

# Toxic drug residue found Drug

5-17-85  
**ZAYANTE** — Toxic chemicals from an apparent illegal drug lab were found dumped over a cliffside along East Upper Zayante Road Sunday night. Close to 200 containers with toxic residue were found, some of which were floating in Zayante Creek.

Authorities said they do not know the quantity of chemicals that entered the stream. The chemicals had been there anywhere from a week to a month.

"We don't think there is a real health hazard in the area from looking at the quantity that might have gotten into the water," Ilse Kolbus, the county's Hazardous Materials Program director said. "But it is hard to know if there was anything in the containers (when they entered the creek). The containers were fairly well washed out."

Area residents have been warned not to consume water taken directly from the stream. Well water, however, should not be affected by the chemical spill, Kolbus said.

"The stream is running fairly

fast and there was probably not enough to trickle down into the wells," she said.

Authorities found 75 to 100 one-gallon containers that at one time contained acetone, sodium hydroxide and other chemicals and as well as 50 five-gallon buckets that were used as mixing barrels and other containers.

About half of the five-gallon buckets, some of which were in the stream, had chemical residue.

A resident hiking in the area Sunday evening found the dump site at the bottom of a steep tree covered embankment near East Upper Zayante Road and Upper Ellen Road.

Zayante volunteer firefighters responded and fished the containers in the stream out while waiting for hazardous materials crews to arrive.

"Most of the containers were empty or had lids on them," Kolbus said. "Some had lids that popped out when they were thrown over and some chemicals splashed out."

A toxic waste disposal company from Oakland was called in at 2 a.m. to remove the containers and contaminated soil.

A County Narcotics Enforcement Team agent said the chemicals were consistent with those used to manufacture methamphetamine.

"Somewhere we have a very large lab operation," the agent said. "A lot of these chemicals are very flammable and carcinogenic and they were dumped right into the water supply."

The agent said that a large truck or van was used to carry the chemicals and that it may have taken more than one dump run.

Drug labs typically exude strong chemical odors which the agent described as having the smell of old gym socks or rotten eggs.

The County Hazardous Materials agency is testing the water and surrounding soil to determine what health risks may persist.

Agents are asking anyone who might have information to call C-NET at 425-2234 or 425-2235.