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## Events to offer public opportunity to discuss site cleanup

By LAUREN MCDONALD [lmcdonald@thebrunswicknews.com](mailto:lmcdonald@thebrunswicknews.com)

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The public will have two opportunities this week to learn about and comment on clean-up plans for a local site where hazardous chemicals were once produced.

The Georgia Environmental Protection Division will host an open house today and a public hearing Thursday to discuss a hazardous waste permit and clean-up plan submitted by Hercules and Pinova.

The open house will take place from 7-9 p.m. today at First Jordan Grove Mission Baptist Church, 2004 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Brunswick. Presentations will offer details about the clean-up plan.



The second event will take place from 7-9 p.m. Thursday at the Brunswick library, 208 Gloucester St, Brunswick, where the public will have the chance to make comments.

“All the state staff will be here, and representatives from Hercules and Pinova will be here,” said Rachael Thompson, executive director of the Glynn Environmental Coalition. “We want to make sure that the community also can turn out and share their opinion and their concerns.”

The site under discussion was where toxaphene was produced before the pesticide was banned in 1984. That manufacturing process created environmental pollution on the facility grounds, within the groundwater and in the marsh.

The U.S. 17 site is divided into active and inaction portions, and the inactive part of the site is now considered a federally designed hazardous waste superfund site by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The plan that will be discussed during the two events this week is for the active side of the property, which is partially owned by Hercules and partially owned and operated by Pinova.

“On the plant site, there is a lot of environmental pollution from the activities that took place on the site during the manufacturing processes for toxaphene,” Thompson said. “There are some areas that have been cleaned up, and there are some areas that have not been addressed yet.”

In March 2020 the property owners submitted a permit proposal that included their plans to clean up the site. The plan has been reviewed at the state level and the public was given a chance to submit comments.

The events this week are part of the final stages before the state officially approves the permit.

Public comments may also be submitted via letter or email by Nov. 1.

A priority for many in Glynn County is the removal of a major blight in the community, Thompson said, and it's important to make sure that the proposal plan does not fall short of achieving the goal.

It's also critical that groundwater continuation is addressed, she said.

"We don't want to see 20 or 30 years from now this contamination getting re-exposed and our community having to continue to deal with these issues when they could just go ahead and deal with them correctly now," she said.

Thompson encouraged those concerned about the issue to attend the events.

"Discussions around hazardous waste can be really heavy," she said. "They can feel extremely burdensome in general, but the more people engage and the more people learn, the more they find that there are ways for them to be a part of the positive change that is necessary to restore areas like this in our community."