Public Meeting Recap

Individual Environmental Report 22
Westbank I borrow site community meeting
Thursday, April 24, 2008

Location	Holy Guardian Angels Catholic Church Youth Center 425 10th St. Bridge City, LA
Time	Open House 6:00 p.m. Presentation 7:00 p.m.
Attendees	Approx 65 and 10 staff
Format	Presentation then Q & A
Handouts	• PowerPoint Presentation • Borrow handout 4.24.08 • Corps approval process brochure • Hurricane system location map
Facilitation	Rene Poche, public affairs Presenter: Soheila Holley, senior project manager, Borrow

Welcome

Rene Poche, Public Affairs

Good evening, I'm Rene Poche and I'll be facilitating the meeting tonight. Thanks to Holy Guardian Angel's Catholic Church and Monsignor Luminais for hosting the Corps tonight. And thanks for the hot dogs and chili, they're great.

These are the ground rules. Soheila Holley has a presentation for you. Please hold your questions until after the presentation. We also have a couple people here who I'd like to introduce:

Rep. Robert Billiot	State Representative, District 83
Monsignor Luminais	Holy Guardian Angels Catholic Church
Jerry Spohrer	West Jefferson Levee District

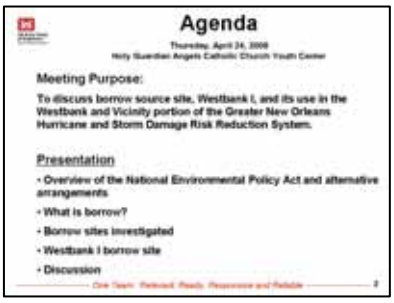
From the Corps we have:

Mike Brown	Environmental Manager
Soheila Holley	Senior Project Manager, borrow
Todd Klock	Real Estate
CPT Eric Marshall	Protection and Restoration Office
Gib Owen	Environmental Manager
Rich Varuso	Deputy Chief, Geotech

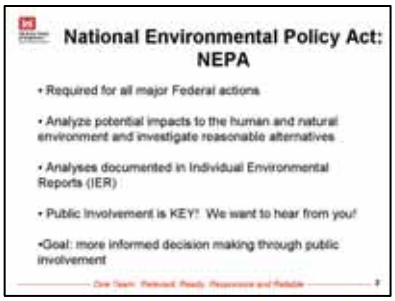
The following notes were recorded by USACE contractors. These notes are intended to provide an overview of the presentations and public questions and comments, and are not intended to provide a complete or verbatim account of the meeting. This account is not intended to be a legal document.

Public Meeting Recap

Soheila Holley, senior project manager

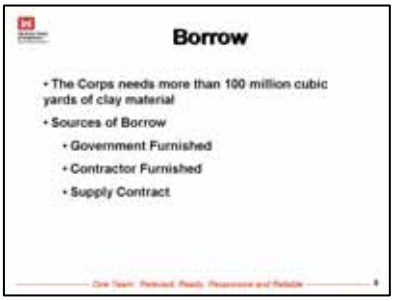


The last time we were here we made a presentation on the Westbank I borrow site and gave the general status of borrow material in the Westwego/Harvey polder. There aren't many new updates but we'll try to give you more information.



We're here because of the National Environmental Policy Act. The NEPA process requires that a project that uses federal money must comply with NEPA. We've come out, [to places all over the greater New Orleans area] to make presentations and make information accessible to the public. [The purpose is to get] information from you and to take it back to let management know what [you'd like to see of the system]. Public involvement is a key to the process.

We've divided New Orleans into 17 project areas and are writing Individual Environmental Reports that discuss the impacts projects have to the human and natural environment. All of this is documented in the IER which the public can review. Once we review the impacts, we review your comments and then the District Commander, Col. Alvin Lee, will sign the document.



We need over 100 million cubic yards of clay for the entire system. The amount we need is a moving target, but it's a tremendous amount of material, over 100 million cubic yards right now but as we get closer to final design that number will change.

