



100-YEAR DESIGN ELEVATION MAP RELEASED

Corps to bring levees, floodwalls in system to 100-year level of protection by 2011

By Susan Spaht

The Corps of Engineers recently released to the public the 100-year design elevation map for the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System (HSDRRS) in greater New Orleans. The map is now available on the Corps Web site at:

http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil/hps/100yr_design_map.html

“The higher elevations on the map indicate where the computer modeling predicts a higher storm surge,” said Mike Park, HPS Program Manager for Task Force Hope. “As project features proceed to final design, some elevations will invariably change,” added Park. “But this map generally depicts the system that will be built.”

The 100-year design map shows the heights that levees, floodwalls and



This is a detail of the recently-released 100-Year Design Elevation Map. It shows the heights that levees and floodwalls in the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System will be in 2011. The new map is available on the Corps' Web site at: http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil/hps/100yr_design_map.html

closure structures in the system need to be to provide sufficient protection from a hurricane event that would produce a surge level that has a 1 percent chance of occurring in any given year. Floodwall designs were developed based on projected conditions in 2057.

The map elevations are based on the work of the Interagency Perform-

ance Evaluation Task Force (IPET) and extensive hydraulic research which included:

- Super computer modeling that used multiple storm strengths and paths, both historical and hypothetical;
- consideration of wave action;

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- land subsidence and sea level changes; and
- compaction of levee material.

Since the Corps is building the floodwalls, levees and other protective features as a *system*, a change to one part of the system may necessitate changes to other system features.

The Corps is also looking at alternatives to higher levees and structures, such as breakwaters and wave berms, which can affect the final design elevation. These alternatives will help lessen possibly damaging wave action from a surge.

“The Corps is sharing this map with the community and our stakeholders to help residents, businesses and community leaders make risk-informed decisions for the future,” said Karen Durham-Aguilera, Director of Task Force Hope. “It is our continuing effort to let people know what the Corps is building.”

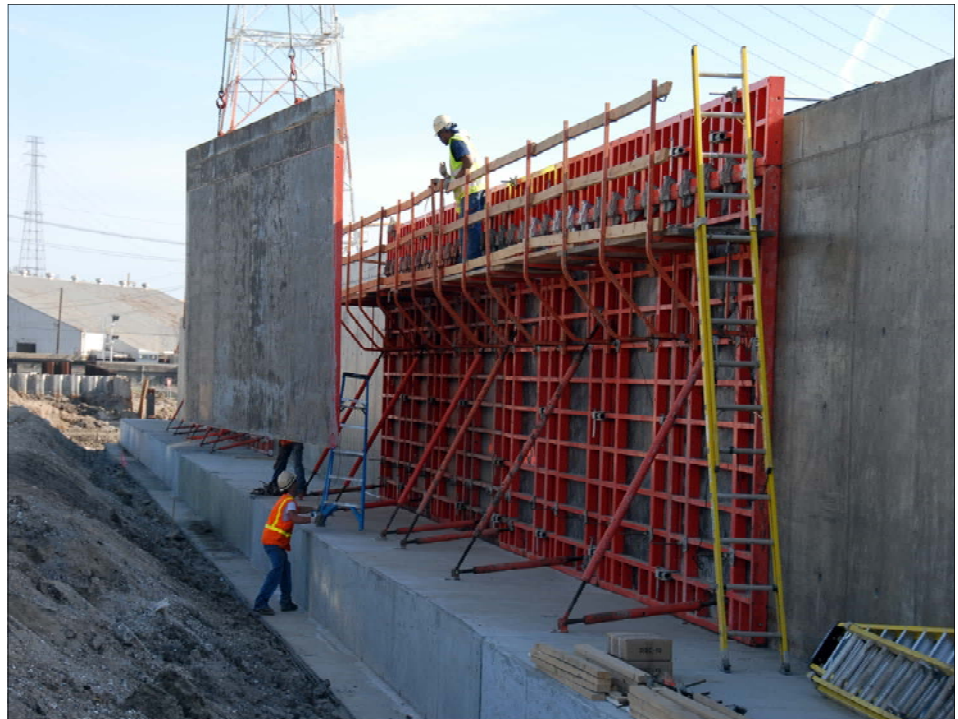
100-Year Design Elevation Maps Questions and Answers

Q. What do you mean by “100-year elevations”?

A. “100-year elevation” refers to a design elevation that would reduce risk from a hurricane event producing a surge height that has a one percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year.

