From: Wendy Adams
To: MVN Environmental;
Subject: Save Coconut Beach
Date: Saturday, May 16, 2009 12:15:37 AM

Dear Mr Owen,

My name is Wendy Adams, and I am a member of the Coconut Beach volleyball community. I'm from New Orleans, lost my home in Lakeview during Katrina, and I would not still be here today if it weren't for Coconut Beach Volleyball Complex.

Coconut Beach isn't just about volleyball, although many of us are volleyball fanatics...and I happen to be one of them. Its a fantastic sport, an activity that will provide a means to good physical fitness, but also the perfect pastime, a great alternative to sitting in front of the television at night after work or socializing in a smokey bar room.
Coconut Beach is about friends and family, and truly the heart and soul of what New Orleans is to me. I've played out there for ten years now. I started on net 18, the lowest of the beginner nets, on Tuesday nights with a team from my office, right after my divorce in 1999. I loved it so much...the game, being outside, and the wonderful people. I wanted to become better at volleyball and would hang around after games playing pickup w/ the others who couldn't get enough of the outdoors and the fun of the atmosphere. I signed up on a draft team and made the first of many good friends. Over the years we have worked our way up to the advanced level nets, improving our volleyball but more importantly developing the type of friendships that can only be likened to family. For years now, season after season, we see each other several nights a week for hours on end. We spend holidays together, enjoy all the local festivals en masse, vacation together, and never miss birthdays. We are professionals and students, single and married, aged 18 thru to and past 60. Some of us are born and raised here, some came down for school or work and fell in love with the city, but we're all Naturally Nawlins.

When Katrina hit many of us were scattered across the country, but those of us who returned home came back to Coconut and helped get the courts up and running. While each of use was working to piece our lives back together, reuniting with friends was most important. We started playing volleyball again, traveling each night through the devastated streets of Lakeview. Returning to Coconut brought a sense of normalcy and means of escape at a time when life was so surreal.

After Katrina, the question on everyones minds, the question we were asked by the nation and the question we all had to ask ourselves was, "Why stay?" The

answer was the same for many: the food, the music, the architecture, the culture, the people...always the people.

Anyone still living in New Orleans despite the obvious hardships clearly has a fondness and appreciation for the city. Everyone in the region is expectant and deserving of the best flood protection the Corp can provide. We all believe the effort to safeguard people and property is the first priority for the city, but surely there must be a way Coconut Beach and the new pump can coexist at West End Beach. There are so many who would be devastated if we lost Coconut Beach. It is not worth the effort to struggle in an environment, to work and plan to ensure the survival and longevity of the region, if the very element we wish to preserve is destroyed in the process.

We are are the people who chose to stay in New Orleans, and Coconut Beach is a part of our lives and our hearts. We've dug our heals in and we are rebuilding. We have dug our heals in the sand and we are home.

-Wendy Adams