We have three methods to identify borrow material. Before Hurricane Katrina we had just the Government Furnished method, we chose a site that was close to the alignment of the levee. Then we would test it [to ensure it met our standards] and put material in the system. Now we need a tremendous amount of material so we have three methods to get it. The first method is Government Furnished. We get the right-of-entry and then invest in the property with a lengthy investigation. We have a check list of geotechnical and environmental requirements. Once we're done with the investigation we put the site in an IER. So far we have completed IER 18 and 19. The comment period for IER 23 closed yesterday and more IERs are coming up. When we have an approved site, then we proceed with the real estate process. We approach the landowner to give them just compensation and then there is a negotiation of an offer. Once the site is acquired we proceed using it on an alignment.

For Contractor Furnished we have many of the same elements but the landowner does the testing. The testing is consistent for each method to make sure the material is good and meets our standards. So the

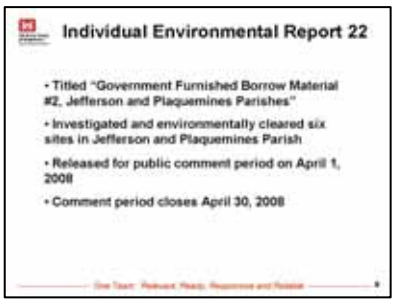
landowner does the testing and then sends us the results for us to review and make sure it's okay. Then the site is put in another IER such as 19 which is complete and 26 which is coming up. When the IER is approved we make it available for construction contractors. Construction companies can chose to use material from that site but we make sure our geotechnical requirements are met. It still goes through the NEPA process.

This third option is a Supply Contract. This is when the landowner does testing, we review it and then it goes through an IER. The intention is to get a handful of bidders approved, then have them compete for the contract depending on the contracting method that we will use. They may have to excavate and bring the material to the levee alignment or to a stockpile area near the alignment. Using this method, we currently have a draft solicitation for material for three projects, two in St. Bernard and one in Orleans Parish. There is another general solicitation for material in draft form. The last Sources Sought request brought us 64 people but they have to demonstrate the material meets the standards for use.

The site you asked us to discuss, Westbank I, is a Government Furnished site.

These are the areas, system-wide, that we have looked at for borrow. Some of these areas have been rejected because of wetlands, unsuitable material, seepage and so on. We would also reject the site if there was too much sand or to many structures near the site. This map includes areas that were rejected. The borrow identified and investigated on this map had a yield of about 20 percent, meaning that out of the 100 million cubic yards that we investigated, eighty million was rejected because it was wetlands or because of the soil quality and so on. We're very picky about materials we use in the system.

These are the sites that have been investigated on the Westbank of Jefferson Parish. The big blue site is River Birch. It is a Contractor Furnished site. Most of these sites are Government Furnished sites and will supply material for the Lake Cataouatche polder. Westbank I is the northeast corner of this map [on the right]. The Churchill Farm Government Furnished site investigation is complete. It was approved in IER 18 and is in Real Estate now. The investigations for sites, Westbank I and F, are completed and included in IER 22.



IER 22 explores a total of six sites, three in Jefferson Parish and three in Plaquemines Parish. It was released on April 1 and the comment period closes on April 30. When we get comments [inaudible] Col. Lee will review the comments then sign the IER, once that happens it is approved.

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This is the Westbank I borrow site. This is the same map we showed on Feb. 12. The site is 33 acres now, it started as a much larger site. It was 80 acres and we ended up with this [area in the green]. The area in the middle marked in red is where the material was too organic so we're using it for stockpile area instead. Another area, marked in red, at the south end, will be used as an access road. The testing is complete but we still call it "under investigation" because the IER hasn't been signed yet. Once the IER is signed we'll turn the site over to the project manager who is in charge of levees in the polder and then the site will go to the real estate department.

This is your opportunity to comment on this process. You can call Gib Owen he gets all the calls, this is his phone number and there is an e-mail address to reach him. And this is a Web site where you can get information if you need more information than what you learn tonight.

As I mentioned in the beginning this is just a status of the Westbank I site. You let us know you were interested in it so we were more than happy to meet again. We heard your concerns last time. We are the technical team and our job is to listen, we're not policy makers but we'll take your comments. The final decision is made by Col. Lee.

