

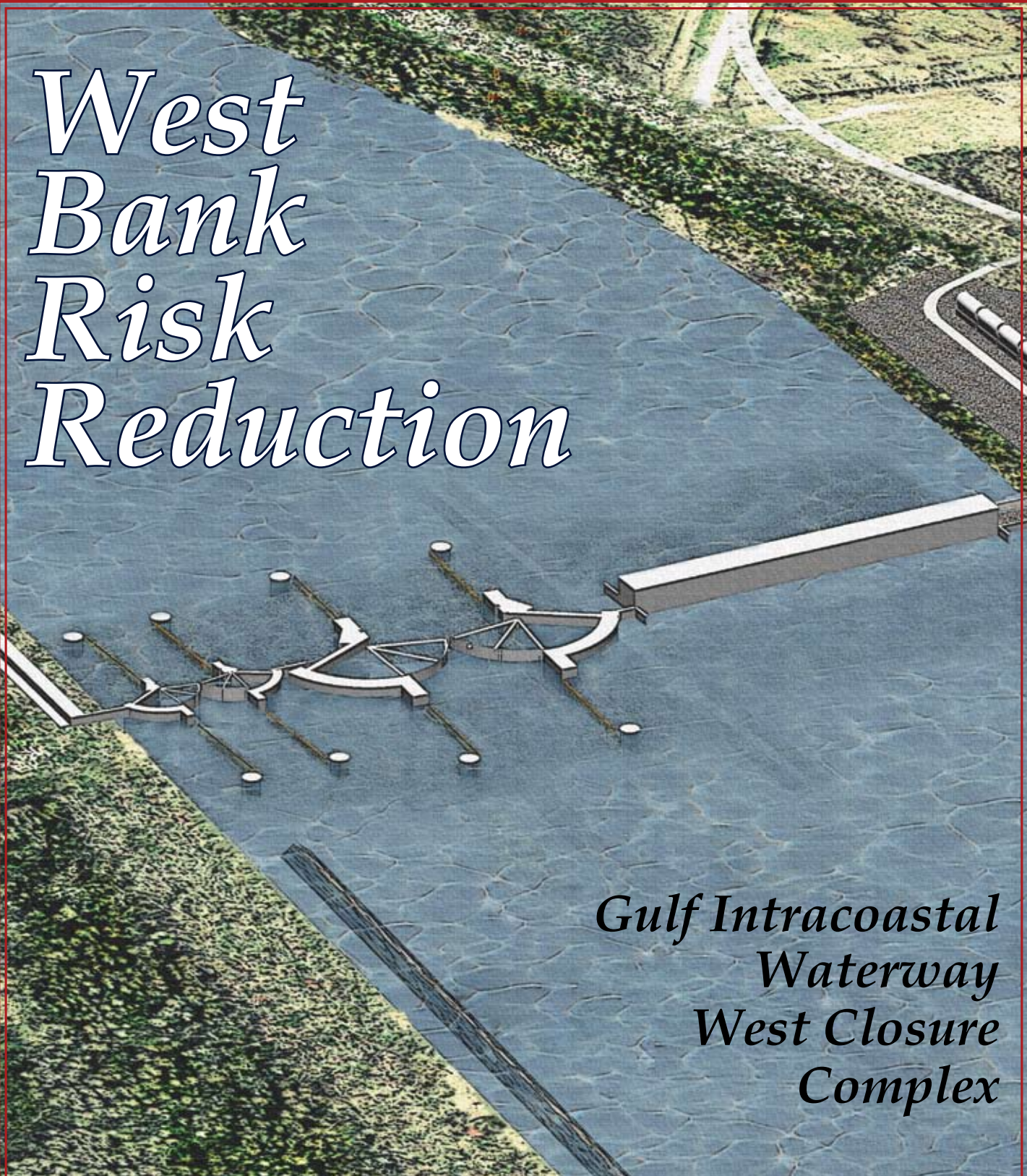


US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
New Orleans District

# RIVERSIDE

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January 2009



## *West Bank Risk Reduction*

*Gulf Intracoastal  
Waterway  
West Closure  
Complex*





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USACE photo

## *Carrollton Gage. . . . . 2*

2009 promises to be full of unique challenges, including the awarding of 114 contracts for the Greater New Orleans Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System.

## *Reducing risk in coastal Louisiana. . . . . 3*

The Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration project employs a multi-criteria risk analysis to identify alternative methods for developing a comprehensive risk reduction system for coastal Louisiana

## *Gulf Intracoastal Waterway West Closure Complex. . . . . 5*

This keystone project for the West Bank involves risk reduction for one of the most populous areas of the West Bank while ensuring safe navigation along one of the busiest waterways in the Nation.

## *Flyover. . . . . 7*

A brief look at some of the recent steps made to fulfill the New Orleans District mission

## *Riverside chat. . . . . 9*

During her thirty years, Janet Cruppi has held several positions throughout the district. This month, the deputy chief of Real Estate agreed to speak with Riverside about her career with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

## *Around the district. . . . 11*

From opening the Bonnet Carré Spillway to two hurricanes thirteen days apart, 2008 was certainly full of challenges. In December, the district recognized the team members that demonstrated exceptional character throughout the year.



