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North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

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Warning Issued Against Eating Certain Fish from Lake Crabtree, All Fish from Brier Creek

RALEIGH— Officials with the North Carolina Division of Public Health today announced that they are issuing advisories against eating all fish from Brier Creek downstream of Brier Creek Reservoir in Wake County, and carp and catfish from Lake Crabtree, because fish in these areas have shown high levels of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). Exposure to PCBs may increase the risk of developing cancer, infection, and skin problems. For infants, exposure to PCBs may cause learning deficiencies. Wake County Parks officials have also posted warning signs.

This fish consumption advisory recommends the following:

- Brier Creek (downstream of Brier Creek Reservoir) – Do not eat any fish from Brier Creek.
- Lake Crabtree – Do not eat carp or catfish. Limit consumption of all other fish from Lake Crabtree to no more than one meal per month. When in doubt about the fish species, do not eat any of the fish.

These advisories are an extension of the fish advisories that were issued upstream along Little Brier Creek and Brier Creek Reservoir in December 2003. The December 2003 fish consumption advisory recommended against eating fish from the following areas:

- Brier Creek Reservoir;
- Little Brier Creek downstream of Brier Creek Parkway; and
- One unnamed tributary to Little Brier Creek.

PCBs were once widely used in electrical transformers as coolants and lubricants. Although they have not been manufactured in the United States since 1977, PCBs still show up at low levels in old transformers. The Wake County contamination was discovered as a result of an investigation of the Ward Transformer facility, which is located on Mount Herman Road near Raleigh Durham International Airport. Ward currently reconditions only old non-PCB transformers. The company's current process is in compliance with environmental regulations. However, the process that the company used from 1964 to 1979 allowed PCBs to escape into the environment. Because of that past contamination, the site is on the National Priority List for investigation by the U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) federal Superfund program.

Environmental and health officials continue to study the Ward Transformer site.

North Carolina environmental officials routinely monitor water and fish from North Carolina for environmental contaminants. Public Health officials issue fish consumption advisories based on those findings. Information on this and other fish consumption advisories is available on the Internet at <http://www.epi.state.nc.us/epi/fish/>.

Individuals with questions regarding these fish advisories can contact Dr. Luanne Williams with the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services at 919-715-6429. Individuals with questions regarding the environmental investigation can contact Ms. Jeanette Stanley with the North Carolina Superfund Section at 919-733-2801, extension 318.

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