

Public Forum Pollution in Louisiana In the Wake of Katrina



Friday, Feb. 10, 2006
7:00 – 9:30 pm
Mount Carmel Baptist Church
1614 Pauline @ N. Claiborne

Before Katrina, thousands of pounds of toxic chemicals were stored in fuel tanks, warehouses, industrial centers, gasoline stations, dry cleaners, auto-repair businesses, in the garage and under the kitchen sink. When hit by floodwaters and hurricane

winds, many of these chemicals floated out of their storage locations and into neighborhoods. These toxic spills will create long-term health risks unless the soil and water are cleaned up.

This forum will share the results of pre and post Katrina environmental testing, look at the health risks and what you can do to clean up your own home and community. A more in-depth workshop will be offered on Feb 11-12 to teach how to use nature's organic processes to remove toxins from the soil so that they do not move into dust or food. All New Orleans neighborhoods, schools, and public spaces must be safe for our most vulnerable populations: children playing in their yards and schools, families choosing to grow their own food, and the elderly whose health may be compromised.

Presenters

Monique Harden is an attorney in New Orleans and co-director of Advocates for Environmental Human Rights, a public interest law firm that provides a full range of legal advocacy services to support communities in achieving their fundamental human right to a clean and healthy environment. She has represented communities in the South, achieving important environmental justice victories, and has impacted national environmental policies.

Johanna Congleton is the public health associate for Physicians for Social Responsibility, a non-profit organization dedicated to preventing environmental health threats. She has a Master's Degree in Public Health from Tulane University and has been on the front lines of protecting New Orleans residents' health post-Katrina.

Reverend Lois Dejean is Chair of the Gert Town Revival Initiative, and is a community activist working to clean up toxic neighborhoods from the Thompson Hayward Chemical Company site.

Jeffrey Thomas is an environmental attorney with Simon Peragine Smith & Redfearn and a member of the "Bring New Orleans Back" Commission's Urban Planning Committee. Jeffrey drafted the Committee's Environmental Health Report which identifies current shortcomings in EPA and DEQ efforts related to soil contamination and pre-Katrina contaminated sites. The report sets out recommendations for better addressing this contamination, including bioremediation techniques.

Lauren Ross Ph.D is an environmental engineer and trainer with Alliance of Community Trainers. She has 30 years of experience in hazardous waste sampling, environmental data analysis and remediation. She has been collecting environmental samples in Coastal Louisiana and New Orleans for independent analysis since mid-September.

**Common
Ground
Relief**

Common Ground Collective, 1415 Franklin Ave. New Orleans. 504-913-5635



CLEANING OUR COMMUNITIES FROM THE GROUND UP

Sat. Feb. 11 - Sun. Feb. 12

Sun Done Garden, St. Denis @ Havana, Gentilly

PEOPLE NEED TO KNOW:

- What toxic chemicals are in our schools, yards, neighborhoods or gardens?
- How do we protect ourselves against these toxic chemicals?

BIOREMEDIATION means using natural and safe ways to clean up lead, spilled fuel, arsenic and pesticides in water and soil. This workshop will present methods that you can easily use at home to safely live, play, and grow vegetables in the city environment. Workshop participants are invited to join Common Ground to implement bioremediation methods to test and begin the cleanup of contaminated sites within New Orleans during the following week.

FREE BIOREMEDIATION TRAINING – KIDS WELCOME!

Saturday, Feb. 11, 10 am – 4 pm

Making Healthy Compost: Compost binds lead and pesticides and creates ideal conditions for growing healthy fruits and vegetables. Learn how to combine food scraps, leaves, and other natural materials to make compost.

Amending Soils: Nature will clean up most toxic chemicals if we provide the right conditions. We will learn how to create soil texture, drainage, aeration and fertilization ideal for natural healing.

Composting with Worms: Worms kill germs and create a disease-free and biologically rich fertilizer. This fertilizer is used to brew compost tea that breaks down toxins. Raising worms is easy with the hands-on experience provided in this workshop. Take home your own worm bin.

Brewing Compost Tea: We can give natural cleanup processes a boost by applying hungry micro-organisms to eat spilled fuel and pesticides. We will demonstrate equipment, provide recipes,

and offer hands-on experience in brewing compost tea. We will use a microscope to see our microscopic remediation allies.

Sunday, Feb 12, 1 pm - 4 pm

Raising Mushrooms to Break Down Toxins: Mushrooms and fungi are nature's starting line-up in the process of breaking down toxic chemicals. We will learn how to grow mushrooms to destroy toxins.

Plants to Remove Heavy Metals: Lead from old house paint is a significant health threat, particularly to children. We will learn which plants can remove lead from soil, how to grow them, and proper handling and disposal of the plants once their work is done.

Please pre-register for lunch and children's program. Transportation can be arranged.

Call 504-913-5635 to register and let us know if there is other support needed.

Directions to Sun Done Garden: From N. Claiborne, go north on St. Bernard Ave. Cross Broad St. and make a right onto Paris. Cross Gentilly, go under the 610 Freeway and then go four blocks to St. Denis. Turn right on St. Denis till it ends at Havana St. You'll see Whispering Winds and Sun Done Garden. We will be working in the Sun Done Garden.

Sponsored by Common Ground, www.commongroundrelief.org