

Lawrence County Journal  
**Commission hears ABC's of EDB's**

By Tim Velder  
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The Lawrence County Commission heard an update Tuesday about a 10-year Forest Service chemical cleanup project in the county.

Rusty Wilder, the Forest Service on-scene coordinator for the project, told the commission about his agency's efforts to remedy contamination of ethylene dibromide (EDB) near Nemo and Hardy Camp.

Wilder was a scheduled visitor to the commission's regular meeting in

Deadwood Tuesday afternoon.

Wilder said the Forest Service used EDB as a pesticide in the 1960's and 1970's to control pine beetles. EDB was also a gasoline additive. In the mid-1970's, scientists determined that EDB is harmful to humans and could end up in drinking water if it is left untreated.

The Forest Service used large amounts of EDB at its work camps at Nemo and Hardy Camp (near O'Neil Pass and the Wyoming-South Dakota.)

Forest Service officials learned of the contamination potential at the

Nemo camp in the mid-1980's and developed a plan of attack. Planning and testing over the next decade revealed EDB had leached into domestic water wells in the area south of Nemo.

In 1997, Forest Service officials, under the direction of the South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources, began treating water and providing clean water to residents who wanted it.

"We have continued to monitor and characterize the problem that we have," Wilder said. "People are not drinking contaminated water."

Forest Service officials, working with the federal Bureau of Reclamation, have devised a groundwater treatment facility that treats the water with carbon filters and deposits the clean water in a dry well.

The Hardy Camp contamination could be linked to underground fuel tanks, Wilder said. The fuel would have had the EDB fuel additive that leaked into the surrounding soil, according to Wilder's theory.

That camp is now used by South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks snow-

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mobile trail grooming crews: Carbon filters are also installed on that site to potable water is available to work crews there.

Wilder said a dump site in an old quarry near Hardy Camp needs study, but requested federal funding has been diverted elsewhere.

Wilder said there are other

locations in the Black Hills where EDB was used, not only by federal agencies, but also by state forestry crews.

Forest Service officials meet regularly with Nemo residents regarding the water treatment. A public meeting is being planned in Nemo for sometime this spring, Wilder said.

