



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Mississippi Valley Division



Corps Hurricane Response

Task Force Hope Status Report Newsletter

December 14, 2009

Causeway Bridge ramp/floodwall up for final approval



Phased construction plan will allow for continuous traffic flow on Causeway Bridge

The selected alternative for the Causeway Bridge project calls for a gradual ramp approach over a 10' concrete floodwall. This aerial photo shows where the new floodwall will be located.

by Susan Spaht

To design and construct projects for the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System (HSDRRS), the Corps of Engineers is often faced with complicated issues that must be resolved before it can proceed with those projects. These challenges can involve sensi-

tive environmental issues, historic structures, real estate challenges, high traffic areas, and more. Design and construction of a 100-year risk reduction feature at the south end of the Causeway Bridge at Lake Pontchartrain presented **all** of these issues. (see page 3 for details)

The original risk reduction action considered by the Corps was construction of a ramp over an earthen levee. After considerable study, this plan was abandoned due to the poor soil conditions in this area which would require constant maintenance of the ramp and levee.

"Frequent maintenance would result in frequent disruption of traffic flow," said Rebecca Constance, Project Manager. "In addition to being a major thoroughfare for commuters, the Causeway Bridge is a major evacuation route for this area. We wanted to make sure this vital artery remained open at all times, so we ruled out the earthen levee plan because of maintenance and access considerations."

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Another suggested alternative was the placement of floodgates across the roadway. These proposed gates would remain open until a major storm or hurricane threatened; at that time, the gates would be closed to block any possible storm surge. The floodgate plan was not selected when the Causeway Commission, the State of Louisiana, the Levee Authority and Jefferson Parish officials voiced concern over evacuation issues and access for emergency response vehicles after the gates were closed.

Several other alternatives were considered before the Corps settled on its proposed action for the Causeway: **an elevated bridge/ramp over a concrete floodwall.**

The proposed action, which is pending approval, will include ramp approaches on either side of a 10-foot floodwall that ties in and links to the Lakefront levee reaches. The roadway ramp over the floodwall will stretch from the Causeway peninsula in Lake Pontchartrain to Sixth Street in Metairie. No gates will be needed for this plan.

The Corps has hosted several public meetings on this project, on both on the north and south shores of Lake Pontchartrain, which focused on the impacts of the project to the area. The public comment period ended December 4.

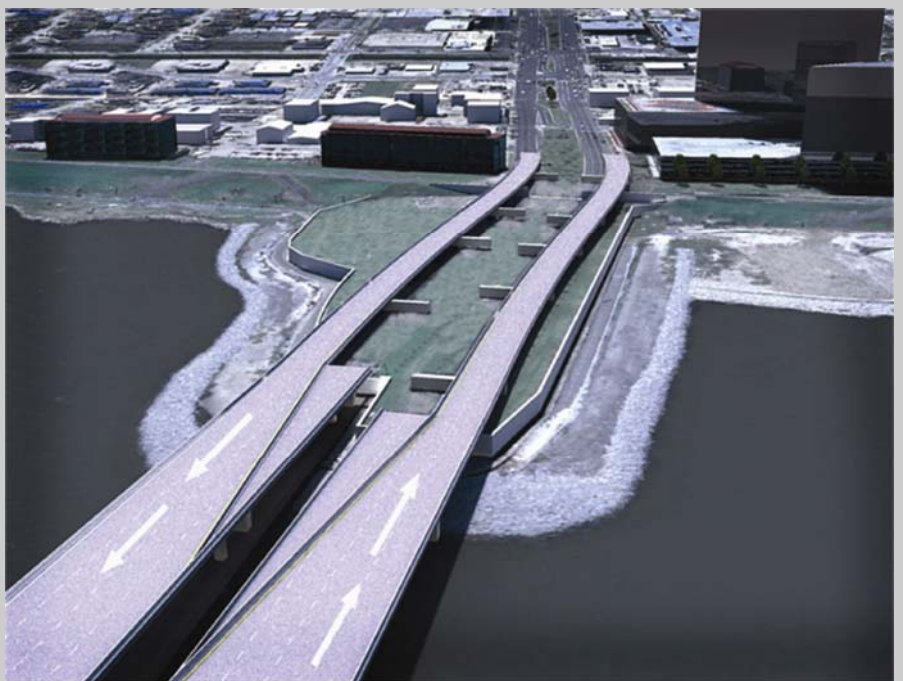
"We listened to the public and the stakeholders," said Mrs. Constance, "and took all those comments and concerns into consideration. Since traffic flow is of major concern to all

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In phase one of construction, two traffic lanes in each direction will be constructed in the current median. Traffic will be detoured onto these lanes while outside elevated lanes are being constructed.