Poche: Before we get to the discussion I'd like to let you know that I'll come to you. Please raise your hand and I will come to you. Please say your name and keep your comment to less than 3 minutes. We'd like to make sure everyone gets the chance to speak before we let someone speak again. We know people have opinions but please be constructive. We want to take your information back, that's why we're here to get your input.

Question 1. Mitchell Mark, Westwego: I live close to the area. You have two sites that are not just near the church. The sites are close to the Mississippi River. Why would you be willing to dig that close to the Mississippi River levees? If you go to the Huey P. Long Bridge, there's leakage. You're trying to relieve the Mississippi River levees with the Bonnet Carre Spillway, so why would you do that? Also, based on transportation costs, why not haul the material on barges? With tugs full of clay from better suited areas [inaudible]. It's going to cost you more time to move material on trucks than it would to move material on barges.

Response 1. Holley: In general, as I mentioned, we're not ready to dig yet. The only site that is ready for Real Estate is Churchill Farms. The rest of the sites are still undergoing testing or are under investigation such as Westbank I and F. They still have to be approved, and then the property has to go through real estate acquisition so no one digging yet. We're schedule to start excavation in mid-2009 for the Westbank I site once it is approved and acquired. We will do seepage analysis, we'll look at the final pit design to see how far away it is from the Mississippi River. Westbank I is 2200 feet from the river. If there were any sand layers we'll be aware of them, we won't jeopardize anything, especially the levee. All that analysis will take place [under the guidance of] a licensed geotechnical engineer. The seepage analysis will be done for each pit. If we have to [reduce the size of the pit to avoid sand, we will].

Varuso: Seepage is always a concern especially with the high Mississippi River. You can be rest assured that we have a factor of safety [inaudible]. There will be water in the bottom of the pit, so

seepage is a concern. There could be stability issues from removing the weight [of the material]. The removal could cause [inaudible] but that's analyzed too, keep in mind that we consider the engineering and impacts, it's all taken into account [when we design the borrow site].

Question 2. Mitchell: What about barging [in material]?

Response 2. Holley: When we assign a pit, the soil will go through a matrix. We analyze the cost, time and the impacts of transporting the soil. The bulk of the cost for borrow is transportation. So that's why, since we're not using wetlands at this time, the areas in closest vicinity to the alignment are the ones we are identifying and investigating. For the third option of obtaining borrow, the landowner may bring in the material by barge or however they want. We can't ignore sites like Westbank I and bring the material in from out of state. The further away we go to get borrow the more expensive it will be. Even if we want to barge it in will depend on the alignment and most times it would have to be taken from a barge and put on truck before it gets to the levee. That concern is valid and we'll keep it under consideration. We're trying to make the best decision for taxpayers. That's why we have the three options to get borrow. We have a tremendous need for material. We're going to try to see what costs we get from people who claim they have material that can be put it the system.

Question 3. Paul, Nine Mile Point: Why are you even considering a site that close to levee? I'm looking at those pictures and they're so close to the river, why would you go that close? [At the last meeting, on Feb. 12] I asked if any other site were that close to the river. [Jerry Spohrer, from the West Jefferson Levee District] said yes that there was one in Westwego but its only ½ an acre. Considering you want to move forward [with this site], and the testing is done, would you be willing to issue a bond for every property owner so if something did happen you could subsidize us if we flooded?

Response 3. Holley: We're the technical team. Our job is to identify non-wetlands areas and do testing and acquire borrow. I can't answer that

Poche: That would be a legal question.

Comment 4. Paul: Why not get a decision-maker here?

Response 4. Holley: All your comments get recorded and we'll forward them to the Office of Counsel.

Comment 5. Paul: But there are no decision-makers here, do they even read the report? Or can we get someone here who can answer that question?

Response 5. CPT Marshall: I represent the District Commander, Col. Lee. I'll take your comment to him. You're asking something outside our authority. That's something that needs to be taken up with Congress or your State Representative.

Question 6. Paul: The other part of my question is if you do go forward with the pit, has the Corps considered what could happen to the rest of the country if something happens to us? We supply oil to the rest of the country. Is that considered in cost?

