From: Rhonda Zimmer
To: MVN Environmental;
Subject: Save Coconut Beach
Date: Wednesday, May 13, 2009 3:58:25 PM

Dear Mr. Owen -

The thought of the Corps of Engineers commandeering the property of Coconut Beach causes my eyes to swell with tears. Hopefully, this email will illustrate what Coconut Beach means to me. For anyone who does not play volleyball at Coconut Beach, this complex is simply 100,000 square feet of sand. For myself and 4,000 plus citizens of metropolitan New Orleans Coconut Beach is a way of life.

I have regularly played volleyball at Coconut Beach since 1989. At that time, there were 5 sand courts and a softball field. Learning the game of sand volleyball was all that interested me. I could never have guessed the impact Coconut Beach would have on my life. My current Thursday night team, Sandy Crotches, is the longest tenured team there. Throughout the past twenty years, I have met most of my very best friends; friends that I can count on, friends that I vacation with, friends who are my second family.

Coconut Beach offers a gathering place for both children and adults to enjoy a social setting, get some exercise and meet some wonderful people. It is a fun-loving, relaxing atmosphere for individuals to have some fun. It is a fitness center for individuals to burn calories and stay in shape. It is a therapy center for individuals to escape the stresses of work and daily life. The same as any community would suffer from their church being demolished, or their hospital closing, the Coconut Beach community would suffer greatly from the closing of this complex.

In a volleyball tournament at Coconut Beach in April, I played with my twin 14 year-old nephews. I was so excited they were finally at an age to play and learn the game of sand volleyball. They were thrilled to play against adults in a tournament, but they were more in awe of the 400 pounds of crawfish that Bruce White had delivered to the complex for all the tournament players. Personally, it excited me to know that my nephews had a place to "hang out" during the summer, meet some friends and stay out of trouble. Honestly, I believe that 20 years from now they will share the same sentiment of Coconut Beach as I do today. Sadness fills my heart when I think this opportunity will be taken away from them.

After Katrina destroyed the complex in 2005, there was a lot of despair to see that the complex was washed away into Lake Pontchartrain. However, in my heart I knew this would be a temporary situation. I knew that Coconut Beach would be re-built and my second family would be back together one day.

I can only fight the possibility of losing Coconut Beach to a new pumping station with words and pictures. I can only express my sentiment against this effort. I hope and pray that I will have opportunities for more memories at Coconut Beach over the next 20 years.

Mr. Owen, I am confident that you will do all in your power to save Coconut Beach. We will not surrender.

Sincerely,

Rhonda C. Zimmer

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