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SCOTT WATSON

DNR

PLEASE SEE VILAS COUNTY NEWS

ARTICLE COVERING MEETING 7/9/96.

I'M CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR FAILURE

TO GIVE MILITARY CREEK A CLEAN

BILL OF HEALTH. LETS DISCUSS.

JERRY PARKER

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## Contaminated soil, water costs Phelps' company 'hundreds of thousands'

By GARY RIDDERBUSCH

**PHELPS** — The testing of contaminated soil and water near North Twin Lake has already cost the C.M. Christiansen Co. at least \$200,000, according to a company spokesperson, and the actual cleanup process hasn't started.

A preservative that was used to treat wooden telephone poles more than 15 years ago was found in some soils and the groundwater on the C.M. Christiansen Co. property on the east side of Highway E, as well as in Military Creek.

Phil Christiansen said the company has spent "a few hundreds of thousands of dollars" drilling and monitoring the soil, but "has nothing to show for it."

Christiansen, who said he has supported the DNR in the investigation, said his company did nothing wrong by using the preservative from the 1950s to the late 1970s.

"It was perfectly legal," said Christiansen. "We believe it (contamination) occurred when the poles were moved from one vat to another."

However, Christiansen said the company has found no financial assistance for funding the eventual cleanup.

"It seems there's no government help," said Christiansen. "If this thing keeps going, it could break the company, which has been in existence since 1902."

A public informational meeting was held last Tuesday to review the investigation, explain the cleanup of the contaminated site and discuss public health concerns. More than 80 people attended the meeting, jointly conducted by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), and representatives of the C.M. Christ-

iansen Co. of Phelps.

Scott Watson of the DNR explained the project includes the investigation and cleanup of a wood preservative chemical known as pentachlorophenol.

"The wood preservative was used prior to the 1980s to treat wooden telephone poles to prevent them from rotting and extend the time the poles would be in service," explained Watson. "The preservative has been identified in some of the soils and the groundwater below the site on the C.M. Christiansen property, as well as in some of the sediments of Military Creek which is located adjacent to the property."

Christiansen said the preservative actually contained about 95% of number 2 fuel and about 5% of the chemical.

"I hope we can come to some conclusions on how to clean it up this summer," said Christiansen. "But for now, I guess they'll just keep drilling and keep monitoring."

Environmental consultants hired by the company to investigate and clean up the site, as well as representatives of the DNR and the DHSS, presented information on the known environmental and public health concerns at the site.

"With source control, we don't believe there will be a public health problem. It is not in any well water," said Watson. "We are also fairly positive that wildlife is not being affected." The creek where the preservative was found flows into North Twin Lake.

Watson said the greatest areas of contamination on the Christiansen property are where the poles were dipped into the preservative and where the poles were once stored.

There are no longer any buildings on the property where the firm once operated.

course is located at the In-vest of St. Germain.

by GARY RIDDERBUSCH

## Fall election contests set; most activity at state level

While there will be no contests (Minocqua) will face no opposition