

ATTACHMENT 2

TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC MEETING
9 NOVEMBER 2000

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
VICKSBURG DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
VICKSBURG, MISSISSIPPI 39183

PUBLIC MEETING
ON

YAZOO BACKWATER AREA REFORMULATION

ROLLING FORK HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM
ROLLING FORK, MISSISSIPPI
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2000
7 p.m.

PRESENT:

CORPS OF ENGINEERS:

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LTC David P. Beshlin, Deputy District Engineer
Mr. Doug Kamien, Chief, Planning, Programs, and Project
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Mr. Joe Smith, Assistant Chief, Planning, Programs, and
Project Management Division
Mr. Dan Johnson, Planning, Programs, and Project
Management Division
Mr. Kent Parrish, Planning, Programs, and Project
Management Division
Mr. Terry Smith, Planning, Programs, and Project
Management Division
Mr. Wendell King, Planning, Programs, and Project
Management Division
Mr. Stoney Burke, Planning, Programs, and Project
Management Division
Mr. Larry Banks, Engineering Division
Mr. Bobby Fleming, Engineering Division
Mr. Joe Woods, Operations Division
Mr. Robert Wood, Real Estate Division
Mr. Leo Phillips, Construction Division
Mr. Henry Black, Office of Counsel
Mr. Mike Logue, Chief, Public Affairs Office
Mrs. Patty K. Bates, Public Affairs Office
Mr. Marvin Cannon, Planning, Programs, and Project
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Mr. Eugene Wall, Planning, Programs, and Project
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Mrs. Myra Dean, Planning, Programs, and Project
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Mrs. Jeannine Beatty, Planning, Programs, and Project
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REVEREND ELIJAH LEWIS: At this time, I have been asked to open with prayer. If you don't mind, please stand. I have also been instructed to inform you that Saturday, November 11, 2000, is Veterans' Day. Keep all our veterans in mind for the sacrifices that have been made by them. Let us pray.

Father God, we come before your presence once again seeking your guidance and your wisdom and knowledge and understanding. Guide us through this meeting, Father, as we do those things that have been assigned to our hands to do. Father, when we come to the end of the journey and have done that task that has been assigned to us, let us hear your welcome voice say, My good and faithful servants, I have been faithful with you; come on up and thou will make a ruler over many. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

COL ROBERT CREAR: Thank you, Reverend.

Good evening. I am COL Robert Crear. I am the Commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Vicksburg District. We certainly appreciate your coming out tonight and attending this public meeting.

For those who are way in the back, we have a lot of seats up front. Even though we started off with prayer, this is not prayer meeting, it is not church. So we don't mind you coming up front. If you want to see what is on the slides, see what is on the screen here, again, we have seats up front. Please feel free to come forward, if you would.

Let me start off by giving you a little background about the Corps of Engineers in Vicksburg for those that are not familiar with us. We are part of the Mississippi Valley Division. As part of the Mississippi Valley Division, the Vicksburg District is one of the largest Districts in the Corps of Engineers. Looking at the location, you see that essentially all the waters of the Mississippi River flows come past our District which explains the importance of flood control and navigation to the District. The other important mission of ours is environmental protection. We are an integral part of the Mississippi Valley Division.

The Division headquarters is also located in Vicksburg. It has the responsibility for the entire Mississippi River, from its beginning at Lake Otasca in Minnesota all the way down to the Gulf of Mexico.

Let me tell you a little bit about the Vicksburg District. Again, we are one of the largest Districts within the Corps of Engineers. Our headquarters are just down the road. We have the responsibility for over 68,000 square miles in a 3-state area, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Arkansas. Included in that are three lakes in Arkansas and four lakes in Mississippi. We also have the responsibility for nine river basins, including over 300 miles of the Mississippi River and the entire Yazoo River Watershed, a portion of which will be discussed here tonight. We have a workforce of about 1,500 employees. About 1,200 of those are Government employees and about 300 are contract employees. Our mission is to help identify the water resources needs of this country and to find solutions.

The purpose of this meeting tonight is to continue the public involvement in this review process of the draft Reformulation Report for the Yazoo Basin. Tonight's meeting will allow additional public opportunity for comment and questions regarding the study.

A lot of information has been put out about this project. Our intent tonight is to provide the public accurate information, listen to the suggestions our customers have, and make adjustment where we can, that is within the limits of the current national water resources development policies.

Let me make some introduction now. I'll start with the folks out front here. The person I'll introduce is Mr. Jim Wanamaker. He is the Chief Engineer of the Mississippi Levee Board. Jim, would you please stand and introduce members of your Levee Board?

MR. JIM WANAMAKER: We have with us today, Fred Ballard who is the Commissioner from Washington County and serves as President of the Board. We also have our two commissioners from Bolivar County, Nott Wheeler and Jimmy House. We have a commissioner from Sharkey County, Laurance Carter; a commissioner from Humphreys County and Vice President, Kenny Rodgers; commissioner from Issaquena County, Roy Nichols; and our newly appointed and recently elected commissioner from Washington County, Johnny Robinson. We have our attorney here, Charles Tindall. We have the Chief Engineer of the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board with us tonight, Ken Weiland. He is back in the back. I believe we have Bob Cocker, a commissioner on that Board from Yazoo County.

COL CREAR: Thank you, Jim. The other two people at the table I would like to introduce to you are Mr. Kent Parrish, Senior Project Manager for this project, and Mr. Terry Smith, Project Manager working on this project.

Now, I will introduce some key staff members of mine that I brought here from Vicksburg who are sitting on the front row. Mr. Doug Kamien, Deputy District Engineer for Project Management; Mr. Bobby Fleming, Chief, Engineering Division; Mr. Leo Phillips, Chief, Construction Division; Mr. Billy Joe Woods, Chief, Project Resources Management Branch; and Mr. Henry Black, District Counsel.

I would also like to introduce at this time some of the VIP's that are present. If I miss some, it will not be intentional. I have the cards here, so if you signed and my folks noticed you, I will introduce you.

Representative Tom Cameron, Mississippi House of Representatives, from Greenville; Mr. Willie Bunton, President, Issaquena County Board of Supervisors; Senator Deborah Dawkins, Mississippi State Senator, from Jackson; Mr. Eldridge Walker, Sharkey County Board of Supervisors; Mr. Jep Barbour, Mississippi House of Representatives; and Mr. Charlie Horhn from Congressman Bennie Thompson's office.

If there are any dignitaries that I did not call your name, please stand up and tell us who you are. [Mr. Luther Alexander, Washington County Board of Supervisors, and several others introduced themselves. Other names inaudible.] Glad to have you here. Any others? We also have Ms. Marilyn Hansell here from the office of Congressman Bennie Thompson. Okay, if there are no others, I will start with my part of the presentation.

What I plan to do here today is to bring you up to date on this project. Then I will turn it over to the project manager to give you the facts on the project. After that, we will accept statements. Looking at the cards I have over there, it is going to be quite a few statements. After the statement period, we will take a break, and then entertain questions. At that time, I will bring a panel up front that will be able to answer any questions you may have on this particular project.

The next four slides will show the process that we have used in preparing this report. There have already been opportunities for the public to contribute to this document. However, if you are new to the process, let me assure you there is still several opportunities for you to participate.

We had a scoping meeting back in 1993 that kicked off the study. At that meeting, the citizens told us what they saw as problems and areas that they needed. Since then, we have been working with cooperating agencies such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Natural Resources Conservation Service; Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks; and Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality.

We have also undertaken economic, environmental, and engineering studies. We have shared these results with state and Federal agencies, environmental groups, local government officials, and other concerned citizens in workshops and consensus meetings.

Based on input from these meetings, the District has gone back and conducted additional studies on other alternative plans. From these studies, a final array of alternatives was developed and a recommended plan was selected.

As you can see, the document has already undergone several reviews prior to this one here tonight. We have distributed more than 350 copies of the report to state and Federal agencies; Congressional, local, and state officials; environmental groups; and members of the general public. It was also placed on our web site for anyone who had interest to pull it down and review it.

Again, tonight you have opportunity to provide input into this process. You can make a statement here tonight or you can go home and think about it and mail us your statement. We will consider each comment received during review of the draft report and draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS).

The report will be again reviewed by the public. The study process will conclude with the signing of the Record of Decision.

We will begin with a slide presentation by Mr. Kent Parrish who is the Senior Project Manager for this project. He will show you the results of our studies to date. Particular emphasis will be placed on the plan recommended for implementation.

Following Mr. Parrish's presentation, I will take statements from those who wish to make them. In the interest of time and fairness, I ask that you limit your statements to 5 minutes. We will keep track of the time. I also ask that you furnish us a copy of your statement, if you would, for the official record.

You should have noted on the sign-in card your preference to make a statement. If you haven't done that and wish to make a statement, all you have to do is indicate that on one of these cards. They are out in the back. Someone will collect them from you.

As I said before, following the taking of statements, we will take a short break. Then we will assemble a panel up here, and we will respond to specific questions that you may have concerning any aspect of this study.

Any questions before we get started? Okay, Kent.

MR. KENT PARRISH: Presented prepared slide presentation.

COL CREAR: Thank you, Kent. I want to advise you that the proceedings of this meetings are being electronically recorded and a transcript of this meeting will be included in our final report.

I just counted the cards. I have approximately 50 cards. I am going to limit you to 5 minutes each. If we do that, we will probably get out of here about midnight. So you understand the importance of the 5-minute limit.

Is everybody still with us? Okay, let me see. I have this word, an Army term, and it is "HOOAH." It means anything but "no." It means positive; it means good. So on the count of three, if you are still with us, I want you to sound off--just say HOOAH. Say it in such a way that you might knock me back to Vicksburg. So on the count of three--one, two, three [audience said HOOAH in unison]. I think we are ready to go forward.

The first person I am going to call up tonight is Mr. Jim Wanamaker, Mississippi Levee Board.

MR. WANAMAKER: Thank you, Colonel. If you will bear with me, I have had a little bout with a bug for the last 3 or 4 days. If I get to coughing too badly, I have already informed Mr. Tindall, our attorney, he may have to come and finish my comments for me. I do appreciate the opportunity to address you and be a partner here with the Corps tonight.

The Board of Mississippi Levee Commissioners and the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board have acted as project sponsors for the Yazoo Backwater project since it was started in the early 1960's. Our Board provided the local interest requirements set forth in the authorization for this project by the Congress.

I would like to take just a moment to answer two frequently asked questions that I continue to hear regarding this project. The first is, why should this work be a Federal responsibility? During Kent's presentation up here, you saw the slide that showed that 41 percent of the United States drains down the Mississippi River passed Vicksburg. That is water from 31 states and 2 providences of Canada. With this in mind, we continue to feel that all projects that are impacted by the Mississippi River are a Federal responsibility.

Another question that I hear asked is, why was this project authorized? We continue to hear comments that the only reason to build this project is to benefit farmers. I would point out that the project was authorized in 1941 as part of the Federal Flood Control Act of that year. The Eudora Floodway, which would take water out of the Mississippi River at the mouth of the Arkansas River across from Rosedale and carry it across the States of Arkansas and Louisiana directly to the Gulf of Mexico--this feature was removed from the Mississippi River and Tributaries Project by that Act. It was determined at the same time that removing this floodway from the project would increase stages at Vicksburg by as much as 6 feet.

I refer to page 2 of the Levee Board handout that was out front that shows a cross section of the Mississippi Delta at a latitude near Onward, Mississippi. As you can see, the elimination of the floodway has worked well for the States of Arkansas and Louisiana. I would also point out that the

water stages on the Mississippi side of this cross section have been adjusted to take into consideration that the levees and structures have been completed, reflecting a flood scene that would occur today with a repeat of the 1973 flood.

I am going to recount a little history, and I am going to take a shortcut a little bit because Kent provided a lot of information in his comments that I will try to avoid. After this project was authorized in 1941, actual construction was not started immediately on the Backwater project. Two factors influenced that fact--one was that cutoffs were being constructed on the Mississippi River which provided an approximately 10-foot lowering of stages along this reach of the river. At the same time, we went from 1950 to 1973 without having a high water on the Mississippi River.

When the 1973 flood occurred, the Backwater Levees had not been completed, and approximately 600,000 acres of the South Delta was inundated by the Mississippi River backwater. Following that flood, construction was expedited to close these levees, and they were completed in the late 1970's.

Also, as a result of that high water, the Corps of Engineers, in evaluating stages and discharges, found that they had lost a large percentage of that 10-foot reduction they thought they would experience from the cutoffs. With this in mind, the water at Vicksburg has the potential of reaching stages as much as 12 to 14 feet higher than they were expected to be in 1941.

Construction of the pumping plant, a feature of the Backwater project, was initiated in 1986. Also, the 1986 Act put cost sharing on this project. The reformulation process started in 1999 is coming to a close. As we moved into the consensus process, as a result of meetings we had with Steve Thompson with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Levee Board hosted a meeting in Greenville which was attended by those on the third page of our handout. We left that meeting with a good feeling. We felt like we heard comments that we had never heard before. Shortly after that, the five groups at the bottom withdrew from the process.

We have continued this process since that time, having several meetings involving the other agencies. The Shabman report was presented to our group in March of this year, the Virginia Tech

study. I have just recently received that today, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is again proposing another initiative for the South Delta. EPA continues to advocate full nonstructural alternatives for this project and has not indicated in any way that they would offer anything other than that.

As part of this new initiative, I would point out that this initiative calls for reforestation easements on 50,000 to 80,000 acres, leaving 225,000 acres of developed land unprotected which will continue to flood.

The last page of our handout was borrowed from the Clarion Ledger. The only difference is we added people to the scene. The only thing missing is a pump to remove the water.

The Vicksburg District, Corps of Engineers, has completed a comprehensive review of this congressionally authorized project. Although the recommended plan does not agree with the position being advocated by many groups, it is a sound plan offering economic and environmental benefits to the South Delta, and it has local support.

With this in mind, the Board of Mississippi Levee Commissioners strongly recommends that the Corps of Engineers proceed with the recommended Plan 5 for the completion of this project.

Thank you.

COL CREAR: Thank you. I just shuffled the cards. The next person is Esther Boykin, Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund.

Incidentally, there are microphones in each aisle. Feel free to come forward.

MS. ESTHER BOYKIN: Good evening. This week the EPA formalized what it has been telling the Corps for years. The Yazoo pumps project will cause massive environmental damage in the Delta, and the project cannot be justified economically. The EPA is an agency with far more expertise regarding impacts to human health and the environment than the Army Corps of Engineers.

In its very lengthy technical review of the Corps Environmental Impact Statement, EPA describes in detail the many things wrong with the Yazoo pumps project. The review is on the EPA web site on the internet for your review.

After reviewing this project, EPA voiced its strong concern that large-scale environmental impacts would result in the Delta if the Corps proceeds with the Yazoo pumps as it wants to do. EPA concluded that this project would cause damage to and I quote, "over 200,000 acres wetlands in the Mississippi River flood plain, cause water quality impairment, and further degrade already impaired waters."

In short, the Yazoo pumps project will destroy massive areas of wetlands, pollute clean waters, and make the already polluted waters even worse. EPA stated that these potential environmental impacts are so great that this project must not go forward.

This brings us to EPA's second major concern. This project just doesn't add up economically. The Corps wants to spend at least \$180 million taxpayer dollars on a project that will have no net benefits. There is nothing about this project that can be tweaked to change this fact. It is time for the Corps to admit this and drop this project. The last thing we want to see here is the manipulation of numbers that caused the Corps to be accused of the manipulation improperly of numbers on the Upper Mississippi River Navigation Project and for which the Corps is now being investigated by Congress.

The Corps should simply dump the pumps.

COL CREAR: Thank you. Next we have Don McKenzie, Wildlife Management Institute (WMI).

MR. DON MCKENZIE: Thank you. The Corps is proposing in this Yazoo pumps project to spend \$199 million of taxpayer money upfront plus \$15 million a year for 1941 technology that is only going to last 50 years. The way they are going forward with this project leaves a reasonable person to conclude that the Corps has not learned anything in 60 years.

