

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
VICKSBURG DISTRICT, U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
VICKSBURG, MISSISSIPPI 39183

PUBLIC MEETING
ON

CREWBOAT CUT DISPOSAL AREA

MUNICIPAL AUDITORIUM
MORGAN CITY, LOUISIANA
TUESDAY, JANUARY 22, 2008
7 p.m.

PRESENT:

CORPS OF ENGINEERS:

Mr. Greg Ruff, Mississippi Valley Division
Mr. Paul Eagles, Planning, Programs, and Project
Management Division
Mr. Larry Marcy, Planning, Programs, and Project
Management Division
Ms. Myra Dean, Planning, Programs, and Project
Management Division
Ms. Vickie Barrett, Planning, Programs, and Project
Management Division
Mr. Michael Alexander, Engineering and Construction Division
Mr. Frank Worley, Public Affairs
Mr. Jerry Villeret, Information Management
Ms. Beth Nord, New Orleans District

PRESENT ALSO:

Mr. Wilson P. Acosta, Sr., P.O. Box 1397, Patterson,
Louisiana 70392
Mr. Ben A. Adams, SMIG, Morgan City, Louisiana 70380
Mr. Duval Arthur, 500 Main Street, Courthouse, Room 112,
Franklin, Louisiana 70538
Mr. Greg Aucoin, Morgan City Port, P.O. Box 1075, Amelia,
Louisiana 70340
Mr. Roger Beaudeon, Cenac Offshore, LLC, 18 Marquis Manor,
Morgan City, Louisiana 70380
Mr. James Boudreaux, Candy Fleet Corporation, 1207 Front Street,
Morgan City, Louisiana 70381

Mr. Joe Boudreaux, Tug Boat, 223 Bayou Blue Bypass,
Gray, Louisiana 70359

Mr. Gerard Bourgeois, Port of Morgan City, P.O. Box 1688,
Morgan City, Louisiana 70380

Mr. Barry A. Broussard, American Supply, 412 Jacobs Street,
Berwick, Louisiana 70342

Mr. Aaron Brown, Cenac Offshore, 218 Herbert Street,
Berwick, Louisiana 70342

Mr. Thomas Brunson, TK Towing, 811 Onstead Street, Morgan City,
Louisiana 70380

Mr. Thomas Brunson, Jr., 811 Onstead Street, Morgan City,
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Mr. Larry P. Bugeron, City of Morgan City, P.O. Box 1218,
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Mrs. Jery Carbonell, Teche Towing, Inc., P.O. Box 247,
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Mr. William A. Cefoln, City of Morgan City, 400 Kidd Street,
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Ms. Cindy Cutrera, St. Mary Industrial Group, P.O. Box 1447,
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Mr. Frank Fink, St. Mary Parish Economic Development,
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Mr. Jeff Fitter, MC Orthopedic, P.O. Box 2375, Morgan City,
Louisiana 70380

Mr. Logan Fromenthal, St. Mary Parish Council, 1725 Dale
Street, Morgan City, Louisiana 70380

Mr. Butch Gautreaux, Louisiana Senate, 714 Second Street,
Morgan City, Louisiana 70380

Mr. Rodger Harris, Morgan City Port Commission, Young Road,
Morgan City, Louisiana 70380

Mr. Joe Harrison, Louisiana State Representative, District 51,
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Mr. Bill Hidalgo, Halimar Shipyard, P.O. Box 2727,
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Morgan City, Louisiana 70380

Mr. Tim Matte, Mayor of Morgan City, P.O. Box 1218,
Morgan City, Louisiana 70381

Mr. Ted McManus, Daily Review, 1005 Spruce Street,
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Mr. Kenny Nelkin, Candy Fleet, 1207 Front Street,
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Mr. Bill Pecoraro, Gulf Craft, Inc., 706 1st Street,
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Mr. Merlin Price, 925 4th Street, Morgan City,
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Mr. Damon Robison, Town of Berwick Council, 405 Riverside Drive,
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Mr. Kenneth Robling, Cenac Offshore, 265 Peters Street,
Houma, Louisiana 70363

Mr. Chip Settoon, 216 Palmer Street, Berwick, Louisiana 70342

Ms. Lou Tamporello, Bollinger Shipyard, City of Morgan City and
Atchafalaya River Coalition, 31 Chennault Street,
Morgan City, Louisiana 70380

Mr. Ruben Thomas, Seacor Marine and ARC/SMIG, 1812 Dale Street,
Morgan City, Louisiana 70380

Ms. Traci Tierney, KWBK-TV 39, 608 Michigan Street,
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Mr. Ronnie Totten, Garber Brothers, Inc., P.O. Box 815,
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Dr. Tim Tregle, P.O. Box 1286, Morgan City, Louisiana 70381

TAPE NO. 1

GREG RUFF: My name is Greg Ruff. I work for with the Corps of Engineers, Mississippi Valley Division, office in Vicksburg. I would like to welcome everyone here tonight. We are here tonight to conduct a part of our public scoping process to gather information to assist us in looking at alternatives for dredge disposal along the Atchafalaya River in the vicinity of the Horseshoe and Crewboat Cut area. Before we begin tonight, I would like to make some introductions. First, I would like to introduce some of the staff we have from both the Vicksburg District and the New Orleans District, Corps of Engineers, offices that are involved in this effort of looking at dredge disposal and dredging along the Atchafalaya River. First, from the Vicksburg office is Paul Eagles. Paul is the study manager for our Dredge Disposal Management Plan which is a study that looks at long-range disposal options. Assisting Paul on that study is Mike Alexander. Mike works the hydraulic modeling for the study. Larry Marcy--Larry is a biologist who assists on this study. Also from Vicksburg assisting us tonight is Jerry Villeret. He is handling our PA system and the slides. Frank Worley from our Public Affairs office is in the back. Also assisting us is Myra Dean and Vickie Barrett from the Vicksburg District. You met them first when you came in tonight. So we appreciate all their assistance. I would like to first thank the mayor, Mayor Matte, and the city of Morgan City for making this facility available to us tonight. This is a perfect setting for us to conduct our scoping process, and we really appreciate the use of this facility. I would like to let everyone know that we will be recording the meeting tonight to make this a matter of public record so that we will have the information to utilize further in our study. So all of the proceedings here tonight will be recorded. Some additional introductions are some of the local public officials who are here tonight. First, the State Senator, Mr. Butch Gautreaux. Sir, thank you for being here. Also, Mr. Joe Harrison, a local State Representative, District 21. Mayor Matte is here also. Mayor, thank you for being here. Anyone else? Myra, was that all that we have? Thanks. Mayor Burrick, yes sir, thank you. Appreciate you being here. Our scoping process allows us to determine issues and concerns that need to be addressed as part of our planning process for any type of Corps project. The proper scoping involves the scoping of problems and opportunities. They are the foundation of our planning process.

