

Repairing Critical Levees and Dikes on National Wildlife Refuges Damaged By 2005 Hurricanes



Levees and dikes are invaluable resource management tools on national wildlife refuges. In the coastal zone, they protect freshwater areas from saltwater intrusion. In freshwater wetland systems, they aid in raising or lowering water levels to promote early successional species growth preferred by wildlife. These valuable wetland areas must be carefully managed in the Gulf Coast Region as the terminus for migratory waterfowl in the Mississippi, Central, and Atlantic flyways. These levees and dikes support habitat for millions of migratory waterfowl in the winter, and other wetland-dependant species year around.

Devastation from hurricanes in 2005 took an enormous toll on the levee and dike infrastructure on national wildlife refuges in Louisiana and Florida. Repairs are necessary to this infrastructure to restore water management capabilities that provide important habitat.

National wildlife refuges also need to protect and repair levees and dikes for other reasons. In some cases, the Service is responsible for maintaining protection for local communities. For example, Bayou Sauvage NWR (Southeast Louisiana NWR Complex) is home to the Maxent Levee. This

levee system is both a freshwater impoundment and a storm protection levee. The Maxent Levee separates Bayou Sauvage NWR from east New Orleans. Bayou Sauvage NWR elevations are higher than east New Orleans and the levee serves as a secondary containment levee. During typical storms, the levee keeps storm water between it and New Orleans' outer hurricane protection levee. During Hurricane Katrina, when New Orleans flooded, the Maxent Levee and the pumps that support it aided in the removal of water from the New Orleans east area.

It is imperative for the Service to repair important levees and dikes on national wildlife refuges. These repairs protect and provide habitat for wildlife, and, in some cases, are critical to protect local communities.



All photos: USFWS

Sabine NWR, November 4, 2005

Allocations to Repair Levees and Dikes on National Wildlife Refuges:

	<i>Initial Emergency Supplemental December 2005</i>	<i>Additional Emergency Supplemental Request February 2006</i>	<i>Total Emergency Supplemental</i>
Southeast Louisiana NWR Complex			
Maxent Levee (Bayou Sauvage NWR)	\$ 4.23 M	\$ 7.76 M	\$ 12.49 M
Southwest Louisiana NWR Complex			
Lacassine Pool	\$ 700,000	\$ 2.03 M	\$ 2.73 M
Cameron Prairie Water Management		\$ 7.20 M	\$ 7.20 M
Sabine 1A/1B & Pool 3		\$15.20 M	\$ 15.20 M
St. Marks NWR (FL)			
Primary levees and dikes	\$ 2 M	\$ 2.3 M	\$ 4.3 M
Total			\$ 41.92 M