



# Corps Hurricane Response

## Task Force Hope Status Report

April 19, 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 main 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.

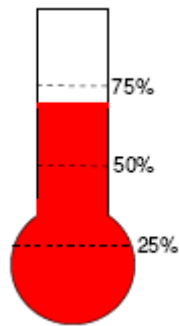
## Hurricane Protection System Restoration

### Percent of Pre-Katrina Protection Restored

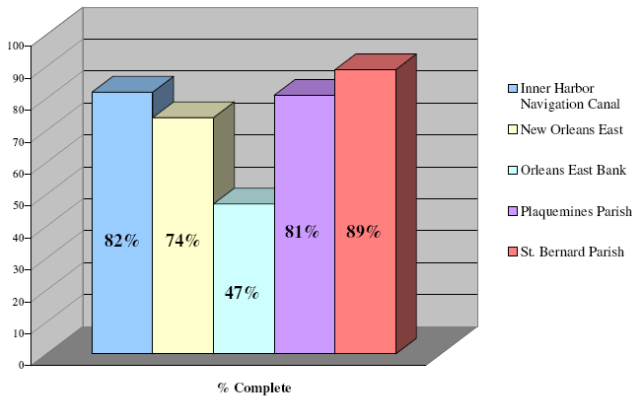
69 % complete

22 of 59 contracts complete

The Hurricane Response website is located at: <http://www.mvd.usace.army.mil/hurricane/>



Hurricane Protection System Restoration Status



The percent figures represent actual construction. The reason Orleans East Bank shows only 47% is that the construction there includes additional improvements (temporary gate closures and pumps).

### Time lines:

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

June 1, 2006—All damaged federal levee repair work will be done.

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

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 ongoing projects will be completed.

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.

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Leroy Smith

## The Faces of Hope:

### *Leroy Smith: Confident in the Corps*

**By Robin Fulkerson**  
*Task Force Guardian and ERDC PAO*

#### **'It didn't look that bad'**

During Smith's 14 months in Iraq, Hurricane Katrina swept through New Orleans. "I was watching it on the Internet," he said. "It didn't look that bad and I figured I would just have a foot of water in the house."

Unfortunately, when Smith returned to his home in New Orleans in December, nothing prepared him for what he saw. "My heart stopped when I saw the devastation," remembered Smith. "It was so overwhelming; my house and the city were destroyed."

Smith lives on Congress Drive, three miles east of the Mirabeau breach on London Avenue and two miles north of the France Road breach on the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal. The surges from the two breaches seemed to converge on his home, filling it with 5-feet of murky water.

Before the storm arrived, Smith's wife and daughter evacuated to Lafayette, La. They will stay with his mother-in-law in Vacherie, La. until they can rebuild their home. Recently, Smith received a FEMA trailer in front of his home to cut down on his long commute to St. James Parish to stay with his family. "It's a warm bed to sleep in," he said. "You have to make do with what you have."

His home stands vacant and gut-

ted like many others on the block. Upon completing the London Avenue project, he will start rebuilding his home. Smith is hopeful that he'll be able to use the original foundation, but, if not, he plans to start from scratch. "We're moving back," he boasted. "There is no place like New Orleans—it's home."

#### **Confidence and Praise**

The London Avenue Canal interim gated closure structures project is 30 percent complete (April 12). Smith gave high praise to his coworkers and MR Pittman, the local contractor on the job. "MR Pittman is doing an outstanding job. All these guys are from here and they are determined to improve this canal and get this project built on time."

"The Corps has the best design engineers and they're up to the challenge of keeping the water out of New Orleans," said Smith.

While contractors have cut back slightly from working 24 hours a day out of concern for their workers, they continue to complete the project on schedule. Smith is confident the work will be completed in time for the start of hurricane season.

Along with his confidence in the Corps, Smith is quick to offer praise where it is due. His project team,

*(See 'Faces,' Continued on page 3)*

## Corps, local contractor bring IHNC project another step closer to June 1

By Kim Gillespie

Task Force Guardian

A U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Task Force Guardian contractor placed the final two concrete L-wall floodwalls on the west side of the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal from south of France Road Ramp to north of Benefit Street. The work was performed by Louisiana-based contractor MR Pittman Group of Harahan.

The final L-wall placement on the west side of the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal marks another milestone in the Corps' mission to restore the Greater New Orleans Hurricane Protection System to pre-Katrina conditions by June 1, 2006.

"Placement of these final two walls means there is now basic protection restored to this section of the wall in this west area of the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal," said Stuart Waits, project manager. "Work will continue, and by June 1, the start of hurricane sea-

*'Faces,' continued from page 2*

son, it will actually be better protection than the pre-Katrina condition because of the L-wall design, the steel H-piles, longer steel sheet piles and scour protection," he emphasized.

Joe Thomas, project team leader; Al Gonzales and Roy Lawson, construction representatives; and Frank Richter, architect/engineer inspector, are instrumental in keeping the construction on track. He also extends his hand to the Corps family and to those who came down to help New Orleans get back on her feet.

"This effort is about our community and the Corps' reputation. I believe in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and I believe in what we're doing."