I work for the Wildlife Management Institute, a nonprofit group dedicated to wildlife restoration and management. Our belief of this project is that it is simply a short-sighted policy bandaid for a big ecological, environmental, and social problem. It is going to stimulate more environmental degradation and flood plain encroachment rather than reducing it, as the report

claims. It will inhibit environmental restoration rather than stimulate it. It will further depress an already struggling agricultural economy. It is going to leave agricultural and structures in the project area still susceptible to regular flooding.

There are very legitimate urban structural problems that need to be dealt with and that my organization supports solutions for. However, 80 percent of the benefits attributed to this project are for agriculture. If additional cropland is so important as this project and the report would make one believe, then why is the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) spending \$1.7 billion a year to retire surplus marginal cropland across this country? This project proposes to spend \$200 million to make more cropland available. USDA is spending \$1.7 billion a year to reduce the amount of surplus marginal cropland. That doesn't add up.

Nationwide crop production has reached an all-time high level. USDA projects corn and soybean production this year is going to hit all-time record highs. There are such commodity surpluses that they are running out of storage silos in parts of the country and having to literally pile grain on city blocks for lack of anywhere else to store it. Crop prices are low. Farmers are having trouble making a profit without being propped up by yet more taxpayer subsidies.

Given this, the Corps is asking for us to fund this project to make more or less 265,000 acres of cropland more productive, more reliably farmable, which any reasonable person can only conclude that it is going to depress the farm economy, further depress prices, and make it more difficult for farmers to make a profit and make a living.

WMI believes this plan is fundamentally flawed. First off, it starts with inflated figures that are used to discredit nonstructural solutions. I was amused to see that it cost the Corps 44 percent more to retire and reforest cropland than it costs USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service. They have a 10-year track record in this project area in Mississippi throughout the Mississippi Delta of retiring and reforesting surplus marginal cropland for only about \$1,000 an acre. It is going to cost the Corps \$1,439 an acre.

The Corps also insisted in their nonstructural evaluation on needlessly paying to put forest protection easements on land that they later in the report acknowledge is not under any threat of conversion at all, so they don't even need to pay that money. Yet they had already discounted the nonstructural plans on the basis on those needless payments.

They want to spend \$130 million for a pump plus \$15 million a year that is only going to have a 50-year life and still have regular flooding for agricultural lands and urban areas. They are going to offer reforestation that we can get anyway in the project area, that USDA is already getting through voluntary landowner easement programs. They have already gotten 26,000 some odd acres in the project area through the Wetland Reserve Program. That is already working.

There is a better way that is going to begin with the Corps and the politicians and the people of this area and this country acknowledging the need for a dedicated sump area to store excess floodwater and drainage water. We have got to come face to face with that reality. This water has to go somewhere. We can't keep shunting it downstream.

NRCS is ready, willing, and able to retire a lot of land from willing sellers for only \$1,000 an acre. You can retire the entire 2-year flood plain for only \$107 million. That gives a big step toward the direction of a long-term solution and leaves a whole lot of money left over to deal with all the urban problems that are very real serious problems.

I will conclude there. Thank you.

COL CREAR: Thank you. Next, we have Ken Weiland, Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board.

MR. KEN WEILAND: COL Crear, members of the Vicksburg District, Corps of Engineers, and other officials here, my name is Ken Weiland. I serve as the Chief Engineer of the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta (YMD) Levee Board domiciled in Clarksdale, Mississippi. Our Levee District encompasses 10 Delta and part Delta counties, including the counties of Sunflower, Holmes, Humphreys, and Yazoo.

I appreciate the opportunity to come before you this evening and offer our public support of the proposed Yazoo Backwater Area project and the draft Reformulation Report for which you are receiving comments.

The majority of the area affected the Backwater Area Project falls within the geographic boundaries of the Mississippi Levee Board who serves as the local sponsor of this project. As evidenced by the information provided in the draft Reformulation Report, a wide array of alternatives to address flooding in the Yazoo Backwater Area during high stages on the Mississippi River has been investigated. These alternatives have been developed to provide a solution acceptable to all parties with an interest in the Backwater Area.

The YMD Levee Board continues to maintain our position of full support of the alternative determined by the Mississippi Levee Board to be in the best interest of the citizens of the affected area. We also reemphasize that the construction and major maintenance of any such solutions be at full Federal cost consistent with the intent of the original authorization of the project in 1941.

The YMD Levee Board would like to acknowledge the tireless efforts of the Mississippi Levee Board in its effort to reach a consensus among all interests in the Backwater Area. We acknowledge the personal efforts of the individual commissioners, the Chief Engineer, and his staff of the Mississippi Levee Board who have diligently stayed the course to find a solution to the Backwater Area. We are confident that they have carefully considered their chosen alternative and that it will provide increased protection to its citizens while at the same time providing enhancement to important environmental concerns such as reforestation, fisheries, and many others.

The YMD Levee Board would also like to offer our sincere appreciation of the Vicksburg District in the outstanding job you have done in the preparation of the Reformulation Report. We specifically acknowledge the efforts of COL Crear and each individual member of the District that have put untold hours of work and thought and spent countless hours in meetings and travel to and from meetings many times at the expense of their own personal time with their families.

The Backwater Area Project is not the Corps project, it is a project for the people of the Delta. It is these citizens who will make the ultimate determination of what is built or not built. It is obvious that the Corps has taken every effort to develop the draft report consistent with the desires of your customer, the local sponsor, and in accordance with the Federal guidelines you are obligated to follow.

The Mississippi Delta and the Nation are fortunate to have the most technologically capable organization in the world to turn to for solutions to complex projects such as the Yazoo Backwater Area.

In closing, let me once again thank the Vicksburg District for allowing me this opportunity to offer our comments on this important project. We look forward to continuing our mutual efforts to provide flood protection in the Mississippi Delta.

Thank you.

COL CREAR: Thank you. We next have T. Logan Russell, Delta Land Trust.

MR. T. LOGAN RUSSELL: Thank you, COL Crear. As usual, I appreciate this opportunity to participate in the Democratic process. Here we are again. It seems like déjà vu all over again, Ground Hog Day. How many times are we going to go through this?

I am not going to try to dazzle anybody with my Ole Miss economics degree. I will do that in a later forum, I am sure. I was fortunate and enjoyed my opportunity to work with Dr. Shabman and EPA on some of their economics.

I will tell a little story, two of them actually--one real quick and one a little bit longer. The first one is, my granddaddy who is the grandson of another fellow named James Lusk Alcorn who was the Governor of Mississippi and a State Senator and a good man. They named a school after him. He came to the Delta in the 1840's. He had some sense, and he taught my granddaddy some sense and I got a little piece of it. One piece of that was, if it ain't broke, don't fix it. Another piece is, if it ain't working, do something different.

I would say \$2.4 billion has been invested by the Federal Government here in the Yazoo Basin--\$2.4 billion. I don't even know how many zeros that is, but is a lot of them. Yet we have to spend, I don't know, \$300, \$400, \$500 million more. You know, people want to talk about the pumps, but they forget about the Big Sunflower River. That is some more money. I imagine there is some more money we are going to spend. What are we going to have when we do that? I don't know. I don't know what we have fixed and what we haven't fixed. There has been an awful lot of arguing, a lot of upset folks, and hurt feelings. I ain't sure we fixed anything.

The second story I am going to tell is about a fellow, Big Mike, an old friend of mine that just wouldn't do right. He had a bad habit on that cocaine and he would not believe people who tried to help him, who tried to tell him, you know, Big Mike, everybody in the world but you can tell this cocaine is a problem. You are addicted to it.

If you told him that, he would say, no, no, T. Logan, I might have a little trouble with this cocaine, but you ain't perfect. You are a little overweight. And I would say, yes, that is true, but I don't understand what that has to do with your cocaine problem. I am trying to help you. I am trying to tell you. I am getting some people here that know some things that want to help you. Oh, no, T. Logan, you are not perfect. You don't go to church every Sunday. Well, that is true, too. I am still having a hard time understanding--remember that sense granddaddy gave me--what me not going to church every Sunday has to do with your cocaine problem. I said, Big Mike, what is wrong with you is everybody in the world sees that you have had too much of this, but you think your problem is that you haven't had enough.

Thank you.

COL CREAR: Thank you. Gene Hodnett, farmer from Sharkey County.

MR. GENE HODNETT: Good evening. Some of the people that has already spoken, they live up on a hill somewhere.

We live here in the Delta. I was born under the same pecan tree that my dad was born under. He was born there 89 years ago. He worked with the Government trying to get this project through all the years that they have been going on. The amount of money that this project is going to cost, it is a lot of money. There is no doubt about it. But they are going to spend more money on this one Nissan plant over here to get it started. They are going to get a lot more benefit out of it though.

There are thousands of people that have been through this Delta over this period of years that this project has been going on, and they have told me all my life, why did you clean up all this old sorry land? Well, when we cleared it up, we could make a living growing soybeans. That is what we were trying to do, make a living.

The project has been going on all these years. The people living here in the Delta have been paying taxes to try to get this project further along and finished over this period of time. I hope and pray that we can get it done. Like I said at the last meeting I spoke at, I hope and pray we can get it done in my lifetime.

Thank you.

COL CREAR: Thank you, sir. Ms. Emma Cooper-Harris, Community Organization.

MS. EMMA COOPER-HARRIS: Out of all your presentations, my statement is clearly one of health conditions here in the Mississippi Delta and, especially, here in Sharkey and Issaquena Counties.

At no time during your presentation did I see where families would benefit from this project. I have first-hand experience with the pesticide here in this two-county area and the pollution. My husband died 10 years from lung cancer. It was not contributed, basically, to the smoking. In his medical records, it says it was the pesticide that he had worked around for 20+ years. At no time during any presentation have I heard of any position that the Corps will use in regard to health conditions here in this area.

Sure, I live here and I don't want to be flooded out. But I also want to be healthy. I want the children of this district to be healthy, and I want the people of these two counties to be healthy.

An article was printed back in April. I am sure most of you read it, where persons down in Cary, Mississippi, were fishing and had been catching and eating contaminated fish because of the DDT pesticide. I wholeheartedly respect the Corps for their efforts, but I would respect you more if you would also look into the health conditions that this project will create.

COL CREAR: Thank you, ma'am. Next, we have Mr. Charles Baxter, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

MR. CHARLES BAXTER: I am going to come up here because I don't want to talk to them, I want to talk to y'all. I have spent 20 years talking to Kent Parrish, and he is probably tired of listening to me.

I am Charles Baxter. I work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) in Vicksburg, Mississippi. I have a formal statement for the record, one of these CD's that has more stuff on it than you would want to read.

Basically, what I am here to do is to present the position of the FWS. We are opposed to the plan that the Corps has recommended. Clearly, it would take more than 5 minutes to explain to you why we disagree with much and most of what Kent said. It is impossible to explain in 5 minutes a position that, basically, goes back in history 50 years.

So in the interest of brevity, I intend to address only three points, or more precisely three questions. Why are we opposed? What is it that collectively we seem to be arguing about? Where do we go from here?

In the simplest terms, our opposition relates back to a promise. I say it that way because I have listened many times to people like Ruby Johnson talk about a pump being promised. Setting aside for the moment the fact that the alternative that FWS laid on the table 2 years ago was a whole lot closer to what was promised in 1941 than what is being proposed today, I want to talk about another promise.

In 1959, the Corps of Engineers did the only comprehensive review that they have ever done of the Mississippi River and Tributaries Project. That report has been the blueprint for everything that has happened in the Alluvial Valley since. In that report, they promised that 3.2 million acres of the Delta's remaining forested wetlands would be cleared. I say promised because it was a purpose of the project and the economic benefits of the project depended upon it. In the Yazoo Basin, the amount of the promise was 0.75 million acres. That promise has come to pass.

Let me paraphrase a piece of the Delta's folklore and put it this way. In the late 1950's and early 1960's, all of us collectively went to the crossroads. We traded, pretty much, the last of the Delta's incredible wealth of natural resources for the promise of \$10-per-bushel beans. We traded it for the notion that there is no land in the Delta that should not be cleared. It was kind of like the only value that we saw the Delta having to the Nation was its ability to produce agricultural commodities for foreign export. The FWS opposition is rooted all the back into that decision that was made in the late 1950's. So we are in a very real sense, calling into question the policies that have driven the Corps program over the past 40 years.

So what is it that we are arguing about? First, let me tell you what it is not. I have listened to Clifton Porter speak passionately of the consequences of farmers going broke and the repercussions that it has to the community as a whole. I have heard him talk about how it even impacts the churches. We are not arguing over the fact that there are socioeconomic consequences that have arisen from us assuming that there is no land that should never have been cleared.

I have listened to Ruby Johnson talk about the stagnant water in Deer Creek. We are not arguing over the need for cleaner water. I have heard her argue passionately about roads going under water during high water and how it impacts the community. We are not arguing over the need to improve the transportation infrastructure of the Delta. But I have heard her speak, probably, most passionately about the youth of Rolling Fork and their future in an economically depressed area. We are definitely not arguing or debating over the need for communities that are sustainable in every sense of the word.

Strangely enough, what we are arguing about here in Rolling Fork, Mississippi, is Federal policy. I can think of no other piece of the American landscape that has been more shaped by Federal policies than has the Delta. We are basically debating how Federal flood control policies are going to deal with the consequences of this old sorry land. We are arguing over the balance between urban flood control, agricultural drainage.

So, where do we go from here? The answer to that question is in the hands of the Corps and the local sponsors. I can only say this. The commitment the FWS brought to the consensus-building process of trying to find a balanced solution remains. We will sit down and we will meet with any and all interested parties. We will discuss in detail our position, our recommendations, and our conclusions. But more than that, I do honestly believe that there is more that joins us than divides us. On that foundation, we are ready to continue the search for an economically and environmentally sustainable South Delta.

Thank you.

COL CREAR: Thank you, sir. Next, Al Rankins, Delta Council.

MR. AL RANKINS: Good evening. My name is Al Rankins, and I am a resident of Washington County, Mississippi. I am currently serving as President of the Washington County Board of Supervisors. I appear here tonight as Vice Chairman of Delta Council Flood Control Committee. My remarks will represent the views and policies of the membership of our area-wide organization from the 18 Delta and part-Delta counties of northwest Mississippi.

First, we would like to express our appreciation to the Mississippi Levee Board and the Vicksburg District, Corps of Engineers, for enlisting public input. Also, we would like to express thanks to the Sharkey County officials as serving as hosts for this public meeting.

On behalf of Delta Council, we would like to stress the important role which the Mississippi Levee Board has played in hammering out a flood protection plan for the South Delta which

is responsive to the concerns of local property and homeowners. Throughout the past year, the Mississippi Levee Board has provided the leadership to bring together Federal and state agencies representing local public officials and affected property and homeowners to enlist our views and constantly strive for the best solution to flood protection in the South Delta.

I have personally attended many of these meetings over the past 2 years, and I can attest to the fact that the Mississippi Levee Board and the Corps of Engineers have listened and responded with dignity to all the questions and recommendations. After numerous compromises and months of refinement to the plan for South Delta flood protection, the Mississippi Levee Board has recommended Alternative Plan 5 as the preferred plan to reduce the crest duration and frequency of flooding in the South Delta area. This plan also includes some of the most creative and ambitious steps toward reforestation and environmental improvements to ever be attempted in our area.

Delta Council joins with the Mississippi Levee Board in the numerous public bodies which represent the people of South Delta in support of Plan 5.

Area aspects of the local economy throughout the Delta Council region are heavily impacted by the degree of success in agricultural production; however, no area of the Delta has more productive land dedicated to agriculture than the South Delta area. Therefore, the frequencies and durations of the small floods combined with those periodic big floods take a disproportionate toll on the local economy of the South Delta when compared to flooding in other areas of the Delta.

Certainly, every individual in the South Delta does not necessarily experience frequent flooding, but it should be clear that the quality of life and economics of everyone in the South Delta area will experience improvement if the property, homes, public roads, and facilities throughout this region are given a higher level of flood protection than currently exists.

For those of us who rainfall eventually travels to the South Delta during times when the Mississippi River flood stages reverse normal gravity flow, it seems simple that everyone would agree that a pump is needed. In fact, in my very own home town

of Greenville, we have a very similar situation on a much smaller scale whereby normal gravity flood would not accommodate every rainfall which gathers in our local storm sewers. And guess what, we installed a pump to move a portion of those floodwaters over the Mississippi River Levee in order to relieve the flooding situation.

