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GUEST COLUMN

## EPA's cleanup plan unacceptable

By David Kyler

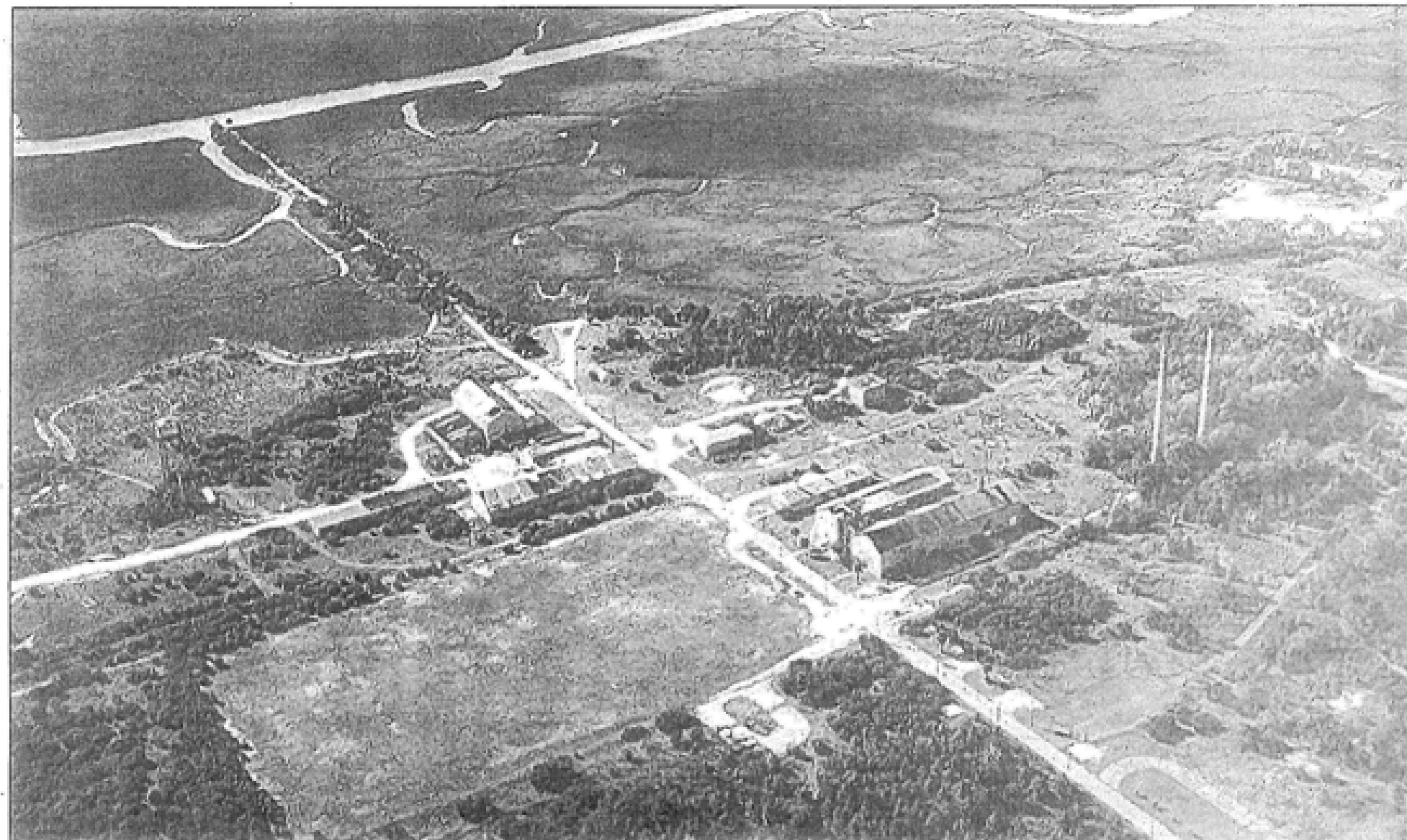
For over two decades, the LCP Chemicals site in Brunswick has been notorious as one of the nation's most dangerous examples of industrial pollution. Due to negligence, deliberate contamination and lax regulatory enforcement, a series of industrial occupants left the site saturated with toxic materials, including mercury and PCBs.

Under federal law, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has studied the site and proposed a cleanup action plan now under public review. But that plan is deficient because it fails to recommend removing much of the poisonous contamination. Instead, despite distressing evidence of extensive damage, EPA proposes to cover polluted tidal marshes – exposed to daily tides and storm surges – with a thin layer of soil.

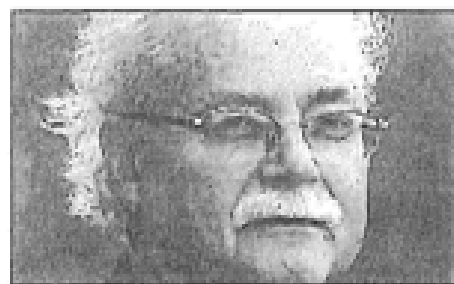
A primary concern is human health, put at risk by consumption of local fish made toxic by exposure to this industrial contamination. The LCP site also threatens surrounding marshes, waterways, habitat and wildlife valued for recreational qualities, natural beauty and related benefits to the local economy, supporting thousands of jobs in recreation, commercial seafood and tourism.

Research by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry found locally caught fish and shellfish were being eaten by some area residents at least 2½ times more than the amount assumed by EPA in its planning assessment. Families identified in the study were eating two or three such meals weekly, equivalent to 100 to 150 meals annually. EPA assumed no more than 40 local fish meals a year.

Moreover, findings of



The LCP Chemicals site in Brunswick threatens waterways and wildlife, and findings of investigations support the thinking that the site should have an aggressive program to remove, contain and monitor toxins, plus compensation for affected people, the writer says. JAMES HOLLAND



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the ATSDR investigation revealed PCB levels in the blood of some Sapelo residents 10 times the amount considered "normal." That stunning statistic correlates with an alarming level of PCBs also found in

dolphins sampled locally and considered the world's most PCB-contaminated dolphins.

These findings substantiate that the LCP site deserves a more aggressive, rigorous and proportionately costly program of toxic removal, containment and monitoring, as well as just compensation for residents whose health has been endangered. People at risk are far likelier to incur excessive medical costs, disabilities and chronic health impairments, possibly extending to future generations due to genetic mutations linked to PCBs.

The tragic LCP circumstan-

es bring into stark focus the ominous consequences of poorly regulated and recklessly conducted business activity, often dogmatically promoted by politicians who trivialize impacts on the public and our shared natural resources. Those responsible for the extensive damage caused by this cumulative industrial pollution must be held fully accountable, regardless of the cost. We must demand that public and private-sector decision-makers strictly follow rigorous standards, recognizing any practices that clearly endanger public health must not be tolerated, much less de-

fended.

It's painfully obvious the geographic dispersion, toxicity and prolonged damage already caused by pollution at the site make any genuine "cleanup" an unattainable euphemism. EPA's suggested "remedy" is at best an exercise in damage control.

I urge concerned citizens to review EPA's Cleanup Action Plan, submitting questions and recommendations in writing to EPA by Feb. 2. The plan and process for site analysis and response can be reviewed at: <http://1.usa.gov/1vDgzz7>.