

Effective Public Involvement Strategies for Restoration Planning

***National Conference on Ecosystem Restoration
Baltimore, Maryland
August 2011***

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



BUILDING STRONG®



Big Stories in The Big Easy

- 2005 Hurricane Katrina
- 2006 Levee rebuilding begins in earnest
- 2007 Coastal restoration authorized
- 2008 Hurricane Gustav
- 2009 MS River Gulf Outlet closed
- 2010 Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill



New Orleans Recovery

- Since Hurricane Katrina:
 - ▶ The Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District has participated in 7,000 media interviews
 - ▶ These include:
 - Approximately 3,500 television stories
 - Over 1,250 radio interviews
 - More than 2,250 print articles in local, national and international newspapers and magazines



Example News Articles

Group wants action to close Miss. River channel

By **DAVID BISHOP**
Associated Press wire

NEW ORLEANS — A new group has sprung up to demand the closure of a shipping channel described by environmentalists as an ecological

disaster to build a 17-mile-long, 100-foot-deep canal for the Mississippi and get navigators to route around the channel.

"There're the people who got the original money to build the channel,"

Miss. River Shipping System
An Interstate Shipping System
Route 2000, 2000
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Steve Johnson, LP
Bobby & Sonnet
1000 10th Street, New Orleans, LA
February 18, 2004

Gulf Outlet dredging program criticized

By **DAVID BISHOP**
Associated Press wire

Questioning the depth of the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet, the environmentalist group has filed a lawsuit to force the Corps to dredge the outlet.

The Corps of Engineers is the lead agency for the outlet, which is a 160-mile-long canal that connects the Gulf of Mexico to the Mississippi River.

The Corps of Engineers is the lead agency for the outlet, which is a 160-mile-long canal that connects the Gulf of Mexico to the Mississippi River.

Senator investigates closing the channel

OUTLET, from B-1

While a high-tech dredging program

Later this year, the Corps of Engineers is expected to begin a \$1.5-billion dredging program to deepen the outlet to 100 feet. The Corps is also expected to begin a \$1.5-billion dredging program to deepen the outlet to 100 feet.

for the channel's closure. The group says the outlet is a disaster, due to the 17-mile-long, 100-foot-deep canal for the Mississippi and get navigators to route around the channel.

While Johnson, a St. Bernard resident who serves on the Louisiana Environmental Foundation board, said he is a member of the St. Bernard Sportsmen's League, said additional environmentalists are looking for a way to close the outlet.

The Corps' New Plan To Keep The MRGO Open: Truth Or Treachery? You Decide!

By **DAVID BISHOP**

The Corps of Engineers' new plan to keep the MRGO open is a disaster. The Corps is also expected to begin a \$1.5-billion dredging program to deepen the outlet to 100 feet.

By **DAVID BISHOP**
The Corps of Engineers' new plan to keep the MRGO open is a disaster. The Corps is also expected to begin a \$1.5-billion dredging program to deepen the outlet to 100 feet.

MR-GO gate proposal passes

Plan would still allow ships to use channel

'Council Rejects Corps' Report On MRGO Closing'

The Corps of Engineers' report on the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MRGO) closing was rejected by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) on Monday. The report, which was prepared by the Corps, recommended that the outlet be closed and replaced by a new canal. The Council, however, found the report to be "seriously deficient" and "not credible."

N.O. ship channel would remain open under new proposal

By **DAVID BISHOP**
Associated Press wire

NEW ORLEANS — A ship channel closed for 10 years would remain open under a new proposal, but navigators would be required to keep the water out of the shallow tributary of New Orleans.

The proposal by St. Bernard Parish (Parish) Mayor "Bert" Johnson, who served as mayor of the parish for 12 years, would allow the Mississippi River of navigation between the parish and the Gulf of Mexico to remain open.

The proposal would allow the Mississippi River of navigation between the parish and the Gulf of Mexico to remain open.

PROPOSAL: Center

Navigators, with the backing of the Corps, are asking the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to build a new canal to replace the MRGO. The Corps is also expected to begin a \$1.5-billion dredging program to deepen the outlet to 100 feet.

