

The Board of Directors of The Whitney Institute, the non-profit entity that operates the museum on the site of the former Whitney Plantation in Wallace, Louisiana, opposes the planned construction of a grain terminal less than one mile from Whitney Plantation's grounds. It is our belief that the project as presented is unlawful, and should not be granted either a Coastal Use Permit or US Army Corps of Engineers permits.

As our country still struggles to reckon with its past, Whitney Plantation's mission to tell the story of slavery on one of the thousands of the sites where humans were held in bondage is more vital than ever. Whitney Plantation includes 22 historical structures, including its original slave cabins, 18th century Big House, and an original 1870s freedman's church. These structures, sixteen of which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places as the Whitney Plantation Historic District, are vitally important to teaching visitors and the public at large about the brutal institution of slavery. The surrounding sugar cane fields, cultivated since the 18th century, still contain unknown numbers of artifacts and ancestral burial grounds.

The buildings and memorials at Whitney Plantation offer visitors a rare opportunity to walk in the spaces where enslaved people lived and worked, and to reflect on their memories. The viewshed of the plantation – uninterrupted miles of sugarcane fields – show visitors in a visceral way the immense pain of sugar plantation labor. Whitney Plantation is one of very few plantations in the state where this original viewshed as yet remains undisturbed. The construction of the grain terminal would permanently change this and forever destroy this cultural landscape.

On August 29th, Whitney Plantation sustained a direct hit from Hurricane Ida. This storm caused extensive damage to every structure on the site. As we recover from the storm, visitation to our site is crucial to our operations. The increased odors, noise, and traffic caused by this planned development will likely discourage visitation, endangering the jobs of 24 staff members, many of whom are from the local community. Should this planned development take place, tons of particulate matter would be emitted in the immediate area of the museum every year.

The proposed grain elevator complex would extend across 248 acres and surround both the museum and the Wallace community with structures as tall as the Statue of Liberty. The operations would inundate a community already burdened with pollution from nearby chemical plant operations with grain dust and noxious odors, increasing the health risks to the community. The potential health impacts to both residents and visitors are serious. Exposure to grain dust is dangerous and the particles consist of fungi, bacteria, pesticides, metal fragments, dead insect body parts, and the feces from rodents and insects. The dust is associated with **lung damage, chronic cough, asthma, bronchitis, and farmer's lung disease**. Tiny particles from grain dust can get **stuck in lungs** and cause **serious respiratory issues**, including fibrosis. It can also irritate the eyes, nose, and throat and exacerbate conditions like asthma. These conditions are even more dangerous here in

“cancer alley”, where our residents are already overburdened with the releases of chemicals from over 150 nearby petro-chemical facilities.

It is believed that unmarked, and as yet unexplored, burial grounds for the enslaved community at Whitney lie within the area of the proposed development. The local descendant community, along with researchers and archaeologists are diligently working to identify, preserve and protect these sites. As the historical property of three separate plantations, including Whitney, the Greenfield grain terminal site could contain as many as three burial grounds that would be destroyed by the development. The site also likely contains civil war artifacts, possibly from African American Union troops, who were located in this area during the Civil War. These artifacts would be lost or destroyed should this development go forward. Greenfield, LLC, the developer of the project and local parish officials have denied the residents the opportunity to meet and discuss the impacts that this grain elevator would have in Wallace.

Please contact us at info@whitneyplantation.org for more information, to get involved or to make a donation to support the mission of the Whitney or our descendent community in Wallace.