From: Kelly Fridge
To: MVN Environmental;
Subject: lost traditions
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Mr Owens-

Culture. Tradition. Keepsakes. Progress. Protection.

These words seem unrelated to each other, yet, in post Katrina New Orleans they have a significant connection. In a city that is unique to America and somehow cosmopolitan by comparison, we have lost many of our icons that we identify with, both as children and grown ups. The many companies that flourished in our heyday are gone. The K&B, Schwegmann, Maison Blanche, DH Holmes, Labiche's, Godchaux's, and countless others have been victims of progress at the expense of our culture. Pontchartrain Beach and NORD. Traditions since our grandparents' day, when New Orleans was the queen city of the south. The Beach is gone and NORD is hurting. What really is hurting is our entire recreational arena. City Park softball, as well as softball throughout the city is almost non-existent. Countless swimming pools-gone. NORD playgrounds in shambles, with no plan in sight. Where do we go for recreation? What do we tell our children? In the almost 4 years since the floods wiped New Orleans from the map, we have lost precious recreational tradition that even if repaired, cannot be re-cooped for the lost time. For a 14 year old in 2005 the loss of places to go to play has now in 2009 become a lost tradition for that 18 year old. They can never get back that time lost.

Now we look at Coconut Beach. Devastated by flooding, it is one of the few venues that came back and came back strong after the storm. With the support of a director and many players, this tradition has roared back as fiercely as Katrina roared to shore. A shining example of what can be done with motivation and cooperation. Now in the shadows of the big pumps that will save our city in the future, Coconut Beach provides much needed recreation time for a city that desperately needs it. We understand the city must be protected and if the land the Beach now occupies must be sacrificed for the greater good, than why can't an alternative site be offered for relocation? The amount of money spent on the re-building would dwarf the amount needed to move this beach.

Please look at all alternatives. This is not just a patch of sand. It is tradition and culture. It is serving a very useful purpose and we cannot let it be gone with the wind.

Kelly Fridge