

# West Bank and Vicinity Mississippi River Levees Co-located Work Individual Environmental Report Supplement 33.a Dec. 12, 2011

| Location    | Belle Chasse Auditorium                          |
|-------------|--|
| Time        | Open House 6:00 p.m.                             |
|             | Presentation 6:30 p.m., followed by a discussion |
| Attendees   | Approx: 42                                       |
| Format      | Open House                                       |
|             | Presentation                                     |
|             | Discussion                                       |
| Handouts    | Mississippi River Co-located levee fact sheet    |
|             | Plaquemines Parish fact sheet                    |
|             | Approval Process Brochure                        |
|             | Nov 2011 Status map                              |
| Facilitator | Rene Poche                                       |

Hurricane & Storm Damage Risk Reduction System



**Rene Poche:** Good evening and thank you for coming out tonight. My name is Rene Poche and I will be facilitating tonight's meeting. Just a few things, there are several exits if you need to leave and the restroom are on this side and if you have a cell phone or electronic device, please put that on silent.



National Environmental Policy Act: NEPA

Required of all major federal actions

Analyze potential impacts to the human and natural environment and investigate reasonable alternatives

Public involvement is KEY!

Goal: more informed decision making through public involvement

Analysis documented in Individual Environmental Reports (IER)

Corps has made alternative arrangements to expedite project timelines

We talk about risk being a shared responsibility. We used to call our system the Hurricane Protection System and over time, we learned that reducing risks is what we really do here. We now have the Greater New Orleans Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System. So even after we've built this system that may include a levee, pump station, or other risk reduction features, you will have residual risks and this diagram shows that. There are opportunities to reduce risks as we go along through building codes, insurance and then there are levees and floodwalls. All these work together to reduce your risk, but you have to remember where we live in Southeastern Louisiana and that we are pretty much in a bowl here so we will always have residual risks. The point here is that you've got to have an evacuation plan and when the local elected officials tell you it's time to leave, please listen to them.

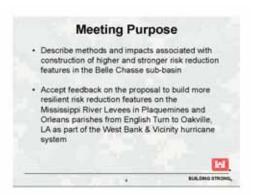
E contractors. These notes are intended to provide an overview of the ments, and are not intended to provide a complete or verbatim

account or the meeting. This account is not intended to be a legal document.

BUILDING STRONG,



You hear a lot about NEPA, the National Environmental Policy Act; it is required in all major federal actions. What we do is look at the impacts to human and the natural environment and investigate reasonable alternatives. That is where your involvement is so important and it helps us make a more informed decision. The analysis gets documented in the Individual Environmental Report and we have made alternative arrangements to expedite the project timelines.



So why are we here tonight? We are going to look at methods and impacts associated with higher and stronger risk reduction features in this Belle Chasse subbasin. We are also looking for your feedback on the proposals to build a more resilient reduction features on the Mississippi River Levees in Plaquemines and Orleans parishes from English Turn to Oakville as part of the West Bank & Vicinity hurricane system.

I'm now going to turn it over to Julie LeBlanc; she is the senior project manager for this project.



Julie LeBlanc: We have this as a handout in the back and they are on the table. We are going to use this map to orient you to the area and what project features we are proposing in this meeting. This map shows the Greater New Orleans area; there the Lake Pontchartrain & Vicinity Project on the East Bank and the West Bank & Vicinity Project. The area we are talking about tonight is here from Oakville, approximately river mile 70 up to river mile 85.5, almost to the Algiers Lock. If you have questions on other projects we can take those questions and get back with you on that.



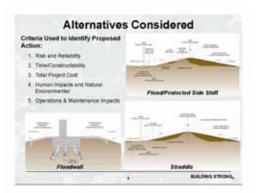
The Mississippi River Levees protect against a riverine flood event. In Southeast Louisiana however, in addition to protecting against a riverine event they are also an integral part of the hurricane system. So they reduce risk from both a riverine event like we saw the last couple of months and from hurricane surge.





The construction that has been going on in this reach from river mile 70 to 85.5 recently has been called Engineered Alternative Measures or EAMs. If you haven't seen the work, it is from Oakville up to river mile 85.5 almost to the Algiers Lock. It is being built to defend against a 1% storm surge event in the Greater New Orleans area on the West Bank & Vicinity Project. It meets the requirements for accreditation for the system that we plan on working on between now and 2012 and it is constructed primarily within the existing right-of-way, meaning from levee toe to levee toe. It

does have a steeper side slope. We substantially completed the work in December of this year although we do have a couple of areas that we are still working on by the ferry ramp as well as by the Chevron reach.



