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NEWS

CLEANING UP A CHEMICAL DUMP

...Resource Engineering (Houston, Texas) has "used naturally occurring micro-organisms to help turn waste into water and carbon dioxide. It has just finished the largest-ever field trial using microbes to help clean up part of French Limited, an improbably named lagoon near Houston that several companies have used as a chemical dump. Resource Engineering helped natural garbage-eating microbes to flourish by pumping oxygen and nutrients into the lagoon and making sure that the resulting soup was stirred continuously. The company thinks it would

cost \$ 40-50 million and take three-four years to clean the whole lagoon, which contains 80,000 cubic yards of contaminated sludge and 70,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil and sand. This compares with a cost of \$ 140 million and four-six years using a standard incinerator." [In *Economist* (London) 13 February 88, p. 88. Reproduced with permission from Press Digest, *Current Contents*®, No. 21, May 23, 1988, p. 13. (Published by the Institute for Scientific Information®, Philadelphia, USA.)]