The active participation by stakeholders is strongly recommended. So we encourage you if you have thoughts or concerns regarding information presented, that is what this is about, to allow you to present that information. That helps us to be better decision makers from the standpoint of our planning process. Our purpose, and I am talking about the Corps of Engineers--the team that is here tonight--is to listen, not to suggest solutions or push an agenda and refrain from any on-the-spot decisionmaking. We are here to gather information. I want to make it clear that we are not about to go out there and start filling in Crewboat Cut right now. That is not what this was about. We are looking at a number of different alternatives for ways to dispose dredge material, and the use of Crewboat Cut was one alternative that was being considered. We felt like it could be a controversial alternative, so we said hey, let's send out a notice, gather information, get the concerns--important issues and what they are. That would allow us to determine if this is a viable and possible implementable plan for the future, but it was not to give any indication that we are getting ready to go out there and start doing this. One of the things we will be doing is taking the information that is presented here tonight, going back and looking at that information, and then making a decision as to do we carry this forward as a viable alternative or do we start, maybe not spending as much time on this now, and look at other options that might be more viable. We definitely wanted to say that up front. No decision has been made at this time to go forward with this option--simply to gather information tonight. So based on that, I would like to go ahead and--I think I missed one introduction. I think it is somebody from the Corps that you all are probably more familiar with than any of the others--Beth Nord from our New Orleans District office. Beth is the Operations Manager who works not only on the Atchafalaya, Chene, Boeuf, and Black project, but also on the Atchafalaya, the _____, GIWW project. I know most of you all are probably familiar with Beth. She is a great asset as far as working with the New Orleans District staff. Sorry, Beth, I apologize. I was not following my notes. I think that is all. I think now we are ready to turn the meeting over to Paul and his team. They will start giving you some details. Paul will first go over some general information on the overall study. Then Mike will go into some more specifics. Thank you all for being here.

PAUL EAGLES: Good evening. I am Paul Eagles. I am a Project Manager in the Vicksburg District. I am just going to go over a few things that have to do with the Dredge Material Management Plan analysis we are undergoing right now. As you are aware, this is a management plan for the Atchafalaya Bayous Chene, Bouef, and Black project. Of course here is a map of the area. You all know it better than I do. The purpose we are here tonight for this study is to look at disposal dredge material in the least costly manner that meets all the Federal environmental standards. Larry Marcy is going to talk about that--what these environmental standards are a little bit and the NEPA process--after I get through. Our regulations require that all Districts prepare these kind of plans for our projects for at least 20 years. This is just one of many that are being prepared throughout this area, as well as all over the country. So, this is just an ongoing effort that is not uncommon in many areas of the country right now. For plan formulation, we determine the amount of material that we believe needs to be dredged to maintain the channel over a period of years. Then we are looking at the manner in which dredge material can be disposed of using cost-effective and environmentally sustainable methods. We are looking at specific measures to manage this volume over the 20-year period. That is in a nutshell what the Dredge Material Management Plan is supposed to accomplish. In the process, we are going to come out with what we call a feasibility level decision document, and then an Environmental Impact Statement to go along with it that we will submit to our higher Headquarters for review and prior to a decision on it. The cost of the study is 100 percent Federal. Once the report and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) are complete and are approved, we can initiate preconstruction engineering and design. Those costs will be subjected to cost sharing. Once it is time to start the actual process of moving out with some features, some features will require different types of cost sharing, but we will have to submit a Project Cooperation Agreement, or a PCA, to our Headquarters for approval once we get to that point. In our schedule, we are--let me back up--our goal is to be complete by September 2010. You can see here some of the milestones we have got as part of the project, but that is our schedule at this point--completing the final report in 2010. Of course, this is the graphic that was in our Public Notice. I am going to call on Larry Marcy to come and talk to us about the NEPA process. Greg has already talked about the purpose of our meeting tonight. So I am going to call Larry. Larry, would you come up and go over our NEPA process for us?

LARRY MARCY: Thanks. Good evening. I appreciate your taking the time out of your busy schedule to come out. Your participation makes our projects. The reason we are here is because of a regulation or a law called the National Environmental Policy Act. We refer to it affectionately as NEPA. It guides us through our whole process. Projects cannot go forward unless we comply with NEPA. This regulation is quite old. It goes back to about 1968 when they first started implementing, not implementing, but getting NEPA as a regulation. Then by 1978, we finally had the guidance on how to implement NEPA. All Federal agencies have to comply with NEPA, the National Environmental Policy Act. I am a biologist with the Vicksburg District, and it is my job to prepare the environmental compliance documentation that goes with the project. If that documentation is not complete, the project goes nowhere. So, it is very important that we get the environmental portion correct. NEPA is just one act that we have to comply with. There are many laws, and we will discuss just a few in just a minute. One thing NEPA does is make sure we provide the environmental documentation to the public, to public officials, to the citizens, so they have a chance to review it. There is a 30-day review process. I will prepare an Environmental Assessment. That will go out to the public for 30 days. You can comment on that draft. We will get the comments back and incorporate that into a final. One of the requirements, and we are doing it tonight, was to initiate a scoping process. It has to occur early in the planning phase. We started with a Public Notice. We sent out about 135 letters with Public Notices. We received 15 comments back--that is a good return. Sometimes we do not get anything back. So we appreciate your taking the time to respond to it. The issues and concerns--they will all be incorporated into my Environmental Assessment, as well as a verbatim transcript that we are preparing. It is being recorded now. That will all become part of the environmental documentation. We have initiated the process. We have asked for your suggestions on how we can better the project, how we can come up with some better alternatives and solutions, and we hope we get some more input tonight that will help us through this process. I mentioned the National Environmental Policy Act--the other regulations that we require compliance with are the Endangered Species Act. We coordinate with the Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service on threatened and endangered species. We have to comply with their regulations.

The National Historic Preservation Act--we coordinate with the State Historic Preservation Officer here in Louisiana to get their compliance with that law. The Federal Water Pollution Control Act, the Clean Water Act--we have to comply with that also. If a citizen is discharging material into the waters, it requires that you comply with that Act. The Corps also has to comply with the Clean Water Act. We also comply with the Clean Air Act. EPA's role--we coordinate with EPA. The Department of Natural Resources--we met with them right before Christmas on this same project. So, there are a number of regulations that we comply with. All this has to be rolled up into that Environmental Assessment that I will prepare. Within that Environmental Assessment, there are various categories that we evaluate. There may be wetland impacts, aquatic impacts--I mentioned cultural resources. Water quality--there may be effects on navigation. All of these are broken down in that Environmental Assessment. We look at existing conditions that are out there today. We try to use our crystal ball and say, well, into the future, if we do not do the project, what is it going to look like? Will the environment decline just based on other input, other factors affecting that environment? If we build the project, what will it look like in the future? What will be the effects? So, that is the way the Environmental Assessment is broken down. I mentioned the Public Notice we sent out back in November. We were testing the waters, if you will, to see what kind of reaction we would get. You came through for us and you told us exactly what you were thinking--some of them quite colorful. We had quite a few comments. I have summarized those comments. Basically, these are the categories those comments fit into. The first one that is not up there was no, we do not want it. Do not put anything in Crewboat, but you went further than that, you broke it down into why you do not want anything placed in Crewboat. It could increase shoaling downstream is one of the comments on several comments. Out of the 13 that we received, a lot of them mentioned increased shoaling. You place it in Crewboat, that material goes on down and we are going to have to dredge it. There were several comments about that Crewboat should be the navigation channel. One important thing about Crewboat--it is a self-maintaining channel. It is 20 feet deep, it has a good current, it blows right on through. Also, for the Crewboat operators that run up and down it, Crewboat is a little shorter.

