

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

Volume 36, No. 32

USPS 428-080

Hertford, Perquimans County, N.C., Thursday, August 7, 1980

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Discharges into river miss state standards

It appears that water being discharged into the Perquimans River from the Hertford waste treatment plant isn't as clean as it should be.

A recent assessment by the North Carolina Department of Natural Resources and Community Development has determined that the town is in violation of state effluent limitations, which authorizes operation of its wastewater treatment works.

Hertford Mayor Bill Cox informed the town council at their regular monthly meeting Monday of the commission's recommendation that the town secure a commercial laboratory in an effort to correct the plant's problems.

The commission's findings, obtained during a routine inspection in April,

indicated an excess of fecal coliform and other human waste-related bacteria in the Perquimans River.

The analysis found the facility exceeding effluent limitations for BOD (a bacteria-related to human solid waste) by 120 milligrams per liter; an excess of total suspended solids by 166 milligrams per liter; and of fecal coliform bacteria by more than 240,000 counts per 100 milliliters.

The facility evaluation, performed by W.E. Furr Jr. of the Department of Natural Resources' regional office in Washington, N.C., also deemed Hertford's plant unsatisfactory in its effluent limitation, operation and maintenance, and laboratory practices.

The council moved to contract with a

commercial laboratory company out of Greenville, N.C. at a cost of \$70 per month.

In other business, the council moved to oppose the N.C. Department's revised schedule for operation of Hertford's 'S' shaped bridge.

Secretary of Transportation Tom Bradshaw informed Cox last week of the reduced schedule, effective August 16, which will also entail a reduction of the present five-member staff to three employees and thus save \$18,500 a year in operational costs.

Councilman T. Erie Haste Jr., who was not in favor of the opposition, said it was unrealistic to oppose the closing. "How

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County to seek shift in proposed park site

The Perquimans County Board of Commissioners approved a grant application on Monday for a softball-recreational facility, but will attempt to shift the site to school owned property.

The commissioners had previously agreed to donate a 14 acre tract of land for the park, but after communications with school officials, decided that a project located on school property might better meet the needs of the county.

Albemarle Regional Planning and Development Commission planner Pam Whitley reported to the commissioners that an application had been prepared for a grant of some \$42,000 from Heritage Conservation Service.

The grant would require a 50 per cent match (some \$42,000) from local government. Ms. Whitley said that the county land could not be used as a match.

She said that the application was based on the site the commissioners originally agreed to donate, but the application could be amended.

She said, however, that locating the park on school property would reduce the county's chances of securing a Heritage Conservation grant.

Ms. Whitley said there is a reluctance to fund park projects on school property because they must be open to the public at all times. "If it's tied up in school

activities it's not open to the public," she said.

Ms. Whitley said she knows of only one instance in which a grant has been made to construct a facility on school property. This was a grant for the construction of tennis courts at Northeastern High School in Elizabeth City.

The commissioners said, however, that they would try to work out an adequate agreement with the schools for keeping the facility open to the public.

If the grant is approved, the county will have the option of turning it down, but the application indicates a willingness to make an effort to fund the project.

Ms. Whitley said that additional state grant monies may be available for the facility if the federal grant is awarded. The county may also be able to use donations of labor and equipment as a partial local match, she said.

In other business, the commissioners discussed malfunctions at the county water plant and decided to continue to withhold a retainer of some \$16,000 from Tucker Brothers of Sunbury until a hitch in the back wash system is straightened out.

During the back wash cycle, rust has on several occasions been discharged into the county water lines, sending

orange water into the homes of customers.

Ray Tucker of Tucker Brothers sought payment for his firm's work on the plant, saying the malfunction was occurring because the plant is being operated beyond capacity, and that the warranty on equipment has already expired.

The commissioners will invite Tucker and a representative of Rivers and Associates, the county's engineering firm, to their next meeting to try and get to the bottom of the water problem.

In another water matter, William Jeffries, Jr., general manager of Holiday Island, asked that a representative of Rivers and Associates be allowed to come to a meeting of property owners in the resort community to discuss the ins and outs of connecting to the county water system.

Jeffries said that Holiday Island has had water problems in the past and is considering drilling a new well, but that the community would also like to check in to the feasibility of joining the county system.

The commissioners also heard an annual report from Thomas Watts, district attorney for the first judicial district.

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Winfall residents share concerns with council

By MARJORIE FIELDS

"We want Winfall to grow, and encourage businesses, but we do not want hazardous businesses that will degrade our town. If we continue like it is now, with no laws, this will happen," said Mrs. Francis Merritt in presenting a list of four complaints to the Winfall Town Council at a meeting Monday night.

"We are not out to get Edgar Roberson of Albemarle Chemical — we are talking about them all," added Mrs. Shelton Morgan, another member of the group.

The residents presented a list of grievances to the council, with concerns ranging from air pollution and noise to sanitation and zoning.

Under air pollution, the citizens cited concentrations of ammonia and debris from drying corn and beans coming from

Albemarle Chemical Company.

