



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Galveston District

News Release

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The Galveston District Army Corps of Engineers readied its assets and solidified its plans to assess the coastal areas in the District, including the Sabine Neches Waterway, in the aftermath of Hurricane Gustav. The District has assembled a number of hydrographic survey vessels to survey any waterways necessary after the hurricane makes landfall. The survey vessels use single beam survey equipment and side scan sonar to assess the federal waterways for shoaling and submerged hazards to navigation.

In the event Gustav makes landfall east of Sabine Pass, the District will use nine survey vessels to assess any damage to the Sabine Neches Waterway, according to Joe Hrametz, Navigation Branch chief in the District's Operations Division.

"Weather permitting, we plan to begin surveying on Tuesday," said Hrametz. "If that is not possible, then we'll begin on Wednesday.

"Working with our team members in the Gulf Coast Inland Waterways Joint Hurricane Team, we have identified the requirements," he said. "The team members have provided assets and personnel to assist the Corps in this effort."

The Gulf Coast Inland Waterways Joint Hurricane Team, composed of the Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Coast Guard, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the inland barge industry—represented by the Gulf Intracoastal Canal Association—works together towards the common goal of restoring inland maritime commerce on the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway and the lower Mississippi River during hurricanes. After the devastating hurricane seasons in 2004 and 2005, the agencies agreed to formally establish the working relationships and incorporate lessons learned, resulting in the formation of the team.

"Today, each has its roles and responsibilities as a member of the team," Hrametz said. "The Corps of Engineers assesses and verifies channel physical conditions relative to depth and obstructions. The Coast Guard makes the ultimate judgments on the opened/closed status and communicates this to the Corps of Engineers and industry. And the GICA serves as the barge industry representative for the Corps of Engineers and Coast Guard to assist them in fulfilling their respective roles relative to waterway management."



Brig. Gen. Kendall P. Cox, Southwestern Division commander, watches the radar on a survey vessel during a recent visit to the Galveston District. The survey vessel also took single beam readings as it moved out of Galveston Bay into the Houston Ship Channel.

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Additionally, the District is postured with a flexible survey plan in the event Hurricane Gustav or its remnants make any unexpected changes in course, according to the District commander, Colonel David C. Weston.

“One of our primary missions is to ensure that our waterways are open for navigation,” Weston said. “These efforts after Hurricane Gustav go to the heart of what the Corps of Engineers does for our local communities and the nation.

“The Corps prepares for our missions well before disasters occur,” he added, “so when disasters do strike, we are ready to respond quickly.”