It saves time. It saves money. Another one, if there was material placed in Crewboat or if it was cut off and filled up, you are jeopardizing reliability of using that channel. Some of the comments referred to the dredging on Horseshoe. During maintenance of that channel, sometimes you have to dredge out there in a pipeline, discharging. Crewboat is a shortcut and you can bypass all that work that is going on in Horseshoe. So, it is a bypass channel. Filling in that channel might increase flooding upstream. You constrict the channel down, all the flow is going through Horseshoe. The water might tend to rise. We do not know. It is something we are studying. It is used by a lot of vessels—shrimp boats, fishing boats, general boaters going up and down. There might be some increased bank erosion. So, these were the various categories of the comments that we received. When we get to the public input portion of this meeting, there may be some others that you can think of. That is the kind of information we would like to receive from you. There have been some engineering studies done that might help clarify some of these as to whether it might cause shoaling downstream, flooding upstream. There were some old studies. Mike Alexander, our hydraulic engineer, is with us. He has looked at the old studies. He has looked at some new studies he is working on. He will speak next and try to provide some information about some of these concerns that you have raised. Mike.

MIKE ALEXANDER: Thanks, Larry. I am Mike Alexander. It is good to be here tonight. I think a lot of the success I have had with evaluating navigation issues and flooding issues over the years has been from people who use the waterway and tell me what is going on. I like to see the comments that came in. Some made me a little nervous tonight having to stand up here and talk about some of the things we are doing in the office, but I think it is all going to work out good in the end. My purpose, like I have mentioned, is to be an evaluator and look at the pros and cons about a particular idea that is passed up to me in my office. I am going to tell you where we are at in that process. It is kind of early on. We have looked at a few things and have a few more things to look at, but we will run through them. Our method is pretty straightforward. We like a lot of field data. In that field data, that includes people who use the waterway. That is the best source of information. If we have good data, we can use our computer models to their best advantage. Of course, there are a lot of studies. People have been studying this area in this region for years and years. We will try to build on what is good from some of those past

studies. I threw this up there just to show--of course Crewboat Cut--the folks of our meeting here tonight--and I just wanted to highlight Shell Island Pass. We will be talking about that at the close of this part of the presentation. Here is a version of my hydraulic model. I just wanted to point out quickly the area that it covers. I can drive tides down on this end and feed the river flow up here. It is important that the model goes this far because that is where we are at tonight here in Morgan City. Any effects of anything downstream, we want to know what happens up here. I gave a little inset zoom of the Horseshoe Bend. We have some good survey data there and good resolution to work with. What we have looked at to date--three main areas. The idea of closing one channel or the other in Horseshoe Bend has been around for a long time. Back in 1994, a study that was completed back then has been looked at and kind of considered the basis of a decision about rerouting the channel through Crewboat. I will give you some specifics from that study tonight. Something that has been kicked around, too--a what if game of closing Crewboat and using that area for dredge material disposal or just using it for a limited amount of dredge material disposal. Why consider closing one of the two? That is probably a big issue. A lot of people that look at this up our policy chain see a split channel. Word gets to us that it would be more efficient and more self-maintaining if we closed one or the other of them. I have heard talk about this for years. We are trying to go through the process, as painful as it may be, and find out if this is true. It is necessary to establish a cost basis for ways to get maintenance money to keep the channel open. Getting back to that older study in 1994--a guy named Brad Hall--I knew him although I did not work on this study back then. They concluded at this time that maintenance would not decrease. In fact, they said it would increase if you moved the channel over to Crewboat. The conclusion from that study was "do not." Here this past year, we started looking at, well, what if we closed the other side. All the three things I have up here are really interrelated. We closed it off in the model now, just a simulation, and upstream water level rise would be a problem. We would have to do some widening and things on the other side to counter the loss of cross section that caused upstream water level problems. So, it kind of took a quick look at that and here we are. Yes, you could close it. Yes, it would have some temporary disposal area. A lot of that might be taken up by what you would have to widen an increased cross-sectional area on the authorized--the bendway channel I call it sometimes. Then you would wind up with about the present level or volume of maintenance material

that would have to be dredged over on that side that is dredged right now. So, we got to the point of thinking about this and considering other options--possibilities. There are a lot of them. I am finding out more about some. Even right before the meeting, I got some information on some areas. We started with three for the Horseshoe Bend area. What if you put a little of this material in Crewboat Cut? This is one I have not gotten to yet--the second one there--putting some material in Shell Island Pass. That idea has been tossed around 5 or 10 years maybe. So we thought we would include that in this go-around of effort. Then, you know, maybe there is a number of areas on Bayou Chene. This is where I mentioned I was getting some information on that as recent as a few minutes ago. Here is a shot from the model just showing the (inaudible) in Horseshoe Bend. Of course here is the Crewboat side and the authorized channel in the outer bend. What if we put a limited amount of material in Crewboat? Some areas in Crewboat--especially the lower end--look kind of deep. We evaluated this for upstream water level rise and capacity while keeping it open. This is just one idea that we looked at with the particular model run I am referring to. I looked at the upper end. I saw that it was about -12 up there roughly. I kept that depth contour. What we find out was if we did not put material to exceed that depth, that -12, you could probably put enough material in there to account for one dredging cycle and still have small boat navigation. That is kind of what it would look like if nothing made any of it move and right after you got through dredging and disposing. Other options--we are pondering these things. We are considering new things--Shell Island Pass. Does it have the ability to move material from the upper end close to Horseshoe during a dredging operation? Is it capable of carrying that material out into the upper Delta area into the Atchafalaya Bay. I do not know. Would it require a long time? Would it do it right away? Would it need a seasonal high (inaudible) cycle? These are things that we are going to be looking at. Confined disposal along the channel around Bayou Chene. There are a lot of benefits to doing that. We will be looking at these things. That kind of brings me back to Larry.

LARRY MARCY: Okay. We have gone through what the Corps has to say as far as a presentation on what we have looked at, what we are looking at, the types of environmental documentation that we are working on, and now it is time to hear from you. We have a few ground rules. I am supposed to facilitate this meeting so we can move it along and we can get all the comments in. When you arrived this evening at the registration desk, you were

asked to fill out a card if you wished to speak. I will go through the cards one at a time and ask you to come up to the microphone. Please state your name and affiliation. We are recording this meeting. If you do not wish to speak, there is also a card you can fill out--write your comments. Put a staple in it or tape it and drop it in the mailbox. It is postage paid, and it will come to me. Also, please limit your comments to about 5 minutes. I have about 15 speakers here. We can get through all the speakers, and if we have more time we can take more questions. Also--the very last one up here--the comment is that we do not have all the answers. It is early in the process, and we are trying to get some information so that we can get an answer to solve the problem that we are having.
Mayor Tim Matte?

