

# NPL Site Narrative for Saltville Waste Disposal Ponds

## SALTVILLE WASTE DISPOSAL PONDS Saltville, Virginia

**Conditions at listing (December 1982):** The Saltville Waste Disposal Ponds Site consists of two ponds adjacent to the North Fork of the Holston River, at Saltville, Smyth County, Virginia. Between 1951 and 1972, chlorine and caustic soda were produced at a plant near the ponds. Although the plant itself has been demolished, the ponds remain, with approximately 11 million tons of mercury-contaminated waste. Discharges from past operation of the plant and leachate from the ponds have contaminated 50 miles of the North Fork of the Holston River with mercury. Since September 1970, this portion of the river has been closed to fishing for eating purposes (game fishing is allowed on a "catch and release" basis).

A task force comprised of EPA (Region III), Virginia State Water Control Board, Tennessee Valley Authority, and the Tennessee Department of Public Health was organized in 1979 to study the mercury contamination problem. Several steps have already been taken under a State order to stop discharges from the waste ponds, and portions of the river were dredged in 1982 to remove mercury-contaminated sediments.

**Status (July 1983):** The river is being monitored to measure the effectiveness of the cleanup measures.

For more information about the hazardous substances identified in this narrative summary, including general information regarding the effects of exposure to these substances on human health, please see the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) ToxFAQs. ATSDR ToxFAQs can be found on the Internet at [ATSDR - ToxFAQs](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp) (<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp>) or by telephone at 1-888-42-ATSDR or 1-888-422-8737.