

“Blind or just don't want to see”

Stanly County, the NC Water Rights committee, and the Yadkin Riverkeeper, parroted by the Commerce Secretary, Governor, and UNC-TV have attacked Alcoa principally with lies, half-truths, cherry-picked facts, inferences (by all means, let's not forget inferences), and just plain made-up stuff. The Yadkin Riverkeeper's latest is a webpage containing what he calls “Smoking Gun” documents showing Alcoa has known for many years that it was dealing with toxic materials. Without the Riverkeeper's exaggerations and sensationalism, they do show that, but they also show a company doing its best to comply with emerging and evolving regulations as knowledge about toxic chemicals increased, and taking measures to protect its employees and the environment.

This is a process every industry in the nation went through. In 1990, I worked for a company which had, at one time in its past, creosoted railroad ties. They were, at that time, digging up all the contaminated soil and having it hauled to approved waste sites.

One of the Yadkin Riverkeeper's “Smoking Gun” documents is an Alcoa internal memo from April 1997 regarding Alcoa's own discovery of PAHs in sediment beneath the Badin Lake swimming area. Last November the Riverkeeper sent out a press release regarding the same memo, calling it “recently discovered” (well, maybe to him) evidence that the company hid information, showing a pattern of deceit regarding its environmental record. Naujoks went on to say “Alcoa acted as judge and jury in determining by itself that the PAHs (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons) it found in the swimming areas and boating ramp of Badin Lake were harmless to humans.”

With due diligence, Naujoks would have discovered that a credible outside consultant and Luanne K. Williams, a Toxicologist with the state's Department of Environment, Health and Natural Resources, Division of Epidemiology, had also said that the concentrations detected were comparable to concentrations found in urban soil and should not pose a significant health risk. (memo from Luanne K. Williams to Sharon Rogers, May 21, 1997) He also would have known that Alcoa held a public meeting with local government officials and the story was reported on the front page of the Stanly News and Press on May 18, 1997. (Way to hide your pattern of deceit, Alcoa!)

This is one of many, many, many examples of the Yadkin Riverkeeper's own pattern of deceit. There are far too many problems in the world which need our attention to waste our resources on problems the Yadkin Riverkeeper and his allies just make up!

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Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) are present in the carbon dust produced in Alcoa's smelting process. Officials believe the PAHs in the lake's sediment were deposited there years ago as rain water carried the dust from the plant area into the lake.

Chemicals linked to cancer found in Badin Lake

By DAVID DEESE
SNAP Editor

Voluntary testing by Alcoa has revealed the presence of chemicals linked to cancer in humans within the sediments of Badin Lake near the aluminum-producing plant.

But plant officials and health experts believe the presence of the chemical poses no health risk to people.

The chemicals, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), are present in the carbon dust that is produced in the plant's smelting process. Alcoa officials believe the PAHs discovered

in the lake's sediment were deposited there years ago as rain water carried the carbon dust from the plant area and into the lake.

While “polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons” aren't exactly household words, Alcoa and health officials say they are commonly around us in cigarette smoke, paving asphalt, automobile exhausts and even in grilled hamburgers. And the more urban an area is, the more PAHs there are around, they say.

The Alcoa testing found PAHs in

the sediment in the popular swimming and boat-access areas across from the plant, but most of the chemical was in sediment 20-30 feet below the water's surface. No PAHs were found in the water itself, say officials.

Speaking for the Alcoa plant Friday, Gene Ellis, Human Resources Services manager, told a small gathering of local government officials, plant officials and media that the PAHs pose no public health risk to people swimming in the lake or using

the nearby boat access ramp.

Ellis pointed out that the tests were conducted and evaluated in strict accordance with the U.S. government's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) guidelines. The results were further evaluated by Dr. Mark R. Cullen, founder and director of Yale University's School of Medicine, Occupational and Environmental Medicine Program, and Alcoa's medical advisor. According to Ellis, Cullen

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taken steps in recent years to better control and collect the carbon dust, he said.

Wayne Chapman, state biologist, was present at Friday's announcement and asked Alcoa officials about the impact the PAHs may have upon fish, wildlife and vegetation. Ellis and other Alcoa officials present

announcement, Bass also had good things to say about Alcoa's handling of the test results. “I commend them for pro-actively handling this information and for the way they worked with the state to determine the significance of the information,” he said.

(ab 7/28/2010)