



US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
Mississippi Valley Division



## Corps Hurricane Response

### Task Force Hope Status Report

April 26, 2006

The US Army Corps of Engineers established Task Force Hope immediately after Hurricane Katrina hit the Louisiana and Mississippi coasts. Task Force Hope's mission is to manage the work on levees and floodwalls, debris removal and all emergency response efforts that Federal Emergency Management Agency requested the Corps to carry out. Task Force Hope oversees the efforts of Task Force Guardian and Recovery Field Offices in Louisiana and Mississippi. Task Force Guardian is repairing damages to the Greater New Orleans federal hurricane and flood protection system resulting from Hurricane Katrina, restoring the system to pre-storm levels of protection by June 1, 2006.

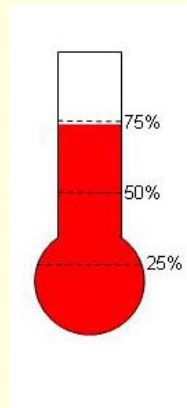
### Hurricane Protection System Restoration

#### Percent of Pre-Katrina Protection Restored

73 % complete

22 of 59 contracts complete

The Hurricane Response  
Web site is located at: [http://  
www.mvd.usace.army.mil/  
hurricane/](http://www.mvd.usace.army.mil/hurricane/)



#### Task Force Hope Mission Timeline:

##### Repair:

May 31, 2006 (tentative)—Debris removal complete in Mississippi.

June 1, 2006— Pre-Katrina level of protection restored.

March 23, 2007 (tentative)—Debris removal mission completion in Louisiana.

##### Restore:

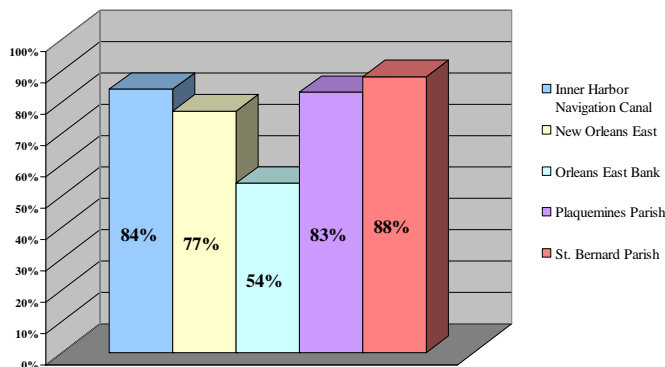
September 1, 2007—All undamaged levees/floodwalls will be returned to original design heights (with the exception of the IHNC flood gate project areas, which will be protected once the flood gates are completed).

September 2007—Construction of unfinished portions of projects will be completed.

##### Improve:

2010 – Other improvements, such as reinforcing levees, IHNC gates and flood proofing pumping stations will also be made to optimize performance of the existing system.

Hurricane Protection System Restoration Status



The percent figures represent actual construction. The reason Orleans East Bank shows only 54% is that the construction there includes additional improvements (temporary gate closures and pumps).

#### In this issue:

- The Faces of Hope .....page 2
- Levee Certification.....page 4

## The Faces of Hope:

# *Lynn Tinto: New Orleans native survives, fights back*

**By Casondra Brewster**  
*Task Force Hope*

**A** die-hard New Orleans native, Lynn Tinto, will tell you that living in the Big Easy has been anything but that for the

last eight months. But being a Corps employee gives her a sense that she's making a difference.

"Life got turned upside-down," Tinto said. "My house in Gentilly flooded; I moved three – or was it four? – times and now I'm in a FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) trailer that sits in

front of my house."

Like other Gulf Coast residents, Tinto has had to maintain an unusual lifestyle since Hurricane Katrina and Rita made landfall last year. She said everything presents a new challenge.

"Where do you start? You go from not having a place to live, to perhaps living with your family, not having your stuff, having to decide what you'll do with your property..."

But initially after the storm, there was one major thing for the 25-year Corps employee to take care of before being able to report and concentrate on work.

"I was scheduled to fly to Philadelphia on Aug. 29 with my youngest daughter to take her back to college," Tinto said. "On the Saturday (before), I knew that was going to change because of the storm."