The Corps of Engineers is the lead agency for the outlet, which is a 160-mile-long canal that connects the Gulf of Mexico to the Mississippi River.

The Corps of Engineers is the lead agency for the outlet, which is a 160-mile-long canal that connects the Gulf of Mexico to the Mississippi River.

Miss. River Shipping System
An Interstate Shipping System
Route 2000, 2000
Tulsa, Oklahoma
Steve Johnson, LP
Bobby & Sonnet
1000 10th Street, New Orleans, LA
February 18, 2004

RV park approved for Industrial Canal

UNION local gets recreational inst

By **DAVID BISHOP**
Associated Press wire

The City of New Orleans, which has been negotiating for a long time, has approved a plan to build a recreational facility along the Industrial Canal.

The City of New Orleans, which has been negotiating for a long time, has approved a plan to build a recreational facility along the Industrial Canal.

Marina will cater to yachts in transit

By **DAVID BISHOP**

The plan is to build a marina for yachts in transit along the Industrial Canal. The Corps is also expected to begin a \$1.5-billion dredging program to deepen the outlet to 100 feet.

The plan is to build a marina for yachts in transit along the Industrial Canal. The Corps is also expected to begin a \$1.5-billion dredging program to deepen the outlet to 100 feet.



The plan is to build a marina for yachts in transit along the Industrial Canal. The Corps is also expected to begin a \$1.5-billion dredging program to deepen the outlet to 100 feet.



Design and Construction Supervised by:



US Army Corps of Engineers
New Orleans District

Mississippi River Gulf Outlet; Closure Structure
Vinicity of Bayou La Loutre;
St. Bernard Parish,
Louisiana

W912P8-09-C-0005

Pine Bluff Sand and Gravel
Pine Bluff, Arkansas



MRGO will go!
Together we will recover.
Experience Counts!

Re-Elect Junior President

Create a Communications Plan

- Identify stakeholders
- Clearly state problems and goals
- Establish timelines
- Build trust communications
- Craft restoration messages
- Carry out strategies



Who are Stakeholders?

- Landowners
- Local government
- State government
- Financial sponsors
- Federal resource agencies
- Environmental organizations
- Fishing and hunting groups



Make Introductory Office Visits

- Before you start, reach out to key stakeholders and organizations
- Go see groups on their turf
- Seek engagement and support
- Ask for their input on direction
- Establish open lines of communication



Use Meetings Effectively

- Employ multiple methods to announce meetings - print ads, radio broadcasts, web sites, mail, emails, and phone calls
- Understand the difference between required meetings and information exchange events
- Meet with anyone, anywhere, any time to discuss restoration needs and plans



Host a Kickoff Meeting

- Invite all interested parties
- Encourage interactive participation, not just presentations
- Distribute information such as relevant authority, fact sheets, and site details
- Be clear about available funds, requirements, and schedules
- Point to next events and opportunities



Listen to Everyone

- Set ground rules for parties to respect each other
- Give all sides a chance to speak
- Helps all sides understand each other
- Clarifies areas of agreement
- Creates opportunity for solutions



Share Information

- Understanding a site's history helps when developing restoration plans
- Site data is invaluable
 - ▶ topography/bathymetry
 - ▶ water quality
 - ▶ fish and wildlife habitat quality
- Data helps frame real issues
- Be honest about level of knowledge