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## 2009 promises to be full of opportunities

*The New Orleans District provides comprehensive water resources management to include navigation, hurricane and storm damage risk reduction, and environmental stewardship for south Louisiana to ensure risk reduction, public safety and benefit the nation. Our team is also prepared to conduct contingency operations as well as support the national response framework.*

*New Orleans District mission*

**T**his past December, I had the opportunity to attend two awards ceremonies, the first at our Lafayette Area Office followed by a program here in New Orleans. During these ceremonies, we presented over 500 awards of recognition to our team members that demonstrated great character and commitment in support of the district's mission during 2008. You helped improve the lives of many Louisianians and reduced their risk through your professionalism and dedication during the 2008 spring flood fight and the two hurricanes that impacted the area last year.

This volume of awards reflects both the tremendous character of the team we have here in Team New Orleans and the significant opportunities this team faced throughout the year. In 2008, we faced the sixth largest Mississippi River high water event since 1900 and two hurricanes. These events were in addition to our daily tasks of ensuring safe and reliable navigation on waterways that include five of the top fifteen ports in the nation, undertaking projects to provide coastal protection and ecosystem restoration in South Louisiana, and reducing hurricane and storm damage risk by striving to meet our 2011 goal of providing 100-year protection for the greater New Orleans area.

Throughout the year, the members of Team New Orleans demonstrated great resolve and aptitude in responding to these opportunities.

I am asking you now to prepare to duplicate the exceptional effort you put forth in 2008. With projects underway from Lake Charles to Venice and early reports predicting a significant Mississippi River high water season followed by an above-average hurricane season, the demands of 2009 promise to exceed those we tackled last year.

As we move into 2009, there will yet again be great opportunities to substantially reduce risk throughout the state and our nation by executing our enormous civil works mission. We are leveraging resources from across our region to assist in this unprecedented task in order to

meet our commitments for 1 June 2011. 2009 will be a pivotal year in our efforts to provide 100-year level protection for the greater New Orleans area by 2011. Between 2006 and 2008, we awarded 96 contracts for work on the Greater New Orleans Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System. In 2009, we will issue 114 contracts valued in excess of \$4.1 billion. This total calculates to \$11.2 million spent each day of the 2009 fiscal year.

With only 28 months remaining to provide 100-year level protection, meeting our goal hinges upon the amount of work accomplished this year. Only through a focused and steadfast team effort can we be successful in our mission. And success is our only option.

Nevertheless, in the face of this daunting array of tasks, I am confident once again that Team New Orleans will rise to the challenge. Over the last three years, you have all demonstrated great character and resolve in the face of adversity. I believe this year will be no different.

## ***Building Strong! Essays!***

*Col. Al Lee*



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### **Authorization**

The New Orleans District Riverside is an unofficial publication authorized under the provisions of AR 360-1. Views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Corps of Engineers or the Department of the Army.

### **Submissions**

Articles and story ideas are welcome: publication depends on the general interest as judged by the editor. Direct inquiries to the editor by calling (504) 862-2201 or e-mailing ricky.d.boyett@usace.army.mil

