

By Jaclyn Brenning
The Paducah Sun

GILBERTSVILLE, Ky. — Sharon Noffsinger of Muhlenberg County has spent every Fourth of July at the Kentucky Dam Village State Resort Park campground for more than 40 years. Katie, her black and white rat terrier, has been coming for three.

Katie goes everywhere with Noffsinger and the

Attractions1D

grandchildren. She goes on walks in the park and sleeps in the air-conditioned camper. And she tags along in the family boat to watch the shower of fireworks over Kentucky Lake.

"She's a great little dog," Noffsinger said, scratching between the terrier's ears Thursday afternoon. "You should really see her try to go fishing with us."

Noffsinger is one of about 220 guests in the campground over the holiday weekend.

Her first trip meant sleeping in a truck bed with a tarp stretched over it as a tent. Next was a real tent, then a used RV and finally a new RV.

Please see **HOLIDAY** / 12A

DOE neighbors question buyout

■ **Contaminated water attracts study of possible property purchases.**

By Joe Walker
Sun Business Editor
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Glenda Wray shook her head at the idea of a \$300,000 study to help the federal government decide whether to offer to buy contaminated land around the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant.

"We don't want to sell our property," she said, "and we don't want somebody else taking it to resell for industry."

She and her son, Joey Wray,

both residents of Metropolis Lake Road just east of the plant, were among about 80 people who attended a Department of Energy meeting Thursday night to discuss the congressionally mandated study. The meeting was held immediately behind the plant in the West Kentucky Wildlife Management Area clubhouse, whose well is contaminated and capped.

Many in attendance were among the 121 plant-neighboring households and businesses who have received free municipal water from DOE since 1994 because of an es-

Please see **WATER** / 11A

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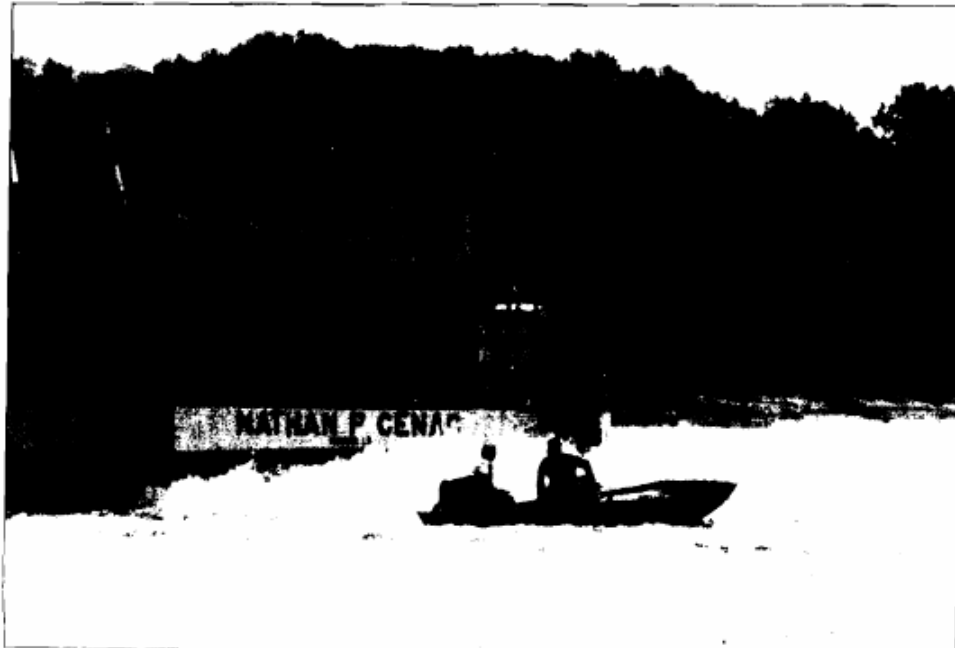


Photo by Jeff Yates

Close quarters: Two men continue fishing after their small boat is rocked by the wake of the

Contamination near plant ...

Continued from 1A

timated 10 billion gallons of contaminated groundwater. The area is 60 to 120 feet deep, flows from the plant to the Ohio River and chiefly contains trichloroethylene once liberally used by plant workers as a degreaser.

"It's another example to me of a waste of money," Joey Wray said. "They keep saying there's no health risk from it. If there's no health risk, why bother?"

The Wrays were among about 135 people owning 82 pieces of land who joined a 1997 federal lawsuit alleging former plant contractors poisoned and devalued their land. The suit remains before the U.S. 6th Circuit Court of Appeals after being dismissed in Paducah in early 2004.

Joey Wray said his and his mother's wells were sealed by DOE in return for getting free municipal water. He said they were told their wells are contaminated, but have never seen information to verify that.

Vicki Jurka of Golconda, Ill., asked how many private wells near the plant are contaminated above drinking water standards. DOE's Rich Bonczek said he was not sure, but that information would be made available to resi-

dents.

Afterward, Jurka said she understands there are five contaminated wells, but has asked for six years and never received an official answer. A member of the watchdog group Active Citizens for Truth, she is concerned about radioactive substances being in vegetables near the uranium enrichment factory.

The meeting kicked off the study, which sprang from a plant citizens' advisory board recommendation in March 2004. DOE has hired the University of Kentucky-based Kentucky Research Consortium for Energy and Environment to do the work. A draft report is due Sept. 15 and a final report Oct. 31. Another public meeting will be held in October.

Bill Murphie, who oversees DOE cleanup work at the plant, said the study will determine the cost-efficiency of a buyout but will not make recommendations. "Purchasing property like this is kind of an extraordinary measure ... The default is to not do that."

But the groundwater contamination "doesn't speak well of DOE's past practices," he said. The area is one of the largest in the nation, Murphie said, adding that the study will help DOE decide long-term cleanup options.

Consortium director Lindell Ormsbee said his group will evaluate a range of land-cleanup alternatives in terms of cost and protecting public health and the environment. The information will be used by DOE in meeting the federal legislation, which requires studying whether a buyout "is in the best interests of taxpayers."

Ormsbee said the study will focus on land under which U-shaped contaminated groundwater flows. Radioactive technetium, another pollutant, is mainly confined to the plant grounds, he said.

Public and private land will be evaluated in blocks at fair market value as compared with other property in McCracken County. Among the options considered will be outright purchase, buying the land but allowing residents to stay, or purchasing easements.

Ragland bond set at \$1 million

Associated Press

LEXINGTON, Ky. — A man accused of murdering a University of Kentucky football player must post a \$1 million bond to be released pending his second trial, a judge ruled Thursday.

Shane Ragland, accused of shooting Trent DiGiuro in 1994, sought a lower bond. Fayette Circuit Judge Thomas Clark also stipulated that Ragland pay for an electronic monitoring program and refrain from drugs.

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