Phased construction plan will maintain smooth traffic flow for Causeway Bridge commuters



In phase two of construction, traffic will be detoured onto the newly constructed elevated lanes. The temporary median lanes will be removed. The final phase of construction (not shown) will be the addition of two more elevated lanes in each direction.

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the stakeholders, the Corps designed a phased construction plan which will maintain two lanes of traffic in both directions at all times during construction.

“Even though the preferred alternative and construction plan are more costly, we recommended this action because it provides the best risk reduction for this area, and minimizes traffic disruptions and inconveniences to the public.”

The construction contract for Causeway is scheduled to be awarded in early 2010. The risk reduction feature is planned for completion in hurricane season 2011, while the roadway and bridge features will continue in construction to the middle of 2012. After the contract is awarded, the construction schedule will become more defined.



Rebecca Constance

“The Causeway risk reduction project points out the importance of partnership and teamwork,” said Karen Durham-Aguilera, Director of Task Force Hope. “It is another example of how the Corps is working together with the State, the Levee Board, the Causeway Commission, local officials and the public to come up with a plan that best balances the needs of all.”



To view a video of the Causeway Project, go to this Web site:

<http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil/PAO/videos/causeway/causewayconstruction.asp>

Corps faced with many important issues to provide 100-year risk reduction for Causeway Bridge Project

- **Sensitive Cultural/Environmental Issues** – the area around the shores of Lake Pontchartrain is known to have been home to many American Indian tribes over the centuries. After extensive testing, Corps archeologists determined that no ancestral bones or artifacts were present in the areas that would be affected by construction dredging. The tribes have accepted the findings.
- **Historic Structures** - the 53-year old Causeway Bridge canopy and buildings are located in the center of planned construction for the new ramp and floodwall. The Corps agreed to preserve the archway's stylized red letters for use on a replacement canopy that the Corps will provide after the ramp and floodwall are completed.
- **High-Traffic Area** - Thousands of daily commuters use the Causeway Bridge travelling both north and south. To eliminate traffic disruptions during construction of the new ramp and floodwall, the Corps devised a phased construction plan which will keep traffic flowing smoothly throughout the construction period. After construction is complete, commuters will experience even better traffic flow due to the additional traffic lanes that will be added by the Corps during construction.
- **Real Estate Issues** – The Causeway project will involve the demolition and relocation of Causeway Commission property, as well as the relocation of several major utility lines that are located at and beneath the project area.