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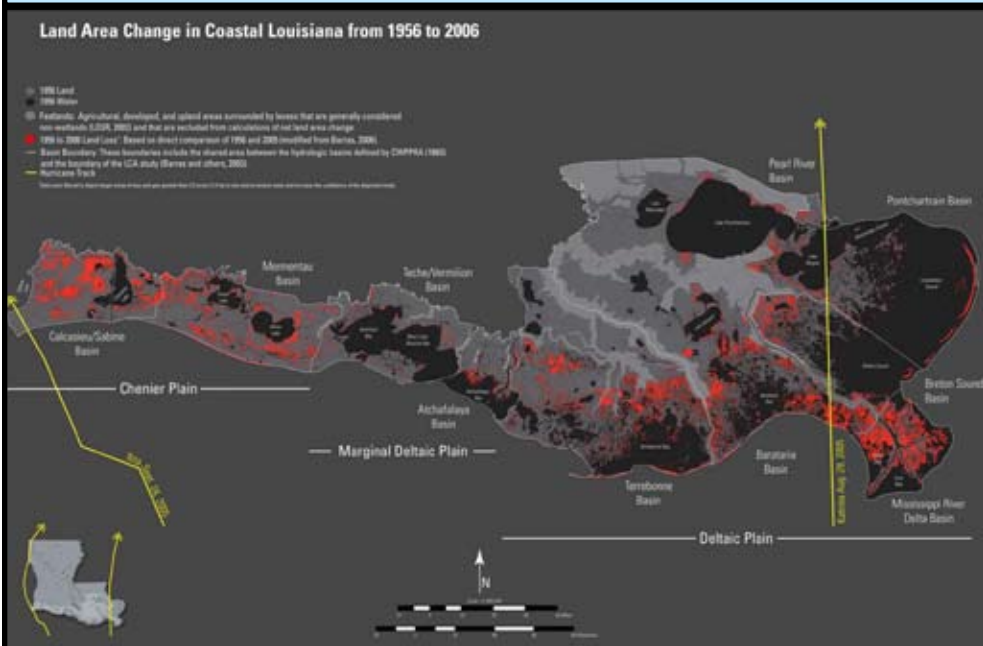
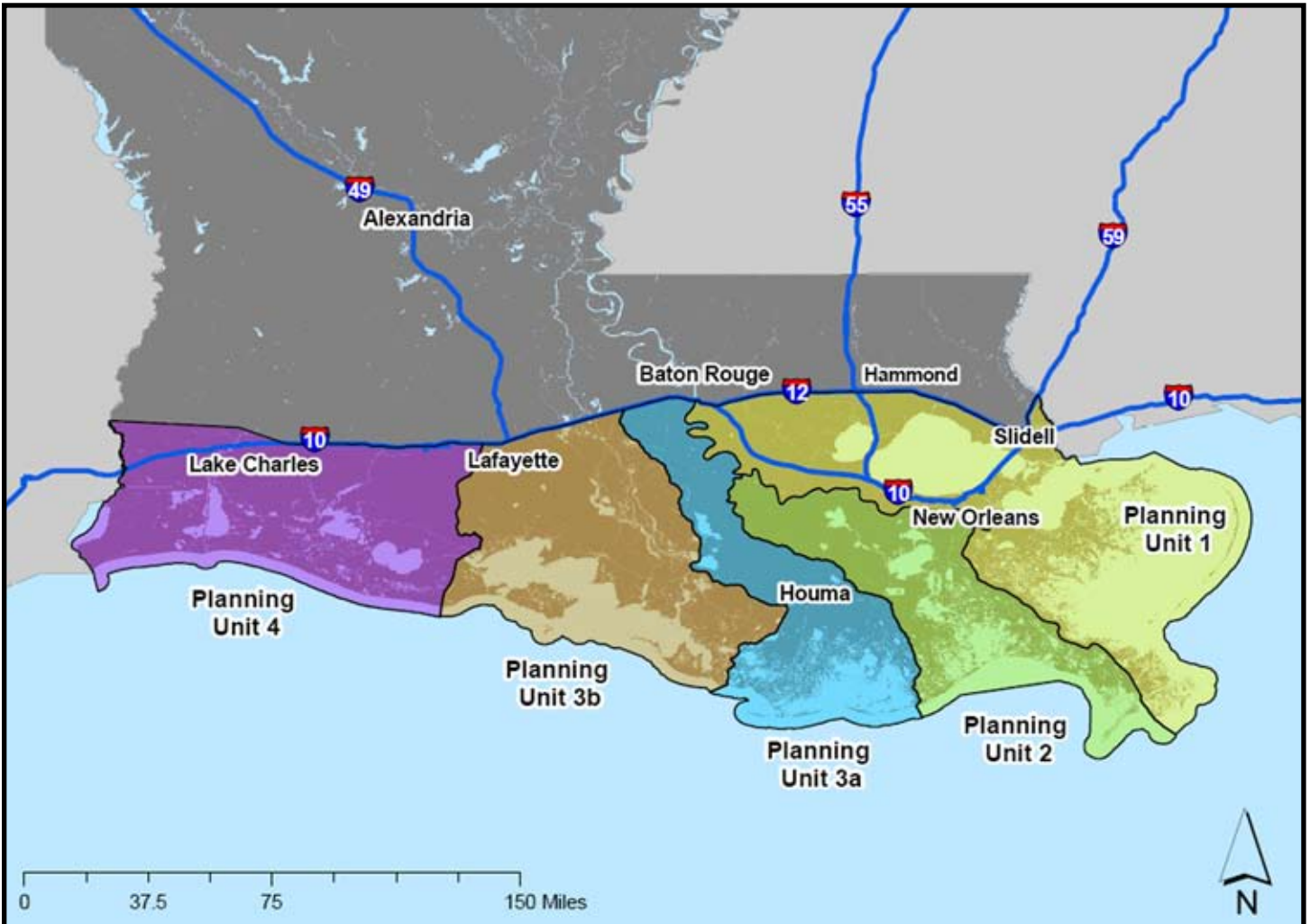






# Reducing risk along the Louisiana Coast

The Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Technical



*A study area roughly the size of West Virginia (above) with a very complex landscape requires different types of analysis. Wetland erosion in Louisiana (left) accounts for 90 percent of the total coastal marsh loss in the nation. The loss of these wetlands are nationally significant. In addition to the many species of water birds that use the wetlands as nesting habitat (far right), approximately 70 percent of all waterfowl that migrate through the United States use the Mississippi and Central Flyways. With more than five million birds wintering in Louisiana, these wetlands are crucial stopover habitat. Furthermore, healthy marshes and other natural features of Louisiana's landscape provide the initial lines of defense (right) against storm surge during hurricanes and other tropical weather events.*

# Louisiana coast

Report by Kelly Stoll

In response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the U.S. Congress directed the United States Army Corps of Engineers to “conduct a comprehensive hurricane protection analysis and design...to develop a full range of flood control, coastal restoration, and hurricane protection measures... conducted in close coordination with the State of Louisiana.” Congress’ directive to the Corps was to develop a technical report only; it did not include the submission of recommendations.

