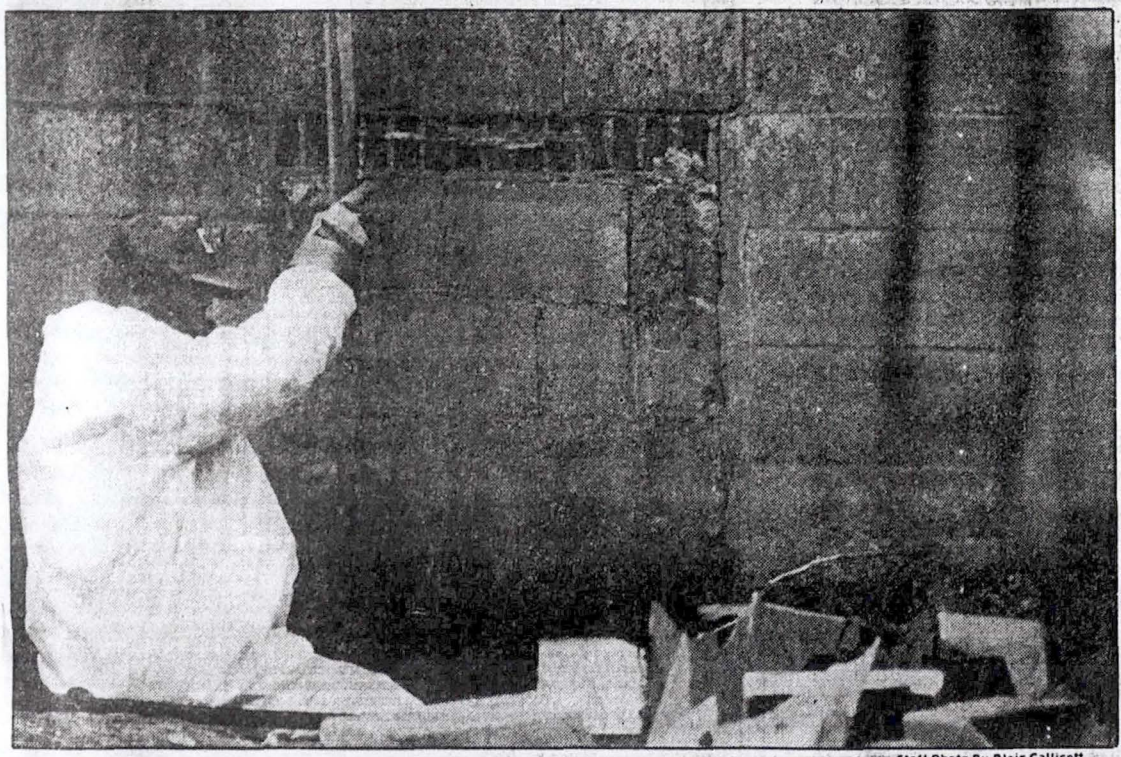
"In addition to that, we are exploring the idea of recycling the battery casings," Butler said. "Recycling was not a feasible alternative in this cleanup because battery casing chips and soil were mixed together. With the other two piles, you can get a truckload of nothing but battery casings."

Butler said some companies have shown interest in the plastic casings for recycling.

But, when or if the battery casings will be cleaned up is still unknown, officials say.

Elliott has said previously that county officials may be forced to tackle the problem which could cost $1 million.

Workers remove battery casings from dry well



Staff Photo By Blair Callicott

Tyrone Kelly of GSX Services Inc. snares battery casings

By CRYSTAL BAITY
Courier-Tribune Staff Writer

ULAH — Workers literally hit rock bottom Friday after they retrieved a stack of battery casings that had extended some 15 feet down a rock-lined, hand-dug well.

The workers are nearing completion of a $350,000 soil excavation project off SR 1219 south of Asheboro, where for 15 years batteries were broken and the lead inside reclaimed for resale.

Last Tuesday, the abandoned well was discovered at the terminus of SR 1219 after workers spotted a small pile of battery casings near an old concrete shed. Once workers began to remove the casings, more were found. Workers dug only about seven feet into the well, which is less than two feet in diameter.

"As far as the casings themselves, we pulled out all we could," said Randy Garner, project manager of GSX Services Inc., the Reidsville-based firm contracted to clean up the area — which state authorities have classified as the worst inactive hazardous substance or waste disposal site in North Carolina — in which the well is located.

"All we can see is rock and a few small pieces of casings. We don't see any water."

Officials said they were glad to discover that at least part of the 60-year-old, 40-foot-deep well had caved in or, perhaps, at one time, been filled with dirt. Workers pulled the casings out of the well Friday with a improvised hook device, fashioned by taping a crowbar to the end of a long pole.

Authorities say the well poses no more of a threat to people living on SR 1219 than was there already. Recent samplings of well water supplies in the area have found no lead.

It is believed the well was once adjacent to a house that had burned, according to longtime residents of the area. The well, which eventually dried up, reportedly served residents of the home.

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10-2-88

Well

From page 1A

10-2-88

The well will be replenished with clay, fresh dirt or grout — a fine cement material — so that residents, especially children playing in the area, will not risk exposure to lead.

Two of four families evacuated from their homes before the cleanup started Sept. 19 were expected to return home Saturday. The other two families will return home sometime next week, when the project is expected to be completed, said Jack Butler, environmental engineer with the N.C. Department of Human Resources' Solid Waste Management Section.

"They (the families) understand we're not totally finished," Butler said. "We still have some cleaning up to do, but the activity will be less ... (Thursday) we had 17 trucks in here. They will be asked to keep the children indoors, or at least away from the (work) site."

On Friday, state officials took 10 random samples from the less-than-one-acre lead reclamation site. The samples will be sent for analysis to determine if any contaminated soil remains.

"Right now, we're sitting at 1,960 tons (of soil removed)," said Garner, noting the GSX contract sets a 2,000-ton limit for removal. "That leaves us a two-truck leeway if they do find contamination. If the tests come clean, we will stop with that (1,960)."

On Tuesday, workers are expected to return to the site to either clean up tainted soil spots or bring in fresh fill dirt for the excavated area.

"I can't speak for the state, but we're pretty sure we've gotten the bulk of it. We're pretty sure it's clean," Garner said.

According to Butler, the state took about 200 soil samples during the month of July to determine the exact location of the contamination — including a sample just inches away from the well.

"We knew the casings were there, but we didn't dig down in the center of the pile. We dug at the edge of the (battery casing) pile," Butler said. "It wasn't until the other day we found the well directly under the pile (of casings.)"

Courier Tribune

THE COURIER-TRIBUNE

. 235 Asheboro, N.C. • Friday, Sept. 30, 1988 24 pages • 25 cents

Workers will try to remove batteries from well

By CRYSTAL BAITY
Courier-Tribune Staff Writer

ULAH — Workers were to today begin the tedious process of removing battery casings from an abandoned well which state officials now believe is 60-years-old and about 40 feet deep.

Officials will also begin sampling a less-than-one-acre area — which state authorities have classified as the worst inactive hazardous substance or waste disposal site in North Carolina — for remnants of contaminated soil at a site off SR 1219 where batteries were once cracked and their lead reclaimed for sale. The well was discovered on the site.

Levels of lead as high as 14 percent have been found in the tainted soil.

On Tuesday, workers unearthed a small pile of battery casings at the abandoned well. Once they began to remove them, they found more. Workers dug only about seven feet into the well, which is one-and-one-half to three feet in diameter.

Today workers will attempt to pull the casings out of the well with some type of hook, improvised by taping a crowbar to the end of a long pole.

A section of the 40-foot well may have caved in or partially filled with dirt after it was deserted. Officials

See WELL, page 10A

A conventional wedding procession it [illegible]

Takes

'88 starts t N.C. Zoo

thms in the day afternoon will f entertainment at the ark.

a native of Trinidad, 's been playing the steel lly since he was 12, will raditional Caribbean at 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. as .

nnual celebration of and the arts, which ure music and dance orld each Sunday in

urday, zoo visitors will n an unconventional t the park. Participants enger hunt form in the off in search of ons about monkeys and nswer all questions a zoo poster.

n Parker, zoo tor, also will present as, entitled "The ch Saturday in October or gorilla habitat at on.

today

atch rabies, health

County Health nsoring a quarterly during normal area veterinarians'

$5 per dog or cat. ttens should receive ot at four months, the onths, then every

ons, call the county t or one of the

Well

From page 1A

are not sure how deep the casings extend into the well, said Stan Atwood, toxicologist with the solid waste management section of the Division of Health Services, which is overseeing a cleanup at the terminus of the dirt road about two miles south of Asheboro.

The well is beside an abandoned concrete storage building, which was once adjacent to a house that subsequently burned, according to longtime residents of the area. It is believed that the well, which eventually dried, served residents of the home.

Authorities say the well poses no more of a threat to people living on SR 1219 than was previously there. Previous samplings of well water have found no lead.

On Thursday, officials received guidelines from the N.C. Department of Human Resources (DHR) on dealing with the well.

