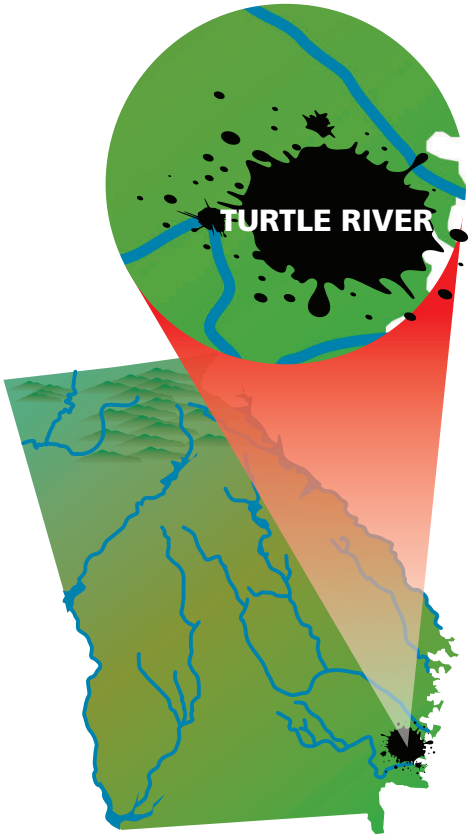
2014's Worst Offenses Against GEORGIA'S WATER

TURTLE RIVER

Toxic Legacy Poisons Dolphins, Drinking Water

INTRODUCTION:

The "Marshes of Glynn," and the Golden Isles of Georgia are the vacation destination for millions, but tucked in those marshes near Brunswick is a toxic site riddled with polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), caustic soda, mercury and lead. Twenty years after the LCP Chemicals plant closed and 18 years after the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) first ordered a cleanup of the site, the contaminants remain, leaching into underground drinking water supplies and contaminating wildlife and humans with cancer-causing chemicals. In fact, the Turtle River which flows by the 500-acre LCP Chemical site has the distinction of being home to the world's most contaminated bottlenose dolphins, with PCB levels more than one and a half times greater than levels recorded in Pacific Ocean killer whales which were once thought to be among the world's most contaminated marine mammals. The creatures that thrill visitors to Georgia's coast are now suffering from health problems including immune suppression and anemia, and their plight suggests that humans, like dolphins that eat fish from the Turtle River, may be unwittingly poisoning themselves with the LCP Chemical's toxic legacy.



THE RIVER:

The gateway to the Port of Brunswick, Turtle River supports a vast network of coastal marshes that stretches from the barrier islands of St Simons, Jekyll and Sea Island to Brunswick and beyond. That robust coastal Georgia marsh network accounts for 33 percent of the remaining coastal marshes on the Atlantic coast and fuels a $400 million commercial and recreational fishery on the Georgia coast. The scenic beauty of the marshes and barrier islands attract some 2.5 million people annually. Those visitors create some 25,000 local jobs and pump about $1 billion into the coastal Georgia economy. A birdwatcher's paradise, the Turtle River and its tributaries support a productive estuary and serve as a calving ground for federally protected manatees.

2014 GEORGIA'S DIRTY DOZEN





THE DIRT:

A suspected cancer-causing chemical, PCBs were banned in the late 1970s, but they are long-lived and persist in the environment, especially around highly contaminated sites like LCP Chemical. There, they have worked their way into the aquatic food chain and ultimately concentrate at the top of the chain—in top consumers like dolphins…and humans.

Yet despite this serious risk to wildlife and local residents, and despite caustic, mercury-contaminated pools of water beneath the LCP site that are slowly eating away soil and leaching into groundwater, a full cleanup of the Superfund site still has not been completed—more than 30 years after the problem was first identified by EPA.

Since the early 1990s when LCP closed its doors, company employees have been convicted of environmental crimes and served jail time, former employees have won a $22 million lawsuit based on exposure to toxins, Glynn County settled claims against the company amounting to $25 million and private property owners impacted by LCP's toxic legacy won a similar settlement.

Still, a real cleanup of the site remains elusive. Poor management and inadequate studies have resulted in ongoing delays and the continued contamination of the Turtle River, nearby marshes and groundwater.

The LCP site was used by various manufacturing and power generation entities for nearly a century; and if the cleanup foot dragging continues, it could be another century before the Turtle River is safe again for dolphins and their distant land-based cousins…us.



WHAT MUST BE DONE:

Continued delays at the LCP Chemical Superfund site must cease, and EPA, Georgia's Environmental Protection Division and the corporations responsible for the mess must take decisive action to once and for all rid the Turtle River and Brunswick of this toxic legacy. Contaminated marsh must be removed and restored, and sources of groundwater contamination must be eliminated.

GEORGIA WATER COALITION

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