

ubbling trouble



Both state, local officials seek solutions

BY JENNIFER WIG
BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

BLOUNTVILLE - The small, white bubbles coming out of the ground sound like sauce simmering on a stove.

But the aroma is anything but appetizing. The stench of methane gas fills the air around an old private landfill, closed for more than a decade.

The frothy mixture of wastewater, known as leachate, also burps out of PVC pipes used to vent the underground sea of gas and toxins, which eat through stainless-steel mesh screens on the pipes' sides.

A tour of the landfill provides visitors with the unpleasant sights, sounds and smells most people tend to forget while fill-

ing up the kitchen garbage can.

Gurgling water puddles come in a rainbow of colors including brown, orange, emerald green and black.

Laws in effect when the landfill was in operation didn't require any kind of barrier between the waste and the soil, so the mix contaminates the groundwater,

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LANDFILL FACTS

- Privately owned
- Open 1980-94
- Covers 60 acres
- Off the Bristol beltway between Interstate 81 and U.S. Highway 11W
- Laws at the time did not require liners or wastewater collectors
- Owner has died, leaving cleanup responsibility to the government

Photos by
David Crigger

as and leachate, above, landfill. The mixture has l mesh that covered the photo at right shows the county Sheriff's Office's ing range, background.