

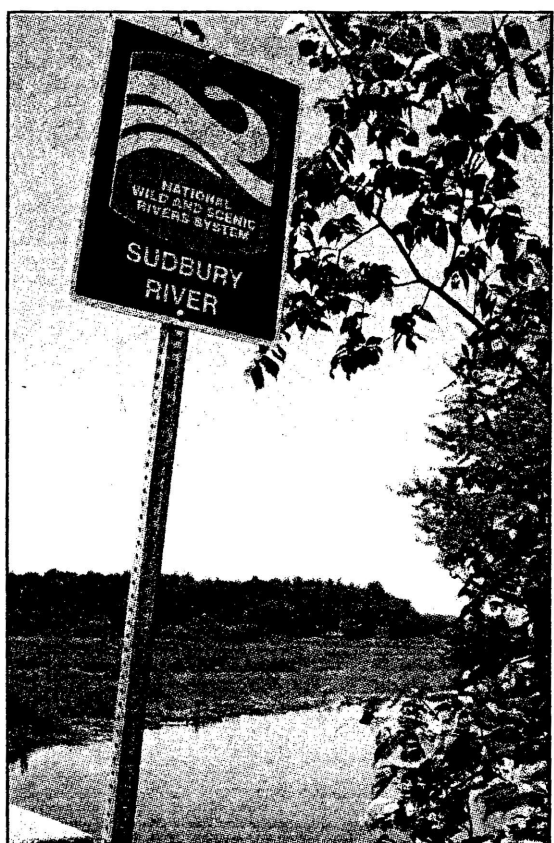
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STAFF PHOTO BY BEAR CIERI

The company that owns the site of the former Raytheon Corp. in Wayland will be cleaning up about 1.7 acres of wetlands on the Sudbury River.

Cleaning up the past

Combined effort will help remove toxic contaminants from Raytheon's former site

By Peter Reuell
NEWS STAFF WRITER

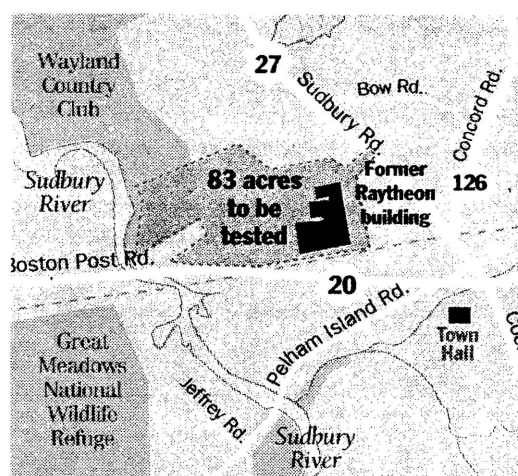
WAYLAND — That the 83-acre swath of land located at 430 Boston Post Road is contaminated with a slew of potentially toxic chemicals has long been something of an open secret.

Contamination on the site, which once housed Raytheon Corp. and Polaroid Corp., was first spotted back in the early 1980s, but cleanup efforts were slow to materialize.

Now, thanks to the persistent work of town officials and property owners, and an unusually cooperative former tenant, the land should soon be back on its way to environmental health.

Raytheon officials this week said the company is waiting to receive a handful of permits from federal, state and local agencies to begin part of the cleanup. Work could begin as early as next month.

"Raytheon expects to start work on the wetland remediation by the end of September or beginning of October," Raytheon spokes-



woman Amy Hosmer said.

That's music to the ears of local residents like Linda Segal, a former selectman who has been eyeing the site for more than three years.

Tests have shown the wetlands hold high levels of contamination, she said. **CLEANUP, Page A8**

Cleanup work at Wayland site may begin next month

CLEANUP, From A1

els of PCBs, a possible carcinogen, as well as dangerous levels of heavy metals including copper and chromium.

"That they'll be able to start work on resolving the issues and the wetlands ... that is certainly good news," Segal said. "It's good news for everybody."

Once it gets under way, the first stage of the cleanup will involve excavating nearly an acre and a half of contaminated wetlands on the site and trucking the contaminated soil away.

With the soil removed, workers will rebuild the wetland with clean soil and restore the wetland with natural plant species.

The work marks the end of a process that began nearly three years ago, when Raytheon officials started their cleanup efforts. Though it had long been recognized as a hazardous waste site, it wasn't until three years ago that Raytheon stepped forward with plans to clean the property.

Flush with a recent successful cleanup of Dow Chemical's Rice Road property, residents, with then-Selectman Segal's support, went to the state asking environmental regulators to give the public a say in the cleanup.

The request put the cleanup under the state's Public Involvement Process (PIP) regulations, essentially forcing Raytheon to hold a series of public meetings on the proposed cleanup, and allowing residents to sound off on the plan.

The lengthy meeting process probably slowed the cleanup work, Wayland Conservation Commissioner Andy Irwin admitted, but public involvement led to the discovery of wider contamination than originally thought.