Causeway Bridge toll plaza

USACE Photo by Tom Durel

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Gulf Intracoastal Waterway

West Closure Complex



Cofferdam for navigation gate



Fabrication of first pump intake

Construction under way on one of the *world's largest pump stations*



Pile driving for pump station foundation

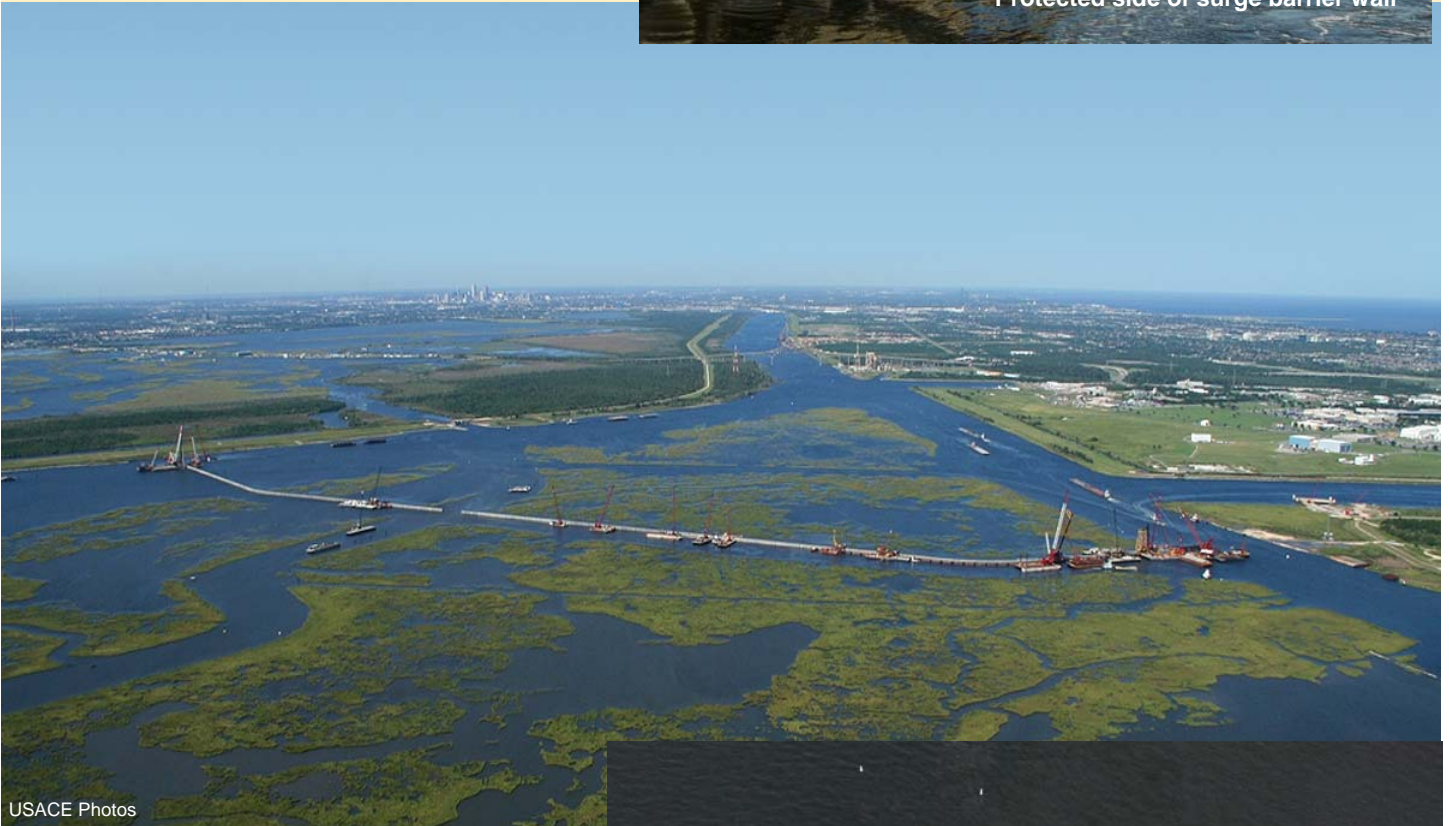
USACE Photos by Matt Soraghan

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Inner Harbor Navigation Canal
Surge Barrier
at **Lake Borgne**



Protected side of surge barrier wall



USACE Photos

Corps of Engineers
building the
largest surge barrier
of its kind in the world
and construction
is 50% complete



Cofferdam for barge gate

New Orleans: December 4, 2009

Commander signs Decision Record for Eastern Tie-In

Swing Gate selected as best alternative



Swing Gates (in open position) across Hwy. 23

*A message from Col. Alvin Lee,
Commander, New Orleans District*

Over the past two years the Corps has hosted more than 140 public meetings in order to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act and incorporate public feedback into the design of the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System (HSDRRS).

On November 5, my team again engaged with citizens from Plaquemines Parish to discuss the proposed action for the Eastern Tie-In project as it was discussed in draft

Individual Environmental Report 13 (IER) Addendum.

The Eastern Tie-In project, once complete, will connect the West Bank and Vicinity levees to the Mississippi River levees in Plaquemines Parish. The IER 13 Addendum answered substantive comments community members had voiced earlier this year about the Corps' proposed action.

