



**US Army Corps
of Engineers.**
New Orleans District



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Corps & Environmental Protection Agency to host joint public hearing on GIWW West Closure Complex

Feb. 11 event to be held at Corps' New Orleans District office

New Orleans, LA – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' proposed action to keep storm surge from entering the Harvey and Algiers canals would cause impacts to the Bayou aux Carpes area, a 3,200 acre wetland of national significance established by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the authority granted in the Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 404(c). The Corps has requested a modification of the 1985 EPA Final Determination be made for the actions proposed as a part of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway West Closure Complex project.

The Corps' request asserts that completion of the Greater New Orleans Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System would provide substantial benefits to several hundred thousand people living in the New Orleans area. The Environmental Protection Agency is considering the Corps' request and is accepting public comments on the proposal.

"We've worked very closely with the EPA, navigation industry, local government and non-government organizations to develop a cohesive plan that would most effectively reduce risk of storm surge inundation for people living on the Westbank," said Col. Alvin Lee, New Orleans District Commander. "We recognize the importance of Bayou aux Carpes and would use innovative construction techniques to minimize impacts to the wetlands site."

The New Orleans District and the EPA are hosting a joint public hearing to serve two purposes. The first purpose is to collect public comments on the Corps' Individual Environmental Report 12, an environmental document that details the potential impacts the GIWW West Closure Complex would have on the proposed project area. A

concurrent purpose of the hearing would be for the EPA to accept comments on the Corps' request to modify the Clean Water Act 404(c) determination.

"Decades ago, EPA recognized the ecological value of the Bayou aux Carpes wetlands and, in 1985, applied our authority under Section 404(c) of the Clean Water Act to protect them. The Corps now requests that we modify that decision to accommodate increased hurricane protection. EPA is considering the Corps' request but will make no determination until the public has an opportunity to comment," said Miguel Flores, director of the EPA Region 6 Water Quality Protection Division.

The hearing will be held Feb. 11, 2009 at the New Orleans District Office, 7400 Leake Ave, near the river bend. A government-issued photo identification card is required to gain access to the Corps complex. Doors to the hearing will open at 5:30 p.m. A formal presentation begins promptly at 6 p.m. and will be followed by an opportunity for the public to comment on both topics. Notice of the public hearing was listed in the Federal Register on Jan.14, 2009.

The comment period for the Corps' IER 12 document has been extended from Feb. 4 to midnight, Feb. 11, 2009. The IER is available for download on www.nolaenvironmental.gov. Comments on IER 12 may be submitted to:

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P.O. Box 60267
New Orleans, LA 70160-0267
Phone: 504-862-1337
Fax; 504-862-2088
E-mail: mvnvironmental@usace.army.mil.

The EPA comment period for the CWA Section 404(c) issue runs through Feb.13, 2009 and may be submitted to:

Barbara Keeler (6WQ-EC)
EPA Region 6
1445 Ross Avenue,
Dallas, TX 75202-2733.
Phone: (214) 665-6698
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The Corps' Request for Modification to the Bayou aux Carpes 404 (c) is available online at www.nolaenvironmental.gov. Comments on this topic should directly address whether the 1985 Bayou aux Carpes CWA Section 404(c) EPA Final Determination should be modified as requested by the Corps.

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