In response to this directive, the Corps assembled a team of expert scientists and engineers from more than 30 organizations, including universities, private firms, environmental organizations, state and federal governmental agencies, and international groups. This integrated team set out to meet the goals and objectives of the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration (LACPR) report by producing the analysis required to enhance hurricane risk reduction and coastal restoration in coastal Louisiana. Close coordination was established with the State of Louisiana’s Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA).

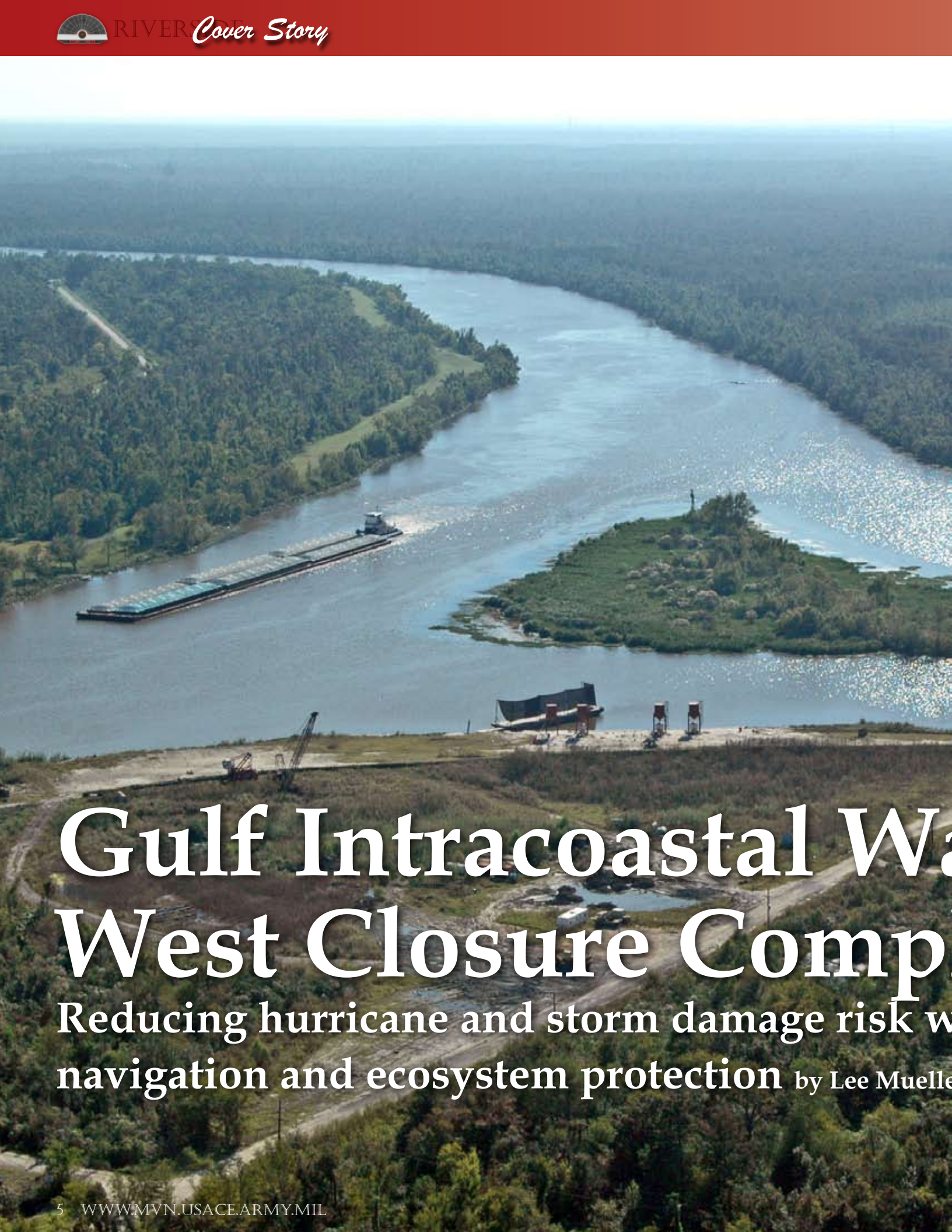
The team made a concerted effort to use the best available scientific and engineering information and to work closely with its partners and stakeholders. The team recognized that the first line of defense against storms is Louisiana’s coastal ecological features including barrier islands, marshes, ridges and coastal forests.

In June 2006 the team submitted the Preliminary Technical Report to Congress. A Final Technical Report was scheduled to be delivered in December 2007. However, because of the size and complexity of the planning area, the Final Technical Report took longer to develop. It was submitted to the Mississippi Valley Division on December 22, 2008.

*(Continued, page 14)*







# Gulf Intracoastal Waterway West Closure Completion

Reducing hurricane and storm damage risk while  
maintaining navigation and ecosystem protection by Lee Muelle





# Waterway Complex

while ensuring safe

For decades, the west bank of the greater New Orleans area has been at risk from storm surge damage and flooding. While an enjoyment for local fishing and recreation, the area's close proximity to several bodies of water poses a great danger for residents and businesses in this area. Lake Cataouatche, Lake Salvador, and Bayou Barataria, along with the Harvey and Algiers canals, allow for storm surge to travel north from the Gulf of Mexico into the west bank areas of Orleans, Jefferson, Plaquemines and St. Charles parishes. The United States Army Corps of Engineers understands the need to keep this surge from entering the many internal waterways that traverse this area.