Q. How were the design elevations developed?

A. Hydraulic and coastal engineers from the Corps used output from storm surge, wave and wave over-



The Corps of Engineers is building the levee system in the greater New Orleans area to the 100-year protection level. Levee heights are determined by location, geography and topography. This photo was taken at the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal during construction of a floodwall section. (USACE Photo)

topping models to compute preliminary 100-year design elevations.

Q. Why doesn't the Corps build the protection system for a 500-year event?

A. Congress authorized and funded 100-year hurricane protection, and that is what the Corps is building. The Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration study is evaluating higher levels of protection as well as coastal restoration.

Q. How will the 100-year elevation levels be used?

A. The information will help the Corps and its contracting partners prepare designs, plans and specifications, and cost estimates to upgrade the 325-mile system to the 100-year levels.

Q. How have these design eleva-

tions been validated?

A. The process and elevations have undergone a rigorous technical review. The review panels included subject experts from industry, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and several universities.

Q. Will these elevations provide a means for certifying the system once construction is completed?

A. Yes. The 100-year level of flood protection is a national standard used by most Federal and state agencies, including FEMA. When the HSDRRS is completed in 2011, the system will provide the levels of protection necessary for certification in FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program.



Mississippi Valley Division News

Crear retires as MVD Commander



On Feb. 20, during a formal ceremony in Vicksburg, Ms., Brig. Gen. Robert Crear, right, retired as Commander of the Mississippi Valley Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and as President of the Mississippi River Commission. Brig. Gen. Crear is followed by Lt. Gen. Robert Van Antwerp, Commander and Chief of the Corps of Engineers; Brig. Gen. Michael J. Walsh, Crear's replacement as the new MVD Commander; and Mike Rogers, SES, Director of Programs at MVD. (USACE Photo)

I am ending my career where it all started 32 years and eight months ago," said Brig. Gen. Robert Crear, "...in Vicksburg, Ms."

A Vicksburg native, Brig. Gen. Crear's military career took him to Washington, D.C., Dallas and Iraq where he commanded Task Force Restore Iraqi Oil, a mission setup to extinguish well fires. Coincidentally, his military career ended in his hometown when he retired as Commander of the Mississippi Valley Division (MVD)* on Feb. 20. Nearly 500 people gathered for the Change of Command and his retirement ceremony.

As MVD commander, Brig. Gen. Crear established and led Task

Force Hope in New Orleans, the Corps' effort to support the Federal Emergency Management Agency's national response to Hurricane Katrina.

Brig. Gen. Crear is being succeeded by Brig. Gen. Michael J. Walsh who has just returned from Iraq where he was Commander of the Gulf Region

Division. Previous assignments included Commander of the Corps' South Atlantic Division, and the Sacramento and San Francisco Districts.

Officiating at the Change of Command ceremony was Lt. Gen. Robert L. Van Antwerp, Commander and Chief of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

"To be assigned as the Commander of the Mississippi Valley Division is to receive one of the top jobs in the Corps of Engineers," said Brig. Gen. Walsh. "This Division has always been the powerhouse of the Corps' civil works mission..."



Faces of Hope

“I know how important the work is.”

- Kevin Wagner



In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Kevin Wagner and his team were checking a levee section in St. Bernard Parish near the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet. Wagner (right) and co-worker Glen Gremillion noticed an American flag tangled in a tree, obviously blown there by the hurricane. “Although tattered and torn, it had survived,” said Wagner, “like a symbol of hope among the ruins. I was determined to get that flag and I climbed up the tree. I still have that flag today.”

(USACE Photo)

By Meg Sullivan

As the Senior Project Manager overseeing levees, floodwalls and armoring in Orleans Parish, Kevin Wagner works on behalf of some of the residents hardest hit by Hurricane Katrina.

Wagner knows all too well the heart-ache these people have experienced, because he too lost everything that fateful August day. Wagner and his two younger brothers were born and raised in St. Bernard Parish and all three lost their homes in the storm. His parents lost their home as well.

It would be easy for Wagner, 47, to become frustrated by his job. However, he takes the exact opposite approach. “I enjoy working here,” he said. “I know how important the work is, it makes a big difference in peoples’ lives.”

To say that Kevin Wagner puts his heart and soul into his work is an understatement.