"These fumes are enough to take your breath and all outside activities must be terminated. These ammonia fumes last any where from 30 minutes to five hours. It is a matter of record that part of Winfall was evacuated because of the same problem three years ago.

"In the fall when the dryers are going it is impossible to sit outside and enjoy the yard. Dust particles and debris from drying corn, soybeans and peanuts filter over the entire neighborhood causing invalids on fixed incomes to close windows and doors and turn on air conditioners.

"We strongly feel that you should exercise your powers as councilmen and pass an ordinance protecting us from these health hazards. There are many

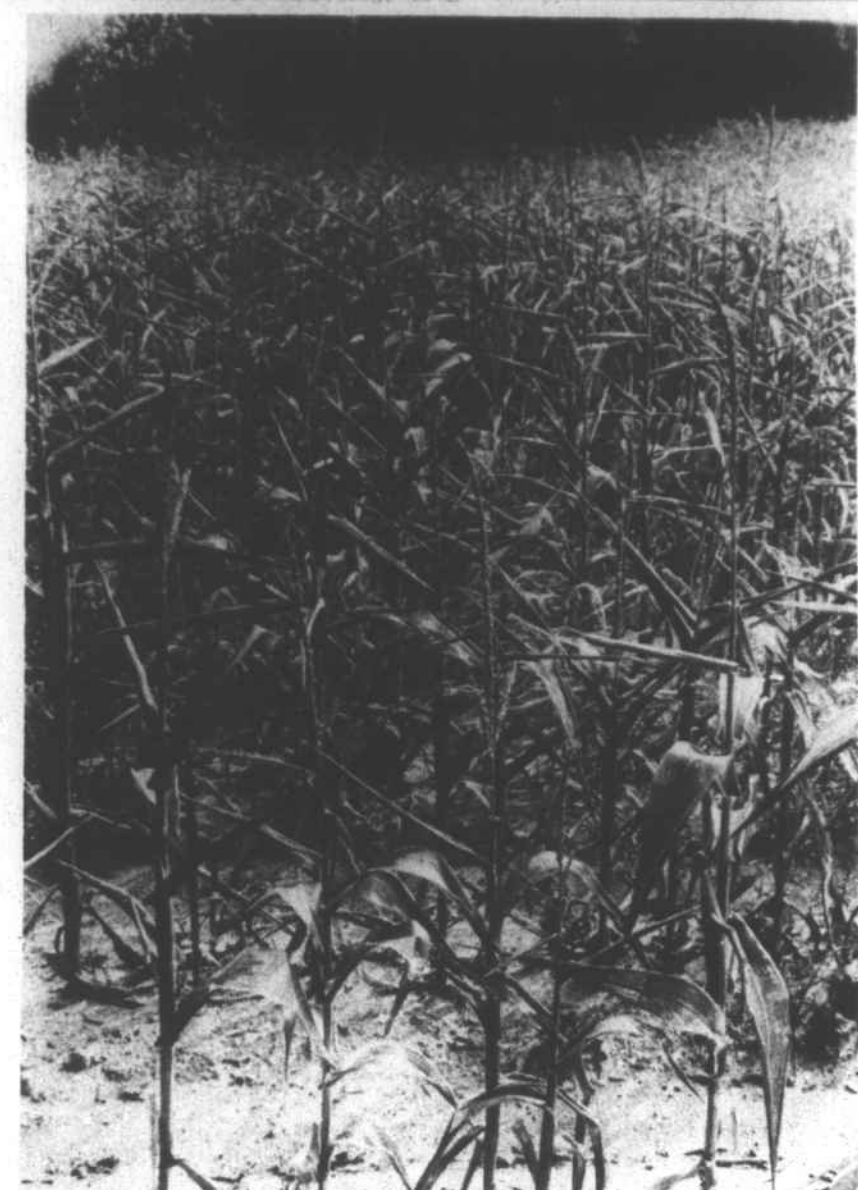
small children in the immediate vicinity of several hazardous businesses, especially during the school year as Central Elementary is strategically located in the heart of all these operations.

"There are also many elderly — some of whom are invalid — who need your protection.

The group also complained of noise at the business.

"We have had a problem with Albemarle Chemical's intercom being excessively loud especially at night and on weekends when no one is at the location.

"If the wind is right it could be heard as far as a half a mile away. We spoke to Mr. Roberson about this and to date the problem has been eased to a certain extent.



Corn disaster

Scrawny corn with few ears is the rule rather than the exception in Perquimans

County this year as dry weather has spelled disaster for farmers.

Corn suffers extreme damage

Recent rainfall has helped to save some of the Perquimans County corn crop, but the moisture is apparently not enough to repair much of the drought damage felt earlier in the season, according to Bill Jester, Perquimans County Extension Chairman.

"The damage to corn in certain areas of the county is irreparable," said Jester. "Corn needed much more rain during the month of June than the 1.2 inches we received."

Jester surmised that many fields would not be worth harvest cost. "A few fields have already been disked up and replanted," he said.

Perquimans County depends heavily on corn and soybeans to generate cash income. Corn accounted for about 25,000

acres of the 68,000 acres of crop planted in 1980.