Based on concerns raised by neighbors, further groundwater testing revealed a plume of perchloroethylene in the site's northwest corner. Studies are under way to determine the ex-

mediate fear, but there certainly is an awareness by all parties ... to make sure it does not impact any resources like drinking water wells."

That dedication — particularly from Raytheon's side of the table — drew high praise from town officials.

"They have been very responsive," Irwin said, pointing out the company even funding the town's hiring a consultant to pore over the cleanup's technical data.

For Cambridge-based Congress Group Ventures, the property owner, the cleanup is even more crucial. In recent years, potential tenants have shied away from the complex over fears of the contamination, said Paula Phillips, Cambridge Group vice president of operations.

"It certainly is a stigma," she admitted. "(It) absolutely complicates the property. When there is a proliferation of alternatives in the marketplace, tenants have tended to have so many more choices, why trouble themselves?"

And though it may not look it, the site is doubly important to the town as one of two bookends for downtown Wayland.

"It's right in the heart of our downtown area," selectmen Chairman Betsy Connolly said.

As part of a recently launched downtown planning effort, residents highlighted the importance of keeping the complex occupied and vibrant — something the cleanup will help do, she said.

"It's pretty clear ... that people are interested in having more of a town center," Connolly said. "It's pretty clear we need to do some more planning to get there, and that property is critical to that effort."

With Raytheon willing to work the town, officials such as Selectman Brian O'Herlihy say they're hopeful they'll see the site soon come back to life, filled with new tenants.

"They've been very, very good," he said, of Raytheon's commitment.

tent of the contamination.

"The important thing to realize is that while it is one property, (there are) several distinct areas where there is contamination," Irwin said.

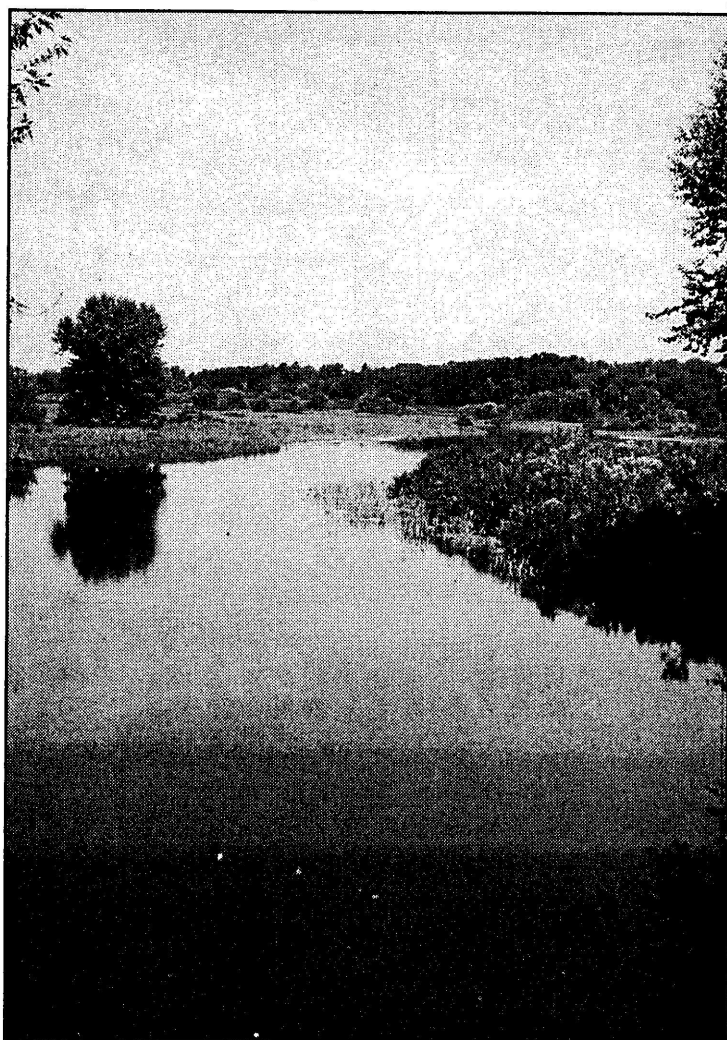
With town wells only a short distance north of the new-found contamination, the area may prove even more important than the ruined wetlands.

"It's a close enough distance to the drinking water wells that people are paying attention to that," Segal said. "That doesn't mean it translates into any im-

To date, he said, the company has put up some \$50,000 to fund the town's consultant, and officials are poised to ask for more as the cleanup gets under way.

"That certainly — in these tough financial times — has taken a great fiscal burden off the town," he said. "Raytheon has shown they want to work with the town. They've stepped up to the plate."

(Peter Reuell can be reached at 508-626-4428 or preuell@cnc.com.)



STAFF PHOTO BY BEAR CIERI

The Raytheon Corp. will be cleaning up about 1.7 acres of wetlands along the Sudbury River, as seen from a bridge on Rte. 20 in Wayland.