The pump designated in Plan 5 is comparably smaller than other similar pumping plants when one takes into account the size of land surface area of the drainage basin which the pump will serve. However, this pump will reduce flooding stages and flood duration in the South Delta in a way which will vastly reduce the economic and quality of life damage which are caused by any flood.

In conclusion, Delta Council urges the Corps of Engineers and the Mississippi Levee Board to proceed in a timely way to implement the necessary steps for construction and completion of Plan 5.

Thank you for allowing me to appear before you.

COL CREAR: Thank you, sir. Patricia A. Williams, concerned parent.

MS. PATRICIA A. WILLIAMS: Good evening. I am a concerned parent from Washington County. My name is Patricia Williams, and I would like to note to all of you that are present that I am a God-fearing woman who not only loves and prays for my children daily, but for other children in our communities, for the homes, for the businesses, and for the industries.

I just want to add that so many things that we do need here in the Delta to improve our living conditions have not been addressed at all this evening. We need to check out our homes, our water, our utilities services, our schools, and, most of all, our health environment.

We would be in a public hearing about how we could use the \$181 million to create new jobs, businesses, industries, and open new health facilities to provide for our people that have common necessities of life, but we are not. We are here talking about the Yazoo pumps which have been talked about for a long time. The pumps won't help the poor. They will only help the rich get richer.

Some of us have family people who have died from cancers and other diseases related to pesticide poisoning. Some of us remember when they used black men to stand in fields and hold umbrellas over their heads while airplanes sprayed pesticides on them.

The Yazoo pumps are all about increasing agriculture. We need a variety of businesses to get out of the poor conditions we live in. Spending millions of dollars should be better spent on investments and creating different businesses and employment opportunities for Delta residents that could improve our communities. I am for better health and wealth; therefore, I am against the Yazoo pumps.

Thank you.

COL CREAR: Thank you, ma'am. William R. Perkins, Jr.

MR. WILLIAM PERKINS: [Passed.]

COL CREAR: Rose Cooper.

MS. ROSE COOPER: [Passed.]

COL CREAR: Norman Johns, National Wildlife Federation.

MR. NORMAN JOHNS: It is much easier with the podium. Thank you for hearing me. Again, my name is Norman Johns. I am a water scientist with the National Wildlife Federation (NWF).

We are fundamentally opposed to this Yazoo pumps project for two main reasons. One is environmental, which others are going to speak about. Second is financially, we don't believe that the benefits that this plan is proposing and promising are really potentially feasible, and I am going to talk more about that.

But let me tell you a little bit about my qualifications to do so. I have a Civil Engineering Masters Degree and a Ph.D. in Geography. I have about 15 years experience applying the principles of hydrology for a variety of studies of natural systems, including flooding of surface waters, ground water, and water supply evaluations. I have worked in both academic settings, and I also worked in private practice for consulting firms.

Now, in all these systems like this, there is a pivotal role that computer models play, and that is the heart of this study. There is a big part of this draft EIS that is devoted to a computer model that the Corps has to simulate the Yazoo Backwater Area and its relation to the adjacent rivers and so on. This computer model determines everything. It is the heart, like I said, of this project. It forecasts the flood levels, how much area is covered by floods, what the duration of these floods are, and, of course, this determines all of the project costs and benefits.

I would say that my analysis of this is still ongoing because I only got this computer model from the Corps about 2 weeks ago. So this is kind of a preliminary analysis so far. I would acknowledge to the folks at the Corps, the hydrologist at the Corps, that this is a very complex system. The Backwater, because it has a variety of tributaries which can feed into it, you get floods caused by waters coming from multiple places. It is nearly flat, and you also have the influence of the Mississippi River Levees. So it is a very complex system. It is the complexity of this system, like most others, that causes us as hydrologists to make a lot of simplifications and assumptions to make this computer model even feasible.

However, the Corps model of the Yazoo Backwater Area has several fundamental assumptions and key pieces of data which are either erroneous or are only poorly documented and developed. Let me start with the most glaring of these.

The Corps included in their computer model a process of water seeping through the levees from the Mississippi and Yazoo side into the backwater side. Now, this a reasonable process. I mean, water does seep through levees. Unfortunately, the way the Corps has implemented this is very poorly done. It violates the fundamental principle of hydrology, and that is, as you all know, that water moves down hill. The Corps has restricted water movement in their model only to one direction. It can only move from the Mississippi into the backwater. This is regardless of what the water level is on the inside where we are here in Rolling Fork and in the rest of the lower Delta.

There are 300 days in the Corps simulation with the computer model when water is moving uphill through the levees. When water on the inside is higher than on the outside, there is water moving uphill. Now, this may seem trivial because it is called seepage, but the amount of water is pretty significant. It is up to 260,000 cubic feet per day which is 20 percent of the capacity of the pumps the Corps is proposing. So this a very conceptionally flawed implementation of a potentially good idea, but it is just not carried out very well. There are a lot of other hydrologic problems with the model.

How much time do I have, sir?

COL CREAR: You have 1 minute.

MR. JOHNS: Okay, I am going to provide a lot of this in writing so I won't try to detail everything tonight. There are a lot of fundamental problems I have as a hydrologist in analyzing and assessing whether or not what the Corps is proposing is even going to be realistic.

Let me talk a little bit about, rather than the model itself, some of the results of the model. Again, this is preliminary. There has been a lot of talk about how this is going to prevent flooding. It is not a flood prevention project. It may be a flood mitigation project, but it will not prevent flooding. There are still 280 structures that would be subject to flooding in the plan, even as it stands right now--even if we believe it and take it at face value, the model, as it stands. The annual flood damages range from about \$280,000 a year up to \$2.5 million a year, even with the plan as implemented. I am going to provide a lot more detail on some hydrologic problems I have with the model in writing.

That will conclude my comments for now. Thanks.

COL CREAR: Thank you, sir. Next, Mr. Luther Alexander, Washington County.

MR. LUTHER ALEXANDER: I am going to say a few words about the human aspect of flooding. I have been here for the past 40 years in Washington County, and I have experienced quite a bit of flooding. I know the suffering of the poor folks, poor black folks, receive in floods. In fact, I was living at the south end of Greenville and have seen when we have flooding, we are attacked by rats and other varmints that cause quite a problem.

Also, during the 1973 flood, I used to drive to Alcorn to carry my daughter. Each side of Highway 61 looked like a lake. Guess what, most of the folks who lived in that lake were the black people here in Sharkey and Issaquena Counties.

I would hope that we would get the pumps. I have been to Arkansas and looked at pumps there, and I see the difference in what we have here in the Mississippi Delta. We have floods. Who suffers? It is poor folks and folks who don't live on hills.

COL CREAR: Thank you, sir. Mr. Charles Perkins.

MR. CHARLES PERKINS: [Already left.]

COL CREAR: Patricia Ware.

MS. PATRICIA WARE: Thank you and good evening. As a concerned parent, I am Patricia Ware, and I am appealing to you here tonight. Young people are often told how to make good decisions by looking at the consequences of their actions. All of us should keep this in mind, especially when it is in regard to the Yazoo pumps.

I am concerned about the pesticide level that has been spilled into the Big Sunflower River and into Deer Creek in Leland, where I live, and into Lake Washington and Lake Ferguson. You can't put a price on health. By this, I mean life.

I am concerned about the talk some of us have heard about the pumps stopping floods. The reality of this is, the pumps will only reduce flooding for those people who are in certain farmlands. People with homes in the Delta won't be protected from floodwaters. In fact, I am a homeowner that needs flood protection right now because when it rains, half of the streets in Leland flood.

These pumps will cost millions of dollars that won't even supply anything for us as taxpayers. Would you be in favor of something that you know will expose your children to deadly chemicals and pesticides? I think not. Then why would you ask us to be in favor of the Yazoo pumps. We want the same thing for our families that you want for your families, the best.

In the year 2000, I am saying, I am staying healthy and I am staying alive, and I refuse to accept this jive.

Thank you.

COL CREAR: Thank you, ma'am. George Lewis.

MR. GEORGE LEWIS: [Already left.]

COL CREAR: Clifton Porter, farmer.

MR. CLIFTON PORTER: Thank you, COL Crear. I am Clifton Porter, and I have a Ph.D. in turn row economics from the school of hard knocks.

I am a homeowner, a son, a father, a husband, and a farmer who lives in the area of this proposed project. Most of us left in the South Delta lived through the floods of 1973, 1975, 1979, and 1983. Then there were smaller ones of 1989, 1994, and 1997. A lot of my neighbors have lost hope in the pumps. Some of us though have been stubborn, and I guess we have been naïve in thinking that if you stay with right long enough, right will win.

My remarks tonight won't be about flooding because the only people who care about our flooding already know that the only way to reduce the impact of flooding is to remove some water. Those who would suggest removing the people and their homes instead of removing some of the water need to go somewhere else and try to sell that. We didn't buy it in 1986, the first time they tried to sell it, and we are not buying it now.

Instead of flooding, I want to use my time to get what I believe to be true on the public record. In 1986, we started the pumps by digging the inlet channel to the pump site. Then late in 1986, someone came down here and told us we had to stop

building. It seems as if some of the same group is here tonight that decided our pumps in the South Delta should be treated different than a dozen or so other pumps that have been built by the Corps within 150 miles of here. They did not have to pay for theirs, but these people decided that we needed to pay for ours. The funny thing is that these people didn't change any other project in the United States like this, but they put a couple of sentences in a water bill in Washington in the fall of 1986 which said we should be treated differently.

Then in 1996, 10 years later, Senator Cochran who has always helped the Delta with flood control stepped forward and reversed the mischief that these people committed. Senator Cochran just put it in a law that we should be treated just like all the other people in the path of the lower Mississippi River and our project could be a Federal responsibility, too. Almost immediately, these same people then began criticizing Senator Cochran and any public official who favored flood relief for the South Delta.

The Corps of Engineers went back to work and picked up the old project, dusted it off, and began studying the feasibility of resuming the project. By 1999, the Levee Board began holding local meetings to tell us to start thinking about our options for flood relief. This was 13 years after we watched pump construction stop.

In the spring of 1999, almost 18 months ago, the Levee Board called local public officials and local property owners and homeowners together and asked if we would agree to meet with environmentalists and Federal agencies that are sympathetic with these groups to see if we could avoid a fight with them. We knew that it might be feudal, and we knew that these people had been quoted as saying that they would not let a pump be built unless it was over their dead bodies. We felt that it was in the interest of every community, county, homeowner, taxpayer, and businessman in the South Delta for us to confirm whether the opposition (1) had a better plan or (2) were just against the pumps.

The Levee Board set up more 50 hours of meetings between representatives of the county Boards of Supervisors and property owners who were for flood relief and those who came from Jackson, Atlanta, Dallas, and other places to argue for no flood relief. I participated in all these meetings and so did Ruby

Johnson from Cary. Local supervisors from Sharkey and Issaquena Counties attended and the Levee Board commissioners came to the meetings.

Here are the facts of the meetings that took place, as I saw them. Steve Thompson of the FWS in Atlanta stated in the first meeting that to do nothing and leave the South Delta like it was would be unacceptable. He challenged everyone in the environmental community, the representatives from the Sierra Club, NWF, the Mississippi Wildlife Federation, the Audubon Society, etc., to work toward something he called a functional solution. Steve Thompson stayed true to his word, and, I think, today he would tell anyone in this audience that the South Delta did their part in this process to bring about a consensus.

The problem was, that after all agencies and local people agreed at the first meeting that a functional solution would have to address flooding in order to improve our standard of living, agricultural productivity, recreational opportunities, and wildlife habitat, the opposition walked out and never came back.

I won't have time to finish all of mine, but the local interests have compromised as far as we can. The radical environmental groups, so I call them, have not compromised any. They have left the table. They kept raising the bar and would not even meet with us to view the area we are talking about or sit down and discuss these things with us.

Their plan is a plan by Dr. Shabman that has been mentioned before. It includes no pumps, gate operated as it is now, and no change in flood stages. He wants to have flood protection for your homes by a ring levee around it or buy you out and let you move. It is just that simple.

I want to point out this one last thing. This past summer has been the hottest and driest summer I can remember. Now, if we would have had ring levees around our homes, as dry as it has been, last night people in the South Delta would have been pumping water out of the levee because their homes would have gone underwater because of rain water. As dry as it has been, the houses would have flooded last night.

Thank you, Colonel.

COL CREAR: Thank you, sir. Margaret Hollins.

MS. MARGARET HOLLINS: Hello, everyone. My name is Margaret Hollins.

I can't believe that we are gathered here tonight to talk about whether more pesticides and spending more than \$180 million is a good idea. I don't think it is. The Yazoo pump is not a good idea, no matter how you look at it. It is only a good idea if you think that benefits for a few at the cost of many is fair.

The Yazoo pumps will result in more pesticides being used on farmlands that will have flood control. We don't need more pesticides.

The Yazoo pumps is also connected with another project in the Big Sunflower River that will stir up cement contaminated with DDT. Some of the fish from Deer Creek could not be sold in grocery stores because they have high levels of DDT and chemicals from pesticides, but people in the Delta that fish from the creek eat the fish. We need to clean up the waters, get the pesticides out of our rivers and lakes. Help people who may be suffering from health problems caused by eating contaminated fish. We should not be creating a worse problem. This Yazoo pump will make a bad situation worse.

Now, we are supposed to be tempted in wanting the pumps because it will stop flooding, but it won't. The Corps has not demonstrated that there is any home in the Delta that will be protected from flooding. Because of the pumps, I am concerned about my children. I don't want them exposed to any more pesticides. I am not in favor of the Yazoo pumps for any activities that will increase pesticides in our area.

Thank you.

COL CREAR: Thank you, ma'am. Next is Carl E. Seifert, Cary Christian Center.

MR. CARL E. SEIFERT: [Already left.]

COL CREAR: Maybe not. Jim Lockett, Delta Wildlife and Forestry, Inc.

MR. JIM LUCKETT: Thank you, COL Crear. I am Jim Lockett, Vice President of Delta Wildlife and Forestry (DWF), a privately owned company located in eastern Issaquena County. DWF owns approximately 21,000 acres of which 18,000 acres are bottom-land hardwood forests and 3,000 acres are farmland.

It has been my pleasure to have been part of the Yazoo Backwater Consensus Group, and I would like to thank the many agencies, organization, and individuals that were involved there.

DWF supports the Corps recommended Plan 5 and feels that Plan 5 will benefit the forestry and wildlife resources of the area by reducing the frequency and duration of flooding. In the 54 years that DWF has been operating, we are yet to realize any benefit that the flooding in the area has produced.

I would like to thank the Corps of Engineers and the Mississippi Levee Board for all the work that they have done toward the project. DWF chose to maintain its forest land, and we feel that being able to manage the water in the flood plain will be beneficial and not harmful.

Thank you.

COL CREAR: Thank you, sir. Willie Bunton, Issaquena County Supervisor.

MR. WILLIE BUNTON: Thank you, Colonel. My name is Willie Bunton, Board of Supervisors for Issaquena County. He said 5 minutes, but I can give you more hell than you have ever had in 5 minutes, I want you to know that.

We are not here to argue and discuss anything about that, but I want to say I am concerned--I live in Issaquena County. I was born and raised in Issaquena County. I have served on the Board of Supervisors for 29 years, and I am still there. My concern is, if we don't get the pumps, the Federal Government buys up all this land and reforests it, we lose our tax base. It is impossible for the people up on the north end, our landowners, to pick up the tab. What is looks like to me is that it is going to run us all out of business, if we don't get the pumps.

I have heard a lot of criticism here tonight, but I want you to know Deer Creek water, Sunflower water, all of that runs right through the Steele Bayou gates. When that river gets up to flood stage and those gates are closed, all of your water comes right down on me and backs up. You talk about contaminated! We are the ones contaminated.

I want to ask a question, Colonel, if you will allow me to. All of you people from Tallulah, Fidler, Goose Lake, etc., stand, all of you. Do they look like rich folks? Those are the people that are landowners and homeowners in the Yazoo Backwater Area and the South Delta flood zone, these are the people. I doesn't look like no rich men there to me.