MAYOR TIM MATTE: Thank you. My comments are from a perspective of someone who has been representing the community for the past 20 years and really involved, I think, in waterway-related issues for a significant portion of that, particularly the last 10 years quite a bit of it involved. I can tell you I have heard over and over and over again from a variety of people who have a variety of experiences in dealing with the river that say the channel should go down Crewboat Cut, and I do not know why they keep trying to maintain Horseshoe as the navigation channel. I relate that to you--I am not a mariner and do not have a lot of experience in going down the river, but I can tell you I have heard it from enough people that they have convinced me. I think it should seriously be a consideration for you in your study. No. 2, there are a variety of reasons that are always referred to in that. No. 1, I think, primarily is that it is self-maintaining. That is a comment that I have heard on a number of occasions. Perhaps with some minor initial dredging, it would easily accommodate the traffic that wants to use that channel. I think that one of the overriding issues, whether it is the authorized channel or not, is the fact that it is a navigation channel that is regularly used. Your idea of placing spoil in that is going to deprive the area of one of its navigation channels. I think that is going to have an impact on some of the mariners here. Now, you have given them an alternate being the navigation channel itself, but I think the concerns that come out over and over again are things like safety--trying to make that big turn in the Horseshoe. All of those who are coming out of the Chene and trying to make that turn, it is something that is difficult. I will not really berate that issue very much or elaborate because I do believe there will be some speakers who have personal experience in

that, and they can certainly convey those ideas, but certainly is one of the things that I have heard over the years. There are a lot of smaller vessels that use that. As I said earlier, depriving them of that opportunity would increase their cost. Not only that, I think there again it is a safety issue for them. I think the fact that if they can stay out of the way of those larger tows that are trying to utilize the Horseshoe makes it a lot safer environment for all of us. We have had enough tragedies on that river over the years. Luckily, not a great number, but still plenty of tragedies on that river. We do not want to increase anybody's opportunity for a problem. I know when you come and you discuss a problem like this, it is always good to have ideas or have potential solutions and I think certainly some of the solutions that I have heard and have heard them mention includes placing more material on the island as opposed to placing more material in the channel or near the channel where it can get right back in the water. I think as an additional overriding concern in all of your Dredge Material Management Plan issues is the fact that it is unfair for the navigation channel to solely bear the cost of finding placement when there are opportunities for beneficial use. Beneficial use in an area like south Louisiana where there are opportunities to perhaps beneficially use that material in a way that is conducive to marsh building or at least stemming the loss of wetlands. It is almost criminal for us to not explore those. I think a solution really is to utilize Crewboat Cut as the channel and thereby save the dredging money that we are spending on Horseshoe. We could use that dredge money for other projects. One of the things that you are going to find here--You know, I did not come prepared to give you a bunch of statistics about who uses those channels, but I can testify with all confidence that the channel is used a whole lot less today than it used to be. One of the reasons for that--I am not saying the reason--but one of the reasons for it is the lack of an ability to keep that channel open throughout its final reach. Because of that, we have lost business here. So the socioeconomic challenge that I see is finding a solution here that allows us to do more with the rest of the river so that we can at least provide the opportunity for some of those users to come back to the channel. Thank you.

LARRY MARCY: Yes, sir. Thank you. Mayor Matte mentioned beneficial use of dredge material. We are looking at that as an option. There are degraded wetlands on both sides—the west side and east side. A lot of them along the east bank, Atchafalaya. (Inaudible) There are other elected officials here, but I did not get a card that you wanted to speak. Does any other elected official wish to speak or make a statement? Sir, please.

LOU TAMPORELLO: Yes, I am Lou Tamporello. I am kind of wearing three different hats here tonight. I work for Bollinger Shipyard here in the Amelia. I am also on the City Council here. I am also associated with the Atchafalaya River Coalition. I would like to thank you all for coming and everybody else here for taking the time out. These are the important people behind me. I am just a little voice. I hear a lot of things like our mayor does, but I can tell you one of the biggest things that we have run across in some of our conversations and everything in dealing with people is one—the safety aspect. As a Bollinger Shipyard employee, we build some barges that are 400 feet long. When they have to tow out of here and they are on a wire, maybe 200 feet out there, and all of a sudden your tug is so far out to make the turn where he goes aground and all of a sudden you have a barge coming at you, you have a problem. That is one big thing. A lot of other things that popped up—one thing that has come to light is raising the elevation of possible spoil areas. There again, it goes into hurricane protection and everything else. I think there are a lot of areas that are out there, that maybe if you could look back and relax some of the regulations of where the spoil is disposed of--where it does not become public land and everybody and his brother can come out there and hunt and fish and trap on it and everything else--maybe those kind of things should be looked at. I can obviously see that you have read our letters. A lot of the things that you have put on there have definitely come out of the letters. A lot of that you hear comes from behind me of the operators and the users of the channel. I hope they are speaking tonight because that is what you need to hear. I do believe there are some options other than filling up Crewboat Cut or even putting in a little bit of it where it could filter its way down. We have probably spent somewhere in the neighborhood of \$20 million in the Horseshoe in the last 10 years. Maybe by just dredging Crewboat one time and allowing a little bit more water to flow there, it could give us a channel. Who knows, maybe you could just flip-flop them around and still have the water going through it where it would not cause any flooding upstream. If you have the Crewboat Cut

open and navigable in the proper waterway, it may eliminate all your dredging in that area. Once again, I thank you and I appreciate it.

LARRY MARCY: Yes, sir. Thank you for your comments. Are there any other elected officials who would like to speak? Any state agency representatives? Any Federal agency representatives? (Inaudible) Okay, we will go right on. Mr. Bill Hidalgo.

BILL HIDALGO: My name is Bill Hidalgo. I represent Halimar Shipyard and also the Atchafalaya River Coalition. I have been involved in the river for many many years from 1977 to 1994 operating a fleet of offshore supply vessels in this area. The Crewboat Cut is always a choice for our captains, but because the channel was not Crewboat Cut, but Horseshoe, I as a manager could not allow them to transit Crewboat Cut. We have seen over the years Crewboat Cut continuing to maintain itself with depths of many times greater than the depth of the Horseshoe. We scratch our head over and over again wondering why the channel is not Crewboat Cut rather than the Horseshoe. I, for one, cannot understand why you would ever want to put any material in a channel with the chance of it coming back into the channel. If you raise the bottom to the 12-foot depth you are talking about and if you were successful in maintaining that 12-foot depth—personally, myself knowing Crewboat Cut as I have over the years, I think it is going to go back to its same depth which means that material is going to go down the channel. So, I think we have learned over the years that we cannot put material right on the side of the channel when it is dredged. As you know, down in the bay area, we now are going to the west. I am not sure how far it is (inaudible). I think some of that was learned over in that area that we all know now is not going to exist anymore and that is the Gulf of Mississippi outlet. The outlet was maintained the same way. The material was put on the bank, and they soon found out—which we saw of a Corps of Engineers study—it had to be put back at least 5,000 feet. So, to take material from Horseshoe and put it into Crewboat Cut, as a manager, I say that is a mistake. As a mariner, I know what they have to say about it, but I cannot speak as a mariner. I do hope some of the mariners tonight do address this. They all would love to run Crewboat Cut. I know my captains all wanted to run Crewboat Cut. I as a manager could not allow them to do that for legal reasons. In fact, in the late 1980s, which maybe precipitated that 1994 study, we asked for Crewboat Cut to be

considered as the channel. We know that the channel would have to be changed. That would take some sort of a Bill, an Act, or whatever. That can happen. That is the only reason I can see that legally it does not go through Crewboat Cut. There is a heck of a lot more area for spoil on the west side of Crewboat Cut than there is to the east side of Crewboat Cut. I heard someone say something about putting material on the east side of Crewboat Cut. It is going to be right back in the Cut. Just as it happened down south in the (inaudible) area. In conclusion, please, to put more material--any material--into Crewboat Cut, I think you damage the balance we have. If you look at any map of the Mississippi River, you see all of these oxbows and you see all of these, it never turns and goes out. It always takes the short cut. That is what Crewboat Cut is trying to do. Its nature is trying to correct the channel. Do not fight it. Let nature take its course. I think it is like trying to swim upstream. If you try to defeat nature, it is not going to work. It never has and never will. So, please consider--do not put any material in Crewboat Cut. Thank you.