Response 6. Holley: We factor in the cost of material, real estate, transportation and mitigation. What you're talking about, and also litigation, is not included in our cost-analysis. We'll make sure there won't be an impact or we won't proceed with the pit. You talk about failure, we have engineers who review the pit plans, identify layers of sand and other potential impacts [inaudible] and avoid it. We're not anticipating failure.

Comment 7. Paul: But your track record is that the Corps failed and failed miserably. Eighty percent of New Orleans was underwater because of a miscalculation. When I think of the Corps in a room with engineers [inaudible] our lives are the ones at stake. You don't live here.

Response 7. Poche: We all live here, we live in the community too. I know you have feelings about the Corps but please move on to constructive comments.

Comment 8. Steve Alvarez, Nine Mile Point: At the last meeting [on Mar. 25] you said you take boring samples 500 feet apart. Now you're using seismic testing to study soil.

Response 8. Varuso: We investigate every 500 feet because it gives us a good representation of the area, to see if the material is suitable. If borings and soil [inaudible] it may show that it doesn't correlate. Keep in mind not all material from the pit will go in the levee. There could be different portions [of suitable soil] at different levels [of the site]. There could be suitable or non-suitable material, if it is [non-suitable we] would waste the material, only good material is used in the levee. We take borings 500 feet apart. If the material isn't useable, during Quality Control, we'll make sure the material isn't used. Before we put the material into the levee it is tested and as long as it meets our requirements it gets placed.

Comment 9. Alvarez: Taking tests 500 feet apart will give you no idea where the soil strati are. It's too far apart. [Inaudible] seismic tests [inaudible] use a layer and sand. Are your Quality Control measures in place? Bill Capo [from WWL-TV] was asking about [material used in] floodwalls tonight. I didn't hear what Capo said but, it sounded like the fabric used in the levee won't hold up. I didn't hear this myself. Westbank I is located downrange from the Southern Gun Club. That soil is probably embedded with lead. People have been shooting skeet there for 50-years. Environmentalists won't even let you shoot with lead bullets anymore. You're going to dig up dirt and it will have lead in it.

Response 9. Holley: We avoided the area from the shooting range. We started with 80 acres and now there are only 33 acres for this site. The area in red, when we did boring samples, we determined it had too much organic material so we're not going to excavate there. Instead, we'll use it as a stockpile area. We look at borings and then there is a geotechnical analysis. If the area's not good, it won't be used.

Varuso: I understand what you're referring to. It's a geology question; you're asking how much the soil could differ depending on the borings taken at 500 feet. Our geologist will look at an area to see if the spacing will recover.

Question 10. Alvarez: When the river flooded it would cut across the [inaudible] there'd be sand there and maybe clay but I don't want you to miss the sand. This area is poised to be booming and [inaudible]. There are no trees there. You're [inaudible] looking for more economic [inaudible]. Why not put [inaudible] in the right-of-way. The land is designated you could put power lines across it.

Response 10. Holley: We're still investigating all non-wet areas within each polder. It takes time for right-of-way and investigations. We'll make sure to identify non-wet areas and will investigate them.

Comment 11. Alvarez: That would be better if there weren't impacts to a school.

Response 11. Holley: Our yield is 20 percent so in all actuality we need to investigate 5 times more than what we get to use. We must identify borrow sites within the vicinity of the project. Identifying borrow is an ongoing process.

Question 12. Gary Bourgeois: Once the site is a borrow pit, will USACE retain ownership of the property? How can we make sure people won't drown? What protection will be around the pit?

Response 12. Holley: Once our investigation is done we go through a real estate process, we'll acquire the site in easement. That means that after the excavation, the area is returned to the landowner or if it was acquired in fee, it was done in the name of the state or local sponsor. At this time, we have no authority to backfill. We look at fencing in a case by case situation, if an area investigated is remote, not close to a home, it's unlikely we would fence the area. But we assess that on a case by case basis during construction then we analyze the area. We'll need to take precautions but this is done on a case by case basis. We're not authorized to backfill. Prior to excavation the construction team will meet with the geotechnical department and other technical staff.

Question 13. Bourgeois: So this may become a big whole for kids to play in?

