

Clean



Currents

Clean Water for North Carolina

Labs Found to be Faking Results

By **Linda Block, Program Coordinator**

We've all been told not to cheat on tests. Unfortunately, more and more private laboratories are being caught falsifying test results for air quality, wastewater and drinking water, petroleum products, underground storage tanks, and soil. The results? Many of us have filled our gas tanks with fuel that violates clean-air standards, officials have cleaned up hazardous waste sites based on incorrect test results, and we have sipped improperly tested drinking water. As suspected by many community groups concerned about polluter accountability, labs are often "in bed with the people who hire them and conspired to commit environmental crimes," according to David Uhlmann, chief of the Justice Department's Environmental Crimes section. Other times labs have independently deceived the companies that submitted samples.

In North Carolina, the Department of Environmental and Natural Resources (DENR) issues pollution permits to industries, sewage plants, and businesses specifying how much and what can be discharged into our air, land, and water. Since the agency has neither the funding nor adequate staff to personally test samples from the thousands of permitted facilities, they are forced to rely on company-generated data reports. Similarly, drinking water treatment plants must sample their own end product to ensure safety to human health. These results are sent to the NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). All facilities must analyze samples in-house or contract with an outside lab, and submit results and regular reports to the appropriate agency.

Certification Process

In North Carolina, any lab producing results for regulatory purposes must receive wastewater certification from DENR or drinking water certification from the State Lab of Public Health, DHHS. Each lab procedure requires its own certification. Requirements include: "proficiency" (ability to generate reliable results for standard samples); submission of necessary paperwork; and undergoing announced or unannounced site visits.

Audits/Inspections

A certified wastewater lab undergoes a scheduled audit once per year, with re-inspection in 3-6 months if a problem is uncovered. Jim Meyers, of DENR's Division of Water Quality, considers this "a lot of oversight." Currently, DENR has only 8 inspectors responsible for conducting audits and reviewing lab reports for approximately 340 labs. Each inspection may take up to 3 days. For additional oversight,

If you need to use a laboratory for analysis:

Check out www.dwqlab.org for a listing of state-certified wastewater labs (under "Branches and Units", click on "Certification") or <http://slph.state.nc.us> (under "Environmental Sciences, click on "Certification") for a list of state certified drinking water labs.



"Always use a certified laboratory," says Diane Morgan and Marilyn Westphal of UNC-Asheville's Environmental Quality Institute, where lead, arsenic and volunteer stream monitoring samples are analyzed.

Chose a lab outside of your area with no connections with the polluting facility. Tour the lab and ask questions. Request copies of the lab's inspection reports, "Performance Evaluation" and "Proficiency" standards. Request the lab's "quality control" documentation for your sample.

Ask the Center for Health Environment and Justice (www.chej.org) and other non-profits about their experience with a particular lab. Information about unethical work gets around.

EPA recently initiated a system of random audits that will become the responsibility of DENR.

Drinking water labs are audited once every three years, a cut back from every 1-1 1/2 years due to budget restraints. There are only 2 1/2 staff to inspect approximately 300 labs.

Sometimes labs are not in compliance. In industry's defense, in the opinion of one EPA chemist, requirements may be overly stringent for the actual needs of regulators, and outdated quality control requirements may still be on the books. But because permit holders are not held accountable for the labs with which they contract, they often take the lowest bid rather than the most qualified lab, and aren't motivated to audit lab performance.

Labs continued on page 3

WHO WE ARE

Clean Water for North Carolina

Clean Water for North Carolina is a private, non-profit organization based in Asheville, NC. CWFNC works to ensure that all people have a right to live, work, and play in clean and safe communities. Together, we have the power and responsibility to work for a healthy and sustainable environment. Our staff works with an active and diverse board of directors and members to increase grassroots involvement in environmental decisions. CWFNC spearheads action statewide and helps grassroots and environmental groups, individuals, and local governments develop strategies to address threats to the environment.

Our Mission

Clean Water for North Carolina promotes clean, safe water and environments and empowered, just communities for all North Carolinians through organizing, education, advocacy and technical assistance.

Board of Directors

Margie Ellison, *Chair* • Pittsboro

Mollie Rose, *Vice Chair* • Asheville

Rick Mass, *Treasurer* • Asheville

Maccene Brown-Lyerly, *Secretary* • Durham

Carrie Oren • Raleigh

Nathanette Mayo • Shiloh

Allen Hubbard • Charlotte

Marshall Tyler • Mocksville

Who to Contact

Asheville

828-251-1291 • 800-929-4480

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hope@cwfn.org

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David Herbert, Organizer
cwfn@main.nc.us

Garysburg

Belinda Joyner, Northeast Organizer
252-537-1078

The Future of Clean Water!