LARRY MARCY: Yes, sir. Thank you. Next person on my list, I think, is James Boudreaux. If I mispronounce your name, just correct me.

JAMES BOUDREAUX: James Boudreaux, Candy Fleet Corporation, crew boat captain. I am against closing in Crewboat Cut for the simple reason that is my shortcut home. If you ever work offshore, you would appreciate the minutes you save by taking Crewboat Cut instead of the Horseshoe, plus the fuel you would save for the company you are working for and hitting logs. When you run the Horseshoe, good luck. You are going to bend a wheel. Not when or maybe, but you will bend a wheel. You will not see it, but it is there.

LARRY MARCY: Could you provide a little bit more information? Do you have any indication of how much time you save by running Crewboat as opposed to Horseshoe?

JAMES BOUDREAUX: Twenty-five minutes.

LARRY MARCY: I was just wondering. I had no idea.

JAMES BOUDREAUX: Yes, sir.

LARRY MARCY: That helps. Thank you. Mr. Steve Mercrown. Candy Fleet.

STEVE MERCROWN: Yes, sir. I am Mr. Steve Mercrown of Candy Fleet. We have a problem in the spring of the year. All trees and all logs come down the river and they go into Horseshoe. The trees have a hard time navigating that sharp turn so they end up on the bank or they go down and you have a stump sticking up out of the water, which in the daytime it is fine, but at night, by radar you see a marker. All of our captains get confused by all the readout there and think they are markers and they are actually trees. They run aground because they are assuming it is a marker in one place, but actually it is a tree. Crewboat Cut saves us time. It is deep enough for crew boats and supply boats right now. We have had our captains (inaudible). Although at the ends you have the junction buoys. So, to have a junction buoy that means you have two channels. If you could get Congress to authorize Crewboat Cut as an alternative channel, then maybe we could get four or five markers in there. More companies would be able to run Crewboat Cut. Right now there is a large liability as the gentleman was speaking of tonight. (Inaudible) If they go through Crewboat Cut and something happens, there is a big liability with the insurance company because it is not the authorized channel. If we could get any type of authorization for the channel, then it would make a lot more traffic going through there. Of course, the more traffic, it would stay deeper by itself. If you navigate the Horseshoe at night and you have a supply boat coming in and a supply boat going out or a crew boat going out, it is hard to line up on each other (inaudible) because one vessel may not be over as far as he thinks he is. By the time they realize it, everybody is pulling their hair out trying to avoid a collision. Crewboat Cut is the safer route for everybody concerned. I do not know if you have been down there or not, but it is pretty hairy.

LARRY MARCY: Sir, thank you.

CINDY CUTRERA: Good evening. My name is Cindy Cutrera. I am Executive Director for St. Mary Industrial Group. I would like to thank our elected officials, all of the public who came out, as well as the members from the Vicksburg District for scheduling this hearing and the response to the letters that have been submitted to you. St. Mary Industrial Group consists of 150-member companies and professionals. We were organized to

promote a better understanding of problems affecting business and industry. We monitor things such as hurricane evacuation, protection coastal restoration efforts, and waterway navigation issues. We do encourage fiscal and ethical responsibility in Government, and we support efforts that provide a safe, healthy environment and a strong economy for our citizens. I am here tonight, No. 1, because I wanted to gain a better understanding of the issues and processes that the Corps has to follow and also to be able to convey some information to you that we have gathered since the issuance of the November 21 Public Notice. First of all, let me say that I think all of us here are aware of what a Public Notice is and that your intent was not to immediately go out and dump a bunch of spoil into the Cut. You know that there is a need to respond if there are issues. What happened was that our stakeholders did not become aware of the Notice being issued until 2 days prior to the expiration, and it was a 15-day comment that was allowed. So we had 2 days with no time to consult with anyone just to get those requests in for you to schedule the hearing so that our voices could be heard. So I just kind of wanted to clarify that. I think most of us do understand the process, just timing was the issue. Since you did go over all of the facts that were in the letters, I am not going to go back over that, other than the fact that one of the boat companies who stated that they have difficulty dealing with the logs and so forth--all of the debris. One of the issues that needs to be mentioned is the amount of money that a company loses when that happens. In their letter, it stated "every time we bend our wheels we, and our client, suffer the loss of use of our vessels for this downtime." In a very competitive industry, this can lead to tens of thousands of dollars loss per vessel per event. So it is significant. Now once we did receive the announcement that you were going to schedule a public hearing, a group of concerned citizens got together and we decided to go ahead and survey various people--shrimpers, fishermen, and those who navigate the area. Most of the people that I spoke to were company owners and operations managers in marine-related industry. There were boat captains with experience and knowledge of the river--most of them exceeding 25 years of experience. We consulted companies, both locally based, as well as companies that operate through here from Harvey to Zalman's and other outside areas. We also talked to companies who have deep draft requirements and others who consistently use Crewboat Cut as their preferred route. One of the companies stated that they have over 30 shallow draft boats, and they estimated that at least four of their boats travel the Cut at least once a day. You were asking for a number a while ago about time saving.

They estimated also that the fuel savings is approximately 20 gallons of diesel per boat per trip by using the Cut rather than using the Horseshoe. Those who required the deeper water stated that they generally travel the Horseshoe not because Crewboat is not deep enough, but because they have to travel that authorized channel. I think it was Mike who said it was a little scary some of the stuff in the letters. Well, I have to share with you some of the stuff from the surveys that I did. You know, again, the boat captains with Longtow find it difficult to navigate during bad weather events at night. There is definitely a concern about unavoidable collisions in the channel. It was noted especially when someone who is not experienced with this waterway is behind the wheel. Of course, the logs and debris create damage to the boats as well as a hazard to those traveling. Another comment was that tows coming out of Bayou Chene must negotiate river traffic in two directions and overcome the natural current going through the Crewboat Cut in order to travel the Horseshoe. They generally find themselves becoming grounded, leaving the Horseshoe just as they have managed to overcome the obstacles of entering into it. This captain states that he travels the Cut during high water. He is familiar enough with the waterways to know when the water is low--I require a deep draft or I am not going through. When the water is higher, he just stays 1/8 of a mile off the point, and he experiences no problems. He also mentioned that he has observed a whirlpool effect where an updown eddy brings silt back into the Horseshoe. He also stated if it were not for the high-tech equipment on the boats that his company provides, "I would catch hell in the channel just like many other boat captains." Those were his exact words. The message was consistent. Throughout every interview was that Crewboat Cut has consistently maintained a depth of about 16 to 20 feet without dredging. People who have to travel the Horseshoe have encountered consistent problems in the same two areas for the past 25 years. The current in the Cut, they do believe, will cause the sediment to be dropped and run down the channel and create additional problems, as well as additional dredging expense. Again, the request was "please work with nature. Dredge Crewboat Cut to the authorized depth and let the Horseshoe fill up." We are still in the process of conducting surveys. This was just a handful of people that we spoke to, and I would be happy to provide copies of the documentation once we are done with those surveys. We do ask that you keep in mind the following points, and we would like to have some feedback along the way. I think it was mentioned that over the past 10 or 11 years, over \$20 million has been expended for the

