



Chief's Report sent to Congress

MRGO officially de-authorized

"...a significant milestone in Corps history. ...and a commitment to coastal restoration in south Louisiana"

- Col Alvin Lee, Commander
New Orleans District



The Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (above) was officially de-authorized on June 5 when the Corps of Engineers Chief's Report was forwarded to Congress. A rock closure will be built near Bayou La Loutre to permanently seal the channel.

On Thursday, June 5, 2008, the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (ASA-CW) forwarded the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers Chief's Report for the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MRGO) Deep-Draft De-Authorization Study to Congress. This action officially de-authorized the MRGO from the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway to the Gulf of Mexico in accordance with the Water Resources Development Act of 2007.

The report recommends the construction of a closure structure just south of Bayou La Loutre near Hope-dale, La., at full Federal expense; and further recommends the state provide lands, easements and rights of way as well as the operation and maintenance responsibilities of the

structure upon completion. The structure will consist of more than 391,500 tons of stone and will completely block the MRGO. It is designed to be 12 feet wide at the top and 450 feet wide at the bottom.

In addition to recommendations for de-authorization and physical modification of the MRGO project, the plan will also address ecosystem restoration. It is preliminarily addressed in this report and will be

fully addressed in a supplement which will be provided to Congress.

"As the final report moves to Congress, thus de-authorizing the channel, it marks a significant milestone

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in the Corps' history," said New Orleans District Commander Col. Alvin Lee. "We are ending almost 50 years of shipping on the channel. In addition, we are working with our partners at the state to continue a commitment to coastal restoration here in south Louisiana."

The Corps and the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority of Louisiana have collaborated closely on the MRGO closure. The Corps prepared the final engineering plans for the recommended closure structure while the State of Louisiana is negotiating to acquire the necessary property to build and maintain the MRGO closure structure.

Garret Graves, the Governor's Executive Assistant for Coastal Activities, and Chairman of the Coastal Protection Restoration Authority, said, "I am proud of our collaborative efforts with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to take quick, decisive action and identify funding to close the MRGO. This is a crucial first step toward the restoration of the region's coastal area. The coordinated steps taken to address the IHNC lock and Baptiste Collette represent the type of big-picture thinking that should be incorporated into all of our future decisions."

Construction of the MRGO closure structure is being coordinated with repairs to the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal (IHNC) Lock. The Corps

plans to de-water the IHNC Lock to perform required repairs to the lock and gate structure in August – September 2008. These repairs will increase the reliability of the IHNC Lock prior to construction of the MRGO closure.

Because the IHNC Lock repairs will impact shallow-draft navigation traffic, the Corps is dredging the Baptiste Collette channel to allow marine traffic to bypass the lock. All of the material dredged from Baptiste Collette will be used beneficially to build coastal wetlands in the Mississippi River delta.

"This is a crucial first step toward the restoration of the region's coastal area."

- Garret Graves, Governor's Executive Assistant for Coastal Activities, and Chairman of the state's Coastal Protection Restoration Authority

The work on the MRGO closure structure, which is expected to be completed before the beginning of the 2009 hurricane season, will also be coordinated with the storm surge protection measures for the

Inner Harbor Navigation Canal area. This work is an integral component of the commitment to provide 100-year risk reduction to the Greater New Orleans area in 2011.

The Corps will closely coordinate all related projects and will continue to work closely with stakeholders and the state's Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority.

To view the Chief's Report and the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet Deep-Draft De-Authorization (MRGO) Final Report and Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (LEIS), visit <http://mrgo.usace.army.mil>



