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## **Aerators reducing N.O. water contamination**

VICKSBURG, Miss. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has begun to employ aerators – big water sprayers – to help to reduce the contamination of water being pumped out of the New Orleans area.

“The aerators are spraying water into the air, like a big sprinkler. This increases the dissolved oxygen levels. The oxygen, in turn, promotes the growth of aerobic bacteria, which will help to break down the organic material in the water,” Corps biologist Gib Owen said Monday.

Organic material includes trees, shrubs, grasses and animals.

“Aeration will also help to evaporate petroleum-product pollution, which floats on the surface,” Owen said.

The first aerator was installed Saturday on the 17<sup>th</sup> Street Canal near Lake Pontchartrain, on the lake side of the Hammond Highway bridge.

The number of aerators in operation was increased to six on Monday, two each at the mouths of the 17<sup>th</sup> Street, Orleans Avenue and London Avenue drainage canals. A total of 40 aerators will be installed. The equipment is mobile, thus capable of being re-deployed to other locations as needed.

Effectiveness of the aerators will be monitored by follow-up tests of water samples.

The aerators are powered by electric motors, run by on-shore generators. They are also tethered by anchoring cables. The equipment is similar to water-jet propulsion: Water is drawn into an intake by an impeller, but then forced out through a widely spaced nozzles which spray it 10 feet into the air.