He joined the Corps of Engineers 17 years ago, after graduating from college at age 30. “I worked in a family-owned business in Chalmette and I

had a four-year-old and another baby on the way,” he said.

“When the economy changed [for the worse], I decided to finish my degree and I enrolled at the University of New Orleans.”

While still a student, Wagner got a job working at the Corps. After graduation, he was offered a position in the planning division.

Wagner got involved with the Corps’

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Katrina recovery and rebuilding efforts when he attended an emergency meeting shortly after the hurricane hit the area.

Since he had lived through Hurricane Betsy and had worked on Corps projects on Lake Pontchartrain, he was familiar with what needed to be done. Wagner was assigned to the first post-storm mission called "Task Force Unwatering"

His mission brought him first to Vicksburg, Miss. to Corps Division headquarters, then to Port Allen, La. where the Corps has emergency quarters and offices. "That was really interesting work," he said. "We flew to Baton Rouge in a G3 [helicopter] and worked with state officials to coordinate the work that needed to be done," he said.

"While in Port Allen, we called up contractors to supply materials like pumps, food, water and equipment. During that time we had to cut [manually breach] a levee in St. Bernard to drain the water," he said.

Eventually, Wagner was assigned back to the New Orleans District, where he was put in charge of re-



Kevin Wagner

building efforts in St. Bernard Parish under the Corps' Task Force Guardian mission.

Wagner said his work with Task Force Guardian would prove to be the most rewarding experience of his career.

Task Force Guardian completed 60 contracts in a four-parish area in just nine months. "It was over a billion dollars worth of work. It was an amazing feat. We felt like family after a while because we worked 16-20 hour days and everyone had the same goal," he said. "If I work an eight-hour day now it seems like a vacation."

Most people will never know the incredible sacrifices made by Wagner and some of his colleagues to protect the people of New Orleans after the storm.

Wagner mentioned one co-worker, Glen Gremillion, whose wife was six months pregnant when he came down to New Orleans from Memphis to help in the rebuilding effort.

"His baby was born prematurely in Houston so he went there, and then his father went into intensive care in Mississippi and he went there. But he came back to New Orleans to help, even after all that. It's an honor to be associated with people like that. You couldn't ask for better."

"My brother's house literally floated off the foundation and across the canal. He still came to work after that," he said. "My co-worker Scott Blanchard lost everything and he came back to work."

Wagner said his experience working with the Corps of Engineers has flown by, with a lot of proud accomplishments along the way. However, he said his proudest accomplishment has been his 23 years of marriage to wife Melissa. "I'm so proud of my wife because while I was working those 16-hour days, she was doing all the work at home and supporting our family. I'm really proud of that."



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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 awards largest floodwall construction contract on West Bank
New floodwall section for Harvey Canal

The Corps of Engineers has awarded a \$132 million contract to construct a 8,300-foot floodwall stretching south from Harvey Canal sector gate at Lapalco Blvd. to the S-curve of Old Peters Road.

Under post-Katrina legislation, the federal government will pay for 100 percent of the project. The Corps is working in coordination with its non-federal partners: the Louisiana Department of Transportation and De-



“This is the largest floodwall construction contract on the West Bank,” said Stuart Waits, the Corps’ Senior Project Manager for floodwalls. “It is one of five contracts that will provide flood protection to the area, from Lapalco Blvd. to the Algiers Canal.”

The contract was awarded to Cajun Constructors Inc. of Baton Rouge, La., to build a floodwall to elevation +14 feet using T-wall construction. This project will provide flood protection for residents and businesses in the Harvey area.

velopment, the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-West, and the West Jefferson Levee District.

The floodwall will be built using over 30,400 cubic yards of concrete, which is about 61,560 tons of material. The floodwall foundation requires 520,000 feet of steel H-piles, about 98 miles long. That is approximately the distance between New Orleans and Biloxi, Ms.



Corps continues public meetings series

The Corps of Engineers is hosting a series of public meetings on environmental compliance efforts and construction updates on the 100-year Hurricane and Storm Damage Reduction System in New Orleans. For more information on meetings go to: http://www.nolaenvironmental.gov/home/nola_calendar.aspx

All meetings start at the same time:

- Open House: 6:00 p.m.**
- Presentation: 7:00 p.m.**

The next meeting is:
March 13 - IER 12, 13 and borrow
Our Lady of Holy Cross College
Moreau Center, 4123 Woodland Drive
New Orleans