The Gulf Intracoastal Waterway West Closure Complex project is an important keystone for the West Bank and Vicinity Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System. Estimated at more than \$500 million, it will be the largest project for the west bank system. This complex will reduce risk for the most heavily populated areas of the west bank.

Upon construction of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway West Closure Complex surge barrier, approximately twenty-six miles of levees and floodwalls with their associated gates and transitions, will no longer be the first line of defense against storm surge. A surge barrier will be constructed on the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway below the confluence of the Harvey and Algiers Canals. When a tropical storm or hurricane approaches, dangerous storm surge will be prevented from entering these internal waterways by closing the barrier.

In addition to the surge barrier, the West Closure Complex includes the largest drainage pumping station of its type in the nation. This extensive pump station is needed to support the pumping capacity of the nine pump stations used to drain rainwater from the neighborhoods in Orleans, Jefferson and Plaquemines parishes into the Harvey and Algiers canals. The amount of rainwater associated with a hurricane or storm event requires a pumping capacity of 20,000 cubic feet per second.

The surge reduction barrier is expected to be constructed by hurricane season 2011 to prevent storm surge from entering the Harvey and Algiers canals. Construction will continue beyond this date

*(Continued, page 13)*



Brig. Gen. Michael J. Walsh, Mississippi Valley Division commander, approved the issuance of a second Notice To Proceed (NTP) with construction for the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal (IHNC) Surge Barrier Project, paving the way to build the gate structures along the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW).



Scott



Rene Poche

The Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers signed a Project Partnership Agreement (PPA) to put into place an overarching cost-sharing agreement for the Southeast Louisiana Urban Flood Damage Reduction Project (SELA). The agreement will pave the way for construction of \$1.3 billion of SELA features in Orleans and Jefferson parishes.

The Old River Lock is now open after the lock chamber was dewatered for maintenance and the installation of 2 new miter gates on the west (canal) end of the lock.



USACE

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District, released a Final Environmental Report 12, entitled "Harvey and Algiers C and Floodwalls, Jefferson, Orleans, and Plaquemines Parish" on for a 30-day public comment period. The document outlines the of and general design plans for the proposed Gulf Intracoastal West Closure Complex, a project that greatly reduces the risk of surge from impacting a large population of the West Bank.

Terrebonne Parish Government, the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA), the Corps of Engineers, and the Terrebonne Parish Conservation District entered into a cooperative agreement for a 15-year period for the \$30.24 million project. The Parish nonfederal level agreement enables the project to begin construction on as early as February



USACE

The Corps of Engineers and the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) have agreed to a 50-50 cost share feasibility study on hurricane protection and coastal restoration features in Southwest Louisiana. The feasibility study represents the first time comprehensive coastal protection has been examined for Southwest Louisiana.



RIVER SOURCE  
*Flyover*







# From Clerk to Deputy Chief

During her 30 years with the Corps, Janet Cruppi has gained a wealth of experience and even more know-how by Amanda Jones





**A**fter graduating from Chapelle High School, she worked for Louisiana Gas Company for six months when the Corps called offering her higher pay as a GS-2 clerk/typist for the Real Estate Division.

It was 1978 and Janet Cruppi gladly accepted, with aspirations for more.

Realizing she couldn't be promoted without some education in steno script, she took a week-long course. It got her a GS-4 and a position in the Executive Office, secretary to Executive Assistant Vic Landry, Sr.

"Janet had to support not only me, but the district engineer and his deputy," said Vic Landry, Sr. "It was readily apparent that she was no ordinary clerk-typist; she proved to be very intelligent, energetic, personable, creative, and not afraid of new challenges."

Realizing her steno skills were not as developed as she would have liked, Janet found ways to work around it.

"Working in the Executive Office, they really used those skills. Fortunately, the commander would read what he wanted me to type. Since I couldn't keep up, I would get his notes. I was in no way fast, but it was fun. There were no computers back then." She laughed, "I've been here a long time."

Cruppi moved on to other positions throughout the district but landed back in Real Estate in 1988.

Landry said, "I hated to lose her to Real Estate Division; however, it was to her advantage to gain expertise in another field where she performed her work diligently and learned new skills while completing her studies and earning a college degree. She definitely has the potential to excel."

"I was just looking to progress through a career field," said Cruppi about returning to the office she started in. "But I'm glad that I moved around because I met a lot of people and if I don't know something, I know where to go."

Now the deputy chief of the Real Estate Division, she said, "When I started in Real Estate, it was like a family atmosphere. We had a really good division chief and a lot of friendly people. Linda and I try to keep that going."

They do this by learning about their employees' families and celebrating birthdays and holidays to get everyone together.

"Better morale makes for a better employee," Cruppi said.

Her own personal morale was highest during the days of Task Force Guardian, as any TFG teammate would say.

