



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Mississippi Valley Division



Corps Hurricane Response

Task Force Hope Status Report

October 21, 2008

INNOVATIVE RISK REDUCTION ALTERNATIVES BEING CONSIDERED FOR WESTBANK

*Corps and partners
collaborating on design
ideas for area at
confluence of Algiers and
Harvey Canals*

By Susan Spaht

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and its partners are currently considering solutions to reduce the risk of storm surge and increase public safety in the Westbank & Vicinity area of Jefferson Parish.

These alternatives are being discussed at public meetings, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. The final recommended plan will be identified in November.

“This project will be one of the most substantial portions of the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System (HSDRRS),” said Julie Vignes, Senior Project Manager for



This aerial view shows the confluence of the Algiers and Harvey Canals on the Westbank in Jefferson Parish.

the Westbank & Vicinity portion of the HSDRRS. “It will reduce risk to hundreds of thousands of people living on the Westbank.

“We are looking forward to incorporating innovative techniques into the design and construction of this important project.”

The Corps meets bi-weekly with its

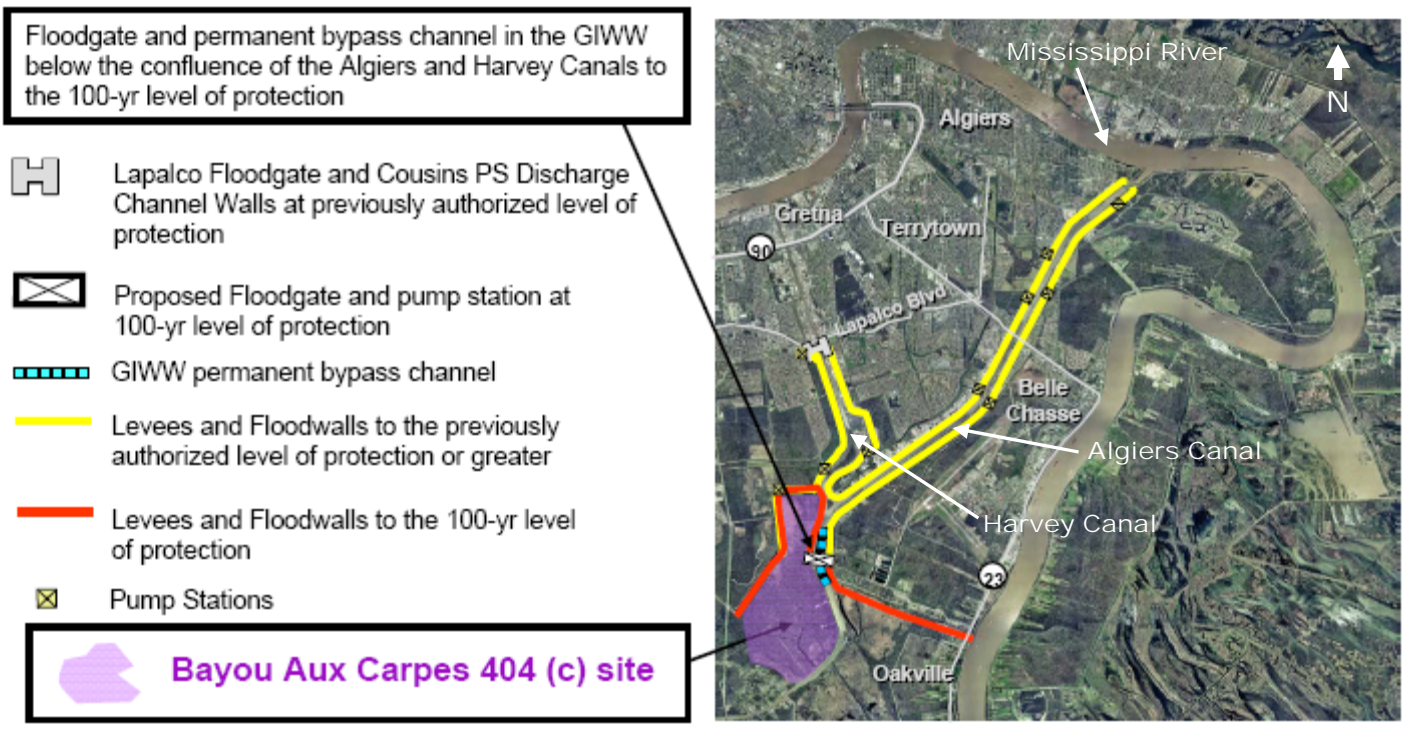
partners on the Westbank & Vicinity Project Coordination Team to discuss the path forward on this monumental project. The Coordination

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Westbank Risk Reduction Project - *Draft Alternative*



Above is one of the draft alternatives being considered to provide 100-year level protection to this area of the Westbank. To view other alternatives, go to this Web site: www.nolaenvironmental.gov.