Launch and Maintain a Website



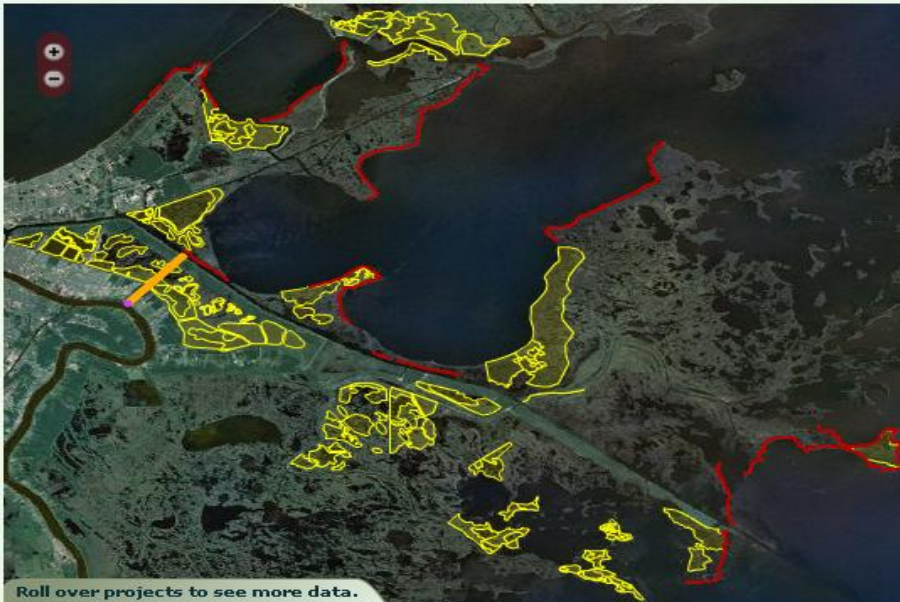
US Army Corps of Engineers
New Orleans District

MRGO MISSISSIPPI RIVER GULF OUTLET

ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION
PLAN FEASIBILITY STUDY

Home Calendar Study Teams Study Products Reference Documents Data Viewer Document Search

Proposed Projects



Roll over projects to see more data.

Click the play button (▶) below to view a short video about the Schematic Closure Design of the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet.

MRGO Document Quick Links

- [MRGO History](#)
- [MRGO Fact Sheet](#)
- [MRGO De-Authorization Study](#)
- [MRGO Navigation Channel Closure](#)
- [MRGO Ecosystem Restoration Plan Feasibility Study](#)
- [MRGO Closure and Coastal Restoration Fact Sheet \(PDF; 2.92 MB\)](#)

MRGO Ecosystem Restoration Plan Final Scoping Report

The "[MRGO Ecosystem Restoration Plan Final Scoping Report, May 2009](#)" prepared by the US Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District is available for review.

The Scoping Report outlines the project background and scoping process and summarizes the key issues identified by members of the public during the initial scoping period. Scoping was initiated on October 2, 2008. Comments received after November 20, 2008 are not included in this report.

A hard copy of the Final scoping report is available upon request. Please contact Ms. Sandra Stiles.; US Army Corps of

Engineers; Regional Planning and Environmental Division South, New Orleans Environmental Branch; CERPDS-PDN-RS; P.O. Box 60267; New Orleans, Louisiana 70160-0267. Ms. Stiles may also be contacted at (504) 862-1583, by email to Sandra.E.Stiles@usace.army.mil, or by fax to (504) 862-2088.

MRGO Ecosystem Restoration Plan Final Scoping Report May 2009



Host Planning Workshops

- Focused working events
- Let all parties participate
- Balance presentations with exercises
- Show feedback in plans
- Examples
 - ▶ recreation components
 - ▶ public access
 - ▶ special area plans



Collaborate with Partners

- Agencies
- Environmental organizations
- Universities and students
- Neighborhood groups
- Examples of collaboration:
 - ▶ Collect public surveys
 - ▶ Test options and techniques
 - ▶ Perform supporting research



Conduct Joint Field Visits

- Visit sites with interest groups
- Discuss options together in the field
- If possible, collect information together



Tell Your Story

- Media are interested
- Spread good news
- Be clear about challenges
- Offer frequent updates



Participate in Community Events

- Neighborhood meetings
- Earth Day
- Wetlands Day
- Coastal Summits
- Swamp Fest
- School science fairs



Other Important Points

- Recognize your audience
- Collect feedback and adjust approaches
- Remember the mission



Celebrate Your Successes



Additional Information

<http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil>

<http://www.mrgo.gov>

<http://www.lca.gov>



BUILDING STRONG®



Questions and Discussion



BUILDING STRONG®

