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EPA to share options for future superfund site work

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Glynn County residents will have the chance to add their voice to the ongoing conversation on how to address nationally designated hazardous waste sites at a public meeting this week.

Representatives from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will host a community event at 6 p.m. Thursday at the Jackson Building on the Rise Risley campus, 1800 Albany St., Brunswick.

EPA staff plan to discuss options evaluated for a Focused Feasibility Study intended to address mercury contamination on a portion of the LCP Chemicals site, one of four Superfund sites in Glynn County.



The EPA has over the past two years worked to finalize a decision on how to mitigate exposure from what's called the cell building area on the site. This is the area where mercury cells were on site when the plant manufactured chlorine gas.

"They were basically these big cement pools of mercury that they used in their production of chlorine gas," said Rachael Thompson, executive director of the Glynn Environmental Coalition.

GEC and other local environmental groups have worked closely with the EPA to make information and public comment sessions available to Glynn County residents.

The EPA has completed investigations on this portion of the Superfund site. Those investigations included groundwater monitoring, soil sampling vapor intrusion studies and more.

“As we think about the Superfund process, one of the most important pieces of the process is actually identifying the problem,” Thompson said. “So the levels of contamination, where the contamination is, they need to define that. In the past year, they’ve finalized those investigations.”

Next comes the feasibility study, which offers options on how to address the problem.

“They’re not saying, ‘This is what we’re going to do,’” Thompson said. “They’re saying, ‘This is what we could do.’”



The meeting Thursday will give the EPA an opportunity to educate the community on the variety of options and hear feedback on what residents would or what not like to see happen at the local site.

Mercury is the main chemical of concern at this portion of the site, and the solutions offered will include ways to prevent mercury from continuing to migrate from the site from future workers being exposed.

The EPA plans to have a public comment period available next year before the agency announces its proposed plan.

Emory University conducted a recent study on how exposure to the toxins on local superfund sites has impacted residents. Participants in the study were found to have higher-than-average levels of polluting chemicals in their blood.

“The landscape this year is different in that for the first time in Glynn County’s history we actually have some preliminary results from the human health exposure study that Emory did,” Thompson said. “For people that live in Brunswick and have lived here for a long time, this is an opportunity to come together as a community and learn about what they’re planning to do to fix this big problem.”

Among those who live closest to the site being discussed at this week’s meeting are residents of the Arco community.

Thompson hopes local residents will take advantage of the chance to learn more this week and to lend their voice to the discussion about Glynn County’s future.

“We had over 100 people show up for the presentation of the preliminary results from the Emory exposure study,” she said. “We at the Glynn Environmental Coalition really believe that those individuals that showed up for that meeting, those are the people that care about how people have been impacted by the site and those are the same people that we are hoping will show up for this event.

“We want those individuals to be informed and we want those individuals to take action with us when the time comes next year.”



Lauren McDonald