CWFNC Strategic Planning with Board, Staff, members and community builds our organization and program

Starting in November, under the great coordination of Linda Block and the guidance of facilitator Bobbi Tousey, we've devoted at least 40 hours with, dozens of participants, through 6 meetings to planning for the future of Clean Water for North Carolina. Our heartfelt thanks to all of those who contributed their time and careful thinking to making this intense planning possible!

Internally, we've committed to an overall plan for development of the Board, Staff, membership and financial support that will ensure our organizational sustainability, as water and environmental justice issues become ever more critical to rapidly changing communities in our state.

The external part of CWFNC, our "program work," is the face that communities, the media, regulators and policy makers interact with as we work for stronger enforcement, increased public participation and more just and protective environmental policies. We began with a staff review of previous program initiatives, continued with a "visioning" session involving Board and Staff to articulate what success for CWFNC would look like, and solicitation of extensive feedback and recommendations from a diverse community focus group.

Our staff and Board have made a strong recommitment to promoting environmental justice and to continuing to community organizing to develop leadership, power and skills to achieve environmental protection for all North Carolinians. CWFNC staff will prioritize work on water issues, but will continue to work on air quality and toxics issues, as they impact the health and safety of many communities and workers. Our visioning will continue in April, with final prioritizing of program goals at our May 17 Board of Directors meeting. All members are welcome!



CWFNC Board, Staff with facilitators in the midst of our January, 2003 Annual Retreat

First row (l to r): Carrie Oren, Marsall Tyler, Maccene Brown-Lyerly.

Second row: Mollie Rose, Hope Taylor-Guevara, Cynthia Brown (facilitator), Linda Block, Margie Ellison.

Third row: Bobbi Tousey (strategic planning facilitator), Allen Hubbard and Rick Maas.

World Water Day

Each year on March 22, worldwide organizations celebrate World Water Day to draw attention to meeting the world's needs for clean water.

2003 Theme: "Water for the Future" Calling for water rights for all, strong conservation and fair distribution of water to meet human needs.

Does **your** community have water policies that encourage waste, pell-mell development, polluting transportation and industries?

Find out, call CWFNC to help change them.

Polluter Accountability

How Bad Does the Reporting of Sewage Spills Smell?

By David Herbert, Western Organizer

Did you know that the required reporting of sewage spill volume is driven by the efficiency and timeliness of worker response to the spill rather than the actual amount of spill that occurs?

In Asheville on August 29, 2001, a sewage spill into Ross Creek, an impaired stream, was reported as 86,000 gallons based on the time (1hr 5min) from when workers arrived on the scene until the leak was stopped. In fact, the spill had been underway for several hours, possibly for two days, before it had been reported. A nationally recognized scientist measured phosphorus in the stream and estimated the actual spill volume was upwards of 2,000,000 gallons!

To make matters worse, in a summary of spill data reported to EPA for 2001, including tens of millions of gallons for NC alone, the August spill described above doesn't even appear at all! How many more millions of gallons are not even being reported to the public or EPA, so that no monitoring for water quality damage or health warning ever occurs?

Present state legislation requires the operator of a municipal wastewater treatment plant to publish a notice of a discharge of 15,000 gallons or more of untreated wastewater in a newspaper of general circulation in the county where the discharge occurred. But in meeting the letter of the law in the Asheville example, the "notice" to the public consisted of a classified ad in the legal notice section of a Saturday paper!

...millions of gallons of raw sewage are going into our surface and underground waters polluting this ever decreasing resource...

So just what is the benefit to the public of reporting only a fraction of the actual amount of sewage spills and then making it known in such a minimal and obscure manner? To quote the local County Health Center director, "... I do know that the legal notice we are requiring operators to publish is a pointless endeavor, read by nobody, and not adequately describing the public health implications of the problem."

Finally, using only the minimum figures of annual sewage spills across the state, millions of gallons of raw sewage are going into our surface and underground waters polluting this ever decreasing resource. Its impact will never be fully realized until regulations governing reporting and accountability are revised to reflect, not a bureaucratic protection perspective but rather a public health threat which affects thousands of citizens and must not be marginalized.