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Team consists of key members of the West Jefferson Levee District, the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-West, and the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development. Additionally, the Corps team hosts monthly meetings to update and receive input from all stakeholders, including local governments, business and navigation interests, Congressional interests, other federal and state resources and non-governmental organizations.

The Team is considering three project acquisition strategies: Design-

Build, Design-Bid-Build, and Early Contractor Involvement. Each of these strategies is intended to expedite the design and construction process and enhance the final product.

The Corps must also consider several other aspects that impact the project, such as cost estimates, environmental impacts, system reliability, social and economic impacts, and level of protection.

All these considerations will be taken into account when the Corps makes a decision on which alternative to recommend. That recommendation will then be put out for public review,

in compliance with NEPA requirements, for 30 days before the final decision is made.

The Westbank project will be part of a system that will reduce risk associated with a storm event that has a one percent chance of occurring in any given year.



To view a video introduction and overview of the Westbank project, go to this Web site:

http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil/hps2/videos/wb_video.asp

Corps experts explain challenges for Westbank

Excerpted from on-line video at : <http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil/hps2/videos/>

Al Naomi, Branch Chief, Protection Restoration Office

The overarching purpose that the Corps of Engineers has is risk reduction, and we are trying to reduce the risk of storm surge inundation on the Westbank. The question is what do we do about the surge at the Algiers and Harvey Canals.

Right now storm surge comes from the Gulf, up the Barataria Basin, and enters the Harvey and Algiers Canals, right into the heart of a highly populated area. So there is a very high risk of surge inundation for the people in that area.

We've been constructing levees and floodwalls on the Westbank for many years and now Congress has given us the task of building 100-year protection for the area. We are looking at various alternatives to reduce risk and provide a better and more reliable system.

We are also looking at the impacts to the environment – we are dealing with some very sensitive environmental areas here. This project will be very close to Bayou aux Carpes, a 404c area, a wetland of national significance.

The area south of the existing protection system along the Gulf Intra-coastal Waterway is adjacent to the Jean Lafitte National Park. This is a very pristine wetlands area, and these areas are designated to be untouched and to be left in their pristine state. The requirements we have would be unique if we would go into

these areas to construct the West Closure Complex. There is also cost and schedule. All these factors have to be considered in trying to determine what the best plan is.

This project is going to be the front line of defense for the Westbank as far as storm surge is concerned. We take this responsibility very seriously. We want to get this job done right, in a way that people will have confidence in. We are working with officials in three parishes, the levee districts, the State of Louisiana and federal agencies. We want a project that is acceptable to the folks in this area, one that they will endorse, and we are doing everything we can to reach that goal.

Julie Vignes, Senior Project Manager, Westbank & Vicinity

The 100-year level of protection requires higher levees. Higher levees require significantly wider levees. Widening levees in this area would have impacts to adjacent businesses and residences



Al Naomi, Branch Chief

along the canals.

A team evaluated how the system performs. What we've learned is that if you can reduce the linear footage of the system that actually experiences that 100-year storm surge you can decrease the risk, or improve the



Julie Vignes, Senior Project Manager

reliability. Therefore, looking at a method to block the storm surge closer to the Gulf vs. allowing that storm surge to enter the canals and 24 miles of levees being exposed to that elevation of water is an improvement in the system.



Small Business contracts reach \$1 billion mark for HSDRRS



By Susan Spaht

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in New Orleans recently reached a notable milestone: it has awarded over \$1 billion in small business contracts since Hurricane Katrina.

"We tracked acquisitions in support of the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th Supplements," said Tim Black, Assistant Chief of Contracting.

"These are dollars on contracts that support the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System (HSDRRS) only. The \$1 billion mark was set at the end of August, three years after Katrina."

That means, of the more than \$2.9 billion in federal funds that have been expended so far on the HSDRRS, nearly one third has gone to small businesses. The Army's



Tim Black

statutory goal for small business use is about 20 percent. Although the Corps does not keep official records on it, observers say that companies that are awarded large contracts traditionally sub-contract portions of their work to local small businesses.

The \$1 billion figure was only on those contracts awarded for work on the HSDRRS. According to Ned Foley, Deputy for Small Business Programs,

"the total goal for all New Orleans small business contracts since Katrina is more than \$1.4 billion."

"The Corps is committed to supporting small business," said Karen Durham-Aguilera, Director of Task Force Hope, "and it is very gratifying to have so many of the federal funds designated for repair and recovery to the greater New Orleans area go to small businesses that are located in Louisiana."



Ned Foley



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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:
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