dredging of the Horseshoe. Operators still complain that consistent depth is not able to be maintained. To our knowledge, Crewboat Cut has never been dredged. Again, the boat captains say it maintains 16 to 20 feet. I would question whether anyone has any knowledge of anyone attempting to dredge Crewboat Cut. We are not aware of it, but it is maintaining. Also, the considerations that were being asked for were either to dredge to the 20-foot depth in the few areas that are not already deep and monitor to see how well the Cut maintains that depth. Can it be included as a part of the authorized channel or can it be authorized rather than the Horseshoe Bend? It is consistent with everything everybody else has said. These again are additional people that we have spoken to. Also, the question about the elevation--can we dispose at a higher elevation on some of these sites you have already disposed on because (inaudible) storm surge resistance. With all of the experience through Crewboat cut, it is definitely a concern that we would have to redredge the same material down the channel. I know that the models indicate possibly not, but just from people seeing the changes in the river through the years, it is the feeling, the general consensus. Also again, relaxing some of the rules of landowners if they want to accept some of the spoil. With safety being a consideration, we do know that there are hazardous materials that are carried up and down the riverways. I am not aware of any type of emergency plan for our residents should that dreadful thing happen where we are having difficulty determining where one tow ends and the other begins and there be a collision. What type of precautions are there available or what kind of plan is available to this area? It is just something that is very serious that needs to be considered. In closing, I would like to say that St. Mary Industrial Group is anxious to support a plan that, in the end, will result in the best interest of all concerned. We would like to stress that the plan best demonstrates physical responsibility by the Federal Government by not spending the same dollars on redredging the same material and not finding a place where it can go and be beneficially used. I would like to thank you for the time allowed to me, and I look forward to hearing from you.

LARRY MARCY: Thank you. Would you give us a copy of the comment? Beth, correct me. The question you have raised was whether Crewboat has been dredged. The Corps of Engineers is already authorized to maintain Horseshoe. There is no Federal money to maintain the Crewboat Cut. Mr. Bob Miller. (Inaudible) I am going to need help with this one. The first name is (inaudible). Mr. Greg Linscombe, you are up.

GREG LINSCOMBE: Thank you, Larry. My name is Greg Linscombe. I am the land manager for Continental Land and Fur Company. We have submitted comments in writing (Exhibit 1). I just want to go over a few of the key points. We are one of those companies, by the way, that would love to receive some of that material. Continental Land and Fur owns and manages property bordering the Atchafalaya River along the east bank from a point south of (inaudible) to outside the mouth of south of Deer Island Bayou, portions of the banks along Bayou Chene, and the adjacent lands and water bodies associated with the Avoca Island cutoff channel. One of our objectives in managing these lands is to protect the marsh, maintain hydrology, and reduce bankline erosion associated with navigation channels located adjacent to or running through our property. Continental has worked with the Corps and the Port of Morgan City providing dredge material disposal dating back to the 1980s. Most of that (inaudible) has been between Avoca Island Cutoff and the river along the peninsula. These areas have been used many times and are currently available today for use—in fact, this year, the spring of this year. We have met with the Corps and expressed our concerns about erosion along the east bank of Avoca Island Cutoff and Bayou Chene and have requested that several eroded sections of this east bank be included as dredge spoil disposal sites. We continue with those meetings. An example of the problems along the channel—the initial right-of-way for Avoca Island Cutoff was 20 feet deep and 800 feet wide. Today, it averages 1,600 feet. In some areas, it is 2,000 feet wide. So, it is eroding into the land we own and manage. It is quite likely that the majority of the material that needs to be dredged from Bayou Chene and Avoca Island Cutoff is, in fact, eroded marsh lands from along that channel. The timing of this proposal to use Crewboat Cut as a dredge disposal area is confusing. At this time, one portion of the Corps is planning for beneficial use of dredged spoil material authorized by WRDA, while at the same time we have a proposal for dumping spoil in an existing channel that is perhaps used by more boat traffic

than the Horseshoe channel. Beneficial use of dredged spoil material seems to be the expectation of the future. In this proposal, we dump material into a channel that may be 20 feet deep--I suspect 1,000 to 1,500 feet wide and 7,000 feet long. It appears that this hole would hold, in fact, a tremendous amount of dredge spoil material. Some people think it would be washed out. They could be right. Anyway, if you are dumping it in there, it could have been used beneficially--including the eroded areas along the east bank of (inaudible) that I described just a minute ago. A second concern that we have is related to the potential of high water levels that might result in closing Crewboat Cut. It would seem that closure would raise water levels in northern Terrebonne marshes as a result of higher stages pushed through all of the available outlets. Higher river stages during the past 30 or 40 years appear to be the most significant factor to the conversion of stable marsh into fragile thin mat floats in open water. In order to maintain and perhaps restore these marshes, we need lower water levels not higher. We look forward to a response to several questions. In summary, what will those higher water levels be? What time period will the result be, and how far will the higher water levels actually push back from the river to the east? Another question is why not coordinate with other sections of the Corps and the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources to use dredge spoil material beneficially instead of dumping it into a channel. Restoration and protection of eroding banks along Avoca Island channel and Bayou Chene--by the way, I am glad to hear that is an option you are looking at--should have a high priority for creation of spoil disposal areas resulting in beneficial use. Why not explore armoring some of these banks along these eroded sections of Avoca Island instead of dredging eroded material from the channel. In the future, if dredging is required, place the material behind these armored banks as upland disposal areas. If you have more information after this meeting or in the future, we would like to have an opportunity to provide more comments. Thank you for the opportunity.

LARRY MARCY: Yes, sir. Thank you for your comments.
Mr. Acosta. You pass. Mr. Merlin Price.

MERLIN PRICE: I will keep it short and sweet. My name is Merlin Price. I am not affiliated with any association or anything. I am a commercial fisherman and recreational fisherman. I have been traveling the river for years. I have submitted a letter to the editor (inaudible). I am not going to reiterate what everyone else has said. You are going to hear

and you have heard more concerns about keeping Crewboat Cut open versus disposal which is what this meeting was called for. All I ask is that you listen to the people and hear what we are telling you. I have traveled this river all my life. Captain Wilson, who just passed, has traveled this river all his life. He can tell you stories about Crewboat Cut. This is where the channel wants to go. This is what we know as people who live here and run up and down this river. Disposal areas-- what do we do with the spoil? I have attended some coastal restoration meetings. The people in Terrebonne--they would love to have what we have here. Believe me, we would love to give it to them because the sand is killing our natural bayous. People that have hunting leases to the east and west of us are filling our bayous up, and we cannot get to our camps (inaudible). We have too much sediment, and I think that is the real problem-- let's do something with it upstream. I could go on and on and on. I am not going to do it. I have to catch a plane tomorrow morning unfortunately. I am going to Wyoming. Anyway, I want to thank you all for being here tonight. I thank everybody for showing up. That shows a tremendous support of what we want to do here and that is keep Crewboat Cut open. We have heard the safety reasons. We have heard the environmental and economic reasons. I am not going to reiterate what everyone else has said. Thank you all for coming. I appreciate the opportunity.