That's the work that we are doing now and because we had steeper side slopes on those levees in some reaches we are looking at coming in with what we call resilient features. The criteria we used to identify proposed action; we looked at risk and reliability of the system, we looked at the time and constructability aspects, the total project cost, the human and natural environmental impacts that were expected from the work as well as operations and maintenance impacts. Items we considered were: a flood-side shift, where you can see the light brown is the existing levee and we're looking at

putting a milder slope in with the crown of the levee being further to the river side and then coming down with a milder slope. We also looked at a straddle where we straddled the existing levee and just come in with a milder side slope. The light brown here is what we constructed during the EAMs phase and that's the work that is currently ongoing. We also looked at a flood wall in areas where we had either a commercial facility, such as the Chevron facility or houses or streets right up on the levee where if we had to acquire additional right-of-way, we were going to have to acquire homes and businesses so we are looking now at putting T-walls along the reaches.



So what we are proposing are our Resilient Features, this is a supplement that we are doing to the Individual Environmental Report #33.a, we are looking at shifting the earthen levee to the flood side, or protected side or a straddle and this map shows where we are proposing to either keep the levee where it is and go with deeper side slopes or we are going to shift it to the flood side or protected side where we can. We are [proposing that we



will] remove the top soil and create milder slopes and build new concrete floodwalls in certain reaches. From this map, you can see the green is where we are proposing a levee; the yellow, this reach here is going to be a T-wall, and we are looking at a levee along this reach. There is a small floodwall right here and then at Chevron we are looking at a T-wall and then a levee and a T-wall. We will go through each of these reaches in more detail later. As part of this effort, we are acquiring new right-of-way to construct the levee as well as access and staging for our construction. Our goal is to minimize the potential environmental and culture resources impacts to the environment and to the human infrastructure and then we have one stretch where we have finished our EAM work where we are looking at armoring the levees only. That means on the protected side we would put some kind of armoring to protect it from overtopping and provide additional resiliency to the levees. We are looking at armoring additional reaches, but from this area here, it's armoring only that we are proposing because the work that we did in this initial phase of construction, completes the project.



This is just a little more detail on the armoring that we are looking at. Armoring prevents erosion and scour on the protected side of the levees and floodwalls. Earthen levees throughout the hurricane system, that's part of the Lake Pontchartrain & Vicinity as well as the West Bank & Vicinity projects will be armored. Armoring can include placement of either grass, which is typically occurring on the levees so there are some areas of the levees where we don't need to do additional armoring other than growing the grass. Potentially we are looking at articulated concrete blocks and high performance turf

reinforcement mats. We haven't gone through the process yet, but in many locations it's going to be this high performance turf reinforcement mat or simple grass on the levees.



This is the first reach I want to talk about; it's this U.S. Coast Guard Facility to Oak Road. Here is the existing toe of the levee and the existing levee that we just constructed with steeper side slopes comes to this location and then comes down; we are looking at doing a flood side shift in most locations. This is the river side and this is where the houses are and we are looking at a much milder slope than the current side slope in many locations. It will be a one vertical on three and a half horizontal coming to a ten foot crown on the levee and then a one vertical and a five horizontal to include new

concrete slope paving on the river side. Each of these reaches will have a 15-foot buffer clearance for trees and vegetation and that is to allow for operations and maintenance of the levees. The elevation that we built this levee reach to, because we had some questions on the



back on this, we have 21-feet elevation. The resilient feature elevation is going to be 22 to 23.5 at the top of the crown.



This shows you a visual of what it currently looks like. This is F. Edward Hebert where it comes into Main Street. The existing right-of-way is right at the levee toe; this just shows you the existing levee and the river is on this side. We are looking up river at this point.



This shows the transition as the levee base will take up some more room in this location because we are taking those steep side slopes and making them much milder. We are again doing a shift to the flood side so we are not impacting Main Street. The other thing to note here, is there is a red line that says right-of-entry, so basically for us to access the levee we will need to have right-of-entry along Main Street and then other locations. This is not set in stone, but to give you an idea of what our impacts are going to be and what the levee is going to look like when we finish the work.