Corps reaching out to the community

Emergency Preparedness Day



JUNE 14
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Rain date, June 21

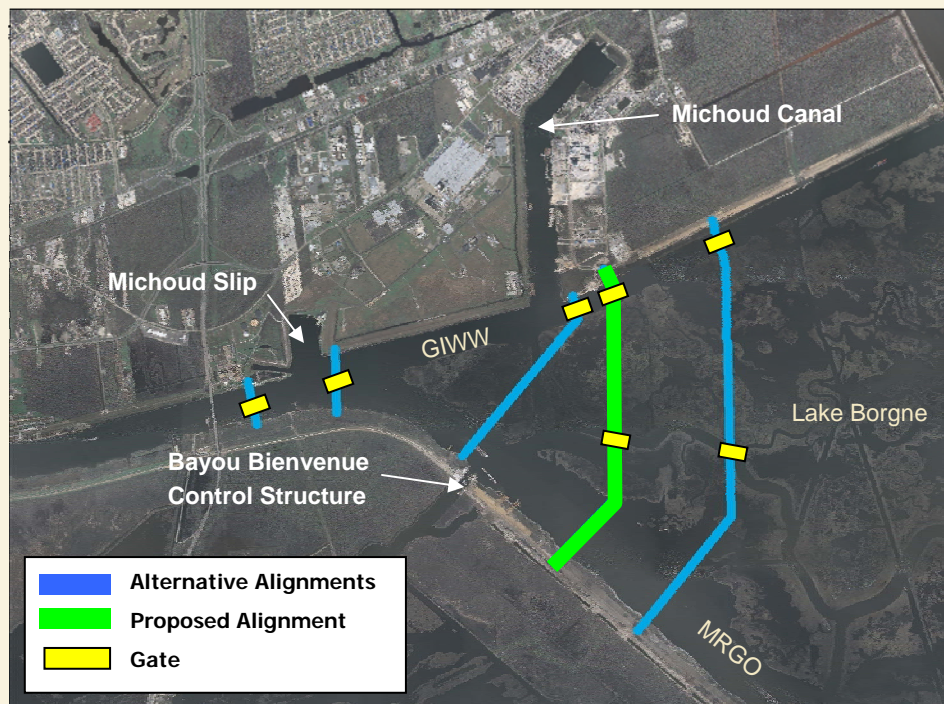
Audubon River View Park
("The Fly")



Come learn about the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System, flood damage reduction, navigation, coastal restoration and more!

Activities for the kids!

Corps proposes surge barrier plan for IHNC area



By Susan Spaht

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has proposed a plan for a constructed barrier that will reduce the risk of storm surge for the communities surrounding the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal (IHNC) area. The plan being proposed is a 1.4-mile concrete wall with navigable gates that stretches across the confluence of the GIWW and the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MRGO).

Five alignments are under consideration (*see illustration, this page*), and have been presented for discussion at numerous public meetings over the past several weeks. The Corps evaluated the engineering advantages and disadvantages, environmental impacts, and socioeconomic impacts of each of these alignments to arrive at the proposed plan.

The IHNC Surge Barrier, as it is called, is the largest design/build civil works project in Corps history. The \$695 million contract was awarded in April to Shaw Environmental & Infrastructure Inc, a local company.

When completed in 2011, the surge barrier will provide 100-year level of protection to communities such as eastern New Orleans and the Lower Ninth Ward, and to the northern areas of St. Bernard Parish. The contractor is also required to provide a substantial amount of risk reduction by hurricane season 2009, in advance of the completion.

This proposed plan, along with the alternative alignments, will be presented to the public for comment in Individual Environmental Report (IER) #11 Tier 2 Borgne in late June, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The public will have 30 days to provide com-

ments and input through upcoming public meetings.

The IER will provide details on the impacts each alternative could have on important resources such as fisheries, navigation, wetlands and recreational opportunities, and will describe how the Corps considered these factors in arriving at the proposed plan.

After he reviews and considers the engineering analysis and public comments, Col. Alvin Lee, Commander of the New Orleans District, will make the final decision on the alignment for the IHNC Surge Barrier. This is expected to take place in late July, and construction is expected to begin in September.

To find out more about upcoming public meetings regarding the IHNC Surge Barrier project and others, go to: www.nolaenvironmental.gov



Corps analyzing source of seepage at 17th Street Canal

Collaborating with partners to select independent peer review team

In mid-May, a couple of wet areas were spotted near the 17th Street Canal floodwall just south of the Hammond Highway bridge. Since there had been no rain, it appeared that water was seeping up from under the surface. The source of the water and the cause are not known at this time.

The seepage is occurring at the area where a flood-wall breach, caused by Hurricane Katrina, was repaired by the Corps immediately after the storm. Corps engineers are confident that the small amount of seepage is not affecting the integrity of the floodwalls.

In late May, Karen Durham-Aguilera, Director of Task Force Hope, called for a meeting with members of the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority – East (SLFPA-E), the state's Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA), and Corps engineers to discuss this issue. "We are collaborating with our partners and stakeholders on an independent

peer review for the 17th Street seepage question," said the director, "and we have our top engineers coordinating this effort."