Response 13. Holley: [Pointing] This is the church and school, this is the baseball field. You have a whole row of trees here [pointing]. When this area is excavated there will be a boundary of where there is suitable material. When we start excavation the site could get smaller. There is a 300-400 feet of buffer between the pit and the [edge of the property].

I am not sure if Rentz made the comment or someone else yelled that "you all are not from this area."

Question 14. Jeanie Rentz, Bridge City: You said there would be a buffer but those of us who grew up here know there are kids that go as gangs. They go into fields to [hang out]. If you don't put a good enough fence around the site, 12-13 year olds go back into the woods. What happens in 5 years when kids start getting hurt? Who takes responsibility if something starts happening?

Response 14. Holley: I live in Lakeview, you know the story of what happened there. This is Tuta Salaam, he lives in Gentilly, you know what happened there. This is Julie Vignes, she's from Chalmette and you know what happened in St. Bernard. We live here. Don't let the accent fool you, we're from here too. I take this personally, we take this protection system very seriously. We don't want our kids going through what we went through, we were blessed this time in this area. Jefferson Parish was fine and we're trying to prevent this from happening again. I have raised two sons half a

block away from Lake Pontchartrain. You have to watch your kids. We have open canals all over these parishes and some of them are close to homes. I drive by them all the time when I go to Lakeside Mall, I understand your concern and these are the areas of concern that we're trying to minimize. There are going to be minimal impacts in any area in the process of construction of any projects and we try to minimize the impacts. You'll have noise and trucks. You cannot eliminate all impacts. We're trying to minimize impacts.

Comment 15. Rentz: I'm a 9th Ward baby, I was here for Hurricane Betsy. We took a pirogue to get to our house, it took two weeks. I grew up in the city and also grew up in the country. This area is kind of like the country. And that's how the kids are raised. In the city the kids don't have a peashooter or BB guns. Here they do, they have guns and some kids go into the back woods because that's their environment. People have been raised like this and that's how their children are raised. You need to understand Bridge City isn't like a city.

Response 15. Poche: We understand you concerns but backfilling borrow sites is not an option at this time. There is an Issue Paper being prepared, it looks at backfilling as an option but that's all we can tell you.

Comment 16. Edie Tranchina, Nine Mile Point: I wasn't at the first meeting. We all agree we need to fix the levees but we should come up with solutions and suggestions that we can take to our local representatives. Who else is going to want this in their area? Who is going to want you to take dirt from their area? If you're going to keep a big hole there, let local officials build us a park for our kids. If we had a park that was maintained they wouldn't play in the pit. There are solutions if we all think about it and don't fight about it.

Question 17. Vincent Vastolla: What's the closing date for IER 22?

Response 17. Owen: April 30.

Question 18. Vastolla: Has there been a decision as to the method the Corps will use to pursue rights to this prop? You mentioned an easement.

Response 18. Todd Klock: The government will take the take least amount of interest in the property as possible so we will take an easement. In the course of negotiations that would be determined. The government takes the least amount of interest as possible

Owen: Once the comment period ends all your comments become part of the decision record for the IER. Every concern becomes a part of the decision-making record.

Question 19. Austin Frey, Bridge City: I go to Bridge City Elementary School. If you're going to build behind the school, in the forest, there are animals there. Will you be careful that they don't get hurt too?

Response 19. Holley: Thank you for coming. We'll make sure we keep the animals in mind.

Question 20. Man with a yellow shirt: Will the clay be used around here, on our levees?

Response 20. Holley: Yes, it will be used in this polder. The material will stay here because it's economical. The material will be used in this basin.

Question 21. Beverly Childs: How much of that property will go towards the levee, percentage wise?

Response 21. Holley: We need 13 million cubic yards for projects on the Westbank in this polder. The Lake Cataouatche area needs 520 acres of material, this site is 33 acres. We're taking one bite at a time. It's a lengthy process we're hoping to get the material for all these levee reaches. Our testing shows that the material for Westbank I is suitable, so we will try to acquire it. Each levee has a different award date so we don't have to find all the material at the same time. We're trying to find material now so when the levee reach contract comes up, we'll have the material to build the levee.