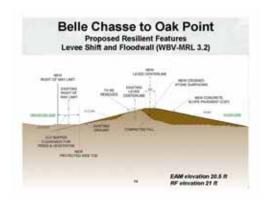


This next section is right below the 5.2 section from Oak Road to Belle Chasse. This is a graphic that shows you the engineered alternative measure, which is what we just recently constructed, and has a one on two slope and the elevation is currently is around 20.5 feet at the top of the levee. Again, this is the river side and this is the protected side so during construction, we are going to degrade the levee, and we are going to have a milder slope and along this stretch we will put in an inverted T-wall and the elevation at the top of the flood wall will be 24.5 feet. There will be an access road on the flood

side for operation and maintenance and that road is going to be higher than the Mississippi River and Tributaries flow line, which means that road will not be under water so there can be access for inspection during high river from this road on this side. Also, on this other side there will be a four to five-foot access road that folks can walk on and will allow for ATV's for inspection purposes. There will also be an access road on the toe on this side as part of that vegetative-free zone and we will have gates positioned throughout the floodwall reaches in



locations where there are businesses that need access. Also, the greatest distance between gates will be 4,000 linear feet so we won't go further than 4,000 feet without having a gate. As you can see on this map, many of these reaches are short to begin with, but there won't be more than 4,000 feet between access points with a flood gate.



The next section is 3.2 and that is just south for 4.2 and you can see this on this map. This is very similar to the map that we saw for the 5.2 levee reach. Here is the existing EAM Project so we are going with one vertical on 3.5 horizontal side slopes to a levee that will be at elevation approximately 21. The current EAM elevation is at 20.5 and then we are going back this way toward the river with a one vertical on five horizontal and new concrete slope paving and also have this 15-foot buffer clearance for trees and vegetation to allow operation and maintenance.



This is a graphic of what it looks like now versus what it is going to look like when we go through. This is before the proposed action on this levee reach. You can see the existing right-of-way, this blue dash line, and the earthen levee is right here.



This also shows that there is an existing railroad along here so we will need right- of-entry for access along this route and then the levee is a little higher. It won't look a whole lot different than what it looks like from a distance, but when you get closer to the levee the very steep side slopes that are there now will be milder, more like what you typically see on the Mississippi River.

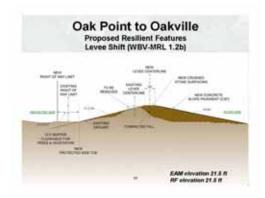


The next reach is Oak Point and most of this is made up

of the Chevron Reach, which has a lot of utilities that cross the Mississippi River Levee. This is what it currently looks like; the elevation at the top of the levee is around 20.5 and it's a one on two side slope. Again, we are going to degrade the levee and put a milder slope here, one on three, and build an inverted T-wall on the top. The elevation will be around 24.5 and those same features I've talked about before with the road access on



the river side and then four to five feet on this side as well as an access road at the bottom remain the same.



This next lower reach is Oak Point to Oakville or 1.2b Contract Reach. This is the exact same thing. We have steeper side slopes here and we are going to do a flood side shift.



The reach right below this is nearly river mile 70 close to Oakville, close to where the Eastern Tie-In ties into the Mississippi River Levee currently. In this location we currently have a one on two side slope and the elevation is 21.5 feet. For resilient features we will degrade the levee and put a one on three side slope with a T-wall; the top elevation of the T-wall is 24.5 feet.



Here is the before and again we are looking at here is the earthen levee. The Eastern Tie-In is further south if you have that as a reference point.



Basically, we will maintain a similar toe here as we have a lot of houses that are adjacent the levees and have a T-wall on top of it.

#### US Army Corps of Engineers

#### **Public Meeting Summary**



We haven't completed the design on this yet, but we do have an emergency bypass road so that when the Eastern Tie-In Gate across Highway 23, that's in Oakville, is closed we will maintain emergency bypass access. We currently have it as an earthen levee but we will likely keep the bypass road on the protected side, but we will maintain access throughout construction. So before, during and after construction, we will have access so that if and when the gate across Highway 23 is closed, there is an emergency bypass to the south in Plaquemines Parish.



This map is hard to see but we have more detailed map on the side you can see. This is also in our IER Supplement document and we have a link to where you can find that. This is our staging and stockpile access. The proposed staging areas are strategically positioned throughout the project area. Our goal is to minimize impacts to the human environment. When we have construction ongoing we are trying not to put staging areas in locations that are adjacent to houses so you don't hear construction noise. These locations are in various colors. Anticipated impacts are increased traffic and elevated dust levels. We do have ways of mitigating those including water trucks on the levees when the dust builds up.



The haul routes, colored in orange, are some of the routes we plan on using. This is not on the map, but any of the armoring that is to be done in this upper reach, the haul route will likely be up along Patterson Road. We will identify travel and haul routes for construction contractors. Any unpaved roads or the levees themselves will be watered to minimize dusts and then the local law enforcement agencies, whether it's Plaquemines or Orleans Parish, are responsible for enforcing traffic laws. During the construction of the EAM phase, we did have some issues on F. Edward Hebert, where we were restricted from hauling for safety reasons during school hours as well as during football games. Safety is obviously our concern.