At the meeting, held on May 30, it was agreed that CPRA and SLFPA-E will recommend a list of engineers as potential reviewers, and SLFPA-E



The arrows indicate the areas, near the 17th Street Canal levee, where two seepage spots were seen recently. The Corps is trying to determine the source of the water seepage. Simultaneously, the Corps is coordinating with its partners to bring on an independent peer review team to render an opinion on the affects of the seepage at this location. (USACE Photo)

will select reviewers from that list. The selected team will include one geotechnical engineer and one structural engineer.

The external peer review team is expected to be selected soon. They will be reviewing the floodwall design and rendering an opinion on whether the seepage affects the integrity of the floodwall at this location.

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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 hurricane recovery work to stakeholders.

This is an online publication and 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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Status Report Newsletter

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Corps sets Public Meetings for summer

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will host eight public meetings, from June through August 2008, to give citizens the opportunity to provide input on development of the Greater New Orleans Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System.

"Feedback provided to the Corps at public meetings is taken seriously and is considered when the Corps makes a decision on projects," said Gib

Owen, chief of the Corps' Ecological Planning and Restoration Section.

Public meetings begin with an open house at 6:00 p.m. A presentation about that area's portion of the hurricane system begins at 7:00 p.m. Questions are answered after that.

Dates of upcoming public meetings:

June 17, 2008

Congregation Gates of Prayer, 4000 West Esplanade Ave., Metairie, LA

Meeting presentation will discuss the LaBranche Wetlands Levee, West Return Floodwall and Lakefront Levees as discussed in IERs 1, 2 and 3 as well as the potential areas from which borrow materials may be obtained (IERs 25 and 26).

July 1, 2008

St. Dominic's Elementary School,

6326 Memphis St., New Orleans, LA

Meeting presentation will discuss the New Orleans Lakefront Levee west of the Industrial Canal, the Outfall Canal Closure Structures, the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal surge barrier as discussed in IERs 4, 5 and 11

Tier 2 Borgne, as well as the potential areas from which borrow may be obtained (IERs 25 and 26).

July 17, 2008

CF Rowley Alternative School, 49 Madison Ave., Chalmette, LA

Meeting presentation will discuss Bayou Bienvenue and Bayou Dupre Control Structures, Caernarvon Floodwall, Chalmette Loop Levee and the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal surge protection barrier as discussed in IERs 8, 9, 10 and 11 Tier 2 Borgne. Meeting will also briefly discuss the potential areas from which borrow materials may be obtained (IERs 25 and 26).

July 22, 2008

Cytec's Tom Call Pavilion, 10800 River Rd., Waggaman, LA

Meeting presentation will discuss Lake Cataouatche Levee, Western Terminus Levee and Company Canal Floodwall projects as discussed in IERs 15, 16 and 17. Meeting will also briefly discuss the potential areas from which borrow materials may be obtained (IERs 25 and 26).

July 29, 2008

Church at New Orleans, 11700 Chef Menteur Hwy, New Orleans, LA

Meeting presentation will discuss the Citrus Lakefront Levee, New Orleans East Levee from the Maxtent Canal to the Michoud Slip and the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal surge protection barrier as discussed in IERs 6, 7, and 11 Tier 2 Borgne. Meeting will also briefly discuss the potential areas from which borrow materials may be obtained (IERs 25 and 26).

August 6, 2008

Lynn Oaks School, 1 Lynn Oaks Dr., Braithwaite, LA

Meeting presentation will discuss Bayou Bienvenue and Bayou Dupre Control Structures, Caernarvon Floodwall, Chalmette Loop Levee and the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal surge protection barrier as discussed in IERs 8, 9, 10 and 11 Tier 2 Borgne. Meeting will also briefly discuss the potential areas from which borrow materials may be obtained (IERs 25 and 26).

August 21, 2008

Our Lady of Holy Cross College's Moreau Center, 4123 Woodland Drive, New Orleans, LA

Meeting presentation will discuss the Harvey and Algiers Canal Levee and Floodwalls, the Hero Canal and the Harvey to Westwego Levee as discussed in IERs 12, 13 and 14.

Meeting will also discuss potential areas from which borrow materials may be obtained (IERs 25 and 26).

Visit www.nolaenvironmental.gov for additional information.



Public meeting on Feb. 26

