

# THE BLUE BANNER



**Mountain Jam**  
So many jam bands, so little fundage, bro  
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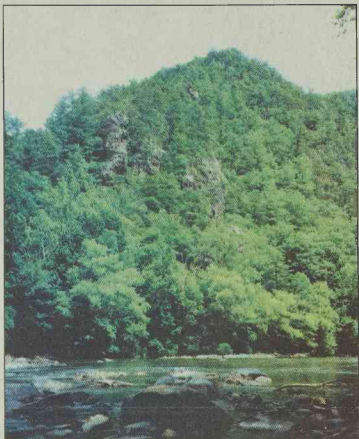
The University of North Carolina at Asheville

April 17, 2003

## Closed paper mill poses threat to river

The shutdown of the Ecusta paper mill may jeopardize environmental safety and the French Broad river

**Becky Reese**  
News Reporter



BECKY REESE/NEWS REPORTER

The French Broad River, the third-oldest river in the world, provides drinking water and recreation, as well as a habitat for many WNC plants and animals.



MAX TAINTOR/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The Ecusta paper mill closed and declared bankruptcy in 2002. Untreated waste water at the mill poses the threat of leaking into the French Broad river, causing severe damage and pollution.

**"My major concern is with the environmental effects of the chemicals and its effects on the aquatic life in the river."**

**Shea Benson,**  
senior biology major

2002, leaving 500 people unemployed. The plant has been on the auction block, but has yet to be bought.

Officials with the plant threatened to turn off the plant's electricity, but have not yet due to environmental concerns, according to *The Asheville Citizen-Times*. "It's critical that the state of North Carolina finds a way to continue to safeguard the French Broad from the deadly toxins at the now-closed Ecusta plant," said Kevan Frazier,

director of student life. The state threatens to press charges against Ecusta if the waste treatment facilities are closed.

The state seeks removal of all chemicals from pipes, storage containers and machines, according to *The Asheville Citizen-Times*. If the plant stops operation and does not restart within 90 days, the state can consider the chemicals onsite to be hazardous waste and order their removal. The chemicals created by the pa-

per-making process include sulfuric acid, citric acid and hydrochloric acid, according to *The Asheville Citizen-Times*.

It will cost an estimated \$2.5 million to clean up the containers and equipment at the plant. If the plant does not comply with the state by Apr. 30, they could face fines of up to \$25,000 per day, according to *The Asheville Citizen-Times*. Many are concerned that Ecusta, its potential buyer and the state

realize the importance of the waste treatment lagoon and the impact it could have on Western North Carolina's environment and economy.

"Our main concern was to make them aware that we needed to have all those systems operational out there, and we were assured that would happen," said Jim Patterson, waste management specialist with the N.C. Department of Environ-

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## Coalition looks now to future of post-war Iraq

**Beth Wyche**  
News Reporter

Despite the Pentagon's announcement that major combat has ended and President Bush's declaration that "the regime of Saddam Hussein is no more," small but fierce battles continue sporadically in Northern Iraq.

"Of course it's not going to be all over just yet," said Courtney Wells, a junior psychology major. "They're (U.S.) not going to just take care of the problem in one big swoop. I'm just glad because it means that my friends over there will be coming home soon and that they're going to be ok."

American marines clashed with local residents in Mosul early April 15 that left at least seven Iraqis dead, according to *The Associated Press*. However, Iraqi officials claim that at least 10 Iraqis died and some 16 were wounded, according to *The New York Times*.

U.S. officials defended their actions, citing mob-like violence as the justification for opening fire.

"Fire was directed at the Marines and special operations forces in this complex," said Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks in a press conference in Qatar, according to CNN.com. "It was aimed fire, and aimed fire was returned against some of the demonstrators, against some of the agitators climbing the wall of the compound. It was lethal fire."

Mosul, the third largest city in Iraq located approximately 240 miles north of Baghdad, remains a stronghold for Arab nationalism and the Ba'ath Party, according to *The New York Times*.