#### US Army Corps of Engineers

#### **Public Meeting Summary**



We are now going to talk about culture resources investigations that were done. I believe this is an area where we have found some culture resources very close to the levee construction on these reaches. Historic research has documented numerous historic plantations, a historic fort, a river transportation facility and other small communities in the area. The survey reveals 13 archeological sites and the ongoing study will determine the eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.



The results of our analysis is on file with the Louisiana Division of Archeology. The Corps proposes to implement conditions to mitigate or avoid impacts to cultural resources and we are developing an agreement with the State Historic Preservation Office for identifying and evaluating cultural resources in the project corridor. Here are some of the actual artifacts that were found in some of the sites that we evaluated. We do have some folks here who can answer questions if anyone has one.



As I mentioned, safety is our single greatest priority and each day we working towards building a system that will reduce your risk. We are committed to implementing and promoting safety measures for the benefit of our team.

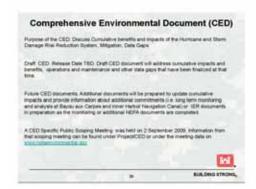


Rene Poche: So what can you expect during construction? You may have some elevated noise levels from motors, pumps, generators, pile driving, etc. There will be increased truck traffic, but we will minimize this as much as possible. We are going to limit work hours to daylight hours and we might have some variances in there. We are also going to do vibration monitoring and we will wet the unpaved roads to keep the dust down and we will stage equipment to minimize safety.





Currently available for public review, we have IERS 25, Government Furnished Borrow Material #3 and that is for review through December 28. 2011. We also have this Supplement, IERS 33a, the West Bank & Vicinity Mississippi River Levees Co-located work through December 29<sup>th</sup>. The ways you can comment is by calling the number on the screen, we also have an email address listed there or you can go anytime to <a href="https://www.nolaenvironmental.gov">www.nolaenvironmental.gov</a> and leave your comments there.



We are going to produce a comprehensive environmental document and the purpose of that is to look at the cumulative benefits and impacts of the risk reduction system mitigation and data gaps. The dates on these are to be determined and again they will address the accumulative impacts and benefits operations and maintenance that have been finalized at that time. Future documents will be prepared to update the impacts and additional commitments that may be long-term monitoring or IER documents or LEPA documents as completed. We did have a public scoping meeting on Sept. 2, 2009 and again, you can get information on that at nolaenvironmental.gov.



Some of the upcoming public meetings, Larose to Golden Meadow, that's going to be Wednesday night and again it will be at 6:30.



Opportunities for public input, like we mentioned early on, we can't do this without you. We need to hear from you so we have regular public meetings. Make sure you sign in if you haven't done so as you can get on our email list and we will notify you when events are happening. Again, you can comment any time at nolaenvironmental.gov. The document is out for a 30-day public review through December 29<sup>th</sup>. If you want to mail, call or email, there is the contact information up there.



If you are out there in social blogosphere, we have ways you can communicate with us. We have Facebook and we update regularly at that site. Flickr, if you want to see photos of some of the work going on you can see that there. We have a Twitter account and videos posted on You Tube.

Some more web-based resources for you. You can to nolaenvironmental or you can go to our public website www.mvn.usace.army.mil and find out information on the system and the other missions that the New Orleans District has. We are now going to move into the discussion phase of tonight's meeting. We will give you three minutes to talk and if you want to speak a second time, we just ask that you wait until everyone has had at least one chance to speak. You can't yield your unused portion of your time to another speaker. All the comments are going to become part of the official record for IER 33 and all comments, whether they are

written or expressed verbally, are considered equally. Again, written comments can be submitted at nolaenvironmental gov through December 29, 2011. We will now open the floor.

**Dallas Picou:** In my area, and I think the same is true in a lot of areas, there is a hundred feet or more of batcher between the levee and the water line. That batcher was taken from [Inaudible] when the levee was constructed because the original property leases read that we own from the road to the water's edge at low tide. So you take it and more than 100 feet. My comment and recommendation is when you reduce the slope, which is a good thing, move it to the water side do you don't take more of our property. We need the little bit we have; if you keep encroaching on us, we are going to be all the way to 23, we won't have any property.