They packed her daughter's stuff in the car and left at 4 a.m. Sunday. She got her daughter moved in and safe in her dorm and left Philly Tuesday afternoon. She



Courtesy of Lynn Tinto

**Corps Employee, Lynn Tinto and her dog, 'Piggy,' sit on the steps of her hurricane-damaged home in the Gentilly section of New Orleans. The trailer in the foreground was provided by FEMA and is what she's calling 'home' currently.**

*See 'Faces,' continued on page 3*

The mission of the **Status Report Newsletter** is to support the information program for Task Force Hope and its stakeholders. It also serves as one of the Task Force Hope's primary communication tools for accurately transmitting the work of not only Task Force Hope, but the efforts of Task Force Guardian and the Recovery Field Offices in Louisiana and Mississippi to the Gulf Coast community and its citizens. This is an online publication and open to public distribution. This issue and past issues can be found at: <http://www.mvd.usace.army.mil/hurricane>. Comments and questions may be sent to the Status Report Newsletter editor at: [b2fwdpao@usace.army.mil](mailto:b2fwdpao@usace.army.mil).

The **Status Report Newsletter**  
Task Force Hope  
Public Affairs Office MVD-FWD  
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(504) 862-1688

*'Faces,' continued from page 2*

then stayed with her siblings on her trip home through Washington DC and Georgia.

Since Tinto was the Project Engineer with the Hired Labor Units, she knew she had to get back as fast as she could.

"I got to Port Allen (LA) Thursday evening after the storm, knowing that was where the hired labor crews were assembled to go to work," she said.

Basically as soon she got in town the Emergency Operations Center requested her to come in as the Marine Manager for the mission. She convoyed in with some other Corps folks delivering supplies to the district.

"It was weird to live and sleep right here at work with power out to the city, 75 percent of it flooded and crazy people in the streets. But I was OK because I knew my family was safe. Both my daughters were away at college – (Ole Miss and U.Penn) and they were safe. My mom had evacuated with my sister and her husband. They had my dog for safekeeping... And so I worked in the EOC as battle captain for about a month, living on the Dredge Wheeler."

She's worked non-stop on hurricane recovery missions since that first fateful week. She worked on the



Courtesy of Lynn Tinto

**A debris pile sits on the curb next to Lynn Tinto's home in the Gentilly section of New Orleans. Cleaning up was the first step to recovering the life Tinto knew prior to Hurricane Katrina.**

initial emergency response, trying to close the breaches and unwatering the city, as well as trying to get people back to work at the district. From there she began working with Task Force Guardian, which has the mission of rebuilding the levees.

"It helps me feel more confident (in the recovery process), because I at least know that the levee question will be addressed."

Rebuilding is a huge focus for the Tulane Civil Engineering graduate and she doesn't mince words about the hard work ahead.

"Living here now is a challenge," Tinto said. "Things are slowly getting better, but rebuilding will take a long time. Things are so messed up and the city's rebuilding plans are coming along slower than people want. There is conflicting information about rebuilding. People are reluctant to come (back) here because there is not a lot of housing and it has become very expensive. But, there is a lot of work here, both with the Corps and outside of the Corps."

However, if you ask her about leaving the Crescent City, she'll give you a slow Louisiana headshake 'no.'

"This is home," she said. "Things happen that can turn your world upside down in a heartbeat. You don't always have time to make it right; so focus on things that are really important, take the time to make things right with people you know and love. Don't sweat the small stuff.

"Then do what you can to help people whenever you get the chance because it is the right thing to do and it helps you as much as it does them. If you are ever on the opposite end of that and need help, accept it graciously. Keep your sense of humor intact – you'll need it."

Tinto says right now she just keeps working hard on the Corps projects and working to get her house back to being livable. When she thinks about the future, she still sees that she'll be working for the Corps, owning more clothes than just blue jeans and hopefully not living in a FEMA trailer.



