From: Kennedy, Greg (USALAE)
To: MVN Environmental;
Subject: Cocont Beach
Date: Wednesday, May 13, 2009 5:01:19 PM

Mr. Owen,

I am writing in regard to the possible taking of Coconut Beach for the pumping station for the 17th St. Canal. I am specifically asking that the Corp reconsider this option. I am not an engineer nor do I claim to have expertise in that area, but, from what I know of the project, there are several land options from which the Corp can choose in deciding what land can be used. While the Corp enjoys the luxury of choice, volleyball players in the greater New Orleans are do not. Coconut Beach is the only complex of its kind in the area and really is more than just a volleyball complex. I have been playing there since I learned of its existence in 1992. I cannot tell you how many countless friends I have made in the time period, some of whom I now consider to be my closest friends. Not only have I been playing there that long but so has my wife. We play on a team that not only includes several friends but also our oldest daughter and her husband, whom she met at Coconut Beach. We also bring our two younger children with us to games and are introducing them to the enjoyment of sand volleyball. No other complex or sport comes to mind that has generations of family and friends not only playing together but also competing against each other. I truly believe that this is what makes Coconut Beach special.

I don't like to play the "Katrina Card" but sometimes it is appropriate. Not only after Katrina but also before, New Orleans has had very few quality recreational facilities. Most of the quality parks in our area no longer function as they did pre-storm. City Park is an example that comes to mind. Coconut Beach is the exception. Not only has it returned but it has thrived, thereby providing New Orleanians with a great venue to play sports. While I recognize that volleyball is not nearly as important as maintaining proper flood control, I do think physical and mental health go a long way in revitalizing and rebuilding a community. Coconut Beach gives us the opportunity to not only play volleyball and socialize but also to enjoy the lakefront area, given the dearth of facilities along that area.

Coconut Beach has become an integral part of the sports community of New Orleans. I simply ask that you reconsider the plans to take this facility from the people of the Greater New Orleans area. To do so would be a great injustice to not only the current players but also to the future players and the very future of New Orleans itself.

Thank you for your consideration,

Greg Kennedy