Question 22. Childs: If you're taking one little bite at a time, why can't you go somewhere else?

Response 22. Holley: The problem is if we avoid this piece of property, then the next landowner over will say skip my property. And then everyone will say what about me? We have to make sure we treat all suitable material and landowners the same; we have to be consistent. We have to be consistent throughout the area.

Question 23. Childs: They're re-doing the Huey P. Long Bridge. I know Father Luminais said Bridge City would bloom after the bridge is finished but not anymore, just because of the hole.

Response 13. Holley: But what kind of economic outlook will there be if you have no protection? Right now Lakeview is coming back because it has protection. [Building the system] is essential to the economic outlook.

Comment 24. Childs: You're trying to fix something that wasn't broken.

Response 24. Holley: This area wasn't tested.

Poche: We can't say for certain that it won't happen next time.

Question 25. Monsignor Luminais: You keep saying analysis and investigation. Are we going to know what the analysis is before you start digging? Will you let us know?

Response 25. Holley**:** Our real estate division will let the landowner know.

Question 26. Monsignor Luminais: So he can let us know what was decided? Can I read you a petition so you know how citizenry feels? [See attached document]

[After reading the petition letter, Monsignor said] Please reconsider your plans and remove Westbank I from your list of potential borrow sites (clapping).

Response 26. Poche: Thanks. That will go into the record.

Question 27. Richard Rivers, Nine Mile Point: Who is the owner of the property? Could this site become a landfill?

Response 27. Holley: Once the site is excavated is goes back to the landowner. They can develop the property however they want.

Rivers: So this could become a garbage dump?

Holley: We don't know.

Question 28. Alvarez: You talked about a pond filled with water and that it will equalize pressure. That's not true [inaudible] the lower level water goes [inaudible]. Backfilling with water is not a solution. [Inaudible] the Bayou Segnette floodwalls have sheet piles [inaudible] has the same problem and those walls blew out. As a carpenter, I'm worried about sheet piles. Those pilings should have been 49 feet instead of 16 feet. We still haven't heard about what happened with the floodwalls that Bill Capo [from WWL-TV] was talking about. You said earlier all the [property owners would say, me too, me too] if you're going to take our material, how many of those "me too" sites are close to a community? Most of the other borrow sites are in a rural area. That should make a difference. (clapping). If you can't find what you need locally you have to barge stuff in, this is only a small bit of land. What you is already depleted to 20 percent, you're going to have to barge in material. If you have to eventually barge it in, why not do that in the beginning so you don't have to worry later about bringing it in from someplace else anyway? (clapping)

Response 28. Varuso: I didn't mean to over-simplify. The site is analyzed and we go through seepage and stability analysis in the vicinity of the pit to make sure [inaudible] soil conditions. Your other question about Bill Capo, I can explain one-on-one.

Comment 29. Alvarez: This letter went to Representative Billiot and Sen. Alario.

Response 29. Holley: Yes, we received a follow-up letter from Sen. Alario. We provided a response to him in mid-April that he should have received. The response was signed by Col. Lee. Mr. Alario's office should provide you a response.

Question 30. Paul: Is population considered?

Response 30. Holley: Yes, population is considered.

Question 31. Paul: Site Westbank I has a greater population around it [than other sites].

Response 31. Owen: It's part of the analysis.

Question 32. Woman: Who makes the final decision? Are you wasting our time when the final decision already made? Is this meeting just for venting?

Response 32. Holley: We're glad to be here. We provided this presentation before but we came back because you asked us. This meeting is not a waste of time, we're recording your comments and Col. Lee will see the comments. I am very sorry if you think this is a waste of your time. When the IER is

complete, the decision record is signed by Commander Lee; he makes the decision. We're the technical team, we don't make decisions. We do public meetings like this throughout the area.

Question 33. Lynn Hulin, Bridge City: We're one community, Nine mile Point, Bridge City and Avondale. Has a meeting ever occurred that brought all four of the communities together so they could all provide input?

Response 33. Owen: This is the 61st meeting we've held over the last year. We've had meetings in Avondale and Bridge City. We advertise them in the paper with a public notice, send a mailer, have a Web site and information about the meeting is on the news.