Once the batteries are removed, the well must be "closed out" — either filled with clay, dirt or a fine cement material so the well will not endanger residents, especially children playing outside in the area.

Then, officials must submit a form detailing the closure. If there is any cost in closing out the well, it will be insignificant compared to the overall cost of the project, which is $350,000, Atwood said.

Perhaps one out of the four families evacuated from their homes before the cleanup began may be able to return this weekend, Atwood said. That decision will be made later today.

Workers are getting close to removing the 2,000 tons of dirt — some 100 large dump truck loads — and expect to be finished at least by Monday, Atwood said.

GSX Services Inc., a Reidsville firm, is in charge of the cleanup. The tainted soil has been taken to a hazardous landfill in Pinewood, S.C.

OBITUARIES

Ethel H. Patterson

Ethel Haywood Patterson, 73, of 518 Loach St., Asheboro, died

an of World War II and a charter member of the Siler City Fire Department and the Chatham Coun-

Bennett of Anaheim, Calif.

Rudolph Watson Jr.

HIGH P[illegible]OINT — Rudolph "Roo-

Students

From page 1A

Fourth grade teacher Fran Toledano was watching with her class in South Carolina the day Challenger exploded.

"The kids and I were very upset about it," she said. "Some were crying and they didn't really understand what had happened, but they knew something was very wrong.

"It's really kind of scary to watch this time."

McCrary School fifth grader Lake Menius had another reason for remembering Jan. 28, 1986 — it marked his eighth birthday.

"I remember I was in Mrs. Murphy's second-grade class, but we watched (the launch) in Mrs. Ellison's class," Menius said while waiting for Discovery to blast off. "I was re shuttle blew up.

"I'm kinda nervous right n

After TV announcers sa achieved orbit, the students a to relax.

"I feel better now," said fo Darwin. "I think (the astronaut

Coinciding with Thursday's teaches math, science and he Young Astronauts Program in dents are enrolled.

Sponsored by NASA, the pr generate interest in America among young people. The stude contest to name the new orbite Challenger. The name "Challe tired in honor of the astronauts v

"As bad as it was, I think we from the Challenger tragedy," S

"I just don't think it will eve

Youths hide in store for nine

FALL RIVER, Mass. (AP) — A department store manager discovered why his burglar alarm had been ringing off and on for days when he crawled into a suspended ceiling and found three youths stowed away with food, clothing and electronic equipment.

zilli said.

During the nine days, the boys entertained themselves and ate food from the store, police said.

On Monday, the boys persuaded an 11-year-old boy to join them after he got out of school.

Officials found a steam heater, a clock, a video ca[illegible]

James Fingles burglar alarm during the nig week.

DEDI

Vol. 112 • No. 234 Asheboro, N.C. • Thursday, Sept. 29, 1988 24 pages • 25 cents

Short Takes

Peacekeepers win Nobel Peace Prize

OSLO, Norway (AP) — The Nobel Committee today named U.N. peacekeeping forces around the world as winners of the 1988 Nobel Peace Prize.

The committee cited the forces for building a confidence in the United Nations that allows it to play a growing role in global affairs.

The five-member committee praised the blue-bereted troops in the Middle East, Cyprus and the Indian subcontinent for subduing tensions where armistices have substituted for peace.

Officials: Batteries in well no new threat

By CRYSTAL BAITY
Courier-Tribune Staff Writer

ULAH — The discovery Tuesday of an old well filled with battery casings does not pose any more of a threat to people living on SR 1219 than was previously there, state officials say.

A cleanup is under way at what state officials have classified as the worst inactive hazardous substance or waste disposal site in North Carolina, where levels of lead as high as 14 percent have been found in contaminated soil.

"There isn't any immediate threat that hasn't been there in the past," said Charlotte Varlashkin, hydrogeologist with the solid waste management section of the Division of Health Services of the N.C. Department of Human Resources (DHR), which is overseeing a cleanup at the terminus of the dirt and gravel road about two miles south of Asheboro.

"There is not a problem that will occur overnight (as a result of the battery-filled well)," Varlashkin said.

On Wednesday, officials still were trying to determine what procedures, if any, must be followed when dealing with the well. Varlashkin said Wednesday afternoon she had not yet been able to find out what state regulations govern closing the well.

"The Department of Human Resources has specific procedures to close out wells. If it's a dry well, it may be that no special procedure would be necessary," Varlashkin said.

"We want to close it out right. Right now, we haven't come up with a method for pulling them (battery casings) out. We still have to find out how deep it is."

See WELL, page 10A

Shuttle grow

Well

From page 1A

Varlashkin, who has talked with several residents of SR 1219, said some remember a house that used to stand next to the well. It is believed that the well, which eventually dried up, served residents of that home before the house burned.

On Tuesday, workers spotted a small pile of battery casings, and once they began to remove them, they found more, said Stan Atwood, toxicologist with the solid waste management section of the Division of Health Services of DHR.

Workers dug only about seven feet in the well, which is one-and-one-half to three feet in diameter. But, officials believe the well could be 30 to 50 feet deep.

George Elliott, director of the Randolph County Health Department, said most hand-dug wells in Randolph County are 38 to 50 feet deep, which wouldn't extend into the water table.

"You're not at the water table (at 50 feet)," Elliott said, "but how far from there is the water table?"

Previous samplings of well water — even those located near the cracked-battery site — have found no lead. Every resident on SR 1219 receives water from wells.

Both the county health department and state officials have been testing the well water periodically since the battery reclamation site was discovered in 1980. The last test made by the state was in January 1987, Atwood said.

Elliott said he is concerned about the discovery of the well.

"It seems it could be a possible threat to the water table," he said. "I don't know what the potential is there.

"What we all may learn from this is that these old reclamation sites do not pose a threat to the water supply. But, we have to assume there is a threat and remove the soil and battery casings."

Since Sept. 19, workers have been removing lead-contaminated soil from a less-than-a-one acre site where, for about 15 years, batteries were broken and the lead inside reclaimed for resale.

Two other areas in the 20-25-acre neighborhood are piled high with battery casings, although those will not be removed during the cleanup operation.

Tons of soil and some pieces of battery casings have been excavated and hauled to a hazardous landfill in Pinewood, S.C. Soil samples collected at the site being excavated have registered elevated lead levels, in some places as little as one percent and in other areas as high as 14 percent.

Most of the contamination is confined to the soil closest to the surface, due, in part, to a high concentration of clay in the soil, slowing the downward migration of the lead.

Varlashkin said workers are getting close to removing the 2,000 tons of dirt — some 100 large-dump truck loads — and expect to be finished with the $350,000 cleanup operation by Friday, if dump trucks can be scheduled as needed.

GSX Services Inc., a Reidsville firm, is in charge of the cleanup.

Fifteen people, including eight children, were evacuated from four homes before the cleanup began. They may be allowed to return home this weekend if the excavation is completed and there is no heavy equipment on site.

Geraldine Spruill, a SR 1219 resident who was evacuated and was visiting a neighbor, Bessie McMillon, on Wednesday, said she is ready to return home.

"It has been an inconvenience, especially carrying the kids back and forth to the bus stop," Spruill said. Her children attend Seagrove School, and she must take them to the bus stop at the end of the road every morning and return in the afternoon to take them to an area motel, the family's temporary home.

"They're working on it hard to get us back in there," she said.

After the lead-laden soil is removed, fresh fill dirt will be put in its place and grass seed sown. Atwood said workers will be back next week, trying to return the ground to its natural slope.

Jonas, two-party pioneer in N.C., dies

Shuttle

ing three scrubs before Challenger's ill-fated launch.

In the event of a scrub, NASA s earl

IE COURIER-TRIBUNE

Asheboro, N.C. • Wednesday, Sept 28, 1988 36 pages • 25 cents ★

Battery casings discovered in well

By CRYSTAL BAITY
Courier-Tribune Staff Writer

ULAH — Workers, who for the past eight days have been removing tons and tons of lead-tainted soil, discovered something new late Tuesday afternoon — a rock-lined, hand-dug well filled with battery casings.

Officials say they do not know if the area's water supply is in jeopardy of lead contamination due to the abandoned well and, since it is filled with battery casings, they do not know how deep it is.

"Anytime you have a situation like that, it provides a route (for the lead to reach the water supply)," said Charlotte Varlashkin, hydrogeologist with the solid waste management section of the N.C. Department of Human Resources, which is overseeing the cleanup at the terminus of SR 1219. "We just don't have enough information right now.

"We'll have to dig out the battery casings and find out how deep it is. We have it covered right now, and we'll be determining what to do with it this week."

Varlashkin, who appeared before the Randolph County Board of Health Tuesday night, said workers dug about seven feet deep in the three-foot-diameter well. Officials say they fear the well could be 30 to 50 feet deep.

Previous samplings of well water — even those located a few feet from where batteries were cracked — have shown acceptable levels of lead. Every residence on SR 1219 receives water from wells.

Since Sept. 19, workers have been scraping away at a less-than-one acre site where, for about 15 years, batteries were broken and the lead inside reclaimed for resale. The site has been classified by state officials as the worst inactive hazardous substance or waste disposal site in North Carolina.