We ask tonight for mercy. We ask for your support to help us go through this project. We appreciate the Corps of Engineers, the Levee Board, Delta Council, etc. Those are the people we asked to help us fight this fight. They did not volunteer; we asked them to help us fight this fight, and we appreciate their help.

We don't want to be like a hog eating acorns and never look up to see where they come from. But I want to say this and I am going to my seat. There was a guy one time that wanted to use an excuse. The Viet Nam War was real heavy. They were killing men right and left. This fellow knew that several of his friends had been killed and that he would be drafted soon. So he went down to the doctor's office and volunteered himself. He told the doctor, send me, I want to go today. I don't want to wait until tomorrow. I am tired of the way they are killing my boys and my friends. I have several guns at the house. I could end that war in 1 day. The doctor looked at him and said, fellow, you are crazy. He said, write that down.

If there is any newspaper editor here tonight, what I am saying is write that down. That is my theme, write that down. We have so much opposition and people that are speaking that live on high ground. People are speaking that have never seen or never been to a dairy, don't even know where it is.

We have some men from Jackson. I have some friends here tonight from Jackson. They are big duck hunters and are not concerned about people. We say we are concerned about taxpayers' money, what am I? What are we? We are taxpayers, too.

I am rolling, now, Colonel. We are taxpayers, too. So we have friends here tonight that love to duck hunt and are not concerned about our people. A duck is not an American citizen. He is from England, but we were born and raised here.

Gentlemen, hunters, recreation folks, don't come to Issaquena County and want to make it home. We have to live in Issaquena County. It is our living. We have some of the richest, best soil, farmland, in this Delta or in this United States. We have good productive cropland down in that area that will produce 2 to 2.5 bales of cotton and acre, 40 bushels of beans, or 175 bushels of corn. That is good land. We don't raise pine trees.

We are going to get the pumps so you may as well get ready to watch the water flow. We are going to get the pumps whether you are for it or not. We are going to get the pumps. The Colonel told us that we will prevail.

Thank you.

COL CREAR: Thank you, sir, for not raising too much hell. Representative Tom Cameron, Mississippi House of Representatives.

HONORABLE TOM CAMERON: Thank you, Colonel. That is the wrong act to have to follow, I guarantee you.

I am a member of the Mississippi House of Representative representing Issaquena, Sharkey, and the lower part of Washington Counties.

Also, tonight I bring the same sentiment from my cohort, Senator Mike Cheney, representing Warren and Issaquena Counties, who feels the same about this.

Representative Barbour may have his own comments. He has worked with us. And I am glad to see Senator Dawkins came all the way from the coast to get a good education on the Mississippi Delta.

Like Clifton Porter, my only education is a degree in good common sense, so I am just going to do the best I can without a whole lot of technical information.

The people of this Delta, as you have heard, are extremely concerned. A gentleman, a little bit ago, mentioned a Nissan plant. Earlier this week in Jackson, we voted to put \$300 million in state spending into a project with \$900 million in private funds to create a plant that will immediately employ 4,000 people, pay 150 percent of the prevailing wage rate in the area, and create another 1,100 to 1,200 jobs that will return to the state a conservative estimate of over \$1 billion in increased revenue to the state. We could not even begin to consider this area of the state for a project like that. Why? Because they can't go in a flood zone. They can't go where you can't build transportation in a flood zone. We cannot promote economic development in this area because we don't know that every square inch will not flood. We are not asking for much. We just need a little bit of it.

You have seen pictures up there of farmland and people have talked about farmland, but there were houses in those pictures. We have already heard that there are almost 500 homes. Those don't all belong to farmers. They belong to people of all races and all financial situations. Many of them are elderly people. We applaud you for taking a promise that the Federal Government made to this area back in 1941 when they came in and said, we are going to spend trillions of dollars, make flood-free two-thirds of the United States, and build all these structures, and it is going to flood you, but we are going to build three pumping plants to protect you from what we are doing to flood you. That has been whittled down to one plant. That plant is even being threatened.

You have taken at least our last hope and given the best part to wildlife. There will be more areas for wildlife. Yet, you have provided some areas for our people to live flood-free and for us to be able to promote economic development.

We strongly support this plan. We encourage you to do it as soon as possible. It started 3 years before I was born. I would love to see it while I am still alive. The people here need this. It has to happen.

We thank you very much for listening to us.

COL CREAR: Thank you, sir. Next is Louis Miller, Mississippi Sierra Club.

MR. LOUIE MILLER: Good evening. My name is Louie Miller and I am the State Director of the Mississippi Chapter of the Sierra Club. I am a native Mississippian. I was born and raised here. I was educated at Mississippi State University, got a rather worthless degree in agriculture, and learned how to farm when I got out. I made so much money over the last 20 years that I had to quit and go to work for the Sierra Club.

The Sierra Club, in case you don't know, is the Nation's oldest environmental organization. It was founded in 1892, and it has over 600,000 members nationwide, including many members from the area that will be impacted by the pumps.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify here tonight. I would like to note for the record that the Sierra Club believes that the draft SEIS for the Yazoo pumps is severely flawed and does not meet anything close to an accurate analysis of the impacts of the pumps. We will be submitting detailed, written comments, 28 pages of them, outlining those flaws before the end of the comment period.

The Sierra Club is strongly opposed to the construction of the pumps. This project will have devastating impacts to the environment. According to EPA, the project proposed by the Corps will drain and damage 200,000 acres of wetlands. This is twice as many wetlands as are destroyed in a year by all public and private projects nationwide.

The Corps claims that the Yazoo pumps will improve the environment because the Corps will purchase conservation easements on 62,500 acres of frequently flooded agricultural lands as part of this project. The claims of benefits are a sham, in my opinion.

First, the Corps has so severely underestimated the impacts of the project that it has no idea how much restoration would be necessary just to mitigate for the damage the project will cause, let alone to create the net benefits being claimed by the Corps.

Second, even though the Yazoo pumps will operate for at least 50 years, the Corps will abandon all efforts to obtain the 62,500 acres of conservation easements after the first year of operation, even if a single easement has not been purchased at that time.

Third, there appears to be no guarantee that any funding will be made available to purchase these easements.

Finally, the Corps failure to satisfy past promises of mitigation does not bode well for their ability to carry out new promises for the pumps. The Corps, Vicksburg District, already has promised some 28,000 acres of wetland mitigation on previous and existing projects that has never been met to date.

So what does the average person in the Delta get in exchange for buying this pig-in-a-poke pumps project. The Corps cannot point to a single, solitary home, not a single, solitary acre that will no longer flood if the Yazoo pumps are built.

We are going to reduce flood stages and we are going to reduce duration of flooding, if everything goes according to plan, but not eliminate flooding. In fact, the Corps knows that there will be times when the backwater area floods and the Corps will not be even able to turn the pumps on.

For example, the pumps cannot be turned on unless the Steele Bayou floodgates are closed because the shear force of the water running through the pumps would render them useless. This means that the pumps could not have been turned on during the flood event of 1991 and several others. The Yazoo pumps simply are not designed to save homes and property.

So who does benefit from the Yazoo pumps? Several large landowners who want to reap Government subsidies for more agricultural production on poor land and fertilizer and pesticide producers who can sell more of their products to those landowners.

Lastly, the Delta Council would benefit from a row-crop surcharge. In fact, the Corps own document shows they will spend \$181 million of your tax dollars to let large landowners grow more crops on marginal farmlands that have flooded and always will.

What I am asking you here tonight, the people who are interested in this project, is that you look at the alternative project that has been designed by the EPA and other stakeholders. There are several priorities. There is \$181 million in here that would be pumped into this local economy that may actually

diversify the economy, provide jobs over a long term, clean up some of the contamination, fund children's health initiatives, and provide flood control for existing structures, homes, businesses, roads, etc., and conservation easements for willing sellers on 50 to 80,000 acres. This, to me, is putting money where it needs to be put.

I would just like to say that anybody that wants a copy of this, it came out on the web today. Many of you may already have it. If you don't have access to that, you can call our office toll free, call collect at (601) 352-1026, and I think you will see an investment package that is worth supporting.

Thank you.

COL CREAR: Thank you, sir. Cynthia Sarthou, Gulf Restoration Network.

MS. CYNTHIA SARTHOU: I am Cynthia Sarthou. I am Executive Director of the Gulf Restoration Network. We are a network of 44 groups from Texas to Florida that work on issues touching the Gulf of Mexico.

I would like to say for the record that I actually live lower than you do. I am located in New Orleans, and the water you pump out of here goes to me. I would also like to say that, as far as I know, the Federal Government does not pay 100 percent of the flood control that is needed to keep me safe from water. So as a taxpayer, I am very concerned about this. I am also concerned from an environmental perspective.

I don't think the pumps are going to help the flooding in the Delta. It is not that I don't concede that there is flooding in the Delta. I think the pumps will, in fact, not solve the problems of the Delta, and they will not solve the problems faced by the people in the Delta.

I think one of the most serious problems in the Delta that was brought to my attention and nobody seems to be spending a lot of money on it is that the Mississippi Delta has the highest infant mortality rate in the United States and that infant mortality rate rivals that of most underdeveloped countries. A lot of that is related to pesticide use, to chemical use, to residual sediment contamination, and to poverty, none of which are being addressed by the project.

I think that what you will find when you look at this or any of the studies that have been done in this area is that there is significant contamination of all of the water bodies in the Yazoo Basin already. Seventy-five percent are presently impaired by siltation, 78 percent by pesticides, and 83 percent by nutrients.

The Yazoo pumps will not help that pollution. If anything it will only worsen the pollution by moving waters more quickly without residual time for absorption of pollutants. There are people who are, in fact, impacted by that. There are people not just in this basin who are impacted, but people who are impacted down river.

I find it very surprising that the Corps would say that nutrient reduction is not a benefit that they are allowed to consider in light of the fact that there is presently a national action plan that requires the Corps to revisit all projects to determine the benefits of nutrient reduction within those projects. So there is now a mandate for them to look at nutrient reduction because that affects the populations that I deal with, the people downstream who are trying to make a living just like you are.

I think that the problem with the pumps is that it continues a process of flood control that has done nothing but worsen flood problems in your community, in my community, in all the communities along the Mississippi River. Structural flood control has been shown, even by the Corps own studies, not to work. It does not work. Somebody builds a levee upstream that puts more water into your community, you then build a pump that puts more water into my community, so they try to build levees that are higher in my community that only starts the process upstream again. It doesn't work.

There are environmentally sustainable ways to deal with flood control. There are ways that can benefit the economy, that can benefit the farmer, and does not force the farmer out of business. Nobody in the environmental community that I know of has talked about relocation of homes. We have talked about working with local communities to try to determine very localized bases of addressing flooding, while at the same time coming up with environmentally sustainable ways to deal with

flooding in the long term that will also help the economy. But nobody seems to want to talk to us about that because everybody believes that a pump that has been shown potentially to never work hydrologically is the best solution to a problem, even though it was formulated in 1940.

So the problem may continue, the arguments may continue, but I think there is a solution to the flooding problems in the Yazoo Delta, it is just not the Yazoo pumps. So we oppose the pumps and will continue to oppose the pumps.

Thank you.

COL CREAR: Thank you, ma'am. Oscar Clark.

MR. OSCAR CLARK: Well, I didn't come prepared with a big, long statement. I was born and raised around here. My father came here in 1928, after the 1927 flood. I am not a rich man. I thank you for what you said, Mr. Bunton. I wholeheartedly agree with you.

My problem with it is that most of the people that are against the pumps don't live here. Most of the people with the complaints about pesticide use know absolutely nothing about agriculture. The people that want to hunt the most live off in cities and want to hunt on the weekends. It insults me as a citizen of this area. It doesn't take a lot of brains to figure out that we cannot have industry if we are going to be flooded out.

I have lived about 50 miles north of New Orleans. They have flood control programs around most of those cities. Most of those cities are lower elevations than this, but they can have it and we can't. It kind of insults me also that a lot of this money, \$188 million, that is a whole lot of money, to me. They want it to be spent on more social programs that don't seem to work either. So let's try the pumps and see if they are going to work.

Thank you.

COL CREAR: Thank you, sir. Carl Norton.

MR. CARL NORTON: [Already left.]

COL CREAR: Ruby Johnson, Chairman of South Delta Flood Control Committee.

MS. RUBY JOHNSON: I just want to say a couple of things. I was born and raised in the flood control. I lived in homes where people had to move out. We would have to move out to be out of the flood. We would go back in and everything was ruined, our furniture, the floors, the walls, everything.

As rich as this country is and we can send money everywhere else out of the United States to help people, we ought to be able to help the people that live here.

Between Vicksburg and Greenville, the people that have lived here all your life, you know that we are dying. When I was growing up back in Fittler and in the flooded areas, we had stores and many more homes. Then when you came on up to Valley Park, we had more stores and many more homes. They flooded there because the flood seems to hit that area first. We come on up to Cary, we are dying. All the stores are closed, nothing is happening. We come on up to Rolling Fork. We have lost stores. At least once, we had what we called, when I was growing up, a picture show. Now, they call it movies and theaters. We don't even have that anymore. We are dying between Greenville and Vicksburg, and that shouldn't be.

We should not have to give up our homes, our land, and our inheritance because of money. Because that is what it seems to be about. Everybody is talking about \$181 million or a billion dollars or whatever. We make the money. So let's ask our representatives to just start studying to make our dollar more valuable. You know, it keeps decreasing. So let's ask them to make our dollars more valuable.

The \$181 million is not laying there waiting for us. If you need something for another area, whether it is for schools or an area where you live that is flooded, it has nothing to do with that money at all. What you do is you get up with the right people and ask for what you need. That is for anybody that lives in the United States. That is what you do.

I am not going to slander some other area because they are asking for \$100 million or \$200 million to do something for their community and the people. I am not going to do that, and you shouldn't do that either. Because whether the money is spent on the pumps or not, you are still not going to get it if you don't go to the right people and ask for it. If you want something, go ask for it. That is what we elect our people for.

They told us they were going to take care of us. Then, let's hold them accountable. Stop voting and getting them in and let them not do what they have promised to do. Let's start doing that instead of fighting each other over money. Because that is what we are doing here.

I am not a scientist, and when I get up to speak, I am not an engineer, but I do know with all that water coming all the way from Missouri from all the lakes and rivers ends down here on us, a nonstructural plan is not going to hold it back. That is just good old common sense. Just think about it. That is what I truly believe.

If you want something, you are going to have to ask for it. I am going to repeat it again, but don't start fighting against each other. Your agencies that speak tonight here, many of them are funded by our own tax dollars. We have government money fighting against government money, and that shouldn't be. That is all we are doing. We are fighting over money that if we don't get it for the pumps, you won't get it for anything else. They are not going to take that money and spend it on something up here in the South Delta.

Any human being that thinks that they are not worth any amount of money that is printed, we make it. Something is wrong. This is something that we make and that we have made a big thing of that people rob over, steal over, and kill over. It is something that we make on a machine.

Please stop and think about what you are saying. That is really what the bottom line is, talking about the money. If you need a project for your area, go and ask for it. Don't knock somebody else's project that is going to help them. We have too many people that have lived through floods. All we are doing is trying to get better protection. So if you need it for your

area, go and fight for it and try to get it. Don't knock anyone else out. That is all we are asking. We are all human beings, and we are not working together at all. Please let's work together and help each other.

Thank you.

COL CREAR: Thank you, ma'am. Richard L. Biles, Sierra Club.

MR. RICHARD BILES: I want to tell you about a meeting first. I had a meeting with the Corps of Engineers in Jackson in 1994, December 15. It was a meeting they put on. I asked for a chance to speak, and they let me. I pointed out to them that I had made calculations that I learned when I was a sophomore in college. That has been many years ago, friends. That was to discuss the Big Sunflower drainage project. It turned out that in damming up the Big Sunflower, digging a dredge ditch called Six Mile Cutoff down hill to Little Sunflower, damming up Little Sunflower, digging a dredge ditch down hill to Deer Creek, damming up Deer Creek, and digging a dredge ditch down hill to Steele Bayou, the Corps had given up many feet of head. This will require much more power to pump the water these extra lost feet, getting up over Whittington levee into the Yazoo River than it would be if they had tried to pump the water at the source at each river mile for each stream. Calculations showed that giving up that many feet of head would increase the power required to lift that water over Whittington levee this lost feet and would add approximately \$50,000 a day more pumping costs.