Holley: We try to go to every community. We make it easier for people who can't travel or don't have the means, we come to you. We go to many meetings in every neighborhood.

Question 34. Woman near the kitchen: [Asking CPT Marshall] When this lady [referring to Tranchina] was talking about building a park, you nodded your head. It sounds like you already made up your mind.

Response 34. CPT Marshall: I like that [Ms. Tranchina] was suggesting something proactive. That idea sounds like a win-win. It seems like a lot of times people say the Corps just gets what they want but that's not what's going on. What [Ms. Tranchina] brought up is a great compromise and removes the controversy. I like to see that type of progress. I am taking all this back to the decision-maker. Col. Lee looks at the IERs. I'm not there [when he makes the decision] but I communicate with him. I'll give him some feedback but other feedback will be written and included in the IER.

Woman: This is a real fear for us, we're not just using kids [as an excuse].

CPT Marshall: I understand

Comment 35. Carol Adams: This community is not near where you live. Lake Terrace has money but they can't sell their houses. Who is going to build this park? We don't have money for that and taxes are high enough. How are we going to get money to pay for this park? The Corps isn't going to pay for it.

Question 36. Larry Walker: If you could fill this hole we wouldn't have a problem. If you'd fill the hole you wouldn't have us griping. Why can't you fill the hole?

Response 36. Poche: That issue can't be resolved here. There's an Issue Paper being delivered to Corps headquarters and then it will go to Washington, D.C. Something may come out of the Issue Paper.

Comment 37. Man: You need so much material. You should just build cement walls so you don't need dirt.

Comment 38. Man 2: Since you've had 61 meetings. What kind of feedback do you get from other residents?

Response 38. Owen: This is the same thing we hear from everyone. St. Bernard doesn't want the pits, the Westbank doesn't want the pits, and Plaquemines doesn't want them either.

Holley: There are also landowners who want to be a part of this effort. We have five sites in St. Bernard where the right-of-entry was provided by willing landowners. We get mixed reactions. There are people who want to participate and contribute, they appreciate the safety so we get mixed reactions. I get calls daily from people who want to offer their property but sometimes it's too far or not suitable.

Comment 39. Woman: Has any community won [against the Corps using property from their neighborhood]?

Response 39. Holley: No, we have to be consistent in our investigation.

Question 40. Laverne Rouse, Nine Mile Point: Many people agree that if it were in a different location and didn't affect so many people's lives it wouldn't be bad. You can go somewhere where there are no homes, churches or schools. The pit doesn't have to be in this particular place.

Response 40. Holley: Every neighborhood expresses same thing.

Question 41. Woman: If the Corps is so up front with everything, how come no one knew of this until Mardi Gras?

Response 41. Owen: We have a mailing list of 6,000 people. People may have not been aware but the landowner is aware. We have an Internet site and place ads in the paper. We do lots of outreach to get word out. We are here tonight for the second time in this location.

Woman: The first we heard of this was before Mardi Gras.

Owen: Meetings are advertised in the paper, on the Web and on the news.

Poche: The ads in the paper include the Corps logo and it lists this meeting and upcoming meetings with dates and times.

Question 42. Man: How do you acquire knowledge of what sites may be used for borrow? Does the landowner come to you?

Response 42. Holley: It's done on a case-by-case basis. Some landowners approach us, other sites the team identifies it and then we are provided right-of-entry by the flood authority. It's a mix.

Question 43. Man: Did Marrero Land Company offer you right-of-way?

Response 43. Holley: No, we were given right-of-entry by the West Jefferson Levee District.

Question 44. Alvarez: How many other pits are within 300 feet of a playground?

Response 44. Holley: We have many pits, I don't have detailed information with me on how far away each one is from a playground.

Question 45. Alvarez: You said it's approx 300 feet from a playground, how many other borrow pits are in the vicinity of a playground?

Response 45. Holley: I don't have that detailed information about each pit with me tonight because we're talking about Westbank I. I can give you general information about how close this site is to the playground but I can't speak to the others without paperwork. Each pit has its own circumstances.