Two other areas in the 20-25-acre neighborhood are piled high with battery casings, although those will not be removed during the cleanup operation.

About 1,300 tons of soil and some pieces of battery casings have been excavated and hauled to a hazardous landfill in Pinewood, S.C. Soil samples collected at the site being excavated have registered elevated lead levels, in some places as little as 1 percent and in other

See WELL, page 5A

Well

From page 1A

areas as high as 14 percent.

Varlashkin said most of the contamination is confined to the soil closest to the surface, due, in part, to a high concentration of clay in the soil, slowing the downward migration of the lead.

About 2,000 tons of dirt — some 1,000 large dump truck loads — are expected to be removed by GSX Services Inc., a Reidsville firm in charge of the cleanup.

Workers expect to finish the $350,000 cleanup operation by Friday.

Fifteen people, including eight children, were evacuated from four homes before the cleanup began. They will be allowed to return home this weekend if the excavation is completed and there is no heavy equipment on site, Varlaskin said.

The families have been living in a local motel, with lodging and meals paid for from the Carolina Clean Drinking Water Fund, which is the source of cleanup monies.

After the lead-laden soil is removed, fresh fill dirt will be put in its place and grass seed sown.

But two large piles of battery casings will remain.

State officials said they chose to clean up the area being excavated first because it is where batteries were actually broken and where acid leaked into the ground. The area poses the greatest public health threat because of human contact with the contaminated soil, such as children playing in the dirt.

After excavation, officials will re-evaluate the battery casing piles — which stand about 30 feet tall in some places — and will rank the site on a priority list with some 800 other toxic waste sites across North Carolina.

"The casings will have to be removed due to the health threat, because there is residual left in some of those casings," Varlaskin said. "If the casings are chosen as a high priority site, my guess is that we would remove the casings themselves in one phase and then come back and remove the soil."

But, George Elliott, director of the county health department, said he is concerned with the soil and the potential threat to the water supply underneath the stacks of battery casings.

He asked Varlashkin if, before workers leave the site, soil samples could be taken from beneath some of the stockpiled batteries by clearing a path in the mounds to get to the soil.

"We plan to do more sampling ourselves," Varlashkin said. "But, our current contractor is hesitant to get into those piles because of the additional liability to him. That's not in his contract."

Varlashkin said it is believed that one of the sites where battery casings are piled could have been the original site of the 15-year-old battery cracking business.

Another problem is nobody knows exactly how many battery casings are there, although one state official estimated there are 600 tons of casings.

Robert Scott, chairman of the local Board of Health, said there are too many "unknowns" to leave the battery casings there.

"It concerns me because there are still some unknowns as to what's happening under those piles," Scott said. "There's a lot of lead sitting there. I hope some of those unknowns will be put in a pitch to move us up the priority list."

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Cleanup only part of hazardous problem

The GSX Services Inc. work crew moved onto the terminus of SR 1219 in Ulah Monday to begin work cleaning up what state officials have called the worst inactive hazardous waste disposal dump in North Carolina. Families in the area have been evacuated from their homes. Signs have been posted that warn: "Hazardous Material Do Not Enter." And, the Randolph County Sheriff's Department has stepped up patrols around the site.

The area is contaminated with lead, the product of a 15-year business in which batteries were cracked open to reclaim the lead inside them for resale. The business was halted in 1980 when county health officials were warned that lead poses a public health risk, but by that time battery carcasses were piled high in two enormous heaps and pieces of car batteries littered the road, yards and driveways like gravel.

The lead-tainted soil spread over years in the dust kicked up by the wind and automobiles, exposing everyone in the neighbor. Children played in the dirt and two years ago a 4-year-old girl was found to have an elevated level of lead in her blood. She was treated successfully, officials say.

Director of the Randolph County Health Department George Elliott is pleased that the state saw fit to allocate $344,000 to remove the contaminated soil around the area, more than half the money the state has appropriated for toxic-waste cleanup. Over the next three weeks he will realize some success for his years of lobbying the state for the cleanup money.

The cleanup has been a long time in coming.

The problem is that the job will only be partially complete. GSX will be removing the soil on the road and around the residences in a effort to minimize exposure to humans in high-traffic areas. But the mountains of battery casings will remain and the soil beneath them will not be moved. We know that the lead has contaminated soil as deep as 18 inches in the cleanup site, but no one knows how deep the contamination extends in the soil beneath the battery piles.

The site will remain a public health hazard. Although it has caught the attention of health officials, finding the money for removing the hazard is a problem that doesn't seem to be close to being solved. Coming up with the money — maybe as much as $1 million, Mr. Elliott says — will not be easy. But who can put a price on the value of public health? Whether it means lobbying harder in Raleigh for money or coming up with the cash here at home, maybe it's time for county officials to move the problem higher on the agenda for consideration.

Courier Tribune

Masked man

Staff Photo By Blair Callicott

Tyrone Kelly of GSX Services, a Reidsville firm, donned protective gear at hazardous waste cleanup site near Ulah
...the air Kelly and co-workers breathed was being monitored for levels of airborne lead contamination

Ulah land-'scraping' begins

By CHIP WOMICK
Courier-Tribune Staff Writer

ULAH — Men dressed as if for chemical warfare work Tuesday beneath a huge oak tree and in the front yard of a home that had been evacuated at the terminus of SR 1219 south of Asheboro.

Big machines rumbled about in the residential area on a dead-end dirt and gravel road, scooping lead-contaminated soil from the ground and piling it to one side. Lined and covered dump trucks will begin rolling today toward a hazardous landfill in South Carolina with the first of what will be some 2,000 tons of contaminated soil from the site.

The soil, which in places has registered a lead content of 14 percent during testing, became tainted during a 15-year business when batteries were cracked open to reclaim lead inside for resale.

A $344,000 project is under way to clean up what state officials classify as the worst inactive hazardous substance or waste disposal site in North Carolina. After the soil is removed, fresh topsoil will be brought in and grass re-sown in the disturbed areas that were once yards.

While the men wearing protective breathing gear and disposable coveralls worked Tuesday, Bessie McMillon stayed inside her mobile home a hundred yards or so from the activity.

"I never thought it would come to this," said McMillon, the niece of one of the men who operated a battery-cracking business, who says she's lived on SR 1219 for about 25 years.

See ULAH, page 6A

Ulah

From page 1A

9/21/88

"I've been around in (the contaminated areas) ever since (my uncle) been busting them batteries. I used to stand by the barrel to keep warm where they burned the hulls.

"I'm glad they're cleaning it up if they think it's gonna harm somebody. But it hadn't ever harmed nobody and we're all grown — fixing to be old now," she said laughing. "It seems like they're wasting money but I guess they know what they're doing."

About 10 days ago, state officials sent the McMillons and other neighborhood residents certified letters informing them of the upcoming cleanup. Residents were requested to:

- Stay away from the cleanup area.
- Either keep small children indoors or restrict play to backyards.
- Keep doors and windows closed.
- Thoroughly wash vegetables from gardens.

And, although 15 people, including eight children, were evacuated from four homes before the cleanup began, McMillon said she's not uneasy over her own or her family's safety.

"I'm not concerned, not one bit, never have been. I believe if they thought it would be any harm to us, they'd have asked us all to move."

Lash Hammond, his wife and three children have been relocated to an Asheboro motel during the cleanup, much of which is happening in Hammond's front, side and backyard.

For two or three weeks, while the cleanup lasts, lodging and meals for the displaced families will be paid for through the Carolina Clean Drinking Water Fund, the source of cleanup monies.

"It's a vacation for most of them," Hammond said. "They're really enjoying it."

But he said he's not enjoying the disruption. Hammond, who's got a third-shift job, said he's finding it difficult to sleep in a place where traffic roars past in the daytime.

Also, he says he's spent weeks preparing for the cleanup, moving crossties and other items from his front yard, digging up and moving shrubbery and flowers, to save them from the digging machines.

Hammond had to clear a garage outbuilding, a large undertaking, and leave the items in his backyard, subject to the elements. There was no place else to store them, he said.

State officials told him he had to move anything he wanted to keep, he said.

Workers will try to preserve a mimosa tree in Hammonds front yard — and, of course, the huge oak — said Charlotte Verlashkin with the solid waste management section of the N.C. Department of Human Resources, which is overseeing the cleanup.

"I'm glad they're cleaning it up," Hammond said. "But I'm on the outside looking in. I don't have a lot of say-so on anything. I've got no say-so whatsoever."