Because of reports from concerned communities, we are tracking recent spills near Henderson, Oxford, Raleigh and High Point, but we know that dozens of wastewater treatment plants and their collection lines had spills during power outages due to this winter's ice storms. There's no excuse for inadequate backup systems and failing pump stations except bad management and, as the News and Observer commented recently about Raleigh's own scandal-ridden wastewater plant, cities trying to manage public systems "on the cheap," to keep taxes down and businesses happy. Clean Water for North Carolina intends to examine this issue in depth and make strong recommendations for public notification, infrastructure improvements and enforcement to protect our waters. If you have a problem with sewage spills in our community, please contact us to help in our effort to develop strong recommendations for responsible wastewater management to protect our waters.

Labs continued from front cover

What's wrong in the labs?

Fraud cases are most often with commercial labs, according to Meyers and Mike King, Supervisor of the Drinking Water Certification Office at the State Lab of Public Health. When a lab becomes financially reliant on a particularly large contract, there is a natural desire to appease their employers. Other times, labs are over-burdened and try to save money and time by not following quality assurance and quality control procedures or by changing test methods. According to King, "Data fraud is one of the hardest things to catch. Unless you are there, there is just no way to catch it. There is a lot of inherent trust in the program."

What happens when a company self-reports a permit violation?

A permit holder may voluntarily report one problem in order to mask another larger one or they may simply be honest and do "the right thing." The "reward" for their honesty may be a full audit, which can

result in fines, shutdowns, or costly changes to their system – quite a disincentive for future truthfulness. But wait, isn't that why industry is reporting in the first place? If there is a problem, it needs to get fixed quickly to protect human health and the environment.

Even if the lab produces credible results, there is the possibility that a permitted facility may change the results to suit their needs. In the last 4 years, there have been three such cases related to wastewater in North Carolina that resulted in civil penalties and at least two cases related to drinking water.

Despite the growing trend nationally of lab fraud, there have been very few cases of lab fraud in North Carolina in recent years. Perhaps that is due to the state's diligence in oversight. Perhaps there are some labs that have not yet been caught. Just like that high school teacher that seemed to have eyes on the backside of her head, pay attention, ask good questions, and hold labs accountable for honest, high quality work.

Focus on Communities

Asheville—A Buncombe County Superior Court judge has just granted legal standing to residents of several Asheville neighborhoods who have sued to block construction of a Walmart Supercenter along the Swannanoa River. Funds raised for this lawsuit, filed last September, have been nearly depleted but citizens have been heartened by this latest decision which allows the case to go forward. The suit alleges that City Council did not follow proper procedure when it approved the development last summer, amidst an outpouring of community protests citing safety, traffic and major environmental impacts. Also pending, is a DENR decision on the developers proposed cleanup plan for a toxic plume in the middle of the proposed construction site.

Burnsville—Banks Creek Citizens for Clean Water, a Yancey county group challenging major golf developer Mountain Air, has fought off legal maneuvers by the corporation to dismiss the contested case against their water quality certification to expand, and to deny them “standing” to go forward. Leaders Nancy Hensley and Diane Kent, who have watched the destruction of streams by Mountain Air’s construction for years, are determined to use this case to get stronger provisions for permits statewide, to stop the destruction of pristine trout streams and to develop realistic standards for mountain developments. CWFNC will continue supporting them strongly in their efforts. We salute them for their commitment to justice for our state’s waters and for downstream communities!

Brevard—Last August, the Ecusta Mill, maker of cigarette and bible papers, closed down after months of demands by owners for wage concessions from workers. Transylvania County’s unemployment rate is now the highest in the state at nearly 14%. International investor Nat Puri, who had bought the company and began divesting assets even before labor negotiations went sour, made no commitment to keeping environmental systems running after declaring bankruptcy and putting the mill up for sale. Without wastewater treatment of fluids collected from toxic landfills, both groundwater and nearby rivers are threatened. While the NC Attorney General has intervened to keep systems operating, the state never should have let itself get in this position! CWFNC is proposing state legislation to require polluters to post an environmental performance bond before being issued a permit to operate, especially for toxic industries like pulp and paper. That way, funds will already be available to handle environmental operations and clean up at abandoned or bankrupt facilities.