I am sure that everyone here who gets an electric bill realizes that power cost the residents substantially since 1994. So it is no telling how much extra it will cost now.

I then asked them why wouldn't the Corps consider pumping at the mouth of each of the four streams rather than running the water so far down hill first. I also pointed out to them that since Big Sunflower levee to let its flow run naturally and by gravity into the Yazoo, but only have to go as far up as the abandoned lock and dam. Why not consider that somewhat cheaper alternative?

To my surprise, none of the Corps technical people present, and as usual these people lined all walls in the room about three rows deep. I thought they would object. In fact, their leader stood up and said that the Corps had found that what I had said was true and that in the greater Delta project, they would consider damming up the Big Sunflower bypass, reopening the mouth of the Big Sunflower River, and possibly building Big Sunflower levees.

My question, now, to the Corps is, when is the Corps going to get off this idea of spending far more money than the land they plan to save is worth by building \$181 million pumps and get down to the cheaper, more sensible solution as they promised me back in 1994?

COL CREAR: Thank you, sir. Willie M. Moore.

MS. WILLIE M. MOORE: Good evening. I am Willie M. Moore from the Tallulah Deading.

I was looking at the picture here that someone had drawn remembering when I was home with my children in the water. They would ask me, Momma, how are we going to get to school? We would get up and get in the boat. I would take them so far in the boat. Then we would get out of the boat and pull the boat until we get to the water. Then we would get back in the boat and go another little piece. Then we would get out and walk for them to catch the bus. This is the way the water was. It never got in my house, but I always had problems with it cutting us off.

I couldn't get to work without going part of the way in a boat. I would leave home at 5 o'clock in the morning. Well, you know, this time of the year, it is dark. You don't know what is out there. I live in the woods, and you don't know what is in the woods.

Really, I wanted to speak about the farmers. We can put levees around our houses, but what are we going to do about our farmers? We have had farmers all my life. I know of people that farm. This is what we had to live off of, the farmers. It is getting to the place that they are not being able to plant their crops when it is time for them to plant. So that is making them not be able to make what their crops are supposed to make.

They are late trying to get their corn in. When they do get it in, it don't rain. Well, you can't do anything about that. If they are late getting their beans in because the water got the land, so that means they can't farm. They are even later with the cotton because the land is underwater. I know that everybody knows you cannot go out there and plant cotton in a boat. You have to wait until the land dries up to try to plant cotton. Well, it is too late by the time it dries up. So that is putting pressure on the farmers. When the farmers go down, you better believe it, it is going to be more down than just the farmers in the Delta. There are going to be people in other places that are gong to go down, too. Because the farmers do support a whole lot of factories and things like that. If they go down, you had better believe there are going to be a whole lot of other people go down with them.

You see, we are already poor. We can't go much farther than what we are because we are already at the bottom. What we are trying to do, we are asking for help. You environmentalists that came in here, we are going to starve just the same because they are not going to allow us to fish. How are we going to live? The farmers are gone, we can't fish. I know I am not supposed to ask a question, but I would just like to know, how are we going to live? What we are depending on is our farmers. They help us. They see to us. The people that farm, they take care of us that are not able to farm.

If I need something, I can go to one of the farmers and ask them and tell them I need such and such a thing. All right, Willie Mae, come and get it. If they go under, you better believe there are going to be some factories up north go under.

COL CREAR: Thank you, ma'am. Mr. and Mrs. Marlon Davis, Center for Constitutional Rights.

MS. LATOYA DAVIS: Good evening. Thank you for the opportunity to present our concerns about the Yazoo pumps project. It is indeed important that all interested persons are able to give input that informs the final decision on this project.

I am Latoya Davis, and I represent the Center for Constitutional Rights in Greenville, Mississippi. The center is a nonprofit legal and educational organization dedicated to advancing and protecting the rights guaranteed by the United States Constitution and the universal declaration of human rights.

Our roots are in the Civil Rights movement of 1966, where our attorneys represented people in the South who protested against racial discrimination. We are now expanding our program to address a broad range of civil and human rights issues. We are proud of the services we provide to communities here in the Delta. There are over 30 grassroots organizations that are part of the South Advocacy Network to the Center.

We are deeply concerned about the lack of credible information circulating about the Yazoo pumps project. Such information erodes the goals of meaningful public participation which is the cornerstone of our democracy. There is misleading information that the Yazoo pumps will stop flooding in Delta homes; however, the Corps own EIS makes it clear that the purpose of the Yazoo pumps is to move floodwaters a little faster off some farmlands. They call this agricultural intensification.

The Corps has not identified one home in the Delta that the Yazoo pumps will protect from flooding. In fact, the Corps EIS indicates that there will be some floods when the Yazoo pumps won't even be turned on. These facts show that there will be very little benefit of the pumps to many Delta residents.

But what are the costs? One of the costs is health. By allowing more lands to be farmed, the Yazoo pumps will result in the increased use of pesticides. These pesticides will find their way off of the croplands and into our air and water.

The small area of the Delta has the Nation's highest levels of DDT, a deadly pesticide that has been banned for the last 27 years because it poisons people. The Yazoo pumps will encourage the dredging project in the Big Sunflower River that would dig up DDT from contaminated river bottoms and deposit them on the riverbank. The threats of toxic exposure to DDT will create a significant public health problem for people who eat fish contaminated by DDT or play on the riverbanks where DDT will be present. The effects of pesticide exposure on children and the

unborn should be a real concern of the Corps because children are more vulnerable to the damaging effects of these chemicals.

Another cost is more than \$180 million to be put on the backs of taxpayers. The Yazoo pumps will only benefit a handful of people by increasing their profits, but it will destroy more than 100,000 acres of wetlands which are the breeding grounds for our wildlife and naturally carry out the function of filtering our pollution and absorbing some floodwaters.

When it comes to projects like the Yazoo pumps, we find there is a pattern of not taking the environmental and health threats seriously when they fall on poor and people of color. This is environmental injustice. The Yazoo pumps will threaten the health of mostly African Americans and poor residents by increasing pesticide pollution.

It won't prevent flooding in Delta homes. It will cost taxpayers over \$180 million. It will destroy significant wetland acreage. It is only designed to move floodwaters a little faster off a few farmlands. We cannot allow Yazoo pumps to continue the pattern of environmental injustice.

In closing, we should take note of the fact that the NEPA governs the Army Corps of Engineers decision on the Yazoo pumps. This law fully requires public participation that allows people the opportunity to make comments, raise issues, and present their concerns about projects like the Yazoo pumps. The purpose of this law is to ensure against ignorant decision making that approves projects without careful consideration of all harmful effects resulting from such a project.

We are committed to the vigorous enforcement of the NEPA in this case where all the harmful effects of the Yazoo pumps have not been carefully considered by the Army Corps of Engineers.

Thank you.

COL CREAR: Thank you, ma'am. Jaribu Hill, Mississippi Workers' Center.

MS. JARIBU HILL: Thank you. My name is Jaribu Hill, and I am a civil rights attorney and founder and program director of the Mississippi Workers' Center.

My comments, basically, will, in fact, talk about the costs, as far as human life, as far as health, as far as the livelihood and the sustainability of our communities through the working population.

We represent workers who are considered low-wage workers, workers for the most part who have very few benefits, including health benefits. We are in a state that has a cap on Workers Compensation of only 45 weeks, no matter what the injury, no matter what the illness, or whatever else happens to befall a worker while he or she is working on the job. Thus, we are concerned about this project that is being proposed by the American Corps of Engineers because the project has within it, is inherent within it, deadly pesticides and exposure to those pesticides, such as the way workers have historically been exposed to pesticides. If you look at the farm worker community that is not even covered by OSHA, they have been plagued with these diseases for many years. We have noticed clusters of cancer, clusters of miscarriages, infertility, childhood illnesses, etc. We have sited illnesses in children as early as 12 years old where young girls have been plagued with uterine cancer. We have noticed birth defects and all other forms of illnesses and diseases that come from workers who transport pesticide poisoning on their clothing home to their families.

We noted that with asbestos poisoning and we note it with DDT poisoning, as well. So we are concerned about the thousands of people that will be impacted by this project. We are concerned that there has been no mention of any kind of companion study that would look at the health risks and the costs that people are talking about in terms of the toll on human life.

We are concerned that the only thing that has been discussed here is the issue of flooding. We know from reading the report and reading the recommendations by the EPA that this project will not even solve the problem of flooding. What it will do is it will foster and sponsor wide-spread, wholesale contamination of communities, and who will suffer the most? The communities in the Delta, the people who will become our clients and the

clients of other Civil Rights attorneys who will have to represent people to see that they get rights that are denied, to see that they are redressed properly for the poisoning that they are about to be exposed to.

So we beg you to rethink. We beg you to think of alternatives that go toward the issue of human life and development and go away from the mass slaughtering that we see will occur if this project goes forward. If there is no companion study to look at the cost in terms of human life, we would say that this project is not only socially irresponsible but it is also an immoral project.

Thank you.

COL CREAR: Thank you, ma'am. Deborah Williams.

MS. DEBORAH WILLIAMS: Since I am about the last person on the list, I want to say thank you. First of all, I would like to come to you. I have been gone from Rolling Fork for almost 26 years, so I can look at it from a different point of view because I am standing on the outside looking in. But I know what is happening inside because I have not disconnected myself with the community.

I heard a lot of things that were said tonight that hardens me. Because, yes, pesticide is an issue. Health care is an issue. But flooding is an issue, too. See I was raised in the flood zones, too, and I am a product of that. So are my sisters and brothers that are not here anymore either. But I also look at those farmers and their hearts are sinking. Every time someone says there is no need for the pumps. Those are human being, too, that have worked until the midnight hours and have gotten up as early as 3 o'clock in the morning to get out in those fields to produce products that all of you are using now.

I think the Corps of Engineers, unless I am mistaken about what the Corps does, the concerns about pesticide--the Corps, where I come from, is not the people that should be working on that. You should go to the direct people that should be working on those concerns.

It is not just the farmlands that is bringing this into the communities. You have allowed factories to come into this community that have used chemicals, and no one can tell me what happened to those chemicals. So that is not the only issue here.

I think now the issue is the pumps because it will soon be spring again. Those farmers, as Mr. Bunton said, are not rich, and they aren't all white. A lot of those people that are living on those lands that you are talking about relocating--my father is 67 years old, and he will not come with us because that is his. The only way that he is going leave there is when he is sick, and we are going to have to pull him away.

So you sit and you talk about all these things, but the issue here is people. You see, I am elementary. I am not into the money and all of that because we are paying taxes anyway, and a lot of those taxes and what that money is going to, we cannot control it. But this is something that we can control, and we can see it.

The Senator that talked about the factories and talked about industry coming into the community. Twenty-five years and Rolling Fork has gone down. Sharkey County and Issaquena County has gone down. It has not improved. Greenville, yes, it is improving for so many reasons I don't know. But I know this area is not.

If these pumps are able to bring industry in here and keep our young women and young men out of the jails because the only thing they know is to steal and to sell drugs, then let that happen.

I am just saying, I am going to pack my bags and Tuesday I am going back to Portland, but my mother and father aren't. And a whole lot of these mothers and fathers out here aren't because the people you are talking about, they can't relocate their homes.

A lot of the young people have decided to stay on farms. I was one that wasn't staying, but that was me. I chose that, as many of us have. But for those that have chosen to stay and those that cannot relocate, you should try going out there.

You see, I know a black man that owns 200 and something acres in Issaquena County. He used to crawl on his knees way in the midnight hours to get his crops out. I knew a white man that did the same thing. He worked from sunup until sundown, too. So, yes, those issues you are talking about are important, but I think they should be shared and they should be given to people that can do something about it, and you should be there demanding that they do something about it.

I feel that the Corps of Engineers should put in that document a guarantee for bids from the community for jobs that this project will require so that local people can get those jobs, so that employment could be shared in the communities.

They should look at the health issues, if there is any, and they should come back to the community and let you know about those health issues. If they can't, they need to tell you who should.

But again, I say to you, and I will end with this, it does sadden me that there is a lot of pointing of fingers and hollering.

When these people here are just going home crying because they cannot get something that should have been done in 1941.

Thank you.

COL CREAR: Thank you, ma'am. Susan Rieff, NWF.

MS. SUSAN RIEFF: Thank you, Colonel and others. My name is Susan Rieff and I am the Vice President for the NWF.

We were founded, to tell you a little bit about this organization, back in the 1930's in part by duck hunters and many from the South. Since then, we have many members in Mississippi. We have had board members from Mississippi, including our immediate past chairman.

We have opposed this project for many years. I don't think since 1941, but for a very long time. I want to talk about the reasons for that.

First, I want to respond to something that I hear some when I come over to Mississippi, and that is, why is a national environmental organization meddling in our business in Mississippi. The reasons for that, even though I don't like to call it meddling, are this is all Federal money. Whether that is apparent here or not, this project has now gained a national profile. It has been spotlighted in national media. Even for the Federal Government, \$181 million is a lot of money.

The natural resources that are at stake here, the wildlife habitat, the water quality problems we have heard about a lot tonight, those are nationally significant resources and nationally important problems.

There are important policy issues here, too, about how the Federal Government is going to invest in flood control and how it is going to do that, where it is going to do that.

Not long ago, the NWF, along with another national group called Taxpayers for Common Sense, released a report. That report dealt with Corps of Engineers projects. It found, after a lot of analysis, that this project was the fourth worst project in the country because of its economic, taxpayer, and environmental problems. So this is a national issue. It is not going to go away as a national issue, and that is why groups like mine are here tonight.

We are going to be submitting very detailed comments on this for the record, Colonel. We thank you for your courtesy here tonight. I just want to highlight a few of the reasons that are behind our strong opposition of this project.

First of all, the environmental damages are tremendous, and that has been detailed quite a bit here tonight by the FWS and, certainly, the EPA letter that you have heard referenced many times. Anytime 200,000 acres of wetlands are destroyed, that is a nationally significant impact. I would wager that even the Corps of Engineers would not allow a private developer to drain 200,000 acres of wetlands. It is a very important issue for us.

The bottom-land hardwood resources of the lower Mississippi River Basin, there are very few left. Some of the best ones are right here in the Mississippi Delta. Those are important to us.

Another reason for our opposition is that we think this project has been misleading. This is an agricultural drainage project, pure and simple. The Corps own analysis demonstrates that the overwhelming majority of the benefits go to agricultural producers. We think that their estimate is too low, but it is 84 percent. This is about agricultural intensification, as some of the speakers here have mentioned.

We share the concerns about people's houses and families being subjected to flood damages. We have said from the beginning, and Jim Wanamaker, I wrote this to you in a letter almost 2 years ago that we would support very targeted efforts to help people keep floodwaters out of their homes, to protect their families, and to protect their businesses. This project doesn't do that. It doesn't do that.

This project costs too much and does too little and it helps too few people. One hundred and eight-one million dollars is, I think, too low. That cost is rising. I don't think anybody here really thinks that is going to be cost at the end of this project.

In other parts of the country, not here that I am aware, recently there have been allegations that the Corps of Engineers has been pressured and has manipulated data, especially economic data, in order to justify projects like this. This has gotten a lot of national media attention. We think it is really surprising given that the Corps, in this draft EIS, has ignored other independent credible economic analysis that very much discredits the economic analysis and especially the estimates of benefits that are contained in this draft EIS.

There is no consideration in this document truly of a nonstructural alternative. Because of that, we think that the document is not consistent with the NEPA. The project is not even consistent with the 1941 authorization that we have heard about tonight. This is a bigger and more damaging project than what even was envisioned in 1941.

Mitigation is a problem. There is not enough of it, and the Corps has underestimated the resources that will be impacted and therefore underestimated how much mitigation is required. There is not enough land identified for mitigation, and a lot of it is not in the right place and there is not any requirement that it be mitigated in Mississippi.

