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NEWSPAPER ARTICLE "RESIDENTS WANT PROOF THAT TURKEY CREEK IS CLEAN"  
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## Residents want proof that Turkey Creek's clean

By PATRICK PETERSON  
THE SUN HERALD

**GULFPORT** — North Gulfport residents want proof that Turkey Creek is not polluted before state officials take it off a list of streams to be cleaned up.

"We are told it is clean, and we have nothing to indicate it has been cleaned," retired minister Calvin Jackson said Tuesday night at a North Gulfport meeting of concerned residents and environmental activists.

"It's our home," he said, "and we care deeply about it."

The state Department of Environmental Quality has proposed removing Turkey Creek from a list of impaired streams in the state. Water tests in 1993 and 2001 show the stream is not polluted with sewage bacteria, said Randy Reed of DEQ's surface water division.

A school and a subdivision were connected to central sewerage since the first tests, so later tests show cleaner water.

"The data shows we don't have an impairment," Reed said. "We just didn't find anything."

Like most Coast streams, the water in Turkey Creek contains high levels of bacteria from animal waste and malfunctioning septic tanks. The DEQ will perform more water tests in May.

"We are not seeing violations of the state water quality criteria," Reed said.

Turkey Creek flows through the wetlands of North Gulfport into Bernard Bayou. Many residents believe that if the DEQ declares Turkey Creek is not polluted, developers will be able to build shopping centers along Interstate 10, which could cause flooding in North Gulfport and Long Beach.

"It opens the doors for developers to come in and develop our wetlands," said Rose Johnson, state chairman of the Sierra Club.

Johnson, who was baptized in Turkey Creek, said that North Gulfport has open ditches and no sidewalks.

"We fear exposure to this polluted water," she said. "We deserve clean water."

Richard Marsh, Sierra Club co-chairman, said residents fear other chemicals from closed creosote plants and dioxin from the Seabee base could also have polluted the creek. The Seabee base is in the final stages of cleaning up dioxin spilled there in the 1970s. However, Marsh said North Gulfport residents want more thorough testing in Turkey Creek.

"We know the area is up for development," Marsh said. "Politics plays a role."

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Seabee construction electrician Dereck Wilson is greeted after arriving Tuesday morning in Gulfport.

# Welcome home

## 285 Gulfport Seabees return from deployment

By RENI WINTER  
THE SUN HERALD

**GULFPORT** — The last group of active-duty Seabees in Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 133 returned to Gulfport at dawn Tuesday to the sounds of a band playing and hundreds of people shouting "hooray."

Most of the 285 Seabees were returning from deployment to Guam and other areas in the Pacific. About 30 of them also spent time in Afghanistan, said Capt. Brian Kelm, commander of the Seabee Base in Gulfport.

"This is the main body of NMCB 133," Kelm said. "They did great, they're home safe, and it's good to have them back. And Monday, they start getting ready again for their next deployment."

Members of the Gulf Coast Chamber of Commerce, community leaders and Congressman Gene Taylor stood at the foot of the stairs to the civilian jet to shake the hands of disembarking Seabees and say a personal "welcome home."

Berinda Logan, executive vice president of the Coast Chamber, dressed for the occasion in red, white and blue stars and stripes.

"This is fabulous," Logan said, waving a small American flag in one hand and greeting Seabees with the other. "It gives me goose bumps to see the community come

together and welcome our everyday heroes."

John Walton, president of the Chamber, also there waving a flag.

"I was here in the rain last time," he said. "This is wonderful. Civic leaders can do for these people."

Tired and dusty, the men and women of NMCB 133 made their tearful reunion.

"Shoot it up," Storekeeper Manning said. "This is wonderful. We're with NMCB 133."

Manning's Class Core plane that arrived Tuesday. Manning and her children were in via Manning, J.

"It feels good to be home," good."

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Executive vice president of the  
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# Woman charged in jail

Police: She posed as inmate's wife, smuggled in gun

By REGGIE BEEHNER  
THE SUN HERALD

**POPLARVILLE** — A woman charged with pretending to be married to a jailed inmate and helping him escape could spend the rest of her life in jail, authorities said Tuesday.

Maria Terrisa Novak, 37, of Nicholson faces six felony charges, including aggravated assault on a police officer, armed robbery and aiding the escape of a felon. The escape Sunday left an armed felon on the loose and a jail guard nursing a bullet wound to his leg. For the most serious charge,

armed robbery, Novak could face life in prison, authorities said.

To obtain visiting privileges, authorities said, Novak claimed to be the wife of Fredrick Henry Suttles, 35, a Pica-yune resident who was being held on a charge of possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.

Novak and Suttles are in fact married, but not to each other, said Chief Deputy Aaron Russell.

Novak's husband is believed to be in a federal prison, and Suttles' wife was last reported to be living in Pearl River County, Russell said.

Novak is accused of smuggling a

gun into and using it during several escape attempts.

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