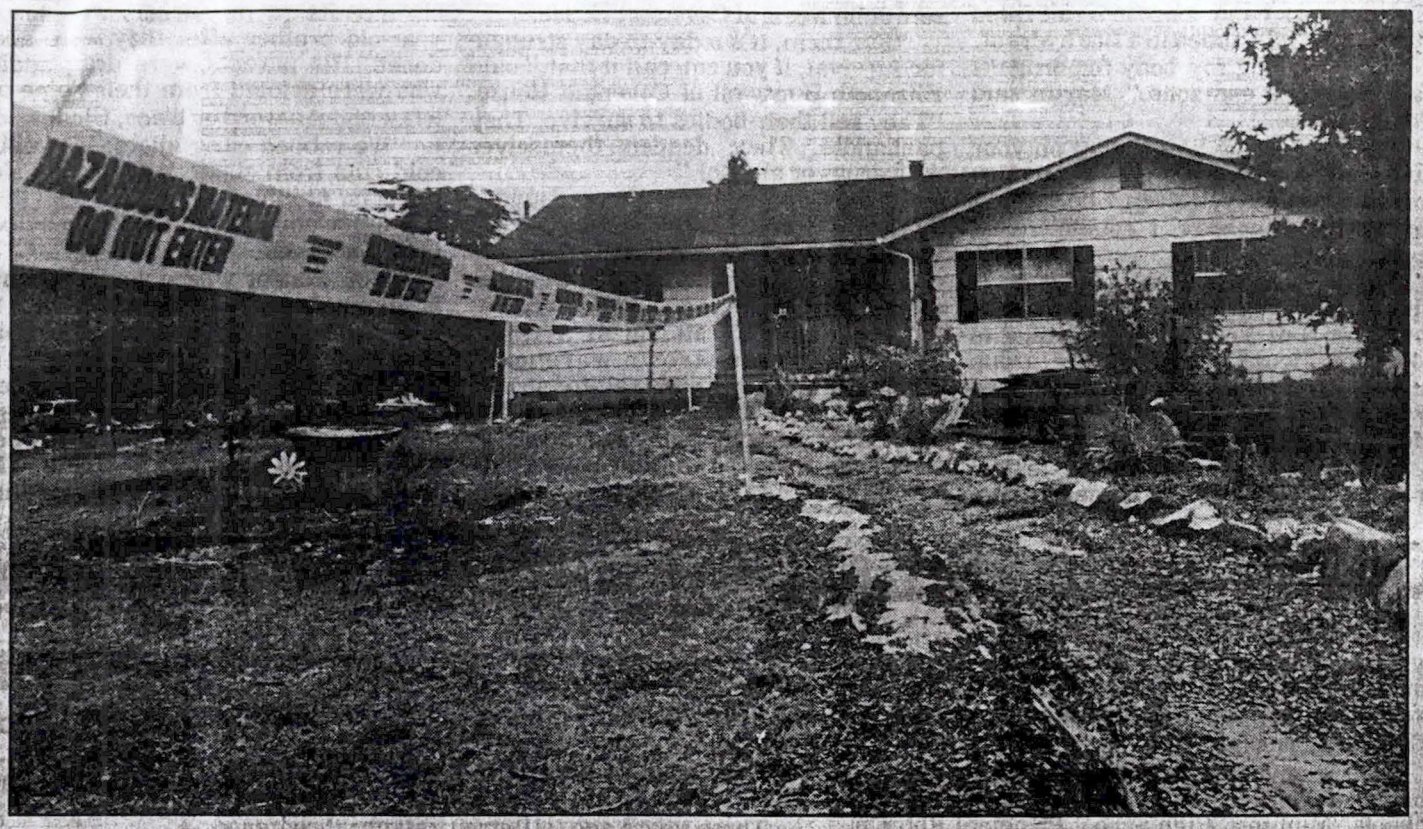
The contaminated soil is only one of three areas in the 20- to 25-acre neighborhood that needs attention. There also are two huge mounds of battery casings and pieces of casings — peaking at about 30 feet in one place and estimated by one state official at 600 tons — left from the battery-cracking business.

State officials say they may deal with the battery casings after they remove the soil, which they say presents the greatest danger to public health.

"I'm glad I didn't have to move," McMillon said. "If they ever start up here, I don't know what we'll do," she added, pointing behind her home, where one battery mound towers.

"I ain't ever seen the beat of that in my life," she said, speaking of the current cleanup. "But do you know what a mess it'll be to get those batteries moved?"

Soiled soil



Staff Photo By Wayne Seal

A bright yellow banner warning "Do not enter" surrounds work site on SR 1219 south of Asheboro
...where removal of some 2,000 tons of lead-contaminated soil in Ulah began Monday

Drizzle keeps lead dust down

By CHIP WOMICK
Courier-Tribune Staff Writer

ULAH — A gentle rain was welcomed Monday as work got under way to move about 100 dump truck loads of lead-contaminated soil from the terminus of SR 1219, a dirt and gravel road two miles south of Asheboro, to a hazardous waste landfill in South Carolina.

"If it's drizzly like this, it'll keep the dust down," said Tony Wood of GSX Services Inc., sales manager for the Reidsville firm in charge of the $344,000 cleanup.

A 15-year business during which batteries were cracked open to reclaim the lead inside for resale contaminated the soil in several places alongside SR 1219, state officials have said.

Lead-laden dust floating in the air, Wood said, is one of the dangers workers might encounter at the area classified by state officials as the worst inactive hazardous substance or waste disposal site in North Carolina.

Because of the potential danger workers will wear respirators when they "break ground" today, said Gavin Burge, an industrial hygienist. "We'll be overprotecting them at first," Burge said.

The air breathed by workers and the air in the immediate area of the soil removal project will be monitored to determine what safety precautions are necessary as the cleanup progresses, Burge said.

Burge said that, due to the lack of dust Monday, he anticipated that lab tests would not find elevated levels of lead in samples taken from respirators worn by workers.

"It's not even worth sending the samples out," he said.

If lead levels in the air are found to be higher than acceptable, workers will continue wearing respirators, he said.

After work, GSX employees will "decontaminate" themselves in a mo-

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9/20/88

Courier Tribune

Lead

9-20-88

From page 1A

bile unit with a "clean side and a dirty side," Wood said, rinsing dirt from gloves and boots and removing disposable coveralls on the dirty side, he said. The unit is equipped so that workers also can take showers, but Wood said he does not think that will be necessary at the Ulah site.

Safety measures developed by the state and GSX for the project meant that 15 people, including eight children, were moved from their homes along SR 1219 for the duration of the cleanup, which is scheduled to take two or three weeks. (Randolph County Sheriff's Department deputies will run extra patrols in the area, state officials say.)

A bright yellow banner which reads "Hazardous material: Do not enter" surrounds the perimiter of the less-than-one-acre site.

Some 2,000 tons of soil — ranging from three inches to 18 inches deep —will be removed in lined and covered dump trucks. As dirt is removed, new testing will be done to be sure lead levels in the soil do not excced safe standards, Wood said. Fresh soil will be hauled in to replace what is removed.

Tests have shown lead concentrations as high as 14 percent in the soil being rmoved.

Besides breathing lead-tainted air, another danger from lead-contaminated soil is ingesting it, officials say.

Two years ago, a 4-year-old girl, who lived in the residential neighborhood and whose mother said she had a habit of eating dirt, was found to have an elevated level in her blood — 60 percent higher than considered safe, health officials have said. Health care officials began monitoring the child and the levels eventually dropped out of the danger zone.

Two huge mounds of battery casings — one which peaks at about 30 feet tall — also are located in the 20-25 acre residential area. One state official has estimated that there are more than 600 tons of casings and casings smashed into tiny pieces in the mounds.

The current cleanup, the first in the state to be financed under the Carolina Clean Drinking Water Fund, will not remove the casings.

The contaminated soil being removed poses the greatest threat to public health of the three areas at Ulah, said Lee Crosby. Crosby heads the Superfund branch of the solid waste management section of the state's division of health services, which oversees such sites.

While on-site, state officials will measure the piles of battery casings, trying to detemine "a waste quantity," she said. Such an estimation is necessary to figure out how much it might cost to remove the casings.

The N.C. Commission of Health Services will adopt a system in the next few months by which to rank hazardous waste sites in the state, she said. If the battery casing piles rank high enough, the state would pay for their removal.

Yet in the past two years, the first two years the N.C. Legislature has appropriated money for dealing with inactive hazardous substances and waste disposal sites, only $600,000 was set aside for such work. Yet the Ulah cleanup will take nearly half of the money so far earmarked to address some 800 sites in North Carolina.

"If we clean up the battery piles, then we'll probably consider moving the dirt under them," Crosby said.

If the battery piles are not moved using state funding, county officials will be forced to tackle the problem, said George Elliott, director of Randolph County Health Department. Elliott has estimated that such a cleanup could cost $1 million.

Cleanup of lead-contaminated soil to begin Monday

9/19/88

By CRYSTAL BAITY
Courier-Tribune Staff Writer

ULAH — Come Monday, residents living on SR 1219 south of Asheboro will see dump trucks and men wearing protective suits that resemble outer space outfits.

But this is real life.

State officials this week will begin a $344,000 project to remove less than one acre of lead-tainted soil where batteries once were cracked open to reclaim lead for profit.

The area has been classified by state officials as the worst inactive hazardous substance or waste disposal site in North Carolina.

Department of Human Resources authorities said a 4-year-old girl living on the road contracted Class III (with Class IV being the highest) lead poisoning two years ago. It is believed the girl had eaten lead-contaminated dirt.

