

TOXINS in GLYNN COUNTY

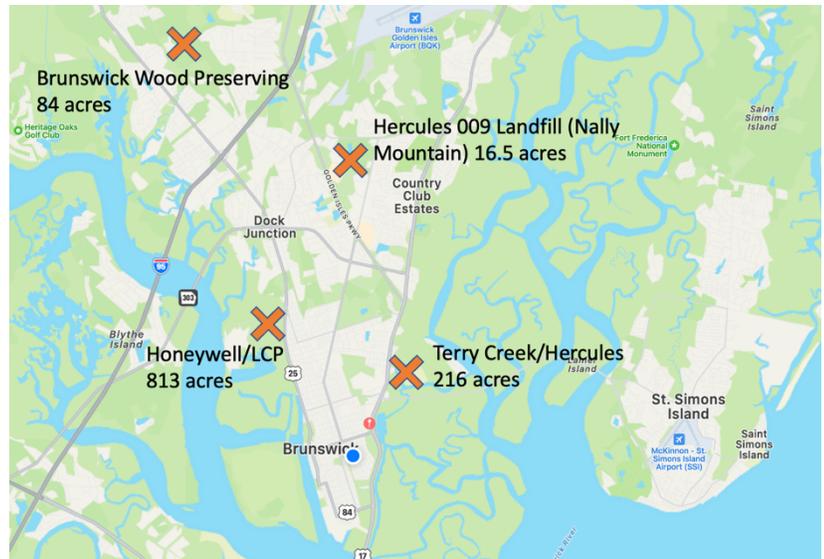
Fact Sheet

Coastal Georgia is home to some of the most scenic marshes on the planet. However, industrial pollution at hazardous waste sites plague our waters and threaten the health of our families. Our federal and state governments hold much of the authority to require the clean-up of these toxic sites and regulate the release of harmful chemicals into our water and land. But federal and state decisions are too often disconnected from local reality and move too slowly to offer help and healing to local communities. The good news is that there is hope for communities to demand attention and clean-up that can improve their health and quality of life.

BACKGROUND

The Georgia coast has more than 60 sites listed on the Hazardous Site Inventoryⁱ. Four Superfund sitesⁱⁱ (or 25 % of the states Superfund sites) are in Glynn County, including:

- **Hercules 009 Landfill siteⁱⁱⁱ** is south of the Nalley Brunswick car dealership and east of the Golden Isles Parkway (GA-25 Spur). The site is a former landfill where Hercules deposited hazardous material and chemical wastes from 1976 until the early 1980s.
- **Brunswick Wood Preserving site^{iv}**, on Perry Lane Road, housed wood treatment and preserving operations from 1958 to 1991. Regular use of dangerous chemicals contaminated the site's groundwater, soil, and adjoining Burnett Creek, requiring extensive clean-up.
- **Terry Creek Dredge Spoil Areas/Hercules Outfall site^v** is contaminated heavily with toxaphene, a pesticide widely used on cotton farms in the southeast. Between 1948 and 1980, Hercules operated the pesticide production plant and discharged wastewater from the facility through the outfall ditch. The outfall ditch has the highest levels of contamination and still discharges wastewater from Pinova. The complete site is 216 acres and includes dredge spoil islands, marshes, and Dupree and Terry creeks.
- **Honeywell/LCP Chemicals site^{vi}** is one of the largest Superfund sites in the United States - at 813 acres. From the 1920s through 1994, various operations (including an oil refinery, coal-fired power plant, and chemical, paint, and varnish manufacturing plants) contaminated soil, groundwater, marshlands, and adjacent waterways. These industries polluted the site with PCBs, mercury, and other toxins formerly used in industrial operations.



Former industrial activities that caused extensive chemical releases have ceased at the Superfund sites, but the legacy of contamination that remains continues to cause harm to local people and wildlife.



LCP Chemicals site in operation, date unknown



Honeywell/LCP Chemicals site aerial, 2020

THREATS TO HUMAN HEALTH AND WILDLIFE

Every time we swim, fish, or eat seafood caught near hazardous sites, people risk dangerous exposure to chemicals such as toxaphene and PCBs. Serious health impacts will result from eating fish, shellfish, and animals that live in or near contaminated water and land. Scientific studies found contaminants in Glynn County marshes, wildlife, and people as far as 70 miles away.^{vii} Each Superfund site in Glynn County has remaining pollution on-site or uncontained pollution. In fact, EPA's Superfund Human Exposure Dashboard,^{viii} considers the Honeywell/LCP site as NOT UNDER CONTROL, meaning human exposure is dangerously high. This disproportionately impacts those who live in communities surrounding the sites, many of whom are subsistence fishermen and many who live in poverty.