LARRY MARCY: Yes, sir. Thank you. Jeff Fitter.

JEFF FITTER: Like Mr. Price, I do not own any offshore boats or shipyards or marsh land. I just use the river recreationally, but I use it a lot. I have been using it for about 30 years now. My first encounter with the Horseshoe was maybe 20 years ago. I had the misfortune of breaking down, and I had to hitch a ride on a supply boat. When he got into the Horseshoe, his boat drew 12 feet of water, and we did nothing but hit bottom off and on all the way up that (inaudible). I cannot repeat what the captain had to say about that channel. Since then, that kind of got me interested. I wondered, why am I going down this channel that has plenty of water in it and half the time I am going down the channel, I am seeing a dredge over in the Horseshoe trying to keep that thing open. I have a \$200 depth finder in my boat, but I can find 20 feet of water all the way down that Crewboat chute now. I mean it is better than it was 2 years ago, 5 years ago. The map that you put up there with the hydrologic readings on it is way way out of date. You might have to dredge that channel once, but what I would like to propose--and it is kind of what the people are already saying,

it is nothing new--just stop dredging the Horseshoe. Put a few markers in the Crewboat chute and make that the channel. I know what is going to happen. I have told a lot of people around town in the last few years that if you stop dredging the Horseshoe, 6 months later I bet I could walk across it and I am not that tall. They have been batting around this number \$20 million in the last 5 years to keep that open. (Inaudible) \$5 million a year. That is not a lot of money for the Federal Government, but we do not get that much of it down here. I just can see a whole lot better use for it--keeping the Morgan City Front Street Waterfront open, buying more rocks for the break wall out in the gulf which I think may be a good idea. The money to maintain that Horseshoe is wasted. Thank you.

LARRY MARCY: Yes, sir. Thank you. Mr. Bill Pecoraro.

BILL PECORARO: Right. Bill Pecoraro. Gulf Craft. Also a member of PR&C. I think most everything has been pretty much covered tonight, although I have talked to several of the shrimpers in this area. In fact, I talked to one of the Vietnamese. I tried to get him to come to the meeting tonight. He has an 82-foot boat, and he travels Crewboat Cut. If you look at the satellite images, the east side still appears to be building up even though there is quite a bit of traffic through there. Then one of the other things I have noticed, too, seems like all of the number of years that I have been in Morgan City (inaudible) of Morgan City. They have dumped it on the (inaudible) side. So, you would seem to think that ought to be filling up pretty soon. So, I am just trying to figure out the reasoning you are going to maintain a 12-foot bottom in this Cut that does not want to stay there. It is basically the same thing as you dumping the spoil in the middle of the river on the Berwick side because it is deep and the current is fast and it is taking it down the river. The same thought process to me would be the same thing that would happen at Crewboat Cut. Now the other thing I would like to try to convince someone. Mr. Carson, he has been traveling and has been a shrimper for over 30 years. He has been traveling it since he was 13 years old. Mr. Carson, if I am wrong, I would like you to correct me. I would like for you to talk about that being an island at one time--that there are rocks and a barge sunk on that end.

WILSON ACOSTA: (inaudible)

BILL PECORARO: If indeed it has a tendency to erode there, let's take some of this \$27 million that we have spent over the last 10 years and give them a little bit (inaudible). I think we need to go past (inaudible). I would like to get that channel opened up. (Inaudible). Thank you.

LARRY MARCY: Yes, sir. Thank you. Are there any other speakers? I have gone through my list of speakers that wanted to talk. Yes sir?

BILL NEW: My name is Bill New. I am the owner and president of New Industries in Morgan City. I am also a member of the Morgan City Harbor Terminal District Port Commission, and I am active in the Atchafalaya River Coalition. For years, every time we talked about Crewboat Cut, I kept hearing about the study--this modeling study that was done in 1994. I have reviewed that study. In fact, I recently had an opportunity to do it again. To me, the most glaring thing about that study was that when they did the comparison of estimated dredge material in Horseshoe versus estimated dredge material in Crewboat Cut, there was no allowance made that if you did not dredge the Horseshoe that it would fill in and force more water down Crewboat Cut. So to me, the study basically looked like a waste of time--looked to me like somebody spent an entire afternoon working on it. I have worked in some large engineering organizations. A lot of times, management makes a decision and then the engineers are told to go out and justify that decision that somebody had already made before we started. That kind of looks like that to me, but at the very least, that was done in 1994 probably with some data from prior years. A lot of things have changed in that area out there, and I certainly think that it merits another look at it. I suspect that if it is looked at again, if you will look at what will happen if you allow the Horseshoe to fill in, I think you will come to a lot different conclusions than that study did in 1994.

LARRY MARCY: One thing we are going to look at is that 1994 study. That is Mike Alexander's task. Yes sir?

BEN ADAMS: I am Ben Adams. I represent SMIG. As for my question for you, is there any cost sharing associated with the river and you all dredging with our port. Does our port put up any money as far as the dredging or do you all do a 100 percent?

LARRY MARCY: It is 100 percent Federal. The plan is to put the information out there on the New Orleans website.

CINDY CUTRERA: In regard to Mr. Adams' question, I wonder if maybe you could give us a little more detail. I understand there are different situations as far as cost sharing. Maybe you could just give us a little brief information on that. After that, my other question is that the Public Notice went out in regard to disposal around the Crewboat Cut area, and now you have mentioned you are looking at Bayou Chene and other areas. Does that mean that you are going to be sending out additional notices as you reach some other alternatives or does that one notice suffice for everything that you are looking at?

LARRY MARCY: That one notice and this public meeting and the information that has been provided, from today there will be a 30-day comment period where people can send in any of their ideas or concerns.

CINDY CUTRERA: In regard to those other areas as well?

LARRY MARCY: Yes. We are developing an array of alternatives.

CINDY CUTRERA: Okay. If somebody can just tell us a little bit about the cost sharing.

LARRY MARCY: Paul? Beth?

BETH NORD: Okay. Today we are talking about disposal for the maintenance of the existing navigation channel. Federal maintenance of the 20- by 400-foot channel, which is the Atchafalaya River, Bayou Chene, Boeuf, and Black project, is 100 percent Federal. So the dredging and the disposal activities in there are 100 percent Federal. There is one situation where there would be cost sharing and that would be if we were constructing disposal areas. In that case, the Morgan City Harbor and Terminal District is a local sponsor for construction of those new disposal areas. There would be cost sharing that would be 20 percent of the cost of construction of the disposal areas—basically, constructing dikes or other (inaudible).