"People will see trucks move into the area Monday morning," said George Elliott, Randolph County health director. "They will primarily set up Monday and may begin soil removal Monday evening if they get that far along. It will be quite an event. They will wear special respirators and protective clothing — almost like men from Mars."

Three families and some family members from a fourth residence, where a small child and pregnant

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woman live, will be housed in a local motel while the soil removal occurs.

"It is a protective measure, because some airborne material and dust may be released," said Jack Butler. Butler is environmental engineer with the Superfund branch of the solid waste management section of the state's division of health services, which oversees hazardous or waste disposal sites in the state.

Arrangements have been made so visitors can view the project without getting in the way of workers or placing themselves in danger, he said.

Cleanup is expected to take two to three weeks, if Hurricane Gilbert's remaining winds and rain don't trek up to North Carolina, Butler said in a telephone interview last week.

"Rain could be a factor," he said. "We're watching the hurricane closely."

GSX Services Inc., based in Reidsville with corporate offices in Columbia, S.C., will replace 6- to 12-inches of contaminated soil with 6- to 12-inches of fresh dirt. The lead-tainted soil will be hauled to a waste dump in South Carolina.

Two other areas where cracked battery casings are piled on SR 1219 will be cleaned up later, officials say.

From 1965 to 1981, at least two separate family businesses reclaimed lead from automobile batteries. Batteries were broken, and the lead plates removed and melted. The casings were burned, thrown in piles or used as driveway fill, allowing battery acid and lead to seep into the ground, said DHR officials.

County health officials discovered the battery stockpiles in 1980, and since then have been working to get them cleaned up, Elliott said.

"I'm glad to finally see something happen down there," he said. "I just hope they can continue and will finalize the site by removing battery casings. I'm apprehensive about that."

Although state officials have shown interest in cleaning up the soil and remaining battery casings, Elliott said funding — or lack of it — may overshadow the problem.

"It's funding and prioritizing all the problems they have in North Carolina, and placing the casings (lower) on a priority list. This may not be a priority. It's possible those casings could stay there awhile."

State officials will use money from the newly created Carolina Clean Drinking Water Fund to remove the contaminated soil. Some 800 toxic waste sites have been identified, although this is the first that will be cleaned up with money from the fund.

Elliott said the state is acting accordingly.

"I do agree that what they're doing first ought to be done first, because it's where people are in direct contact with the soil," he said. "But, it would seem easier to me for them to clean it up all at once."

Butler said the state is attacking the problem in phases.

"We have chosen to do this area first because this is the actual area where the batteries were broken," Butler said. "The acid leaked from the batteries and the soil is full of lead.

"It's practically right outside the door of one residence and two mobile homes. And there are at least two children living in those houses. The children have had direct contact with the soil, and have had reports of elevated lead levels."

While on site, state officials will do further soil tests.

"We want to make sure we're getting the elevated lead-level soil," Butler said. "It's a situation where you can't see the lead. The soil looks like normal front yard dirt, but when you analyze it, you find elevated lead levels. In fact, some soil has higher lead levels than the (discarded) casings themselves."

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of the state's division of health services, which oversees such sites.

On Sept. 19, workers wearing protective gear will arrive at the terminus of the dead end road and begin scooping up some 2,000 tons — roughly 100 large dump truck loads — of soil contaminated at one of the battery cracking sites during the lead reclamation business, said Tony Wood of GSX Services Inc., a Reidsville firm in charge of the cleanup.

The soil, which in at least one spot registered a 14 percent concentration of lead during testing, will be hauled to a South Carolina hazardous waste dump, where it will be buried. Tests have shown that the lead does not contaminate the area which will be excavated deeper than 12 inches.

Extensive precautions will be taken during the dirt removal because lead is extremely hazardous when airborne, Wood said.

Fresh topsoil will be brought in and grass sown.

The tab for the two-week project: $344,000.

But the battery mountains will remain.

And no one knows for how long.

Also, no one knows what is beneath the battery casing piles, how deep lead may have penetrated into the soil, how far it might be from contaminating the water table.

Only further testing will determine that.

"Just looking at the piles, they look the most spectacular," said Crosby in a telephone interview. "But the lead-contaminated soil in the yards presents the greatest health hazard."

George Elliott, director of Randolph County Health Department, said he's glad the contaminated soil is going to be removed but that he's concerned about the fate of the battery casings.

"We're going to attack the problem that affects people directly," he said, referring to moving the contaminated soil. "And that's going to take a lot of work. But that's not to say we still don't have a problem.

"Since we were told that lead stabilizes itself in the soil and moves very slowly, you're not just going to wake up one morning and your well's contaminated. It just doesn't happen overnight."

Money — or a lack of it — is at the core of solving the battery casing problem.

Local health officials have been aware of the Ulah battery reclamation site since 1980 when state officials alerted health departments across North Carolina to seek out such sites.

The Ulah battery-cracking business soon ceased.

Blood-testing of individuals who live along the affected road have continued periodically since then, Elliott said, especially among children under the age of six. The habits of young children — thumb-sucking, playing in the dirt and such — make it more likely that soil contaminated by lead might enter their bodies.

The Ulah child who tested above an acceptable blood lead level is six now. She never exhibited symptoms making treatment necessary and the level of lead in her blood eventually dropped out of the danger zone. No unacceptable lead levels have been recorded in the blood tests of other residents, children or adults.

Water is supplied to every residence on SR 1219 via wells.

Tests of well water — even from wells located within a few feet of sites on which the batteries were once cracked, their contents dripping onto the ground — have always been negative, that is, not containing unacceptable levels of lead.

A program of education by local health officials has continued for eight years, It has been successful in light of the results, Elliott said:

"As far as we know we've had no serious health effects from the lead —well serious, yes — but not fatalities or mental retardation. A lot of responsibility was put on the people. We were there saying don't let your children play in the dirt. And, if lead poses a threat for the children, I think the families did a fantastic job."

Monies in the federal Superfund to deal with hazardous wastes are intended to address and clean up only a few sites that rank high on a national priority list, Crosby said.

"Our worst site in North Carolina is not as bad as, say, the worst site in New Jersey," she said.

So, although local and state officials have identified 715 sites in North Carolina that need attention, until recently, there was no money with which to begin.

In 1987, the N.C General Assembly passed legislation governing inactive hazardous substance and waste disposal sites in the state and established the Carolina Clean Drinking Water Fund.

During fiscal year 1987-88, lawmakers earmarked $100,000 for that fund, Crosby said. State health officials decided that it would not be cost effective to spend $100,000 to clean up just a portion of the Ulah battery site and "leave 75 percent of the mess out there," Crosby explained. "(The Ulah site is not) like a train turned over, a screaming emergency, but an on-going problem that needs a planned removal."

But when the legislators in July approved the budget for the second year of the current biennium, which ends in June 1989, they added another $500,000.

With $600,000 in the till, it was time to begin hands-on work for which groundwork had been laid for years, Crosby said.

"Actually, the (Ulah) cleanup will begin about 2½ months after it was possible to address the site," she said.

What will happen to the battery casings and the approximately $250,000 left in the Carolina Clean Drinking Water Fund? Will the money be used to finish the job which starts next month in Ulah?

"There's no guarantee that those casings will be top priority (in the state after the initial cleanup)," Crosby said. "That will take a lot of study and a lot of analysis to determine. We're in the process of evaluating now."

A state study which determined that the best way to deal with contaminated soil at Ulah would be to move it also proposed the possibility of recycling the battery casings.

So far state officials have sent inquiries to some 40 or 50 such recycling firms in the United States, said Jack Butler, environmental engineer for the state's solid waste management section.

To be recycled, the battery casings would have to be removed from Ulah as hazardous waste, crushed and treated to remove any lead contamination, Butler said. Then the casings could be re-formed or used as fuel.

One problem state officials encouter when making such inquiries is telling prospective recyclers how many battery casings there are.

"We're only dealing with part of the problem but we feel like we're addressing the most serious aspect of that site first," Crosby said.

"When we get right down to the nitty-gritty, there may be no contractor in the country who will recycle those batteries."

This fall, state officials will rank the rest of the hazardous waste sites in North Carolina to determine how the rest of the money in the Carolina Clean Drinking Water Fund — and future monies appropriated — will be disbursed.

If the Ulah battery mounds wind up way down the priority list — with no prospect of receiving state money to deal with the problem — Elliott said he would have to approach county commissioners for help.

Elliott said he has apprised the county board of health — and commissioners — throughout the eight-year saga, but that he has never considered asking for money.

"If I find this is going to be a long-term situation then the commissioners will have to make a decision (about cleanup). But historically the state has intervened in problems that are too big for the county to handle.

"Can you imagine the commissioners approving what may take $1 million for cleanup?"

Lead leaching

Staff Photo By Blair Callicutt

Randolph County Health Director George Elliott stands in front of batteries piled high at disposal site in Ulah

...soil contaminated by lead runoff will be removed but source of the problem will remain

Lead-tainted soil to be removed but battery casings going nowhere

By CHIP WOMICK
Courier-Tribune Staff Writer

ULAH — It's impossible to gauge how many battery casings — and casings smashed into tiny pieces — make up two huge mounds off a dirt road about two miles south of Asheboro.