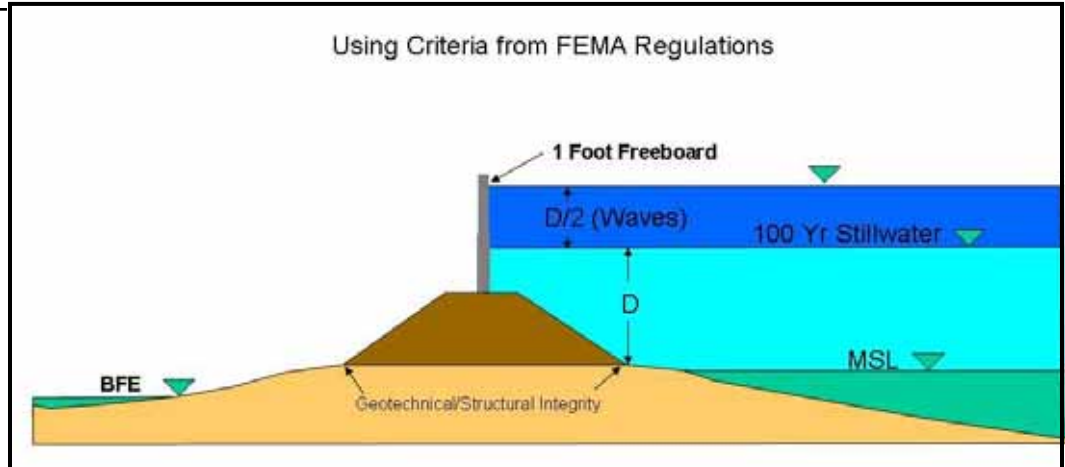
# Levee Certification: *One more step in hurricane protection*

**By Casondra Brewster**  
*Task Force Hope*

The Corps is working with its partners to make the New Orleans levee system better and stronger than ever before. Its around the clock work will set the stage for restoring the nationally-significant commercial and cultural value of the New Orleans area and the Gulf Coast.

If proposals now before Congress are approved, the Corps will be making further improvements to the system.

“It is critical that as we plan and execute the work to restore the hurricane protection system we work with federal, state, and local agencies to be sure needs and requirements are being met,” said Task Force Hope Director Dan Hitchings. “One important step is



the certification by the Corps to FEMA for 100 year level of protection. We understand how important the work on the hurricane protection system is. Many of our team members depend on it, because they live here. They want it better, safer and stronger, too.”

In order for FEMA to issue base flood elevations within an area protected by levees and floodwalls, FEMA requires that the levees and floodwalls protecting that area be certified.

One of the steps in ensuring those safeguards is to make sure the system meets the requirements for certification established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

In order for FEMA to issue base flood elevation within an area protected by levees and floodwalls, FEMA requires that the levees and floodwalls protecting that area be certified. Base flood elevations are used by FEMA to establish flood insurance rates and by local governments to regulate flood-plain development.

Certification means that the protection system is designed to prevent floodwaters from entering the protected area during a 100-year event. For New Orleans and Vicinity, levee certification means that the Corps has properly designed and constructed the HPS to the appropriate height.

Determination of the appropriate height for certification is based on a combination of the heights of

*See 'Levees,' continued on page 6)*

## Certification Math

**100-year storm level = still-water elevation + wave height + free board**  
**For example:**

*If:*

**Still-water elevation = 12'**

*Then:*

**wave height = 1/2 x 12' = 6'**

**Free board = 1'**

*So:*

**100 year storm level = 12' + 6' + 1' = 19'**

**19' = Levee height for certification\***

**\*(for areas where still-water elevation equals 12 feet)**

# Hurricane protection improves with tree removal

By Kim Gillespie  
Task Force Guardian

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Task Force Guardian will begin cutting trees later this week along the 17<sup>th</sup> Street, Orleans Avenue and London Avenue outfall canals; the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal; and the Lake Pontchartrain lakefront in Orleans and Jefferson Parishes.

The removal of trees and woody plants is part of the repair effort and is necessary to help insure the integrity of the hurricane protection system. Trees blowing over and uprooting during a hurricane or tropical storm may remove large amounts of soil from the levee or its

toe, or fall on a floodwall, damaging and weakening the system and introducing the risk of failure.

Trees located on or adjacent to a levee or floodwall pose an additional risk to the integrity of the system by providing a pathway for water to work its way into the levees. Their extensive root systems can serve as pathways for seepage, particularly after they die and their root systems begin to decay.

The trees will be removed in phases. The first phase of the effort will focus on cutting and removing trees and woody plants on the water side of the canals, and within the known levee and floodwall rights-of-way. As additional rights-of-way are established, trees within

15 feet of the levee toe may be removed to insure the integrity of, and prevent damage to the system.

Uprooted trees will be removed, their holes filled in, smoothed and cultivated with grass. Generally, the stump will remain. An estimated 850 landowners will be affected by the tree removal effort. Efforts will be made to contact those owners, and notices will be published in the newspaper.