Gaston County—Folks downwind of chronic air quality offender Carolina By-Products animal rendering plant in Gastonia remain unhappy with a NC Administrative Law Judge’s decision reducing DENR penalties against them from \$96,000 to \$68,000. Despite the company’s efforts to further reduce the fines, the NC Environmental Management Commission ruled in March that the judge’s ruling stands. Just over the border in South Carolina, citizens are taking on another CBP plant for similar environmental insults. A class action suit filed in US District Court in Columbia in behalf of all persons residing within a four mile radius of CBP’s Ward, SC plant alleges that plant has, since opening in 1995, frequently discharged air and water pollutants creating offensive, nauseating, and intolerable odors, and decimating the quality of the plaintiffs’ lives.

DENR Regional Offices

Asheville • 828-251-6208 Fayetteville • 910-486-1541
Mooresville • 704-663-1699 Raleigh • 919-571-4700
Washington • 252-946-6481 Wilmington • 910-395-3900
Winston-Salem • 336-771-4600

If they don’t respond, call US! • 828-251-1291

Focus on Communities



Oxford—Granville County’s Environmental Advisory Committee has released a powerful new report on the application of sewage sludge on 12% of the county’s agricultural land. Only five counties, Orange, Davie, Harnett, Robeson and Union, have more acres permitted for sludge application, which often includes heavy metals, persistent toxic compounds and pathogens, with occasional analyses required for only nine toxins out of thousands likely to be present. The study’s authors, Committee Chair Brenda Currin and project investigator Neil Gresham (whose family farm is adjacent to major sludge applications), found that neither the state nor EPA monitors these applications for contaminants or timing and that staffing and testing are completely inadequate to protect the waters to which these fields drain, or the health of farmland for future crops or grazing. The report concludes that the county should establish a local monitoring and enforcement program and strengthen and fully implement its own ordinance to protect county residents, landowners and the future of our water quality and agriculture.



Neuse, Cape Fear, White Oak and New River Basins—With leadership from Rick Dove and many other NC activists who have been fighting industrial hog operations for over a decade, Sierra Club, NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council) and the Waterkeeper Alliance filed a suit in March against a new EPA farm pollution rule. The groups argue that the rule violates the Clean Water Act by allowing large-scale livestock operations to continue to foul the nation’s waterways with animal waste through unregulated spreading of manure on fields, and would actually provide a “shield” to damage claims on factory farms. The administration’s rule “puts corporate profits ahead of environmental protection,” said Robert F. Kennedy Jr., president of Waterkeeper Alliance. A successful suit could finally change the practices and permitting for hundreds of operations impacting NC waters, as well as quality of life for many communities.

ACTION on Clean Air, Water and Toxics

No Toxic Accountability for North Carolina's Biggest Air Polluters!

Toxic Power Plants are Exempted from Critical NC Regulations

In the midst of one of the nation's most active clean air campaigns, resulting in the passage of landmark legislation to clean up coal-fired power plant emissions, many North Carolinians are unaware that those same utility plants are exempt from the state's Air Toxics program! While even mid-sized manufacturers are required to



evaluate their emissions for ambient levels of many toxic air pollutants, the huge coal-fired boilers are allowed to escape such regulation due to a loophole they lobbied hard for when the program was first implemented. Duke Power and Progress Energy, which get about half of their power from coal, are among the region's largest corporations and leaders in the state's polluter lobby.

The state's largest toxic air emitter is the Progress Energy (formerly CP&L) Roxboro Steam Station in Person County, releasing nearly 19 million pounds of toxins a year, according to the EPA's Toxic Releases Inventory. Its nearby sister plant, Mayo, releases nearly half as much toxics, the total making Person county the largest air toxics releasing county in North Carolina, the 26th highest in the nation. Even more startling, both plants expect to INCREASE their toxic emissions in the coming years as they increase capacity! THE EXEMPTION FOR UTILITY BOILERS FROM NC AIR TOXICS RULES MUST

BE REMOVED TO PROTECT THE HEALTH OF NEARBY AND DOWNWIND COMMUNITIES!

A More Protective Standard for "Rotten Egg" Hydrogen Sulfide? Relief in Sight!

North Carolina's current standard for the rotten egg smelling eye and respiratory irritant, hydrogen sulfide, is the worst in the nation, allowing nearly 100 times the health levels established by other states. The NC Science Advisory Board for Air Toxics (SAB), headed by internationally known dioxin scientist Dr. George Lucier, has recommended lowering the state standard to Adopt two standards for H₂S to 33 ug/m³ for a 24-hr average, based on eye irritation, and 56 ug/m³ for a one hour average based on respiratory effects in asthmatics. Dr. Lucier also pointed out that the SAB has proposed stronger standards for 30 more air toxic compounds on which the state has not acted! Hydrogen sulfide comes mostly from a huge PCS Phosphate operation on the Pamlico River and from 6 large pulp and paper mills in the state.