Finally, I think it is really important to point out that this document produced for our comments tonight has been opposed and discredited by both the EPA and FWS. While some of you may think that that happens all the time, but, from somebody who has tried many times over the years to get FWS and to get EPA to oppose harmful projects, it almost never happens. This is very rare, and it should be evidence, I think, of how severely flawed this project is and, again, what kind of national attention it is likely to receive.

So all we conclude here is that this document is an effort to justify a project that many of us, I think, would agree is not economically justified and it is very environmentally damaging. It simply doesn't make sense. The Corps needs to take this project back and come up with a sensible alternative, a nonstructural alternative, that can address the real needs of families, homes, and businesses, but do so without sacrificing the treasury or sacrificing the environment in the Delta.

Thank you, Colonel.

COL CREAR: Thank you, ma'am. Bill Newsom, Sharkey County Board of Supervisors.

MR. BILL NEWSOM: Thank you, COL Crear. I am a newly elected Supervisor here in District 1 in Sharkey County. Although I am new to the county government system, I am a life-long resident of the South Delta. I have lived and worked in the flood-prone areas of Sharkey and Issaquena Counties.

Up until January 2000, I have seen and experienced continued flooding in the South Delta. I have wondered why someone doesn't do something about it. Now, being a county official, I represent so many people who wonder that same thing.

I know you have heard from many speakers, but I want you to consider helping in any way you possible can with our continued flooding. I have attended every meeting I possibly could since January to educate myself in the ways I can help. I just want the Federal Government to finish what was promised in the South Delta since 1941. We need the help.

We need to have school busses running safely. During flooding, the busses are not able to pick up children in these problem areas. Our emergency vehicles and county workers need to be able to go where needed. This could affect both the safety and the well-being of the citizens of the South Delta.

I thank you for your genuine consideration.

COL CREAR: Thank you, sir. Clyde Nichols, Jr.

MR. CLYDE NICHOLS, JR.: [Stood at map and did not use microphone.] I hope you all can hear me. If you can't in the back, I wish you would come forward. If you look at this map, you will realize why we have this problem. The reason that we have all the water down at the south end is because we drain the large area of the northern Delta and we drain all the farmland that flows down through the Mississippi Delta. Who benefits from that?

We all do. We have cheap food. We also provide cheap food that is exported throughout the world that allows us not to have high industry in the United States, lowering our air pollution. We produce food and export it, and we allow industry not to be in our area and we are able to take the money that we get from selling agriculture products and buy industrial goods from other countries. We get to live real well here in the United States.

I am a Viet Nam veteran, helicopter pilot. When I came home in the early 1970's, I flew all over the South Delta. I saw this area flowing from here all the way up to Hollandale across to Belzoni. Basically, every bit of this was underwater. The only thing sticking out was Highway 61, running right down through here with Deer Creek ridge. That was the only part of the South Delta that was sticking up. Everything else was flooding.

But we do get to live in a fine place that I love. I think it is one of the few places that is left in the world where we can still live off the land, if we had to. You people all are going to want to come down here if something happens to the rest of the United States to live down here, when they turn your electricity off.

How many people are still left here that have been living in the Mississippi Delta for over 30 years? May I see a show of hands? Okay, all the rest of you people don't realize what we are facing here. There are periodic times, like right now when there is no rain, you can drive down and cross our bridges and all our waterways are dry. But then there also periods of time when we get 20 inches of rain in a 12-hour period, and all this water that drains this farmland that allows us to eat cheap food throughout the whole Mississippi Delta area and the whole Mississippi River Basin piles up right down here. Any relief that we could give these people that live down in the area by putting the pump in would help.

The nice thing about this pump that they are proposing is that it will also pump water back in so that during dry periods, we are going to be able to pump water back out of the river into these lakes down here to maintain a little.

Can you imagine how much wildlife habitat was destroyed in 1973? All this water came down and piled up. All this area was flooded. Look at all this wildlife habitat that was destroyed. Any relief that we could give this area down would help the wildlife, it would help the people, it would help the farmland. It would also help the world because we are continuing to produce cheap food down here.

I grew up in Issaquena County. I lived here all my life. My dad moved here with the Rural Electric Power Association and brought electricity down to Eagle Lake. I am for staying down here. I am for helping these people out just a little by putting these pumps in.

I do have one problem though. We get rain in the Delta and we pile all this water up down here. We also drain all this other area. That is the reason that when you cross these bridges, they are all dried up, the lakebeds, the river beds. The person I work with ran over an alligator the other day over at Lake Washington, an 8-foot-long alligator. He was just laying up in

the road. The only thing I can figure he was doing up there was trying to get some road kill because he was starving to death because the water table has been dropped out from underneath the lake and there wasn't any food for him.

I also was in Glen Allen the other day and there was a huge snapping turtle. It almost filled up the bed of a pickup truck. It must have been 100 and something years old. His habitat has been destroyed because we drain the Mississippi Delta. We allow all this water to come down here and we have no way to get it out. But we do drain all the Mississippi Delta.

I have a proposal. Let's put the pumps in down here. Let's save some of this wildlife habitat. Let's do anything that will help control this backwater level down here, whether it be 5 feet or 6 feet, or whatever. I guarantee it will help save some wildlife habitat that otherwise would drown.

You see this little bit of drainage system here. It drains a tremendous watershed up here, but it provides real good farmland. All that water does come down at tremendous speed. It rains up here one day and it is down here 2 days later. So we have fantastic drainage, but we have destroyed wildlife habitat by not helping the farmers, by not having some way to release this water down here.

I have one other proposal that I would like to see happen. We need to restore some of this habitat. We are complaining because the water table is draining out from under the lands here. The reason is we allow the water to leave the Delta real quickly. I propose we put a pump in up here at Deer Creek.

A little history about Deer Creek.

COL CREAR: Sir, your time is up.

MR. NICHOLS: Just one more point. Deer Creek used to be a waterway where the steamboats could go all the way to Leland, Mississippi. By putting a pump in on the north end and allowing water to come down through Deer Creek, there is a point just north of Arcola where we could allow water to go into Black Bayou and into the Bogue Phalia River that would go into the Sunflower River. With a series of weirs, we could retain the water in the northern Delta.

We need these pumps down here. The water comes down too fast.

Thank you.

COL CREAR: Thank you, sir. Anson Jones.

MR. ANSON JONES: Good evening, everyone. My name is Anson Jones. I am not going to hold you long because I am not a long talker. You know, when you do it right the first time, you don't have to worry about it.

I was back in the flood in 1973, and I was 13 years old. I asked the Lord, before I left the house, to give me what He would have me to say.

My father was born in 1919. When the water came up in 1973, we had a levee put around the house I am living in right now. The levee was about 6 feet high. But the water still crossed over. We would pretend to be sick so we could get out of going to school because we were so muddy by the time we got ready to get in the boat to get to the school. We were all muddied up. That is why we did not want to go to school.

But Anson Jones, if anyone knows me, has been to school. I have never missed a day in my life, from kindergarten all the way through 2 years of college. I never missed a day. I don't like to be late.

Since 1973, every time it starts to rain, we get a little shaky. But God promised that it would never flood again, that is the reason we need these pumps. If we had had these pumps back when I was 13 years old, we would not have had to move because it would have pushed the water back out of our levees.

When you move from one spot, the water would move with you. We had to keep on moving. We didn't have anywhere to go. Right now, we don't have anywhere to go. Where we going to go? Our parents died and are buried. We don't want to see them under the water. Even my horse, I buried him. I had him ever since I was 9 years old. He died in 1999. He lived a good life. But what I am trying to say is, we need these pumps.

When it rains, we get a little shaky because we know it is going to flood. If it rains all night, someone might be scared just like in 1979 when I was getting ready to graduate. During the night, we had to come back in a boat, praying all the way home, Lord, let it be a boat there for me to get back across to our home.

Walking through the water, leaches would get all on you when you were walking back home. And you are talking about we don't need pumps. We need those pumps. No one wants to leave their home. We have worked all our life for it, trying to do the best we can. Now, I walk with a cane, but I am doing the best I can, with the Lord's help. The Lord has blessed me with two kids, and I don't want to see them have to catch the bus coming through the water that they might run off the road. Even my little horse helped me get across the water sometimes.

Just think about it. When you just have one little string of road, and you are on there you don't know if you are going to be in the ditch or whatever, walking across that road. Even my father had to carry my sister with polio, when she had a cast from her leg all the way up to her hip, standing inside the boat because she was not able to sit in the boat.

And you say we don't need no pumps. We do. With the Lord's help, God is able this evening.

Thank you.

COL CREAR: Thank you, sir. Brent Bailey, Mississippi Farm Bureau.

MR. BRENT BAILEY: Good evening. My name is Brent Bailey, Director of Environmental Resources for the Mississippi Farm Bureau. The Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation, the state's largest general farm organization, appreciates the opportunity to express our views on the draft SEIS for the Yazoo Basin Reformulation Study regarding Mississippi's Yazoo Backwater Area.

A significant portion of Mississippi's agricultural economy and some of the most fertile soil is located within the project area. The Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation urges the

completion of the Yazoo Area Project, including the installation of the 14,000-cfs pumping plant, to relieve flooding problems and increase environmental and economic opportunities in the area.

Sound flood control is necessary for successful farm operations. In addition, we ask that the Corps of Engineers and other state and Federal agencies involved to recognize the following request. We ask that private land already under good wildlife and forest management be exempt from mitigation and be credited to the reforestation efforts. Acquisition of land or easements should be confined to land where poor or no management is practiced. If lands are to be mitigated, acquisition of land or easement should be distributed evenly throughout the Yazoo River Basin. Environmental easements should be considered over fee title acquisition and land acquisition should be from willing sellers only.

Without sound flood control facilities such as the Yazoo Backwater Area project structures, future conditions will likely be no different than current conditions. Flooding will continue to afflict emotional distress on residents and physical effects on their property. Also, few economic opportunities will be willing to locate within the area to tap into the local labor pool.

Your report states that \$13.2 million in damages to agricultural operations occur per year due to flooding. Without proposed flood control structures, this figure will either remain the same or increase. Replacing agricultural operations with nonstructural controls will hurt the tax base of the affected counties. Also, every acre taken out of production in the United States will be into production in a foreign country without environmental regulations, thus, increasing our dependence on imported food and fiber and compromising our national security.

Once again, thank you for allowing the opportunity for our organization to express our views on this project.

COL CREAR: Thank you, sir. Nathalie Walker, Earthjustice.

MS. NATHALIE WALKER: Thank you very much. This three-volume EIS that we are all here to comment on tonight is really a shoddy piece of work. You have heard people reference the incredible critiques EPA and FWS have already done of this document. I would invite everyone in this room to review the document. It is a shoddy piece of work. It can't and it won't stand up to a challenge under NEPA.

Let's get it straight at the outset. This is not a flood control project. It is not a flood control project. I defy you to draw up a map showing 451 homes. Specifically locate them on the map and show me those homes that will no longer flood after the pumps are constructed. Show me one home. You can't because it is not true.

You are selling a bill of goods, and, unfortunately, it is being bought. I can understand why it is being bought. If someone tries to sell you an apple pie idea, you are going to be receptive. Who would say, oh, you are going to prevent flooding which has been a terrible problem here in the Delta, we are opposed to it. Nobody is going to oppose that. So that is why they are selling it as flood protection, but it is not. They always conveniently omit the fact that there will be all kinds of flooding in the Delta when they will never turn on the pumps. The 1999 flood, those conditions were such that they never would have turned on the pumps.

These are facts that you don't hear. But, boy, you hear flood control from them all the time, and it is not true. This is about increasing agriculture in the Delta, and that is not good for the long-term health of the Delta at all.

This project makes absolutely no sense in so many different ways that I can only touch on a few of them tonight. Let's start very briefly with just one issue that some folks have talked about already. That is pesticide contamination in the Delta.

The whole purpose of this project is to increase agriculture. That means more pesticides. It is very simple. The cancers linked to pesticides are not unknown here in the Delta. The Corps of Engineers knows exactly what I am talking about. David Johnson, who is a Corps employee, admitted in a sworn affidavit, and I am quoting, "every agricultural field in the Delta is

contaminated with DDT." DDT is one of the deadliest pesticides that have ever been used. Why should taxpayers foot the bill for a project like this that is bad for the health of the people in the Delta and isn't economically justifiable in any way, shape, or form.

You have heard tonight that the project is going to cost at least \$181 million. We all know it is going to be a lot more than that. It is going to completely change the hydrology of the Delta. It is going to destroy at least 200,000 acres of wetlands. As was mentioned earlier tonight, that is more wetlands destruction than you see in the whole country in a year. That is one of the reasons why the economic experts at Virginia Tech have concluded that there won't be any net benefits from this project.

Who is kidding whom. Land use in the Delta has begun to move away from more and more and more agriculture because reports have documented that 30 years of agricultural expansion have left a landscape here that is not economically or ecologically sustainable.

Senator Thad Cochran of this state has admitted that agricultural overproduction is a huge problem in the Delta. The Delta Council knows this as well as everyone else. They paid for a report on the Delta by Mississippi State University, but when the draft report came out and said nonagricultural activities like forestry, recreational hunting and fishing, all kinds of ecotourism were absolutely vital to the economic health and growth of the region, the Delta Council stopped the report from being finalized. They don't want people to know that more and more and more and more agriculture in the Delta is not the way to go because when that fact becomes well known, neither the Delta Council nor the Corps will be able to justify with a straight face ridiculous and costly agricultural projects like the Yazoo pumps.

There are very real needs here in the Delta and everyone who lives here knows it. It is obscene to be spending \$181 million on this project when that money could make a real difference in the quality of life of Delta residents.

Don't think this is flood control. It's not. They cannot point to anything in these three volumes that establishes that you are getting flood control for your homes. You deserve it. That is not what you are getting here.

COL CREAR: Thank you, ma'am. John Prewitt, Mississippi Wildlife Federation.

MR. JOHN PREWITT: I am John Prewitt, Executive Director of MWF, and here to speak on behalf of our group in opposition to this project. MWF is a nonprofit citizen's organization formed back in 1946 and committed to natural resource conservation, environmental quality, and outdoor recreation in Mississippi.

We are an umbrella organization representing individual members, businesses, and affiliated groups throughout the state. Our members come from all parts of the state, including the Delta area. So our perspective is that of Mississippi residents. I have submitted our full statement, and I will recap, simply, our summary at the end.

It is the belief of the MWF that the Corps has failed to adequately address potential environmental impacts that are the likely result of implementation of the pump project as proposed. These impacts have not only been poorly addressed, but, in fact, many facets of the potential impacts have not even been listed.

We find the draft EIS to be woefully inadequate and deficient in numerous areas, as outlined in detail by two primary Federal agencies that are charged with, among other things, the task of wildlife, fisheries, and natural resource stewardship in this country, namely EPA and FWS. These agencies are staffed by competent environmental and natural resource professionals who are eminently qualified to analyze environmental, ecological, and natural resource community dynamics. The mere fact that these agencies have publicly indicated concern and reservations regarding the rigor and quality of the draft EIS should be sufficient to cast indictment upon the proposed plan of action. This lack of scientific rigor and credibility is coupled with the fact that the Corps of Engineers continues to drain areas that have historically always been wetlands.

We believe the project to be a flawed and faulted irresponsible effort that if successfully implemented would serve primarily and most effectively to allow marginal farmland to come into production with minimal overall economic benefits to a very few

in the agribusiness community but at great expense and damage to this valued ecosystem within the State of Mississippi. The cost, economic, cultural, and natural resource base far exceed the poorly demonstrated benefits.

We thank you for the opportunity to make comments about this project.

COL CREAR: Thank you, sir. Monique Harden, Earthjustice Legal Defense.

MS. MONIQUE HARDEN: Good evening. My name is Monique Harden, and I am an attorney and community liaison director in the New Orleans office of Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund. We are a nonprofit environmental law firm, and we successfully represented Mississippi residents in several environmental cases where we were able to achieve greater protections for public health, quality of life, and the environment in areas of this state. We have been called by Mississippi residents who are deeply troubled by the Army Corps of Engineers proposal for the Yazoo pumps project.