"It was stressful, I know it was, but that's not what we remember," Cruppi said. "A lot of that had to do with Col. Setliff. Leadership sets the tone for the whole team," Cruppi said, noting that his leadership style has influenced her own.

"In fact, I always tell people that I learn a whole lot from the good leaders *and* from the bad," said Cruppi. "So everyone I've ever worked for, team leader or supervisor, I've learned from."

All of her experiences have molded her into a very mission-oriented leader who gets things done.

"Janet's drive to execute the mission is unprecedented," said Linda Labure, chief of Real Estate Division. "She sets the bar for performance, then challenges the team to exceed the mark. Those who work alongside her cannot help but be influenced by the fact that she strives for excellence every day."

"I don't expect people to work like I do," said Cruppi, "but I expect people to work. And I try to have a balance. Although work is important, being a person is important too," she said of both herself and her employees. "You can't have stress in both places."

"I think that I have balance with my employees, but I know that I am really task-oriented," said Cruppi, who embodies the necessary spirit of the New Orleans District in the race to meet our 2011 goal.





# High Water and Hurricanes

New Orleans District recognizes team members' efforts in 2008

photos by Anne Marino



In December, the New Orleans District held its annual award ceremony to recognize the team members that demonstrated great personal character during 2008.

In total, the district presented 542 awards, including one Superior Award for Civilian Service, two one-star notes, seven special awards, 34 length of service, 65 Commander's Award for Civilian Service, 87 Achievement Awards for Civilian Service, and 346 Department of the Army Certificates of Appreciation.

While the majority of these awards were for the team members efforts during the district's emergency response to the spring Mississippi River high water event and Hurricanes Gustav and Ike, some received special recognition for their efforts in projects such as the Interagency Performance Evaluation Taskforce report and the Louisiana's Master Plan for a Sustainable Coast.







Two district team members have recently deployed to assist the nation's efforts in the Global War on Terror.

Lt. Col. Andamo Ford (left) deployed on November 30, 2008. He is currently serving as the Infrastructure Team Chief for the Provincial Reconstruction Team in the Gulf Region South District.

Lester Mastio (right) deployed to Afghanistan on December 16, 2008 to assist the mission of our troops as a construction representative.

The New Orleans District would like to thank you, and all of our team members, for your commitment to our nation and hopes that each of you stay safe and return home soon.



## Postcards from Afghanistan

### **Afghan assignment — an adventure like no other**

By Vicky Cummings  
Kandahar and Bagram Air Bases, Afghanistan  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

When I first received the offer to deploy to Afghanistan, I was very excited, and not one bone in my body felt frightened at the possibility of heading into another foreign country, let alone a war zone. I felt sure that this would be yet another interesting experience — to go along with other rewarding and memorable moments that have highlighted my life over the past five years working in various countries. I believed this would not only be a chance to do my part as an American, in some small way, but also an opportunity to get an up close view of the Middle East.

Deploying to Afghanistan was quite unique and intense, as one gets used to the military life-style preparation. Numerous required immunizations had to be received and training courses had to be taken. I was issued duffle bags full of equipment and taught how to use this lifesaving equipment. I proudly wore the Army Civilian desert camouflage uniform on a daily basis, and could sense this was becoming my most ultimate adventure. Arriving and moving in country proved to be nothing like I had ever encountered in my travels. I'd flown of course, however now I was aboard huge C-130 military aircraft and helicopters sitting among soldiers from all over the world or on ground convoys seeing a part of the world I'd never imagined.

When I started my duties at the AED USACE Area Office on Kandahar Air Base, the work proved to be quite interesting — it's amazing what dedicated people from throughout the United States and the world can accomplish in a war zone. Despite all the challenges, USACE projects are moving forward with a vengeance. The construction is so impressive and the cause so great. Many Afghan people are working shoulder to shoulder with our USACE staff to get it done. They truly want to see their country evolve into a modern civilization.

I was honored to meet a very nice Afghan family who were kind enough to invite me into their home. This home, like all others, was built of sand and mud and had not withstood bombings by any means. There was no electricity, water, or comforts that we as Americans take for granted. The genuine warmth and friendship I felt when being greeted by this family of 7 girls, 2 boys, the mother, maternal and paternal grandmothers, was an

experience I will cherish and never forget. Despite the lack of basic necessities, this family insisted on giving me a gift to take home with me. Of course, we could not converse in language, but I could see in their eyes their kind hearts and gentle souls.

I am grateful USACE invited me to join the great team helping the Afghan people build a brighter future for their children and grandchildren. Its an historic mission — an adventure like no other.



**Getting ready to board a Russian helicopter to fly from Kandahar to Kabul in May 2008.**



**My husband Jerry and I are recognized with end of tour awards by AED Commander Col. Tom O'Donovan in Sept 2008.**



**An Afghan family warmly welcomes Vicky Cummings into their home.**



(West Closure Complex, from page 6)



*Above: Situated on the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway just below the Harvey and Algiers Canals, the West Closure Complex will greatly reduce risk for the West Bank. However, because the GIWW is the second busiest navigational waterway in the nation (the Mississippi River is the first), the effects on this maritime traffic are important factors in determining the design and operation of the complex.*

to reach maximum pumping capacity for the project. During a storm event that requires the closure of the gates, the Harvey and Algiers canals will act as retention basins for rainwater and safe water levels will be maintained by the pumping station component of the complex.