After thorough re-evaluation, we confirmed that the most effective way to reduce risk of storm surge to the Belle Chase sub-basin is construction of a higher and stronger earthen levee along the Hero Canal,

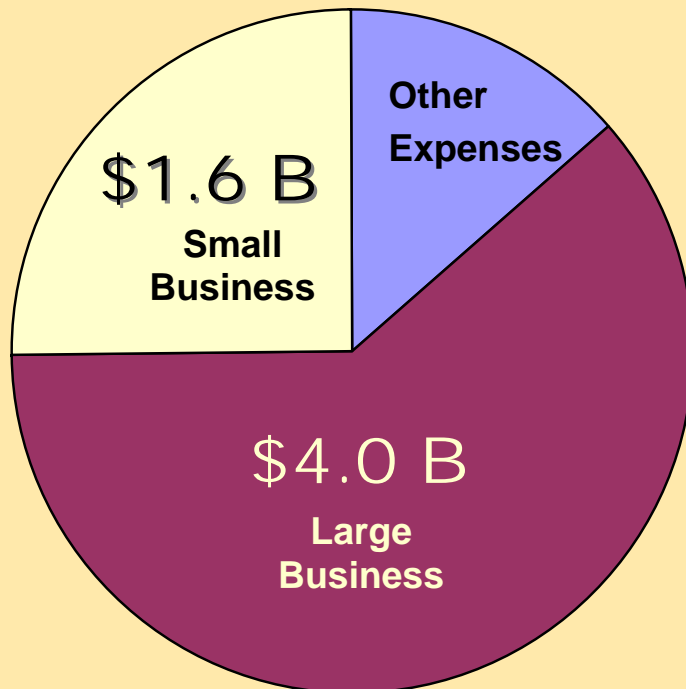
and construction of two steel swing gates across Hwy. 23 in the Oakville area.

Our team assessed four alternatives to cross the highway for: risk and reliability, impacts to the human and natural environment, time and constructability, cost, and operations and maintenance.

The team concluded that the swing gates are the most reliable system feature. From a risk and reliability standpoint, and operations and maintenance standpoint, this alternative is clearly superior to the others considered on this project.

Col. Al Lee

Small Business **BIG** part of Contractual Obligations for HSDRRS work



Contracts for design and construction of Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System

Approximately 25% of all contractual dollars for the HSDRRS have been awarded to small businesses, according to Corps records. And large businesses sub-contract a large portion of their work to small businesses as well.

If you would like more information about HSDRRS contract opportunities, go to this Web site:

http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil/hps/hps_contract_info.aspx

Contact Information

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Task Force Hope

(504) 862-1836

New Orleans District

(504) 862-2201

Hurricane Protection Office

(504) 862-1708

The *Status Report Newsletter* supports the information program for Task Force Hope and its stakeholders. It also serves as the primary tool for accurately transmitting the Corps' hurricane recovery work to stakeholders.

This is an online publication that is open to public distribution.

This issue and past issues can be found at:

<http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil/hps>

Comments and questions

may be sent to the

Status Report Newsletter editor at:

b2fwdpao@usace.army.mil

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U.S. Army Corps
of Engineers

Status Report Newsletter

Task Force Hope

Strategic Communications

7400 Leake Ave., Room #388

New Orleans, LA 70118

(504) 862-1949

Nearly 25,000 acres built by Beneficial Use of Dredged Material

The Corps of Engineers tracks beneficial use acreage with photography that is taken at the end of each calendar year. In the 20 years leading up to 2008, the Corps has created the following beneficial acreage:

- 1) **Mississippi River:** 11,950 acres (includes South west Pass, South Pass and Outlets at Venice)
- 2) **Atchafalaya River:** 8,300 acres (includes Atchafalaya River & Bayou Chene)
- 3) **Calcasieu River & Pass:** 1,670 acres
- 4) **Barataria Bay & Bayou Rigaud:** 676 acres
- 5) **Mermentau River:** 253 acres
- 6) **Bayou LaFourche:** 137 acres
- 7) **Houma Navigation Canal:** 102 acres
- 8) **Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (prior to de-authorization):** 1,865 acres

Beneficial Use of Dredged Material is 100% federally funded with the exception of Calcasieu, and less than 10% of projects in Barataria, Houma and MRGO.