Toxic chemicals of concern in Glynn County include, but are not limited to:

- Toxaphene,^{ix} a pesticide, was generated at the Hercules plant between 1948 and 1980. It is a mixture of over 670 different chemicals and was banned by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) when they discovered the chemicals cause damage to the central nervous system in mammals. Toxaphene is known to cause developmental effects, including behavioral effects and immunosuppression (the partial or complete suppression of the immune response of an individual) in lab studies.
- Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)^x are a group of man-made chemicals that were used in industrial and commercial operations as electrical insulators. Their use was banned in 1979, but products containing them may still be in use. PCBs are probable human carcinogens, meaning there is likely an association between exposure to PCBs and cancer, including melanoma, Non-Hodgkin lymphoma, breast cancer, and liver cancer. Exposure to PCBs also has non-cancer health effects, including immune system suppression, deficits in learning and neurological development, and reproductive system effects such as decreased birth weight and birth defects. PCBs are easily absorbed by the body and stored in fatty tissue. PCBs are not eliminated well by the body and can accumulate within the body.

ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICE IN GLYNN

Seventy (70) percent of the country's Superfund sites are near low-income housing complexes.^{xi} The people most affected by toxins are neighborhoods of color. ARCO neighborhood is closest to the Honeywell/LCP Chemicals site, where 49% of the households live at or below the poverty level.

- Honeywell and Hercules, as responsible parties, have not yet cleaned up the contaminated soils, marshes, and waters. Yet, the EPA is responsible for holding these corporations accountable for cleanup plans that protect families and include community-driven needs.
- Data shows that flooding from a major hurricane hitting Brunswick would put many low-lying areas, like the ARCO neighborhood and the Honeywell/LCP Chemicals site, underneath three or more feet of water.^{xii}
- The longer toxins are in the environment, the more people and wildlife suffer. For nearly thirty years, the agencies and the responsible parties have not removed contaminants known to threaten residents' health. The result is generational injustice that must no longer be tolerated. Community members should demand that the EPA remove contaminants and implement community clean-up to protect future generations.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Educating yourself and sharing information with friends and family is the easiest way to make a difference.

- Strictly comply with local seafood guidelines, especially if you are pregnant or a nursing mother - <https://www.glynnenvironmental.org/safeseafood>
- Consider writing a letter to the editor to share what you know and ensure more members of our community are made aware of toxic contamination issues.
- Ask our US Senators and Congressmen/women to support greater community involvement in the selection and implementation of clean-up plans.
- Demand government agencies conduct the necessary Natural Resources Damage Assessments for the marshes, rivers, and lands contaminated by Hercules and Honeywell/LCP operations.

Our collective efforts must result in political and governmental pressure for agencies and responsible parties to remove dangerous contamination from our community and to advance the process to justly compensate Glynn County for the decades of harm we have suffered. One Hundred Miles is partnering with other community organizations, like Environmental Justice Advisory Board, local Riverkeepers, and the Glynn Environmental Coalition, to ensure our voices are heard.



The communities of Glynn County deserve an environment free of the toxic legacy left behind by Honeywell, Hercules, and others.

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- i <https://epd.georgia.gov/sites/epd.georgia.gov/files/2018HSI/Web/HSI%2olist%20by%20county.pdf>
- ii https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/ga/list-superfund-sites-georgia_.html
- iii <https://cumulis.epa.gov/supercpad/cursites/csitinfo.cfm?id=0401699>
- iv <https://cumulis.epa.gov/supercpad/cursites/csitinfo.cfm?id=0405622>
- v <https://cumulis.epa.gov/supercpad/SiteProfiles/index.cfm?fuseaction=second.stayup&id=0404439>
- vi <https://cumulis.epa.gov/supercpad/cursites/csitinfo.cfm?id=0200455>
- vii <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26166752/>
- ix <https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2016-09/documents/toxaphene.pdf>
- x <https://www.epa.gov/pcbs/learn-about-polychlorinated-biphenyls-pcbs>
- xi "Poisonous Homes – The Fight for Environmental Justice in Federally Assisted Housing" (June 2020) by the Shriver Center on Poverty Law and EarthJustice - <https://www.povertylaw.org/report/poisonoushomes/>
- xii www.floodiq.com (2018)

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