### Challenges to face

The Gulf Intracoastal Waterway is a very active inland commercial barge channel that stretches along the Gulf Coast from Texas to Florida and is very important for both the local and national maritime industry. The current configuration of the West Closure Complex includes two navigable floodgates to pass the nearly 30 barge tows per day that pass through this section of the GIWW. The Corps has worked with members of the maritime industry, the United States Coast Guard, as well as other government agencies, to gather their input on safe naviga-

tion along the GIWW. The Corps has also conducted studies at the Engineering Research & Development Center in Mississippi, including hydrologic modeling to determine water flow and velocity through navigable floodgates. The Corps is committed to minimizing impacts to the commercial navigation industry both during and after construction.

A wetland area of national significance, the Bayou Aux Carpes 404(c) site, also presents a challenge for construction of the West Closure Complex. This wetland area directly borders the west bank of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway and is protected under special jurisdiction by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Bayou aux Carpes is one of only eleven sites

in the country with this designation and has been protected by the EPA since November 1985. It is a bottomland hardwood forest, which is a significant ecological resource in the Lower Mississippi River Alluvial Plain. The Corps has pledged to take every action to minimize construction impacts to this area. As a result, all construction staging areas will be located on the east bank of the GIWW or on barges in the GIWW. The EPA has been involved in each step of the Corps' process and has provided beneficial advice and suggestions.

### Corps employs innovation

The New Orleans District is employing several new techniques and ideas in various stages of this significant risk reduction project. The GIWW West Closure Complex is the first New Orleans District project to employ early contractor involvement (ECI) as an acquisition strategy. ECI is a contracting method which promotes the



*Bayou Aux Carpes 404(c) is one of only eleven sites in the country with the designation of being a wetland of national significance and has been protected by the EPA since November 1985. A significant ecological resource in the Lower Mississippi River Alluvial Plain, every precaution is being taken to minimize the impacts to this bottomland hardwood forest.*



involvement of the contractor by using them as a resource during the design of the project. This method can produce new ways to improve construction sequencing, as well as adding innovative measures into designs to benefit project cost and schedule.

The Corps is hosting a Pre-Proposal Conference January 29 to further discuss the options, terms, and conditions of the ECI solicitation with private industry.

Further information about early contractor involvement, as well as the overall project, is available at: <http://www.mvn.usace.army>.

[mil/EBS/cont\\_preproposalconference.asp](http://www.mvn.usace.army/mil/EBS/cont_preproposalconference.asp).

### **Path forward**

The Corps considered four different alternatives to provide the residences and businesses of Jefferson, Plaquemines, and Orleans Parish with the Congressionally-designated 100-year level of risk reduction. A surge barrier located below the confluence of the Harvey and Algiers canals is the Corps' proposed action. A more detailed description of the proposed action, as outlined in Individual Environmental Report (IER) 12,

is available on [www.nolaenvironmental.gov](http://www.nolaenvironmental.gov). This IER is currently out for 30-day public review, and the public can submit comments about the project during this time. In addition, the Corps is hosting a joint public hearing with the EPA on Feb. 11th to further address any concerns about the project, especially as it relates to modifying the Bayou Aux Carpes 404(c) site. The Corps will take all comments and concerns into consideration as we move forward to begin construction of this significant risk reduction feature for the West Bank and Vicinity Project.

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*(LACPR, from page 4)*

"The study area for the report is roughly the size of the state of West Virginia," explained Col. Lee, commander of the New Orleans District, "and covers a very complex landscape which required different types of analyses."

The LACPR study area covers such diverse landscapes as bays and estuaries, sounds, as well as Chenier Plain.

"The Corps was asked to complete a report that would typically take five to seven years," added Col. Lee, "and we were asked to complete that report in a mere two years. We are very proud to have done it in just three years."

"The Corps has three major missions that we routinely have to balance: flood control, navigation, and ecosystem protection and restoration. It's no different here," said Troy Constance, branch chief of the Protection and Restoration Office. "We had to consider all those things as well as the diverse

cultures involved in the study area; the people in South Louisiana are extremely diverse."

"When all these factors are taken into consideration, it becomes obvious that there will be conflicting interests and preferences to consider," Constance explained. "For every action there will be a tradeoff. Everything we do will require a decision by the stakeholders on what to compromise."

Over the past three years, the Corps and CPRA have hosted public meetings throughout the study area to obtain suggestions and preferences from stakeholders in the area as well as non-governmental organizations, including academia and environmental groups. So far, 16 meetings have been held, four meetings in each of the four planning areas.

Last year, the State of Louisiana released a report called Louisiana's Comprehensive Master Plan for a Sustainable Coast. The State described this document as "a

conceptual vision... a living document that changes over time as our understanding of the landscape improves and technical advances are made."

