



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
New Orleans District

News Release

Public Affairs Office
504-862-2201

www.mvn.usace.army.mil

For Immediate Release

Media Contact: Amanda S. Jones, 504-862-1914

May 7, 2009

Public meetings focus on updated Bonnet Carré Spillway Project Master Plan

Meetings scheduled for May 13 & 17

NEW ORLEANS - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District, is hosting two public meetings next week to discuss specific improvements and actions related to natural resources and recreational activities that either are currently underway or are proposed as part of the Bonnet Carré Spillway Master Plan Update.

On Wednesday, May 13, the Corps will hold an open house at the La Maison Magnolia Reception Hall in Norco, LA beginning at 6 p.m. with a presentation to follow at 7 p.m. The second meeting, Sunday, May 17, will be an open house at the Bonnet Carré Spillway Pavilion from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Detailed fact sheets and displays will be available about the particulars of the master plan. Comments and suggestions are welcomed.

The recommended improvements as part of the project master plan update include a new administration building for park ranger staff and visitor information, improved restroom facilities, road and access project plan, sand hauling permit program changes, vegetation management plan, management of clay borrow activities, outreach program, landscape improvements, limited expansion of All-Terrain Vehicle use, and establishing horseback riding and 4-Wheel Drive truck areas. These intended additions and improvements will assist the project in continuing to be a recreational resource for the citizens of Louisiana.

The Bonnet Carré Spillway's major purpose is to maintain steadfast flood risk management. Recent funding from the American Recovery and

Reinvestment Act will be used to improve the flood risk management project in several ways, including the following:

1. Acquisition of spare needles for the historic structure to replace those lost annually due to age and through spillway operation.
2. Guide levees for the spillway will be raised to prevent downstream flooding by diverting the Mississippi River to Lake Pontchartrain during high river stages.
3. The spillway's crane rails will be sandblasted and painted to prevent corrosion and extend the life of the rails.

In addition to Bonnet Carré Spillway's primary purpose of flood risk reduction management, outdoor recreation has become a significant use of the project. Some of the activities that are noticeably increasing in the region are visits to nature centers, nature walks, photography and birding, while the more traditional outdoor recreations such as camping, boating, fishing, and big-game hunting continue to be sustained attractions. With the spillway's nearly 8,000 acres, it offers a wide variety of recreational pursuits.

In 1998, the New Orleans District commander approved the original project master plan. While much has been accomplished over the past 10 years, an update to the spillway master plan is intended to identify improvements in management of the project's natural resources and recreation.

Questions or comments concerning the Bonnet Carré Spillway Master Plan Update will be addressed by contacting the New Orleans District at:

Phone: 504.862.2037

E-mail: BonnetCarre@usace.army.mil

Mail: USACE, MVN-PAO, c/o Bonnet Carré Spillway, P.O. Box 60267, New Orleans, LA 70160.

Or, visit us online at www.mvn.usace.army.mil/recreation.

###