A Hypothetical Situation

Please consider the following hypothetical situation. This press release is based on fish kills that have actually happened in the past. But remember, the fish kill that is described did not actually take place. Look on the back of this page for the location of the hypothetical fish kill. When we call you back, we'll talk about this hypothetical situation.

Press Release

September 2000

Last week, scientists responded to reports of dead fish on the lower Pocomoke River. Dead fish were observed over a small area in the main portion of the river between Shelltown and Fair Island. The kill was estimated to affect approximately 10,000 menhaden. Lesions were observed on over 50% of the fish. The fish had been dead for at least 24 hours. Other fish in the area were healthy, suggesting conditions that caused the kill had ceased.

Water samples were collected and sent to several laboratories for Pfiesteria analysis. All results to date indicate that Pfiesteria was involved in the fish kill. According to a university scientist, two samples showed concentrations of the organism at levels high enough to be lethal to fish under certain environmental conditions if the organisms are actively releasing toxins.

As a precaution, until the cause of the fish kill can be determined, it is recommended that you avoid direct body contact with the water in the fish kill area: including swimming, water skiing, personal watercraft operation, fishing, clamming, crabbing or other recreational water activities. If you fall into the water, change any wet clothing and wash with soap and clean water. Keep pets from affected areas. Avoid touching any sores or lesions on the dead or dying fish and do not eat dead or dying fish or fish with sores. If you experience any illness that you think could be related to the fish kill, contact your physician promptly.

State officials are working to monitor the situation and collect additional information as needed.
LOCATION OF SEPTEMBER, 2000 PFISTERIA-RELATED FISH KILL