At its recent meetings, the Air Quality Committee of the NC Environmental Management Commission has heard presentations from state Air Quality staff, an industrial lobbyist (who said, of course, that the costs would be too high for industry to lower the standard to the SAB-recommended level), and Amber Munger of Environmental Defense, speaking for the environmental community for strong regulation. Some Commissioners were initially inclined not to take this rulemaking seriously, and leaned toward delaying action. However, Commissioner Delilah Blanks, the only African-American on the panel, who lives near the state's largest pulp and paper mill at Reigelwood, introduced a motion to take the recommended standards to public hearings this summer. Other Commissioners introduced weaker proposals, but the public will get to comment on all of them, a great format for organizing public support for the best standards! Stay tuned and watch for announcement of the hearings this summer.

Tuesday March 25

Clean Water Lobby Day, Raleigh, NC

Friday-Saturday, April 4-5

NC Watershed Coalition Statewide Conference, Salisbury

Catawba College Center for the Environment

Contact: Scott Jackson, 828-215-4015

Tuesday, April 22, 2003

Earth Day! Celebrate where you live.

Saturday, April 26, 2003

Greening Up the Mountain, Sylva, NC

Earth Day street festival—visit CWFNC at our booth.

Friday night and Saturday, May 2-3

Rolling Thunder Democracy Tour, Asheville "A county fair with guts." An uplifting celebration that strengthens community organizations to empower people. Jim Hightower, Laura Love, Fruit of Labor, and other speaker, entertainers and activist workshops. **Contact:** Hope, 828-251-1291, or <http://main.nc.us/rollingthunder/>

Clean Water Calendar for Spring 2003

Saturday, May 10

Human Race - UNC Asheville - 5K Walk, Run, or Roll

(wheelchairs, wagons, strollers) 9:00—Noon

Solicit pledges in name of CWFNC and participate or sponsor!

Contact: David Herbert, 828-251-1291

Saturday, May 17

Clean Water for North Carolina spring Board of Directors Meeting, Mocksville

All members welcome, program planning for 2003-2004.

Contact: Hope at hope@cwfn.org for more info.

Saturday, June 7

2nd Annual French Broad Paddle Challenge, 9 a.m., 16 miles, Westfeldt Park, near Asheville Airport

Contact: 828.252.8474 ext. 115



Clean Water for North Carolina

Thanks to all of CWFNC's great volunteers!

Emma Patti is a gifted freshman at Robeson High School. Between sports seasons, Emma has found time to come to our office and help us sort through our collection of photos and slides and helped prepare our office for renovations in December. Emma also recently entered competition with a magnificent history project on Champion, Blue Ridge Paper and the long-polluted Pigeon River.



Todd Lee is participating in our "Adopt-a-Permit" program and is monitoring the sewage treatment facility at Windy Gap Camp in Buncombe County.

Ben Kunka is a UNC-Asheville student studying Environmental Science and Spanish. Ben is translating our lead-testing brochure and instructions so that CWFNC can ensure this important information reaches Latino communities across the state.

Toby Heaton is a freelance photographer and writer, who helped document conditions at the Mountain Air golf development with aerial photos and interviews of residents.



Toby Heaton

Community Focus Group participants who gave us feedback on our program work:

Jackie Hallum, Nann Guthrie, Scott Quaranda, Sharon Martin, Todd Lee, Joe Haun, Phil Gibson, Lucy King, Ralph King, Ginny Lindsay, Dewayne Barton

Other community feedback from C.L. Barnes, Larry Stenger, Jim and Beverly Carroll, Sarah Beth Roberts, Jay Weatherly, Montie Hamby, Tim Milling, Toby Heaton, Blair Pollock, Cecil Bothwell, Carol Haack

Thanks to all of you for your time and dedication to being a part of our work!

What's Your CWFNC Staff Been Up To Recently?