I need to point out here that the EPA has recently issued its review of the Corps EIS, and it identifies numerous flaws and incorrect assessments made by the Corps. In a word, the Corps has written hundreds of pages in this EIS that wildly exaggerate the benefits and minimize or ignore the harms. When you consider the facts about the Yazoo pumps projects, it should come as little surprise that informed residents and the EPA are in agreement that this project should not go forward.

For residents, the Yazoo pumps will do more harm than good with significant changes to the hydrology of the area that will worsen water quality, result in increased pesticide use, and overlap with the Big Sunflower dredging project that will dig up DDT-contaminated sediment from the river bottom.

With the Yazoo pumps, the Corps attempts to change nature with manmade plumbing. The pumps would encourage agricultural intensification by moving floodwaters just a little faster off some farmlands that agribusinesses want to farm. Contrary to what some people have been told, the Yazoo pumps is not a flood control project for Delta residents. We need to separate fact from fiction. The Army Corps of Engineers, the fact is, has not identified one single home in the Delta that the pumps will protect from flooding.

The crisis brought about by flooding won't be stopped by the Yazoo pumps projects. In fact, during some floods, we know from the Corps own documents that the pumps would not even be turned on. So what we have here is a plan to build a multimillion dollar project that will only be used under certain specific conditions for the benefits of certain specific individuals.

The Yazoo pumps will also cause Delta residents more pesticide pollution. We have heard a lot about that tonight. We need to be very sensitive to the fact that pesticides are a significant problem facing Delta residents in this community. Some of them have shared with me their tragic experiences with losing loved ones to diseases that are linked and associated with pesticide exposure. Health studies have concluded that there is, indeed, an association between pesticide exposure here in the Delta and cancers, birth defects, and other severe health problems suffered by residents.

The Yazoo pumps also overlap with the dredging of the Big Sunflower River. It is absolutely outrageous that this project will be dredging up DDT contaminated poisons that are in the river bottom. Circulating them back into the water, contaminating the fish that will then be eaten by folks here in the Delta. Another effect of the Yazoo pumps is that by increasing agricultural uses for agribusinesses, we are talking about more spraying of pesticides, more use of pesticides, here in the Delta.

There is no doubt that the people who have the most to lose with the Yazoo pumps are the mostly poor and African American residents in the Delta who eat fish and rely on fish from the local waters, cannot afford to buy bottled water, and live in pesticide drift that comes from aerial spraying. Although the EPA has taken steps to work with communities of color and poor people to resolve these kinds of harms that come from major projects, the Corps has demonstrated through its EIS that it is light years away from ensuring poor people and people of color here in the Delta are not disproportionately burdened with harmful projects like the Yazoo pumps.

Thank you.

COL CREAR: Thank you, ma'am. Elbert Redmon.

MR. ELBERT REDMON: My name is Elbert Redmon. I live in Issaquena County. I have been there for quite a few years. I was there in 1983 and 1984, and I have seen water. We had to get out each time. We did not have anywhere to go so we went north of here to Washington County. There was a fellow that let us stay in a house up there.

I have heard tonight that the people from the north are talking against it, but I am not against it because I live in Issaquena County. East and west, the water is from there on to Vicksburg. It is not just races, black. The whites get the same thing that I get, water.

The Government will sponsor it. I have heard the talk tonight that when the Government is sponsoring the water from over the river, they are talking about the chemicals and all, it is not about chemicals. It has been here for years. Water has been running and fish have been dying. It wouldn't be no fish dead if it were that much chemicals.

What I am concerned about is a pump. The farmers cannot plant their wheat out there and get a crop off of it because the government has got sewage pipes that are draining from over the Mississippi over on the farmers. But they are going to say that we built our house down low. I need to come up to 101. The Government ought to be responsible for it. They ought to be responsible for those pumps.

As far as I am concerned, it has been said that the engineers have not learned anything in 50 years, I am saying they have not learned anything in 60 years because there ought to be a change in it.

It is just bad. I have taken a tractor with the belt off and driven out of there taking my children to the school bus for miles. The northern people cannot talk for the south because they don't live here. They don't know what is going on.

I have seen Mr. Bill Moore down here had catfish running over, I mean, coming from the backwater going back over there. They were going from one side to the other side. The farmers are catching hell just like anything else, the chemicals killing the fish. We need something.

It might not solve all our problems, but it sure would help. It sure would help. Everybody that has been talking doesn't know what we are living in. If they came down there and turned and looked south at the levee there and saw all those field pipes there for the water coming from under the levee, seepage water. To get the pressure from over there, they are going to put it over here on us. My God, common sense ought to tell somebody something. Somebody ought to wake up. They have been sleeping too long.

That is all I want to say. We need some pumps. I am not against, I am for it.

COL CREAR: Thank you, sir. Dorothy Chocolate.

MS. DOROTHY CHOCOLATE: (Already left.)

COL CREAR: Dorsey Johnson, South Delta School District.

MR. DORSEY JOHNSON: Good evening. My name is Dorsey Johnson, and I am Trustee of the South Delta School District.

I have heard the term or words thrown around several times, and that is, common sense. I would like to interject what I consider to be common sense about what we are talking about.

When we considered the first computer that was made, that stage up there could not hold it. Now, we have laptops. When we considered the first automobile that was made, it only carried one person. Now, we have 15 passenger vans. What am I saying? I am simply saying that if the pumps do not do what they are supposed, the children and the families that are affected by the floodwaters, then the pumps are worth it.

I represent the South Delta School District. We have Sixteenth Section land where we have been given a responsibility to manage the farmland, hunting, and timber, and we lease that land in order to have money to educate our children. I am under oath by the State of Mississippi to provide an education for these children in the South Delta School District and to provide a secure place where they can learn. I don't believe we should allow an area where we have children to be flooded. I serve them and I represent them, and I think we should do something about it. We should use common sense here.

The only reason that we are using the laptop is that somebody decided they would modify the computer. They decided they could do it better. So therefore, if the pumps are not going to do what they are supposed to do in the first year, then the second year and the third year, let's make them better. Our children and our families are worth it.

Thank you.

COL CREAR: Believe it or not, those are all the cards that I have. So I will open the floor and see if there is anyone else here that would like to make a statement before we take a break. Yes, sir. I would ask that you identify yourself.

MR. STEVE PITTMAN: My name is Steve Pittman. I bought property up here in this county in 1968. I want to let everybody know that I have one house that would have been out of the floodwater had this program been in place in 1973.

You have got to be blind if you rode down Highway 61 and couldn't find a house that there was 3 feet of water in. It is not just right here. We are down on the far end, down at Valley Park. There are houses down there that water would have been out of with this pump project going on.

I don't see how anybody that owns land here would not support this. The EPA or whatever, they need to be doing their job on the chemicals and things like that. That is what they are here for. Your project, and I am for it, is to provide some type of flood protection for the people that live here that don't want to leave this county, these counties.

I just want everybody to know, there is one house. No one else has said anything about a house. I have one that had 30 inches of water was in it in 1973. It would have been dry had this project been in. I am for it.

COL CREAR: Do we have any more? First of all, let me thank you for your comments, your candid comments. We appreciate that. That is the purpose of the open forum here, to get informed comments, not only for us, but I think you have educated a lot of people around you, as well.

Again, the purpose of this session was to get comments from you, to get feedback. It was also to explain to you our project, let you see, give you the facts, and expose it to scrutiny that we knew we were going to get. We appreciate that. We will take that information and we will use it in making the final decision on what we are going to do. This process is a long way from being over. There will be additional opportunities to comment.

Just a few comments before we take a break. First of all, this project is a flood control project. The authority to do this project that the Corps has is flood control. I think we should not underestimate the knowledge of the people here in the Delta. I think they know that every house will not receive flood protection. I think they know what houses that will. There is a chart right here that we will show you the houses that will receive protection. I think they also know that this project will not do all things for all people. I also think they know, and the rest of you know this is the best chance for flood control and environmental protection that can actually get done.

Again, we welcome your comments.

Let's take a 10-minute break. Let's come back, and I will convene my panel for questions and answers.

Break 10:32 p.m.

Reconvened 10:45 p.m.

COL CREAR: I appreciate your taking time out of your busy schedules. I realize it is getting late, and you are still here. That lets me know that people are really concerned.

So now I would like to introduce my panel. Then, if you have a question, raise your hand, I will recognize you, come to the microphone, let us know who you are, state your question, and we will make sure you get an answer.

I have already introduced several members on the panel, Kent Parrish, Project Manager; Terry Smith, another Project Manager; Jim Wanamaker, Mississippi Levee Board. Now, the new people. We have Stoney Burke, Project Management Economist for this

project; Wendell King, Project Management Biologist for this project; Robert Wood, Real Estate Division Appraiser for this project; and Larry Banks, Engineering Division, Chief, Hydraulics Branch.

Please raise your hand if you have a question. We will take the first one. Yes, ma'am. Please come forward and state your name.

MS. WILLIE MAE MOORE: My name is Willie Mae Moore. I have a couple of questions I would like to have answered. One is, if the pumps are not going to work, why are they fighting it?

COL CREAR: Ma'am, that is a good question.

MS. MOORE: The next question I have is, they keep complaining about pesticides. Well, if water is standing and pesticide is standing in the water, isn't that contaminating the earth and everything where it is standing?

COL CREAR: I will let my biologist answer that question for you.

MR. LARRY BANKS: I think I can answer that. Let's answer the first question first. The pumps will work. The pumps will take anywhere from 4 to 5 feet of water off of the lower Delta. They will work. They will pump water. They will resolve many flood problems for the lower Delta.

If you got flooded, and your house has been flooded knee deep before in a flood, you wouldn't have any water on it if the pumps were in. If you were flooded waist deep, you probably won't have any water for that particular event, if the pumps were in. So the pumps will work. If you had water 10 feet deep in your house, your house is still going to get flooded. So that is about the easiest way I know to explain it. For most of the flood events we have had in the last 30 years in the Delta, the pumps would have taken water off many, many homes. They are going to work, and they are going to pump the water.

The question regarding the pesticides and DDT was mentioned more than anything else. DDT has been banned for about 25 to 27 years. We are still picking up DDT in the Delta. You can go out and test many of the fields that were in cotton back in the

1950's, 1960's, and 1970's, during that period of time, and you can still detect DDT. You can get a sample of the mud in the bottom of the rivers, and you can detect DDT.

DDT is a chemical that binds very, very tightly to the clay particles in that soil. It has been there 25 years. It binds to the soil, and it stays bound. You can take a sample, put it in a blender, blend it up all day long, and you cannot make it turn loose of that soil. That is the reason that it is not going to hurt, not one bit, if we dredge the Sunflower River out. That has been brought several times tonight. It is not going to contaminate the Delta with DDT.

In fact, we believe that the best way to get the DDT out of the streams is to dredge it out and place it in an upland confined disposal area and seal it up there on the land. Put erosion control features in those disposal areas such that it doesn't wash back into the stream. That is the best way to clean up the streams in the Delta. We are collecting data right now on some of the work that we have done on the Steele Bayou project that we believe is going to prove that point.

So I hope that kind of addressed the questions that you had. The pumps will work. They will take water off of you. They will give you flood control, and the pesticide problem is not going to be made any worse in any fashion by the construction of this pumping plant project.

MS. MOORE: Thank you, sir.

COL CREAR: Yes, sir.

MR. CAMERON: My name is Tom Cameron. I want to expand a little bit on what she was saying about this business about pesticides. We have heard all night that the pumps are going to increase pesticides, and it is not. It is already there and bound in the dirt.

In 1973, I had a house at Eagle Lake, and after that water finally went down after about 3 or 4 months of just standing there, it was over a foot of silt in that house. Is it not true that without these pumps, under the current flooding conditions, when it floods, everything from all over the Delta drains to the lower Delta. It just sits in the houses, it drops the silt, and

it drops the pesticides in the house because it is with the silt. So isn't it true that the pumping plant would help prevent the silt from coming in the houses and help keep pesticide out of the houses? Wouldn't it be a better health situation to keep that out?

MR. BANKS: Yes, that is exactly the case. In the 1973 flood, this project would have protected the homes around the Eagle Lake area. The water would have gotten up to 95.9. We can hold a little higher than that out at the Muddy Bayou structure, and we have been able to protect the entire community of Eagle Lake.

I happened to have worked up there in the field during the flooding in 1973 at Eagle Lake, and it was a bad situation. I believe over 100 homes flooded all at one time when the dam broke up there. There was a lot of silt deposited in many of the homes. During 1973, I saw it in several homes. I am sure that if we would have taken samples of the silt in those homes, we would have detected DDT in those silt samples.

HONORABLE CAMERON: Okay, thank you. I thought that health did play a part in this project, and that it would help the health.

MR. BANKS: Yes, sir.

COL CREAR: That is another issue that kept coming up, the health issues. I thank you for bringing that out. Any more questions?

MS. RUBY JOHNSON: My name is Ruby Johnson. What we have learned here tonight, I believe, is that we have to do a better job of educating the people on these different entities. They are being educated well. If you noticed, the speeches that were said, at least 10 of them all said the same thing. Those people are not engineers or biologists any more than I am. They are lawyers and lay people that live in the community like I am. That means they have been talked with and educated. You don't get up repeating the same speech that the lawyers are speaking and the head of the environmental people were speaking. You just don't do that. You don't have that knowledge.

So we have to do a better job of educating the people in our own community, Sharkey and Issaquena Counties, so that they will be able to get up and speak to those things, also. The people that

were talking here tonight, they are being paid with our government tax dollars. They work everyday. They are used to writing speeches. That is their job, talking to people and convincing them of things. We don't have that expertise. So some how we have got to educate our people to do that and understand that.

COL CREAR: I'll just comment on that. I agree with you that an informed public is the best public. It is our function to explain to you in layman terms about this project. But I also will tell you that people speaking from the heart, people speaking what they feel and what they have experienced comes over. Whereas, people who have been given information to bring out without any feelings but just to get an agenda through to make that statement with no attachment to it and then just leave, drop it in the air and leave, versus someone that may not be educated and may not know all the technical data that we are talking about but have a desire, have the experience, and know there is a need, and they come to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and say, help us to do all that technical information, help us to do all the things you do. That is our job. The American public asked to look at flood measures for the Yazoo Backwater flooding. We hear it loud and clear. We hear the other voices as well.

As most of you know, we and members of your community worked hard to try to get them in and talk to them, to have some dialog. Let's not just take a cold statement presented in a public forum and newspaper and just leave it and go look at your calendar and look at your travel orders and head to the next targeted area. So common sense goes a long way. It does not take a rocket scientist to figure out what is going on here.

I don't know, looking out here, who is here now that we are going to actually have an interface, to ask questions, and get answers. That is to get a better understanding of where we are coming from. If I look out there, I cannot tell you who is here. But in most cases, I can tell you who is not here. So that speaks volumes.

I hear you, Ms. Johnson. We will do as much as we can to help educate the public. But I would tell you, people like Jim Wanamaker helps to educate me. People like Ms. Ruby Johnson help to educate me. I have been on the ground up here with the people. I have been studying this thing for myself personally, so I am getting a great education. Of course, I have some of

the best minds in the Corps and in the world. But sometimes my best education just comes from going out on the ground, talking with, and looking at what is going on. But I hear you.

Any more questions?

MR. STEVE PITTMAN: COL Crear, I have a question for Larry. I would like to elaborate a little more on the modified operation of the low flows in the 70- to 73-foot elevation and reintroducing the water back into that. I don't really understand what that process is. I would like to know more about it.

MR. BANKS: What this project, the recommended plan, Plan 5, calls for is an operation of Steele Bayou structure very much like what we are operating today. Today, we are holding a 70-foot pool in Steele Bayou. The water on the riverside is down to about 52 feet. So today, we have about 18 feet of water that is held in the lower Delta by the Steele Bayou structure. That water goes for miles and miles. Where that plays out, we have low-water weirs that are holding more water in the main channels of Steele Bayou. This is providing for fisheries habitat in the basin. The recommended Plan 5 will simply raise that elevation 70 to elevation 73. There will be no other changes in the structure operation.