Like Baghdad, Mosul continues to experience significant looting and violence. UNCA students express concern about how these conditions affect Iraqis.

"It's crazy. It's like a nothouse," said Wendy Segars, an undeclared freshman. "It's horrible and I just wish that something could be done."

Others acknowledge the reality of looting and violence in such unstable conditions.

"It's unfortunate, but it's pretty typical," said Wells. "It's sad, but this would have happened almost anywhere else the same way. I think that Iraqis are just trying to get back what has been taken from them for so long."

Despite the clash in Mosul, coalition forces cite the capture of terrorist Abu Abbas and the raiding of "Dr. Germ's" secret biological laboratory, both occurring in Baghdad, as major victories both in the war against terrorism and in the war on Iraq, according to *The Associated Press*.

"We've said for a long time that Iraq [has] harbored terrorists, ... and in some cases have facilitated operations of terrorism," said Brooks, according to CNN.com.

American Special Forces raided the biological laboratory early April 16 where Ribah Tahar, wife of Gen. Amer. Mohammed Rashid, Iraq's former oil minister, weaponized anthrax. Special forces discovered

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## Senate votes against drilling in Alaska

**Ginger McKnight**  
News Reporter

The United States Senate voted 52-48 against drilling for oil in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) Mar. 19.

"The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge was set apart as a refuge for a reason, and that is because it is a very, very special place that is just teeming with life for the summer," said Rick Maas, professor of environmental science. "It is one of the last truly wild remaining places on the whole earth that really hasn't been exploited by humans. To think about ridding one of the most truly wild ecosystems for a few months of oil doesn't seem to make much sense."

The arguments for drilling in the ANWR vary from monetary gain to philosophical reasoning, according to Chris Bell, associate professor of economics. "People want to drill oil because

it's a useful and scarce resource and there are profits to be made drilling oil," said Bell.

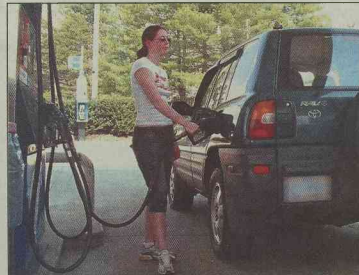
"There are some who believe that the material resources the world has given to us were to exploit, and we're idiots for not exploiting them," said Bell.

"Drilling for oil is something that no one does but us because of our basic and flawed concept that we are here to do whatever we want to the planet," said Jack Bennett, an undeclared sophomore, in an e-mail.

"That it was made for us and we can conquer it, dump all our crap in it and it will just go right on producing all the things we need."

The question of how much oil actually exists in the ANWR continues to be debated. Amounts range from enough for six months to a couple years, according to an *Associated Press* article.

"The amount of oil in Alaska is about six months to a couple years at current consumption rates," said Bell. "In the grand scheme of economic history that is a blink of an



MAX TAINTOR/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Nikki Nelson, a junior psychology major, pumps gas into her SUV. Many UNCA students support research for alternative fuels rather than drilling oil in the Alaska reserves.

eye." Since the amount of oil is very small, one of the arguments against drilling in Alaska is that the amount

of recoverable oil will not be worth disrupting the wildlife, according to Maas.

"There apparently is quite a bit of

oil there, but nobody knows how much," said Maas. "There is a lot of evidence that having all that oil mined would be disruptive to the last main [Porcupine] caribou herd there."

Many students feel the drilling will disrupt the ecosystem in and around the ANWR.

"[Alaska is] a very fragile ecosystem and there are animals that live there that don't live in other places," said Tom Meisenbach, an undeclared sophomore, in an e-mail. "It's one of those places that people can go to and admire nature without the distraction of civilization and I would hate to see that ruined by an oil rig on the horizon."

Along with the devastation to the Alaskan ecosystem, some students say the effects of the oil will not only hurt the environment in ANWR, but will affect the whole world.

"We aren't reliant on other countries, we are reliant on the planet," said Bennett in an e-mail. "If we

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