During the next phase the contractors will remove the stump and root system, fill and grade the holes, and reseed. The Corps is reviewing its criteria for root-free and vegetation-free zones, and changes in that criteria may result in the need to acquire additional rights-of-way and cutting of additional trees.

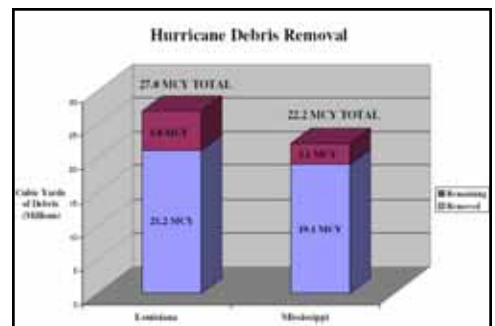
Residents or media with questions concerning tree removal should contact Task Force Guardian toll-free at 1-866-830-5038.



Lane Lefort

## Surveying the progress....

Fred Young, project manager (second from right) explains progress on the repairs 17th Street Canal project area to Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), the Hon. J.P. Woodley (second from left). Woodley spent two days on the ground in Southeast Louisiana this past week. Col Lewis Setliff, Commander, Task Force Guardian (far left) and Duke Ducarpe, quality assurance inspector for the 17th Street Canal project accompanied Woodley on his site visit.



For public or media information on Debris Removal Operations, please contact the respective state offices: Mississippi Recovery Field Office at (601) 631-5065 or the Louisiana Recovery Field Office at (225) 218-9325.

*'Levees,' continued from page 4)*

waves and storm surge.

The 100-year still-water elevation is determined by analyzing historical storm records and determining the height that the storm surge has a one percent chance of reaching or exceeding in any given year. The still-water elevation is calculated by using detailed and thorough hydrological modeling tools and considering the worst-case storm paths for the given areas.

Following that, scientists need to add on wave height. There are a variety of methods to calculate this figure. The FEMA method for wave height is to add one half of the still-water elevation. In addition to the wave height, FEMA adds one additional foot of free board. This is done to provide additional protection from overtopping the levees.

In areas where wave effects are minimal, as in canals and other protected areas, wave height figures are not part of the equation for the certification height. However,

three-feet of free board is added to the still water surge height.

"Freeboard is just additional height added on in design above what the maximum water level is expected to be," said Steve Sweeney, Task Force Hope deputy

***It's important for people to know that while the risk of hurricane damage will be significantly reduced by this work, it won't be eliminated. — Jim Ward, Deputy Director of Task Force Hope***

program manager. "If you are talking about a levee, it is one to three feet of earth. For a wall, you are adding one to three feet of concrete."

Sweeney explained it further, "For an area where the 100-year still-water elevation is 12 feet, the required level of protection is 12 feet plus 6 feet for waves, plus 1 foot free board, which equals 19 feet."

The Corps' goal to achieve this

certification process is to have it occur concurrently with the completion of its 2010 improvements of the Hurricane Protection System.

But certification of the levees may not be the end of the story.

"It's important for people to know," said Jim Ward, Deputy Director of Task Force Hope, "that while the risk of hurricane damage will be significantly reduced by this work, it won't be eliminated. A 100-year flood is an extreme event, but if you buy a house that has a 1 percent chance of flooding in any year and get and get a 30-year mortgage, there is a 26 percent chance that your home will be

flooded before the mortgage is paid off. That's why Congress has tasked the Corps to look at providing even better protection."

The Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration analysis and design will look at a wide range of alternatives for providing higher levels of protection and making New Orleans residents safer. A preliminary report will be completed in June 2006, and the final report will be completed in December 2007.

Points of Contact for Information		
Topic	Phone	Organization
Overall information about work being performed by the Corps of Engineers in the New Orleans District	504-862-2126	New Orleans District Public Affairs
Levee construction being performed to restore the hurricane and flood protection system to pre-Katrina condition by June 1, 2006	504-862-2076	Task Force Guardian Public Affairs
Debris Removal in Louisiana	225-218-9325	Louisiana Recovery Field Office
Debris Removal in Mississippi	601-631-5065	Mississippi Recovery Field Office
Overall Task Force Hope Information	504-862-1836	Task Force Hope Public Affairs