Comment 46. Alvarez: But we don't want the site here because of the playground and the churches. You said earlier if this site was disqualified there would be, "me too, me too' from the other sites.

Response 46. Holley: Each neighborhood has their own concerns. Some people are concerned just about the hole. Look at the site called Westbank J, it's close to development also. Every neighborhood has something to say about the pit.

Question 47. Woman: Mr. Billiot said the Expressway was supposed to go through Westwego. It doesn't because the neighborhood fought it. A small city could fight something like this if we stand together. We could fight it and it could work (clapping).

Question 48. Man in a blue shirt: You won't consider wetlands but the pit will probably get wet.

Response 48. Owen: Federal law has said we need to avoid wetlands. The federal government said they want us to create wetlands. In this area the pit will attract certain wildlife. Upland sites are a reasonable alternative to wetlands.

Question 49. Man in a blue shirt: What's the definition of wetlands?

Response 49. Mike Brown: Wetlands have special hydric soils, special hydrology indicators and hydrophytic vegetation. We have botanists at the Corps, they delineate the sites for us.

Man in a blue shirt: So in layman terms what does wetland mean?

Brown: It's a forest that's sloshy and muddy and has certain types of wetland plants

Man in a blue shirt: So you can't dig that but you can dig near a playground?

Holley: We haven't completed the investigation yet so no site has been acquired yet. No site has gone through real estate yet except for one in Orleans Parish but we haven't stopped investigating this site. Westbank I won't be ready until the Commander signs the IER, then it goes to real estate.

Comment 50. State Representative Robert Billiot: We're hoping that you'll take back to the Corps that you came here and witnessed that there are still a lot of questions that couldn't be answered. That's

what brings on the frustration. Once again we want to do the democratic thing. We want to hear answers to our questions but the people here leave frustrated because some answers can't be given. Once again we get to a point where we don't know what's going to happen. If you study the history of this area, the people have been waiting for the Huey P. Long Bridge construction to change their quality of life. We have landowners who are willing to put up money to make the area wonderful and build shipyards. The bottom line is people are leaving here frustrated because they didn't receive answers. You should know what type of individuals you'll need to be here with you.

We're going to hope this process does work. If your process works as it should, the end result may be that the material meets your standard [for use in the levees]. Overall the quality of life and development of this area needs to continue. It can't be held back because there are other places where you can get the mud.

You may need more tax dollars, so you may have to take that up with people in Congress. [My constituents] need to know it'll cost the Corps to do this. If we want to move this site, then we need to do our work to convince Congress that we need funding. Please bring that back to the Corps.

[Inaudible]. Many people want the process to work and by using a process we need to know the next step. If the [IER] makes it up through the ladder and then Col. Lee signs it, we need to know what costs are associated with getting the material, but we don't want it to come from here. We'd need to weigh the cost. The [construction of the Huey P. Long] Bridge will cost over $1 billion. [Inaudible] you'd come over from the Eastbank and when you got here you're going to have just a pond. It's just not right for people who have been waiting all this time and all these years. Anything that can be [inaudible]. Let's see what [IER 22] says and let's see where we stand. If we need to go back for more appropriations so that we don't spend a billion dollars on a bridge to a pond [inaudible]. Everybody is talking about the new bridge and that with it is economic development. We're all thinking it's a wonderful thing. If the landowner is not willing to [inaudible] like what Marrero Land is willing to do, then were going to have a problem. If people want to step up with their own money, [inaudible] stick with the landowner to make sure that their development [inaudible] drivers are just going to have to bypass this area and the development.

Please try to do what you can to get the attention we need. Thank you for coming back here and for doing what [you need to do]. But one more time we didn't get answers or didn't get to ask questions of the right people who needed to be here.

Monsignor Luminais: Thanks for coming here, I've gotten two more names added to the petition.

Poche: Thanks Monsignor and thanks for the hotdogs and thank you for coming out. We're committed to doing the right thing so please come to the project manager to make sure we have your comments.

The following notes were recorded by USACE contractors. These notes are intended to provide an overview of the presentations and public questions and comments, and are not intended to provide a complete or verbatim account of the meeting. This account is not intended to be a legal document.