The peak of one mound stands nearly 30 feet tall. One state official estimates the amount at more than 600 tons.

But it is possible to gauge the effects of a 15-year business during which the batteries were tossed into the mountainous piles after being whacked with an axe or otherwise cracked open to recover the lead inside for resale.

Two years ago, a 4-year-old girl who lived on SR 1219 was found to have an elevated level of lead in her blood — 60 percent higher than considered safe. The potentially dangerous concentration probably occurred because the child had a habit of eating dirt — some of which had been contaminated with sulfuric acid and lead salts dripping onto the soil from the battery operation.

One section — which covers less than an acre — of the 20 to 25-acre residential area near Ulah has been classified by state officials as the worst inactive hazardous substance or waste disposal site in North Carolina — the one posing the most serious public health threat — according to Lee Crosby.

Crosby heads the Superfund branch of the solid waste management section.

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money from the fund.

More than 100 soil samples collected at the site in 1986 revealed elevated lead levels, in some places as little as 1 percent and in other areas as high as 14 percent, she said.

"In our opinion this constitutes a serious health threat," Crosby said. "Residents use groundwater for drinking water and there is no alternative means. As of now, there is no indication that lead has contaminated the drinking water."

But, nine children who live in the neighborhood were referred to the health department for lead exposure. A 4-year-old girl was diagnosed as having Class III (with Class IV being the highest) lead poisoning, Crosby said.

"One of the major reasons we're concerned from the public health standpoint is (the threat of) toxicity to children," said Stan Atwood, toxicologist with DHR. "Some of the most contaminated areas are in the front yards of homes where children playing could get enough (lead) on their hands or in their mouths to get poisoning over a period of years."

Lead can affect the nervous system, digestive system, reproductive system, blood and kidneys.

Another route for lead poisoning is dust, which people breathe or that clings to their clothes.

"We see a high potential for children in the area to be exposed to lead and that could manifest itself over a period of time," Atwood said. "Lead is an element, which means it will stay there generation after generation. As long as it's there, there is a potential to infiltrate the groundwater."

But, some residents who have lived in the area for years say nobody has gotten sick, except for the 4-year-old girl who they say could have contracted lead poisoning in some other way.

"I haven't been concerned about it until all this came up," said Bessie McMillan, who has a 12-year-old daughter at home and often watches after her infant granddaughter. "I've never been worried about lead poisoning."

Another couple, Beverly and Frankie King, said they have lived in the neighborhood for 26 years.

"Nobody's got sick from it — no disease or nothing like that," Mrs. King said.

"As long as we've been living there, we never had an incident like that (lead poisoning)," her husband added.

Hoskins, who owns one acre of land, has lived in the area for at least 25 years.

"As far as the lead, we didn't see a problem. Back in those years, there was lead in the water pipes," he said. "At the time we started this, we didn't know anything about this hazard. The only problem we were seeing was the acid problem. But, we protected ourselves."

Hoskins, who sometimes made $350 a week from the scrap lead, said the workers wore rubber gloves and boots to guard against battery acid.

It is estimated the cleanup project, which is expected to begin Sept. 19 and take two weeks to complete, will cost $350,000, Crosby said.

GSX Services, Inc., based in Reidsville with corporate offices in Columbia, S.C., will replace 6- to 12-inches of the contaminated soil with 6- to 12-inches of fresh, fill dirt.

About 28,000 square feet of contaminated soil will be removed, and taken to a solid waste dump in Pinewood, S.C.

Residents of the area may have to leave their homes as a safety precaution during the excavation process. Crosby said the details are still being finalized.

Once the area is clean, "we will initiate an action of some type to recover our cost," said Bill Meyer, section chief of DHR.

"You've got a property owner who sought profit from cracking those batteries. To me, it's a sense of fair play."

Although Hoskins said he couldn't afford to pay restitution, he is glad the area is being cleaned up.

"If I was breaking the law and I knew it, then I think I should have to pay. But, I didn't know anything about this hazard."

The other two piles of batteries will be cleaned up at a later date, Elliott said.

"We feel real positive about the cleanup operation," he said. "But, don't think for a minute we're going to leave those (other) batteries out there. Sitting on top of the ground, they could possibly threaten the water table at some time. As soon as this cleanup is over we'll begin negotiations with the same people."

Cleanup of battery piles set

By CRYSTAL BAITY
Courier-Tribune Staff Writer

In September, state money earmarked for cleaning up toxic waste dumps will be used to dispose of a 30-foot stack of cracked car batteries that officials have deemed a "serious health risk" to some Ulah residents.

In fact, at a public hearing conducted Monday night in the Randolph County Health Department's conference room, officials from the Department of Human Resources said a 4-year-old girl contracted lead poisoning from the dumped batteries.

But, some residents living off SR 1219 where the batteries are located say they didn't realize the severity of the problem and never felt their health was at risk.

Glenn Hoskins, who owns property where most of the battery casings are piled, said he shouldn't have to pay restitution for the damages if state officials file a suit against him in an attempt to recoup the cleanup money.

State officials first will clean up an area two miles south of Asheboro off U.S. 220-Business on SR 1219. Two other areas where cracked batteries also are piled will be cleaned up later, officials say.

From 1965 to 1981, at least two separate family businesses — one operated by Hoskins, a mechanic by trade, — reclaimed lead from automobile batteries, according to a fact sheet supplied by DHR.

Batteries were broken, and the lead plates removed and melted. The casings were burned, thrown in piles, or used as driveway fill, allowing battery acid to seep into the ground, said Lee Crosby, branch head of the DHR Solid Waste Management Section.

County health officials discovered the battery stockpiles in 1980, and since then have been working to get them cleaned up, said George Elliott, county health director.

"We started sampling in 1981, and have been doing it intermittently since then," he said. "We had heard of lead poisoning from paint chips (but not from cracked batteries). Then, state officials alerted all health departments to look out for battery reclamation sites."

After the Ulah site was found, people in the area were warned of the dangers, and the cracked battery business was closed. Still, the area could not be cleaned up mainly due to lack of funds, Elliott said.

Now, state officials will use money from the newly created Carolina Clean Drinking Water Fund to remove the contaminated soil. Some 800 toxic waste sites have been identified, although this is the first that will be cleaned up with

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County picked easiest battle

By Grant Parsons
THE SALISBURY POST

Rowan County could have been attracted to the Mingus farm as a landfill site, despite its historical significance, because its second and third choices presented more obstacles.

County officials and their consultants held out three sites to state authorities. All had problems of one sort or another, as outlined in a June 25 memo from the N.C. Division of Human Resources:

- A 360-acre tract off U.S. 29-601 near the Swink Plant has inadequate water flow in Town Creek, and because of a former clay mine, it would be difficult to find enough dirt to cover the garbage daily. Also, because of the types of rocks in the creek state observers believe the underlying bedrock is fractured, and groundwater could be contaminated.

A permit for the U.S. 29 site would have required special permission from the Groundwater Section of the Division of Environmental Management.

- A 415-acre tract off Long Ferry Road near Interstate 85 had limited excavation depths, and water filterings from the landfill would flow almost directly into

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High Rock Lake — an eventual water supply for the town of Denton.

A permit for the Long Ferry Road site would require special permission from Environmental Management's Public Water Supply Section.

- A 374-acre site off Campbell Road apparently met all the preliminary requirements. Although not spelled out in the memo, the county knew of the historic Mingus house.

A permit for that site would require special permission from the N.C. Historical Commission.

All sites had some sort of obstacle to be surmounted: county officials had to choose the best battle, the one in which they had the highest chances of winning.

"In many instances, people have so many hurdles to get over in an environmental review — waste management, water quality, prime forest land, prime agricultural land — that when they've completed one particular round of reviews, they'll often feel they've accomplished what they need to," says William Price, director of the state's Division of Archives and History, which oversaw the Mingus farm case.

Or, he says, county officials may have chosen the easiest battle because they knew of the obstacles facing others.

"People sometimes feel that they've had such hurdles to surmount in purely environmental reviews that a historical or archeological review process just can't be that big of a hurdle," Price says. "There could be the perception that we're an easy target."

But there's also a third perception.

"There gets to be the situation which — and I think this is clearly part of the case with Rowan County — every alternative that's looked at has some sort of review problem," he says.

An agency looking to accomplish an undertaking as vast as a landfill is faced with a variety of review concerns, from local zoning to federal regulations.

"As you work your way through the process, there comes a point where you weigh, wrestling one line as opposed to another one," he says. "Hopefully you make those decisons in the best informed manner possible, but frequently you're going to have to make those decisions."

In a nutshell: "You wind up opting for a particular problem and trying to make it work."

GSX Signs Contract For First State Superfund Site

GSX Services Inc. of Reidsville has announced that the firm has signed a contract to provide remedial services for the first state-managed Superfund site ever in North Carolina.

The Ulah Battery Reclamation Site, south of Asheboro, is contaminated with lead from automotive battery casings. From 1965 until 1981, at least two family businesses reclaimed lead from automobile batteries. Batteries were broken; the lead plates were removed and melted, and some of the casings were burned, accumulated in piles, or used as driveway fill. Acid from the batteries was allowed to spill into the soil.