The Corps' Technical Report took into consideration the State's Comprehensive Master Plan. "And the Corps' plan is consistent with the State's Plan," said Constance. "However," he added, "the Corps' report also incorporates design elements, hydraulic modeling and analyses, cost estimates, real estate impacts, and economic and ecosystem affects."

"The Corps' Final Technical Report is an array of alternatives," said Constance, "it will demonstrate that a broad range of viable options are available for the reduction of risk from large storm surge events in South Louisiana."

"While the LACPR Technical Report strives to be consistent with the State's Master Plan, the State's plan was completed without the benefit of complete performance



evaluation of the plans and the now-documented tradeoffs,” Constance explained.

“The State and its residents, as the direct bearers of the resultant benefits as well as any tradeoffs, should be the first to begin weighing and determining their preferences.”

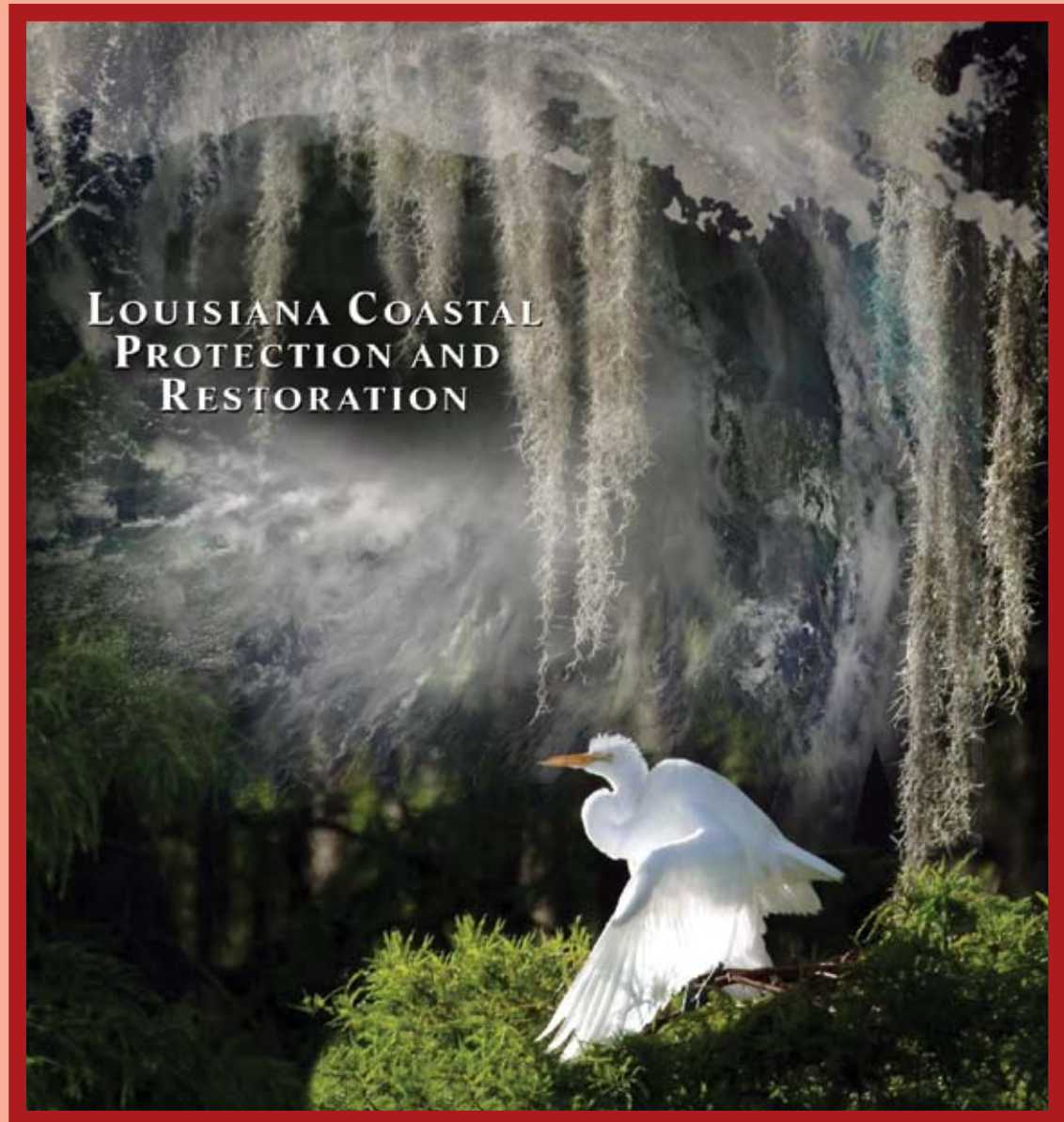
Below is the planned review/approval schedule for the Corps’ Technical Report:

**Dec. 22, 2008**

– submission of Final Technical Report to Mississippi Valley Division (MVD) for review.

Once MVD endorses the Final Technical Report, the report goes to Corps Headquarters in Washington, D.C. which will release it to the National Academy of Science for independent external peer review. All comments and review findings will be resolved at this time.

**June 26, 2009** - the Report goes to the Chief of Engineers for transmittal to the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), and from there to Congress.



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