One fellow, Mr. Nichols, that came up to the map talked about reintroducing water. He was a little confused. We are not going to use the pump to reintroduce any water over into the landside area. The pumps will operate after the water ponds all the way up to elevation 87. That is approximately equivalent to a 39-foot stage on the Vicksburg gage. So we are talking about a pretty good flood on the ground before we ever turn the pumps on. That is part of the compromise that has been made in working out a combination structural and nonstructural plan for this area, whereby we provide flood protection to the lands below 87 through the offering of the conservation easements on croplands and structural flood control by turning the pumps on when the water gets above 87. So the Steele Bayou operation is going to be exactly the same except the lower ponding elevation will be held to 73 instead of 70.

COL CREAR: The point that he is making is that we are not going to drain the Delta because we do have a responsibility to the environment. As he said before, if we looked strictly at flood control, sure we could have a project that would just drain it. But we really can't do that. We really do have to worry about ecosystem restoration.

So, again, we came up with a compromise. The compromise was, we will not turn the pump on until elevation 87. So that means some people are going to get flooded. He has already told you pretty eloquently, if you had flooding at the 10-foot level, you are still going to get flooding. If you had flooding at the waist-high level, you won't get flooded. Those are facts. There is nothing we are trying to hide. It is not strictly flood control, but on the other hand, it is not strictly environmental restoration. That is why we call it a combination plan. You get both flood control benefits as well as benefits to the environment.

Yes, sir.

MR. CLIFTON PORTER: Colonel, I just want to make the point that the compromise, Larry, was a reluctant compromise on the local interests' part. It was not something we were jumping up and down to do. We really wanted to pump the water down to 80 feet.

I did not have time to finish my statement a while ago, but the compromise that we agreed to which is basically this plan was a real hard sell for us in this area. We feel like we have given all we can give, but it was not reciprocal on the environmental community's part. We want to make that clear. This is not something that we were jumping up and down to agree to because we feel like we gave all we could give to try to have a compromise plan.

COL CREAR: We appreciate that because we could be extreme or you could be extreme, as well. You are willing to give up something to get something, hopefully, for the greater good of all.

Yes, sir.

MR. CLYDE NICHOLS: I am sorry. I looked at the board, and I misunderstood what someone had told me about the pumps. I thought that they could pump water back out of the river into the sump area to maintain the water level. Are they so designed that they could be reversed and pump the water back?

MR. BANKS: No, sir. We will not design them such that they would pump water backward. However, the plan would be to hold a little higher water during low-water periods of time and, also, not turn the pump on until we had significant accumulation up to elevation 87. We are not creating any additional flooding up to elevation 87, we are just not turning the pumps on. In other words, if the water is going to get up to 86 during a flood year, it will just get up to 86, and we won't turn the pump on. The flooding is not going to be any worse below 87, it just won't be any better. But we will not reverse the pumps. The plan, as it is today, does not call for any pumping of water back the other way.

COL CREAR: Yes, sir. Sir, please go to the microphone.

MR. DORSEY JOHNSON: My question has to do with the compromise that I hear you talking about. Those people who will be affected during the time that the pumps are off and the water level is going to reach 87 feet, do these people know that they are going to be affected? If so, is anything being done in terms in helping them to adjust or give them some alternative as to what they need to do before the flooding starts?

MR. KENT PARRISH: Mr. Wanamaker has contacted a lot of those landowners. The people that live above 87 will get benefits from the pump. The people that have land below 87, if it is openland, cropland, we will offer to buy an easement from them, strictly from willing sellers, and convert that land to trees. So, it is something in there for everybody. No, they will not be any worse off down below 87 with this project, they just won't get anything as far as the pumping capacity, but we will be offering them a conservation on their land and plant it back to trees for them.

MR. BANKS: Also, there is no one that lives, there are no homes down in that 87 range. All the homes are above that level, so it is not affecting any homes.

COL CREAR: Yes, sir.

MR. LARRY WILLIAMS: My name is Larry Williams. I want to ask a question about this list you have. I don't know what that consensus is about. The first group of people on this sheet, are they the ones for it and the next group the ones against it?

MR. WANAMAKER: Okay, is that on the white sheet?

MR. WILLIAMS: Yes, sir.

MR. WANAMAKER: Okay, that is a consensus group, and I will tell you that the folks on the bottom came to the first meeting and did not come back. The other people in the group came to the meetings, participated, but all of those people are not for this project.

The EPA, all along, has advocated a nonstructural alternative, solely a nonstructural alternative, and they continue to do so. The FWS, you heard Charlie Baxter tonight, they participated in this process. There are still some things that they feel like they are opposed to with the recommended plan, but they did continue to meet. They do see the benefits to managing water. There are some other issues within FWS that are causing them problems, I think. I think you heard Mr. Baxter express them tonight.

Some of the other participants in the program were, I call, neutral. Ducks Unlimited did not take a position on the project. Although there was never a vote taken, most of the other participants felt like there was middle ground that could be achieved, and I am hopeful. I cannot speak for those groups, but we feel like a majority of those other groups would support the recommended plan.

MR. WILLIAMS: Okay, part b to my question. Those people that don't want the pumps, do they have a say so? It seems like to me that we are the ones that need the pumps. If we are the ones that want the pumps, how can they say we cannot have the pumps based on something that sounds to me like they are mixing apples and oranges. What I heard you say, it is two different things. You are dealing with the water, and they are worried about the

DDT. If I am wrong, correct me because I have been hearing all night about how you are going to dig up the DDT and all that stuff. From the first meeting I went to, all you want to do is help get the floodwater off us.

MR. WANAMAKER: That is the goal of the project.

COL CREAR: What they are doing tonight is, we have two projects. Well, we have several projects in this area. What we are here tonight to talk about, of course, was the Yazoo Backwater Pump Project. As you said, several folks had the same statement that linked the Big Sunflower Maintenance Dredging Project with this project. They are two separate projects. One is not connected to the other, but people will try to lead others and you to believe that they are.

MR. CHARLES TINDALL: COL Crear, I am Charlie Tindall with the Levee Board. You mentioned a moment ago that this was a public information meeting and that they had a panel here that was able to answer questions. You said you were not able to look out and see whether people who were opposed to the project had stayed to ask any question or get any additional information. Well, for the record, I think it is important that the decision maker have that type of information. I kind of kept a list as we were going through of some of the people who has questions about this project or made objections to it. If I look around the room, I think I will be correct when I finish this list. I don't see that any of them were interested in staying to ask questions or get the answers to some of the questions that they raised.

Specifically, I don't see Mrs. Esther Boykin with Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund here still. I don't see Mr. Don McKenzie with the Wildlife Management Institute here. I don't see Mr. T. Logan Russell with the Delta Land Trust who was concerned about economics here. I don't see Ms. Patricia Williams who was concerned about pesticides here. I don't see Mr. Norman Johns who was the water scientist who had questions about hydrology who could had asked questions here from the NWF. I don't see Ms. Patricia Ware who was concerned about pesticides. I don't see Ms. Margaret Hollins who had the same concern. I don't see Mr. Louie Miller from the Sierra Club here. I don't see Ms. Cynthia Sarthou from the Gulf Restoration Network here. I don't see Mr. Richard Biles who was concerned about the

Sunflower River running backwards somehow here. I don't see Ms. Latoya Davis here. I don't see Ms. Jaribu Hill who was concerned about workers and pesticides here. I don't see Ms. Susan Rieff with the NWF here. I don't see Ms. Nathalie Walker from Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund here.

UNIDENTIFIED: Thank goodness.

MR. TINDALL: I don't see Mr. John Prewitt from the NWF here. I don't see Ms. Monique Harden from the Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund here.

I think that the decision maker should have this information. I put it in the record here as a matter of determining whether the public information was available to them and they didn't take advantage of it.

COL CREAR: I appreciate that. Please let us know what is on your mind. Anybody else? I know it has been a long day, but this is what we are here for. If you have a question, please ask it.

MR. ELBERT REDMON: My name is Elbert Redmon. I heard a question answered a while ago, but it was not completely finished the way I heard it. Also, this gentleman right here took some of it from me, but I heard you say that in order to clean the DDT up, you have to dredge the streams and all? But what are we going to do about that which is not in a stream? What landfill is going to hold all that top soil?

MR. BANKS: Okay, what I said is that on the Sunflower maintenance project, we will be dredging sediments out of the bottom of the river that have accumulated over a period of time. Those sediments are what has restricted the channel capacity such that flooding up the Sunflower is occurring. So we are trying to restore the channel capacity that existed on the Sunflower back in the 1960's timeframe when it was originally cleaned out.

In order to dredge that out, we take those materials out and put them in a confined area. We take a field out there, a soybean field, build a dike around it, and pump that material into that dike. It sits there and it settles. Then, we construct structures that control erosion off of that land. That is probably the best way to clean up DDT that is in the streams.

No one else seems to be addressing the DDT problem. We are addressing it because it is part of our problem in resolving the flood control issue. We are going to do our best to clean as much of it as we can through the flood control authorities that we have.

MR. REDMON: That sounds good. One more question I want to ask you. If you are going to address the flooding control, then why don't somebody send a bill or call the President and tell him he is sending water from over Mississippi River back over here where there is not a river? I want to hear that answer.

MR. BANKS: Okay, I think what you are hinting at is that the reason that we are here tonight is that we have a national flood control problem here in the Mississippi Delta. Kent's speech talked about the fact that we drain 41 percent of this country right by us here in the Mississippi Delta. Years ago, there were decisions made to protect the whole Lower Mississippi Valley, and one of the ways that was done is that levees were built on the other side of the river. It made things worse here in the Delta. Congress, through the laws it passed, decided that the Delta deserved a levee system and the Yazoo Backwater Project is in mitigation for that, as part of the overall comprehensive plan. Because it is the Nation's problem. That is the reason that there is no cost sharing on this project. Unless something gets changed, I think what you are talking about has been taken care of. The matter now is just continuing on and finding an acceptable solution and implementing it.

MR. REDMON: One more and I will sit down.

COL CREAR: Go right ahead.

MR. REDMON: Do you feel like we get DDT from the soil coming underneath the levee over here where many people have raised soybeans in one place for years and have never raised cotton? Do you think it may drift over on some farmers?

MR. BANKS: There is not much movement of DDT in the Delta. It comes through the washing of the clay part of the soil particles off the land. The DDT is attached to the clay-sized sediment. I don't think there is much movement except when you get rains and you have erosion that is occurring and washing the materials into the streams.

There can be some movement from a cotton field that is a higher elevation on into a soybean field that may be at a little bit lower elevation. On a bean field that maybe has never had any cotton on it, you may detect small quantities but not very much in soybean fields. Most of it is in the cotton fields from the tests that we have conducted.

MR. DOUG KAMIEN: Let me make one more point. DDT does not mix with water. DDT does not like water. So like Larry says, the DDT adheres to the clay particles. It does not mix with water. So when we do our dredging and we stir up the turbidity, we have done testing on it. Even when you stir up all that clay particles with DDT attached to, there is no DDT in the water. The only reason that DDT is in the fish is because the fish eat those little clay particles and maybe some algae or some little microbe that they like to eat. That is how DDT gets into the fish, when they eat the sediment. It does not get in the fish from the water.

To go back to what Larry said, when we dredge those clay particles and that sediment out of the Big Sunflower and put it on land, that is a good thing. The fish can't get at it and the water stays clean the way it is. DDT and water do not mix.

Thank you.

COL CREAR: Yes, ma'am.

MS. RUBY JOHNSON: My name is Ruby Johnson.

What we have happen to us tonight is a group of people came in and told us what will happen, and they don't really know what will happen. They don't know the answer to what he just said, that DDT doesn't mix with water. If they had, they would not have come in with all these 10 or 11 speeches talking about the harm it would do.

We have had a group of people to come in here to try to stop us from getting better flood protection. Why? I don't know. They didn't stay to get the answers to the questions. So that is saying a lot to me. They just came and tried to change people's minds about the protection that we need here, and now they are gone.

If we are going to have another meeting, maybe we should have the question-and-answer session first. Because they have done their thing and, hopefully, not damage us, and they are gone. The people are gone. That is where we are right now. So we have to put our heads together on how to deal with that.

COL CREAR: Yes.

MR. OSCAR CLARK: Oscar Clark.

What are the specific legal walls that are having to be overcome in fighting groups such as the opponents of this? Do you understand that question?

COL CREAR: Let me take a stab at it. This is not the first time that we have had environmental groups disagree with us on our EIS.

The Mississippi River Levees project itself, when the Corps did the Supplemental EIS, they considered it inadequate. As a matter of fact, they considered it so inadequate that they decided to take us to court. The Corps won the ruling that we were taking the proper measures. So they decided they were not satisfied with that and they took us to the Appeals Court. We got a ruling back from the Appeals Court. Again, the Corps won that one, too.

So I will just say this. We are committed to committing all of our resources that are necessary to provide flood protection in the Yazoo Backwater Area and maintaining the environment.

MR. CLARK: How many appeals, how long can they do this? I know it has been going on for 60 years now. We are so close now, how much longer?

COL CREAR: I didn't mean to confuse you on that. At this point now, we are in the part of our process where we are getting comments from you so we are driving forward. We will take the information. We will use what we can, as long as it is within our guidelines that we have. Then we will take it to the next level.

The ultimate decision maker on this project will be your elected representatives in Congress. So you are very powerful people because they represent you and your needs.

MR. CLARK: All right.

COL CREAR: You have to come down, identify yourself, and speak into the microphone because everything that is being said here tonight is being recorded and will be part of the official record.

MR. WILLIE JOINER: My name is Willie Joiner. I was wondering, how well will your pumps help the residents that are in the Valley Park area?

MR. BANKS: The pumps will take about 4 feet of water off of that area during major flood periods. If you have the 1973 flood, were you there in 1973?

MR. JOINER: No, not really, but I remember 1973.

MR. BANKS: You remember 1973? Okay, it would have lowered the water in 1973 about 4 feet. You could take about 4 feet of water off, which is about the water level that we had here a few years back. That is what it would bring it down to. That is a level which was not near as bad as what 1973 was. So it would do you a lot of good in that area.

MR. JOINER: Okay, you say the pumps will only help the people that are at elevation above 87?

MR. BANKS: That is when the pumps will be cut on.

MR. JOINER: Oh, okay.

MR. BANKS: I don't think there is anybody that lives below 87 in the Delta. There are none that I know of. Most of the people that live in the lower elevations--we give out river forecasts in my office--many of them call me. I know many of them by name, and I have never talked with anyone that calls when the river is at that level. All the maps and data that we have don't show anybody living down that low.

One thing I would like to clear up, too, that was said tonight, just for the record--it was stated that there are flood events when the pumps won't do any good and the 1991 flood was used as an example. The level of the 1991 flood at Steele Bayou was at 91.4. That is a stage that we start to get into some flooding

in the lower Delta. At 91.4, there are not a lot of houses flooded. The Steele Bayou gates were open during that flood event, and we passed a lot more water out Steele Bayou. However, in 1991, earlier that year, that was the May flood event. In January of that year, the water would have gotten up to the 93 range and the pumps would have done some good, earlier that year, by pumping about 3 to 4 feet of water off. That was during a period when the river was higher. So I just wanted to clear that up for the records.

MR. JOINER: All right, thank you.

COL CREAR: Any more questions or comments?

MR. CLIFTON PORTER: Let me just ask you this question. I know the answer to it, but let me ask you just for the record. I heard mentioned several times tonight that this pump plan was going to increase agricultural land in the Delta. If you are going to reforest 62,500 acres, how would you increase agricultural acreage?

MR. STONEY BURKE: I can answer that one real quickly. There will not be any increase in agricultural lands. There will be a reduction of 62,500 acres of agricultural lands.

COL CREAR: Okay, I think that is it. We will hold the public meeting record open until December 11, 2000. If you have any additional statements that you want to make, you can send those to us. You have our telephone numbers, e-mail address, and mailing address. So with that, I adjourn this meeting. Thank you.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 p.m.

LIST OF EXHIBITS

- No. 1 - Notice of Public Meeting
- No. 2 - Mailing List
- No. 3 - Kent Parrish's presentation
- No. 4 - Corps of Engineers handout
- No. 5 - Mississippi Levee Board handout