_____. Correct. To date, we have not had any such types of projects. Jerry? It is 10 percent up front, 10 percent over 30 years. The port also provides land rights and easements for all of the disposal areas that we use right now. So, it is not a money cost exchange, but that is part of their partnering for the project. So, if we are going to use a disposal area, the port does the real estate work and that cost is carried by the port. Go ahead. Yes sir. Yes. There are numerous programs that are out there that have opportunities for cost sharing. Some of these programs are Federal programs that have been in place for a number of years. One of these programs is called Section 204, and it is a Water Resources Development Act section. I think it was 1986. Does that sound right? Basically, that is a program where the incremental cost or the cost above the least costly environmental acceptable alternative which was mentioned tonight. The cost for that could be paid for by the Federal Government, the Corps of Engineers program, plus a local sponsor. So, if we had a base plan that was disposing material into the river at, say it was \$2 million, if a local sponsor--non-Federal sponsor--wanted to partner with the Corps of Engineers to take that material and place it at some other location for beneficial use. The 204 program talks about beneficial use. Then there would be an opportunity to prepare a report, request Federal funds to pay for 80 percent of those incremental costs. Then the local sponsor would have to pay for 20 percent of the cost above the base plan. That local sponsor could be a state agency or some other interested party. In the past, there have been projects on other navigation channels. An example would be placing material on (inaudible) Island, which was a Section 204 project that was done in conjunction with the state Department of Natural Resources. To date, we have not had any of those 204 projects on the Atchafalaya River. There is another authority that is called 1135 which is similar. Again, it would be Federal--the Corps of Engineers 80 percent of the incremental cost, 20 percent the local sponsor--kind of a cost share thing. That is a program not necessarily for beneficial use, but for environmental enhancement of projects. There is also a new program that we have all been hearing about that is with the Louisiana Coastal Authority. You are going to have to help me Mayor Matte. This is the one you asked me about. It was the BUDMA--beneficial use of dredged material--I think is what the acronym is. I have been doing some research on that, too. That is part of the Louisiana Coastal Authority. It is similar to the Section 204 projects in the fact that the base cost would be funded by the O&M program. The increment above that could be funded by this additional program--similar to 204,

it requires cost sharing 20 percent. That program is proposed to be \$100 million over 10 years, so that would be \$10 million a year. However, there is a portion of those funds that the program right now is proposing to use for further study of different types of technologies. Some of the things that we have probably all heard about--long pumping distances and things like that. So, that would be an opportunity to get \$10 million or less per year as an incremental cost for the whole coast. That program is actually focusing on eight channels, one of which would be the Atchafalaya River Bayous Chene, Boeuf, and Black channel. That is based on preliminary report which has not even been released, but since you asked me some questions I have some information about that. A lot of those programs--you are competing for money all across the coast--all of those programs I mentioned require cost sharing by a non-Federal sponsor. So, in many cases, the non-Federal sponsor for LCA--and it looks like it has been identified as the Department of Natural Resources, but to do those programs and to blend them with the O&M program requires timing and requires that things happen together. So, to assume that we are going to get any of those dollars is very hopeful, but I do not know if it is realistic. The LCA beneficial use program--they are anticipating that they will be ready to go to construction on some projects by 2010. So, we are still talking 2 years out for that. For the Section 204 and Section 1135 programs, they have been out there for a number of years. There is also the Coastal Wetland Planning and Protection Act that also requires non-Federal cost share. So, for those types of programs to blend in with the navigation channel dredging, those things have to track along with our dredging cycle for potentially (inaudible) you folks have mentioned. Those are just some of the programs I am aware of. They basically require cost sharing just like the steps that we talked about tonight or was discussed with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)--all those things have to happen with these other programs. Those programs provide authority to do something beyond the base dredging and disposal, and they also provide a vehicle for getting additional money. So, those are two pieces of what those other possible programs provide. I will say that a number of years ago there was a CWPPA project (Coastal Wetlands Planning and Protection Act), a project that was proposed to take material from the Horseshoe and place it in open water (inaudible). Because the incremental cost was so high, that project was abandoned. It is still out there as a possible project. I do not know which priority project it was on. It was a number of years ago. Due to the incremental cost, that was abandoned. We work with the

Department of Natural Resources annually to talk about disposal plans. The Department of Natural Resources would like the Corps of Engineers to use 100 percent of the dredge material that we remove from the navigation channels beneficially. They have taken opportunity to partner with the Corps to do some beneficial use. Like I might have mentioned, (inaudible), that is associated with (inaudible). They have not come forward with partnering for this channel. At one time they had looked at pursuing taking this material from the (inaudible) for this 204 program, but the incremental cost of removing that material to an area like (inaudible) is so costly that was not (inaudible). So, there are opportunities. Timing has a lot to do with it. Having a non-Federal sponsor who is willing to put up with funding has a lot to do with it. Then we still have to go through all those steps. What we were basically talking about tonight was designating a disposal area. How do you get from concept to actually being able to begin construction. So, all those steps would need to take place. Hopefully, that was helpful. Does anyone have any other questions about that? There is a lot more information on all these programs on the New Orleans District website, on the DNR website. There is a list of CWPRA projects out there that you can look at. There is some information about this beneficial use disposal program that I was mentioning on the Corps website as well.

LARRY MARCY: Any other comments? Okay, if not, I will turn the program back over to Greg Ruff. I appreciate your attention and your responses and your comments—for participating in the process. It is a win-win situation. Our mailing address, our phone number, and e-mail address if you need to get a hold of me for additional comments.

GREG RUFF: Thank you, Larry. There was one question, I think. raised about future public meetings. We have sent out this Notice and held this meeting to specifically address the area of the study that we needed some more public input on. As we move forward in the study, if we identify specific areas of the study, we would go back through a similar type process. Most of the time what we will do is gather the information and go through and complete a draft report for the overall study and then conduct a public meeting and gather input on that draft report at that time. That is what we would expect the likely course of this study effort will be. However, I will indicate if we do come to another area during the study where we feel like we need some more specifically focused public input on, we will do that. We will work through the Port as we move

throughout the study process (inaudible) on information regarding the study to see where they feel we may need more specific public input. I would like to thank Paul and his team from the Vicksburg District; Beth for being here tonight from New Orleans. Mayor Matte, once again, thank you and the city of Morgan City for providing the facility, but most of all, I would like to thank every one of you. You have been a terrific group and given us what we asked for. I really appreciate that. That will help us significantly as we move forward. Yes sir.

_____. Paul indicated that this study will be completed, I think, in 2010. What we are looking at is a plan for disposal over at least a 20-year period in the future. That is what we are required to put together--a plan to meet the long range needs of the citizens.

GREG RUFF: No, sir. Based on the feedback we have gotten tonight, that is not a permitted activity for us right now. We would have to go through the formal NEPA process and Environmental Assessment and all that. This was a first step of scoping to gather information to see if that was a viable implementable plan. So, that is what we were doing is gathering that information. If we had come up with an idea and everybody said hey, this is something you ought to be doing--this is what you should be doing now--then that is something that maybe we could have looked at it. Everybody liked it; let's go forward with an Environmental Assessment and complete our NEPA compliance to go ahead and start doing that. But in order to have done that, we would still have several more steps to take to do that. I think the information that has been presented here tonight, that is definitely not the direction that we would be expected to immediately go in. Once again, thank you. Paul indicated the website. The easiest way to get to that website is just to go to the New Orleans District homepage, click on projects, and go to the Atchafalaya River Chene, Boeuf, and Black, but if you type in a web address that long, and if you are like me, you are going to mess up some. So, the easiest way is just go to the New Orleans District homepage. Thank you and this meeting is adjourned.

Adjourned 8:45 p.m.

LIST OF EXHIBITS:

Exhibit 1 - Comments from Continental Land and Fur Company

Exhibit 2 - Public Notice

Exhibit 3 - Mailing List