Here's just a sample:

David, Western Organizer

- Researching sewage spills and state reporting of spills to EPA
- Organizing and coordinating with partner groups fighting polluters and development in Asheville and Gastonia
- Coordinated publications and mailings

Linda, Program Coordinator

- Coordinating CWFNC's strategic planning with staff, board, community members, and a facilitator
- Developing the Adopt-a-Permit programs
- Facilitated a Stream Monitoring Information Exchange with regional watershed groups, agency representatives, consultants, educators, and interested individuals.
- Coordinating logistics and outreach for Clean Water Lobby Day

Belinda, Northeast Organizer

- Coordinated Concerned Citizens of Northampton County in a focused effort to redirect local economic development to non-polluting industries

Hope, Exec. Director

- Addressed Common Cause, student groups on corporate polluter accountability.
- Organizing and technical assistance for communities from Burnsville to Oxford
- Prepared grant proposals to foundations and major donors
- Helped organize public participation to challenge the state's biggest coal fired power plant and demand stricter standards for papermill and fertilizer plant sulfur emissions

Thanks to Our 2003 Foundation Partners and Major Donors for their Generous Support!

Beldon Fund
Dandelion Fund
Mitchell Kapor Foundation
New Leaf Fund of the Community
Foundation of Western North Carolina
Julian Price Family Foundation
Norman Foundation
Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation
Patagonia, Inc.
Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation
Fred and Alice Stanback
Winterberry Fund

Join Clean Water for North Carolina (or renew your membership)!

\$100 + = Clean Water Patron
\$50-99 = Clean Water Defender
\$25-49 = Clean Water Advocate
\$15-24 = Clean Water Supporter

I would like to volunteer, please contact me.

Please send me a newsletter.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

(Email is a faster and cheaper way for us to reach you.)

**Make your check payable to: Clean Water for North Carolina
Send it to:**

29½ Page Avenue • Asheville, NC 28801



Clean Water for North Carolina

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Asheville NC 28801
info@cwfn.org

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Permit #70

Clean Water Lobby Day at the North Carolina General Assembly on March 25th! Did you miss it this year? Find out more in our next issue of Clean Currents and join us next year to show your legislators how important water issues are to you!

This newsletter is printed on 80% post-consumer, processed chlorine free paper.

Stop the Sneak Attack on Our Environment

While the drums of war have been distracting legislators and the public, the federal administration has been seizing the opportunity to push major policy changes to weaken environmental protections. Here's how you can help stop the sneak attack:

Don't even think about it, EPA! Stop choking our communities with the threat of increased air pollution!

Proposed new rules from EPA on New Source Review would weaken controls on new and expanding air polluting operations. Don't let this happen! Because of our Clean Smokestacks Act and pressure from NC legislators, **one of five national hearings on NSR will be at the EPA Research Triangle headquarters near Raleigh on March 31st.** You have to register to speak by March 26 by contacting Ms. Chandra Kennedy at 919-541-5319 or kennedy.chandra@epa.gov. Comments will be limited to five minutes in length. The public comment period for this rule extends through May 3, 2003. We'll see you at the hearing!

Prevent stripping away Clean Water Act protections from many US waters!

Let the EPA know that you won't stand for removing tens of thousands of US stream miles and hundreds of thousands of wetlands from the protection of the Clean Water Act. A recent bad court decision has given the pell-mell sprawl advocates at EPA the excuse to try to drastically narrow the jurisdiction of the CWA. **Speak Out to Protect the CWA before April 16. Go to www.cwn.org and follow the Action and News links to example letters to the editor and comments to EPA. Do it today!**

Clean Water has several videos available for loan. If you would like to host a showing and discussion at home, or other gathering place, please let us know. Here are three we've recently acquired:

Outstanding Videos Available for Your Viewing

Blue Vinyl: A Toxic Comedy (1 hour)

A decision to "re-side" a house with polyvinyl chloride (PVC) turns into a toxic odyssey that most ordinary homeowners would never dare to take. Travel to America's vinyl manufacturing capital and beyond in search of answers about the nature and production of polyvinyl chloride. The result is a humorous but sobering and uniquely personal exploration of the relationship between consumers and industry.

Kids and Chemicals (1 hour)

Bill Moyer investigates the relationship between environmental contamination and the health of America's children. Medical investigators and health officials discuss recent findings. Families whose children are coping with potential chemical poisoning share their anger and fears.

Trade Secrets (2 hours)

Most Americans believe that the government is making sure that they are protected from any of the thousands of harmful substances currently in use, but are they? In this video, Bill Moyer sets the record straight, drawing on industry documents and interviews with historians, scientists, and public health professionals who explore the effects of chemicals on the public's health and safety.