

Councilmember-at-Large Clarkson to Speak  
In Support of Wetlands Restoration at MRGO Rally  
In Lower Ninth Ward this Afternoon

News Release

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Contact:  
Jacquelyn Cole  
Office of  
Councilmember-at-Large  
Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson  
Ph: 504-658-1072  
Cell: 504-577-3600  
[jicole@cityofno.com](mailto:jicole@cityofno.com)

New Orleans  
City Council

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New Orleans, LA - June 1, 2009 - Councilmember-at-Large Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson will join community leaders in the Lower Ninth Ward today in calling for the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers to restore the wetlands surrounding the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MRGO).

The MRGO Rally will take place **today at 12 p.m.** at the **Bayou Bienvenue Cypress Triangle Platform** at the intersection of Caffin Ave. and Florida Ave. in the Lower Ninth Ward (click [here](#) for a map).

Completed in 1965, MRGO is a 76-mile, man-made channel connecting New Orleans to the Gulf of Mexico. Although the channel provides a navigational shortcut, it has also allowed saltwater to intrude upon surrounding wetlands, which thrive on freshwater. Over time, this process has led to the destruction of tens of thousands of acres of wetlands.

"We must restore those wetlands," said Councilmember Clarkson. "This is a vital component of ensuring New Orleans is a viable, sustainable place to live."

She continued, "Levees, vital as they are, are not enough. We need to restore the coastal wetlands that have for so long helped our

region absorb the impact of major hurricanes."

MRGO is under congressional mandate to be closed, and the Corps began constructing the closure earlier this year. The Corps must also devise projects to restore the surrounding wetlands.

"We must join together as a regional community and ask the Corps to do everything within its power to quickly implement projects that will restore the natural hurricane barriers we so desperately need," Clarkson said.

Possibilities for wetland restoration surrounding MRGO include land diversions that would reintroduce freshwater and marsh-building sediment into the wetlands, marsh creation, and barrier island building.

## **New Orleans City Council**

The New Orleans City Council is the legislative branch of New Orleans city government. The Council considers and enacts all local laws that govern the City of New Orleans. The Council also approves the operating and capital budgets for the City, as recommended by the mayor, and continually monitors revenues and expenditures for local government operations. The City Council is also the regulatory body for public utilities. It also reviews and has final say on many land use and zoning matters, as well as considers major economic development projects for the City. As a Board of Review for Orleans Parish, the Council examines appeals of property tax assessments for real estate taxes, and certifies tax rolls to the Louisiana Tax Commission. Other responsibilities of the Council include overseeing the operation of the public access television in Orleans Parish.

The City Council is comprised of five districts and two councilmembers-at-large. Council President and Councilmember-at-Large Arnie Fielkow; Council Vice President and Councilmember-at-Large Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson; District "A" Councilmember Shelley Midura; District "B" Councilmember Stacy S. Head; District "C" Councilmember James Carter; District "D" Councilmember Cynthia Hedge-Morrell; and District "E" Councilmember Cynthia Willard-Lewis.