#### **Dr. Carol Daplechain:**

First of all, why didn't you get this right the first time? Why do we have to go and destroy what's been going on for the last year and a half. You've had trucks on the roads, you've had dirt on the roads; this has not been easy on anybody. For me as a veterinarian it's been great for [Inaudible] because of all the dirt in the roads has given the dogs ringworms, but other than that, we are now destroying what our tax dollars have put together. Every time that green line is flushed out of our levee it gets to my heart. I'm a tax payer, that's real money. All this blacktop on the roads and the parking lots that we have for 10 or 15 miles, are going to tear it up and throw it away? What are we going to do with the top soil and the seed that we put? We see trucks working everyday and we are going to destroy what looks like a third of what we have already produced. I was told in my area we don't have a 100year levee protection; there's no money as it's not approved by Congress. You could have taken those dollars that you are destroying and you could protect us. It's time to get it right the first time, you don't need to get it the second, third or fourth time. There are people in this parish



that aren't protected. Our property values keep going down and we can't get insurance and I think this is an absolute waste to not get it right the first time.

Charles Ballay: When the project was last done [Inaudible] it was obviously not done right the first time, but when it was done we talked about issues about homes and the sand, the dirt, and you said it's part of any protection and you have to live with it. Fine, it looks like it's finished and we get our homes pressure washed and now we have to have people redo the whole system and now we find out we have to go through the same thing again. It seems like there needs to be some consideration for the neighbors and people in the area who have homes and things there. Just like Main St. and Hebert Dr., money was spent to redo those streets and we are in pretty good shape, at least Main Street. Now, we are going to have the pot holes and that's another added problem. It seems like we need some consideration back for the property owners and everyone who lives out there and [Inaudible] we are going to have to deal with the dust and repairs. Something should be considered [Inaudible] especially since this is a mess up or screw up the first time that it's being redone. Something needs to be done for the consideration of the people in the area.





Julie LeBlanc: I just want to address a few comments that were made. The repairs on Main St., the potholes on Main St., because the load rating on that road was lower than the load that we put on it, we are repairing the road. The other thing, the Engineer Alternative Measures that we put in place, were put in place knowing that we were coming back to put in resilient features. The reason we did that work the way we did, can you go to back to the slide, we were looking at staying within the existing levee right-of-way so to put the steeper slopes in was originally planned so that we could certify the West Bank and Vicinity Project and complete the work in 2011 and certify it in 2012 as part of the FEMA certification. This was not a screw up, it was the plan. We planned to do this additional work. Any material that is removed here we can potentially reuse when we come in and put in the additional fill that is required to build a levee for resilient features. In those locations where we don't have the right-of-way. basically the way we will handle that is stay within the existing right-of-way to not impact houses and put a T-

wall in the location.

**Unidentified Female Speaker:** Are you going to continue to pave the unpaved tops of the roads so that you can destroy it again? There's about 2.5 to 3 miles of that blacktop is going on today and we know we are going to take it off. Why don't we stop the loss, stop what you are doing and just get to the point of the final project is.



**Julie LeBlanc:** What specific area are you talking about, where is that happening? Is that

Main Street?

**Unidentified Female Speaker**: No, it's south of here 8 to 10 miles.

**Julie LeBlanc:** Is the reason we are doing the repair work because of this? What street is

it on?

**Female Speaker:** I have no idea. I just drive past there every day. There is black top if you go from F. Edward Hebert down south and get past the base, they are still blacktopping and every day there seems to be more black topping placed on top of the levee and that's costing us dollars.

**Julie LeBlanc:** I'm not sure what area you are talking about. If you give us your name and number afterwards we will be glad to talk to you about.

**Dominick Scandorro**: The red line that cuts way into [Inaudible]

**Julie LeBlanc:** This is an area showing a potential staging area where we can put equipment. It's showing that currently the exiting right-of-way is close to the levee and we are looking at needing additional access areas for staging. This is a specific example of an area that we are proposing for staging during construction. It just means that the construction contractor will be allowed to put equipment in that location.

**Dominick Scandorro**: This is not going to run the whole way?

**Julie LeBlanc:** No.

**Unidentified Male Speaker**: What's the time frame; if you said it earlier I missed it.

**Julie LeBlanc**: I'm looking at my notes and I'm not sure I actually said it. We are looking at contractor award for most of these contracts in August 2012 through November 2012 with construction beginning close to that timeframe and continuing through 2013 through the latest contract is completed through August 2014.

**Unidentified Male Speaker**: [Inaudible] There are a lot of trucks that will be coming through by the school [Inaudible]. Have y'all looked into barge [Inaudible].

**Julie LeBlanc**: I think it was an option for the alternative measures and none of the contractors proposed barging the material, but it is an option they can use.

**Rene Poche:** We are going to close the meeting now. We have displays you can look at over here and there are some more on the back wall that you can see. Thank you for coming this evening.