According to Jester, the reduction in the county corn yield will exceed 35 percent of the county average, which is about 110 bushels per acre. "This will have a serious economical impact on many grain farmers in the county, as well as those raising swine on the farm," said Jester.

Hope for soybeans and peanuts

Although soybeans have also been injured by the drought, good moisture conditions during the month of August and September could possibly bring the county a better-than-average crop, according to Jester, who also noted promise for peanuts.

"Thus far, the potential for a good

Hertford plant is closed, jobs lost

As many as 55 jobs were lost in Hertford on Friday when Hertford Apparel on Grubb Street announced that it would be closing its doors.

The firm has been making mens' and boys' pullover shirts in Hertford for some three years.

Manager Edward Byrum confirmed that the plant is closing at the end of next week, but said he could not comment further on the matter until more of the details are worked out.

While expressing concern about the lost jobs, Hertford Mayor Bill Cox said the plant closing would not have a drastic impact on the town.

"(The firm) is employing about 50 people — of course it will hurt us. We'll miss every job we have, but there will be no severe impact," Cox said.

He said there is a possibility that another firm will move in to the building but that the town has no prospects at present.

peanut crop remains good as the growing season is almost 60 percent completed," said Jester, pointing out that good moisture conditions from here on out, plus disease and insect control could offer better than average yields this year. Some 100 farmers raise 3,200 acres of peanuts in Perquimans County.

This season has brought no relief to farmers trying to recover from financial losses brought on by a combination of low yields and small margins experienced in the last two years.

"It is ironical that in a year when corn prices may be the best in five years, farmers in the county may have less corn to sell," observed Jester.

"Hopefully, a good soybean and peanut crop may help us recover some of the losses suffered from the corn crop.

and what it entails. "This is no easy matter and something it will take some time to work out — it is not something that can be done tonight," he said.

Edgar Roberson, Manager of Albemarle Chemical Company and Mr. Alvah Wills, Regional Manager — Albemarle Chemical Company and Central Fertilizer were at the meeting. Wills stated, "I can appreciate your coming and I can assure you we will listen to you. We want to be neighbors. To the best of our ability we want to do what is best for everybody. Edgar and I know we have a problem and I will guarantee we will look into this. As for the ammonia spills, if we catch the wind right when we bleed cars, it will be no problem, and if

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Nothing fishy about river

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the conclusion of a three-part series dealing with the quality of the water in the Perquimans River.

Lester Simpson has seen the time when boats were lined up at Snug Harbor Marina to get at the fish in the Yeopim River and Albemarle Sound.

This year Simpson hasn't even opened his marina. He says there is no need to because there aren't any fish.

Fishermen tell the same story about the Perquimans River and other area waters.

"You ask anybody. The fish aren't out there like they were," said Eldon Winslow. A resident of Hertford concerned about declining fishing, Winslow has been to the Perquimans County Board of Commissioners on two different occasions to press for action on the matter.

"I don't fish much anymore because there's not much to fish for," Winslow

said. He said that the fishing has gotten progressively worse since the mid-fifties.

The fishing decline does not appear to be centered in any particular species of fish. Fisherman say that all of the fish populations have declined to practically nothing.

Jim Bass, an avid rock (striped bass) fisherman, said it's hardly worth his time to put his boat in the water anymore.

"Three years ago it was real good," said Bass. "It kept getting worse and worse, and it's not only rock fish. There has been the time you could catch all the perch you wanted. They're scarce now," he said.

"It's sort of getting very discouraging as high as gas is now to ride and ride and not catch anything so I definitely don't go as much as I used to," said Bass.

Bass is apparently not the only person

who doesn't fish in the area as much as he once did.

Simpson said that where he once could count as many as 150 boats per day entering the water at his marina, that figure had declined to some 25 boats per day as of last year.

He said that most of the boats going into the water now are doing it for swimming and skiing, not for fishing.

Those who do try the fishing don't have much luck, Simpson said. "They don't catch any fish anymore but they still like to go and try," said Simpson.

He said that area waters used to be somewhat of a mecca for fishing and people would come from all over the state to wet a line.

"I have seen it when you could go out there and just pull in white perch until you got tired and just came on home. Everybody caught fish," Simpson said.

"There's nothing more exciting than for a mother and father to take their kids out fishing and when they come back to see the excitement in their eyes when they're showing you the fish they caught," Simpson said.

"It's gonna be a thing of the past if something isn't done," he added.

None of the men could venture more than an educated guess on why fishing has declined in the river, but all of those interviewed agreed that it has something to do with the water quality.

Winslow and Bass speak of the grass that once grew in the Perquimans and sheltered every species of fry. The grass is gone now. They wonder why.

They mention agricultural runoff, and the damming of waters to the west, speculating that Lake Gaston and other such man-made lakes hold back the

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Patient fisherman

Kenneth Nobles waits patiently for a strike as he fishes the Perquimans River along U.S. 17 business near Hertford.

Area fisherman are wondering just what has happened to all the fish in the river. Photo by PAT MANSFIELD