GSX will remove the contaminated soil and battery casings for off-site disposal at its permitted hazardous waste landfill in Wilmington.

Pinewood, South Carolina. That facility has been engineered to mitigate the potential for migration of the toxic contaminants.

According to a spokesperson for the North Carolina Department of Human Resources, lead affects the nervous, digestive and reproductive systems, and blood and kidneys. Children are especially susceptible to lead poisoning.

Lee Crosby, head of the North Carolina Department of Human Services Superfund Branch, stated that soil lead levels exceeding 500 parts per million (ppm) are considered potentially hazardous. Soil lead levels measured at the Ulah Battery Reclamation Site are migh higher than this, thereby posing the risk for increased lead absorption from direct contact with contaminated

Battery dump called health risk

State officials plan lawsuit after clean up

By The Associated Press

ULAH — State officials say money from a fund set up to pay for cleaning up toxic waste dumps will be spent for the first time to clean up parts of a site in Randolph County where car batteries were cracked for the lead inside.

Officials said they would file suit against the landowner after the site was cleaned up in an attempt to recoup the money.

The 30-foot-high hill of cracked car batteries behind Glenn Hoskins' house represents one of the state's worst toxic-waste problems. For 10 to 20 years, Hoskins and some neighbors bought used batteries, cracked them open and sold the scrap lead. It was hard work, Hoskins said, but he made a good living at it.

The workers wore rubber gloves and rubber boots to guard against the battery acid, but the ground had no such protection. As a result, bits of lead built up in the ground, contaminating the topsoil and threatening to poison the neighborhood children.

In the worst spots, state officials say, up to 14 percent of the soil is lead, a Winston-Salem newspaper reported Sunday.

"We've already warned the children to stay away from it, don't play in it," said William Meyer, head of the state's solid waste program.

If children play in contaminated soil, they can absorb lead by eating dirt, by breathing dust or by putting dirty hands in their mouths, said Dr. Gregory Smith, a state health expert. Even small amounts of lead in the bloodstream can cause anemia, brain damage or learning disabilities, he said.

The lead in Hoskins' neighborhood hasn't harmed anyone directly, said Randolph County Health Director George Elliott. But he added, "I don't want to minimize the importance of a tremendous public health risk there.

"This lead, this hazardous waste, is sitting on top of the water table," Elliott said. "So far it hasn't been detected in the groundwater, and I'm surprised that we have not found evidence of it reaching that far. It must be fairly stable in the soil.

"There's no evidence that it won't reach it at some point, at some time. And that's bad news."

The battery pile behind Hoskins' home won't be hauled out in the near future, but the state plans to remove the worst patches of contaminated soil this fall, using money from the newly created Carolina Clean Drinking Water Fund.

Hoskins said he's glad that the state wants to clean up the neighborhood, but he doesn't have the money to pay for it. He also said a lawsuit would be futile.

"I sure ain't got the money to pay them," he said.

In the end, Meyer said, Hoskins and the other battery crackers will likely be forced into bankruptcy.

AP Photo

Mound of batteries about 30 feet high behind home in Ulah
...the batteries were purchased for the scrap lead and cracked open

Courier Tribune

DMH Monday 20 June 88

Used Battery Business Target In Toxic Lawsuit

ULAH (AP) — The 30-foot-high hill of cracked car batteries behind Glenn Hoskins' house represents one of the state's worst toxic-waste problems, and state officials say they'll file suit after it's cleaned up.

For 10 to 20 years, Hoskins and a handful of neighbors bought used batteries, cracked them open and sold the scrap lead. It was hard work, Hoskins said, but he made a good living at it.

The workers wore rubber gloves and rubber boots to guard against the battery acid, but the ground had no such protection. As a result, bits of lead built up in the ground, contaminating the topsoil and threatening to poison the children of the southern Randolph County neighborhood.

In the worst spots, state officials say, up to 14 percent of the soil is lead.

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"There's no evidence that it won't reach it at some point, at some time. And that's bad news."

The battery pile behind Hoskins' home won't be hauled out in the near future, but the state plans to remove the worst patches of contaminated soil this fall. It will be the first use of the newly created Carolina Clean Drinking Water Fund dedicated to cleaning up toxic-waste dumps.

After the state removes the soil, it will sue Hoskins and his co-workers, Meyer said. The law, which treats major industrial polluters the same as small-time battery crackers, doesn't leave him any choice, he said.

Hoskins said he's glad that the state wants to clean up the neighborhood, but he doesn't have the money to pay for it. He also said a lawsuit would be futile.

"I sure ain't got the money to pay them," Hoskins said.

In the end, Meyer said, Hoskins and the other battery crackers will likely be forced into bankruptcy.

Hoskins' home is one of about a dozen trailers and small ranch-style houses three miles south of Asheboro. His mountain of batteries, which covers about three-quarters of an acre, is the largest of the three in the neighborhood.

Tucked behind the trees and the trailers, the mounds look from a distance like piles of coal at a foundry. Hoskins said that the mound behind his house is mostly his own handiwork.

"It was another fellow in the neighborhood who started it [battery cracking]," he said. "You know how it is. We saw he was making a little money at it, so we decided to try it. Self-employed is a whole lot better than working for somebody else."

The work started in the mid-60s, when the Vietnam War fueled the demand for scrap lead. Marvin Elbert Caviness, a neighbor of Hoskins' who joined him in the battery-cracking business, said they would buy batteries by the truckload for $4 each and haul them back to their neighborhood to be cracked.

To get the 38 pounds of lead out of each car battery, the men dropped them onto pipes or barrels or split them with an ax. The fork-lift batteries, which weighed as much as 1,500 pounds, were opened with a blow-torch, Hoskins said.

The scrap lead was loaded onto the back of a flatbed truck and taken to a lead recycler—the Douglas Battery Manufacturing Co. in Winston-Salem at first, then the Willard Lead Co. in Charlotte.

When business was heavy, Hoskins and Caviness said, they would sell four tons or more a day. In some weeks Hoskins alone would recycle 1,200 batteries, he said.

The neighbors knew that the work was risky, Caviness' wife, Daisy, said. They saw how the acid ate through cloth and killed the grass, so they kept the kids away from the growing piles of battery cases, she said.

But no one knew about the damage they were doing to the environment or the accumulation of poison that was threatening their children and grandchildren.

POLLUTE

Continued From Page C1

Hoskins said he's glad that the state wants to clean up the neighborhood, but he doesn't have the money to pay for it. In the end, Meyer said, Hoskins and the other battery crackers will probably be forced into bankruptcy.

Hoskins' home is one of about a dozen trailers and small ranch-style houses on Dinah Road, a dead-end rural gravel road, three miles south of Asheboro. His mountain of batteries, which covers about three-quarters of an acre, is the largest of the three in the neighborhood.

Tucked behind the trees and the trailers, the mounds look from a distance like piles of coal at a foundry. Hoskins said that the mound behind his house is mostly his own handiwork.

"It was another fellow in the neighborhood who started it (the battery cracking)," he said in a telephone interview. "You know how it is. We saw he was making a little money at it, so we decided to try it. . . . Self-employed is a whole lot better than working for somebody else."

The work started in the mid-'60s, when the Vietnam War fueled the demand for scrap lead. Marvin Elbert Caviness, a neighbor of Hoskins' who joined him in the battery-cracking business, said that they would buy batteries by the truckload for $4 apiece and haul them back to their neighborhood to be cracked.

To get the 38 pounds of lead out of each car battery, the men dropped them onto pipes or barrels or split them with an ax. The fork-lift batteries, which weighed as much as 1,500 pounds, were opened with a blowtorch, Hoskins said.

The scrap lead was loaded onto the back of a flatbed truck and taken to a lead recycler — the Douglas Battery Manufacturing Co. in Winston-Salem at first, then the Willard Lead Co. in Charlotte. The lead sold for up to 20 cents a pound, or almost $8 a battery, Caviness said.

When business was heavy, Hoskins and Caviness said, they would sell four tons or more a day. In some weeks Hoskins alone would recycle 1,200 batteries, he said.

One of Hoskins' daughters, Lena M. Hammond, said that the battery-cracking business was good to her parents. "He (Hoskins) could do anything he wanted to, go on vacation anytime. . . . That's how good it was," she said.

Hoskins said that his family never joined the ranks of the rich. But he made a better living off of batteries, he said, than he's making now as an automobile mechanic.

He said that the profits from the battery business allowed him to buy the small vacant lot next to his house, where he works on cars. Caviness, a former tobacco farmer who was disabled by a stroke, said that he didn't have anything to show for his five or six years in the battery business.

The neighbors knew that the work was risky, Caviness' wife, Daisy Caviness, said. They saw how the acid ate through cloth and killed the grass, so they kept the kids away from the growing piles of battery cases, she said.

But no one knew about the damage they were doing to the environment, or the accumulation of poison that was threatening their children and grandchildren. If they had known, Mrs. Caviness said, they never would have gotten into the business.

