

Team: Experts to analyze soil, air data

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scientists, environmental engineers and medical professionals to review the data.

Meanwhile, the Elmira City School District has hired its own experts to get a second opinion on the data. Conestoga-Rovers & Associates, an environmental engineering firm headquartered in Waterloo, Ontario, is studying past uses of McNaught Field, an athletic field near the school used by students. In August, the school board closed McNaught and all-school athletic fields until further soil testing can be done.

The firm will also review results of state soil and water tests of the school and surrounding properties.

Rick Kennedy, an environmental attorney for the school district and co-chair of the advisory committee,

said Conestoga has almost completed its preliminary investigation of McNaught Field, which sits just east of Miller Pond. The pond has been contaminated by petroleum for decades.

Kennedy reported the firm's initial findings indicated three reasons for testing the soil of the athletic field:

- The Flood of 1972 carried polluted waters that contained such things as petroleum and paint from nearby industrial properties.

- The property had been historically used for farming and could contain residual wastes, such as pesticides and herbicides that break down slowly.

- Contaminated water from Miller Pond could have been discharged into the field.

The district will employ another engineering firm, Gradient Corp., to review the Department of Health's findings regarding the rates of cancer among former and current Southside students and possible links to contamination on the school grounds at 777 S. Main St.

The committee also completed a letter that the district will send out to former Southside students notifying them of the investigation and asking them to report any confirmed cancer cases to the state Department of Health. The letter will be mailed out in November.

Representatives from the DEC will present the results of the most recent testing of the athletic fields at the committee's next meeting at 6 p.m. Nov. 13 in the school's library. It is open to the public.

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