The neighbors stopped cracking batteries around 1980, when the bottom fell out of the lead market. About the same time, state health officials discovered a connection between lead poisoning in children and backyard battery recyclers.

Mrs. Caviness said that there are 19 children living on Dinah Road, most of them new to the neighborhood. Three of Hoskins' grandchildren — Mrs. Hammond's children — live at the end of the road, where state officials say the most dangerous accumulation of contaminated soil is found.

Mrs. Hammond's driveway is almost equal parts gravel and plastic chips from battery cases, and her front yard is dotted with stakes marking the contaminated soil. Still, she said that she is not worried about her three children, the youngest of whom is 3 years old.

"I don't watch her or nothing. She isn't bad about picking up stuff and putting it in her mouth," she said.

All the children in the neighborhood have been tested for lead, and only one was found to have lead in her bloodstream, Elliott said.

There is no question that the lead in her blood came from the batteries, he said.

"She was one or two years of age, (and) [illegible]now children will play in dirt and eat dirt," he said. After the child was examined and counseled at N.C. Memorial Hospital in Chapel Hill, he said, the amount of lead in her blood dropped immediately.

Elliott said that the county discovered the site in 1980, after state health experts put out a warning about lead poisoning.

The first time he saw the piles of battery cases, Elliott said, he was shocked and amazed.

"Since that time we've been trying to get somebody to do something about this site," he said, adding that the county could never afford to clean it up itself.

Meyer said that the state tried to obtain the federal government's help for Dinah Road and about 13 similar sites in Columbus County. But the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ruled that the sites were not eligible for Superfund money, he said.

While the county was casting about for help, environmentalists were urging the legislature to create a cleanup fund for toxic-waste dumps. They were blocked for almost five years by lobbyists for industry and state government, who said that the proposals were underfinanced and unfair.

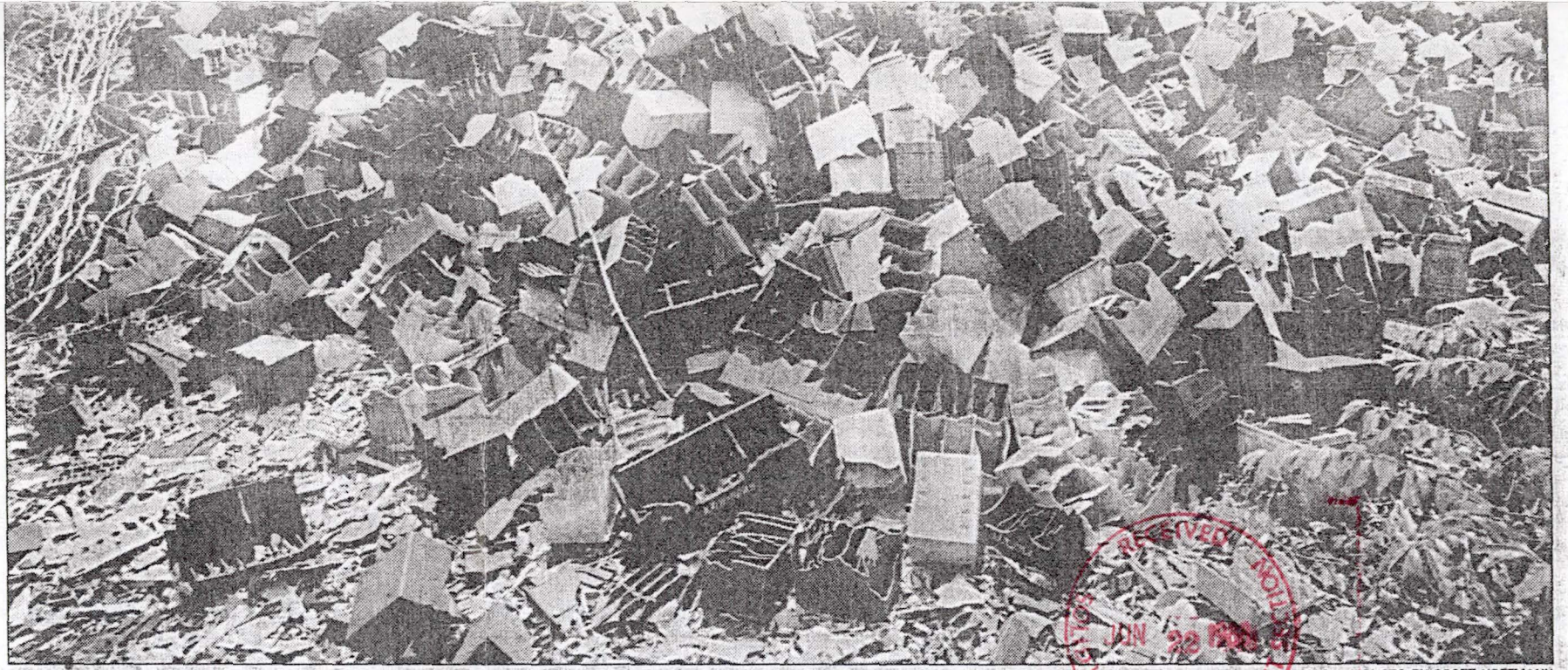
Last year the legislature compromised, putting up $600,000 to start a cleanup fund for abandoned dumps. It also required that the people responsible for the dumping to pay for any cleanups ordered or performed by the state.

Lee P. Crosby, the head of the cleanup program, said that a portion of the fund will be spent removing some of the contaminated soil from Dinah Road. After the work is finished this fall, she said, the state will decide whether to remove the piles of battery cases or take on another problem.

If the state decided to remove all the battery cases and contaminated soil from Dinah Road, Meyer said, it would virtually wipe out the fund. And the state is not likely to recover any of the money from Hoskins or Caviness, he said, although it has to try.

Meyer already told the men about the likelihood of a suit. "I wanted to tell them face to face, it's part of my job, nothing personal, but we've got to sue you," he said.

Hoskins said a suit would be futile. "I sure ain't got the money to pay them," he said.



JOURNAL PHOTO BY SCOTT HOFFMANN

Broken-open battery casings are strewn in a 30-foot mound behind Glenn E. Hoskins' house.

Man's Livelihood Polluted His Neighborhood and May Bring On His Bankruptcy

By Jon Healey
JOURNAL RALEIGH BUREAU

ULAH

The 30-foot-high hill of cracked car batteries that rises behind Glenn E. Hoskins' house is a monument to Hoskins' strength and enterprise.

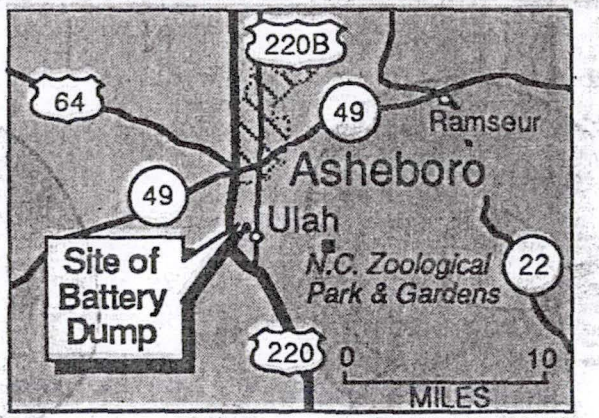
It is also a landmark for one of the state's worst toxic-waste problems.

For 10 to 20 years, Hoskins and a handful of neighbors bought used batteries, cracked them open and sold the scrap lead. It was hard work, Hoskins said, but he made a good living at it.

The workers wore rubber gloves and rubber boots to guard against the battery acid, but the ground had no such protection. As a result, bits of lead accumulated in the ground, contaminating the topsoil and threatening to poison the children of the neighborhood in southern Randolph County.

In the worst spots, state officials say, up to 14 percent of the soil is lead. William L. Meyer, the head of the state's solid-waste program, said, "We've already warned the children to stay away from it, don't play in it."

If children play in contaminated soil, they can absorb lead by eating dirt, by breathing dust, or by putting dirty hands in their mouths, said Dr. C. Gregory Smith, a state health expert. Even small amounts of lead in the bloodstream can cause anemia, brain damage or learning disabilities, he said.



JOURNAL GRAPHIC BY JIM STANLEY

The lead in Hoskins' neighborhood hasn't harmed anyone directly, said George V. Elliott, the health director of Randolph County. But he added, "I don't want to minimize the importance of a tremendous public health risk there.

"This lead, this hazardous waste, is sitting on top of the water table," Elliott said. "So far, it hasn't been detected in the groundwater, and I'm surprised that we have not found evidence of it reaching that far. It must be fairly stable in the soil.

"There's no evidence that it won't reach it at some point, at some time. And that's bad news."

The pile of batteries behind Hoskins' home won't be hauled away in the near future, but the state plans to remove the worst patches of contaminated soil this fall. It will be the first use of the Carolina Clean Drinking Water Fund, a new fund dedicated to cleaning up toxic-waste dumps.

After the state removes the soil, it will sue Hoskins and his co-workers, Meyer said. The law, which treats major industrial polluters the same as small-time battery crackers, doesn't leave him any choice, he said.

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