### 'Come on Home'

Smith is not only confident in the Corps' ability to reconstruct the hurricane protection system, he is confident that New Orleanians will return. "Come on back home," he said. "The Corps is ensuring these levees are going to work and we're going to control this water."

"Home is where your heart is and, if that's New Orleans, come on back."

The repairs to the west side of the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal floodwall included removing approximately 1,300 feet of the damaged concrete I-wall and replacing the damaged section with a new concrete L-wall. The new wall is supported by steel H-piles and longer steel sheet piles.

The Corps of Engineers awarded the \$7.5 million contract in October 2005, with completion scheduled for May 2006. This is one of eight contracts for restoration of the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal hurricane protection.

"All eight contracts are well underway, and the total Inner Harbor Navigation Canal project is 79 percent complete," Waits said. "We are on target to restore protection at the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal before the start of the 2006 hurricane season."

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**Five little kittens who were rescued...** U.S. Army Photo

The Penton family (above), Lakeshore, Miss., asked the Corps to try to save a litter of kittens located under the rubble that was about to be picked up and removed from their lot per their Right of Entry authorization. The possibility was discussed with the track hoe operator, Mr. Herb Lappie, but no promises were given. Mr. Lappie skillfully removed the collapsed structure, therefore allowing a successful rescue of 'Katrina' and her five kittens. As seen in the photo, the family with Mr. Lappie, were extremely grateful.

## Focus on upcoming Inner Harbor Navigation Canal work

As the 2006 hurricane season date of June 1 nears, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers moves closer to completing work that will provide a pre-Katrina level of protection. However, the actual protection that will be provided by that date will be significantly better than what existed when Katrina struck.

Current levee construction along the IHNC repairs damage from Katrina; these repairs will provide levels of protection beyond what was present in August 2005. All damaged areas along the IHNC are being repaired back to the authorized design heights in areas that had settled and subsided. These repaired sections are being constructed using T-wall or L-wall construction to replace I-walls. Besides being stronger, this substitution will provide additional protection from overtopping protecting from back-

side scour and erosion, factors which contributed to failures in this area.

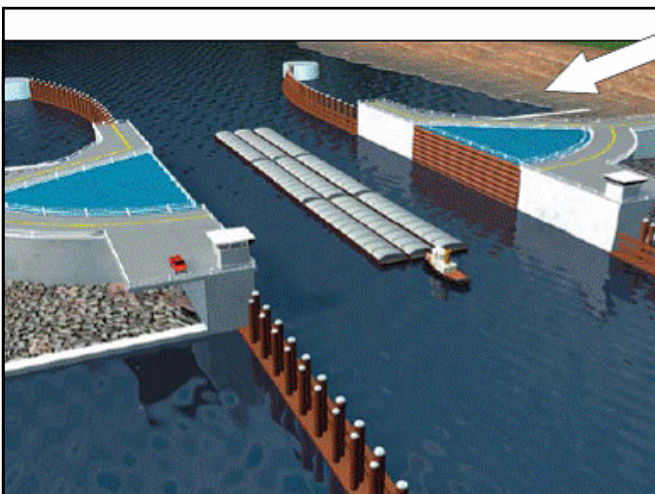
In addition, all other areas where overtopping caused protected side scour and erosion have been repaired. Along these areas erosion and scour protection has been added to reduce the likelihood of failures similar to what occurred in other areas along the IHNC.

Even in areas that were not damaged in hurricane Katrina, there are levees and floodwalls that have settled and subsided below their design heights. The Corps will restore the hurricane protection system to authorized levels of protection in almost all areas by September 2007. The exception is at the IHNC. After examining plans and designs the Corps identified a more effective method of providing protection from potential storm surge

in these areas. This area includes the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal (IHNC) and along the Gulf Inner-Coastal Water Way (GIWW) from the IHNC to the confluence with the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MRGO). The solution is to provide navigable flood gates at Seabrook and near Paris Road. These gates will prevent storm surge from entering these navigable waterways. Congress is now considering a Bush Administration request for funds to construct these gates. Congress is not expected to approve this project until after its current recess.

Once in place, these two flood-gates will eliminate the need to restore the existing levees and flood-wall to design height. But, construction of these floodgates will not be completed until 2010, along with

See 'Focus,' Continued on page 5



*GIWW Structure Open for Navigation*

Sector gates will remain open to allow normal navigational traffic along the GIWW and the MRGO. A smaller navigable flood control structure at Seabrook will allow traffic to pass between Lake Pontchartrain and the IHNC. These structures will be closed only during storm events. (Arrow points to the movable sector gates.)



*GIWW Structure Closed for Flood Control*

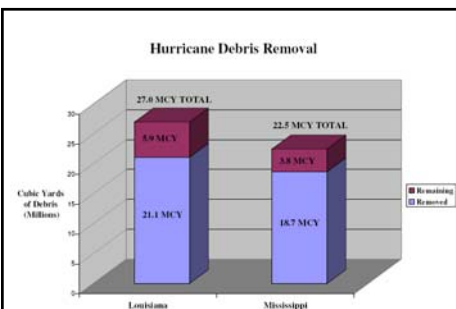
When water levels rise during tropical storm events, the flood (sector) gates will close and prevent storm surge from entering the protected areas.

*'Focus,' continued from page 4*

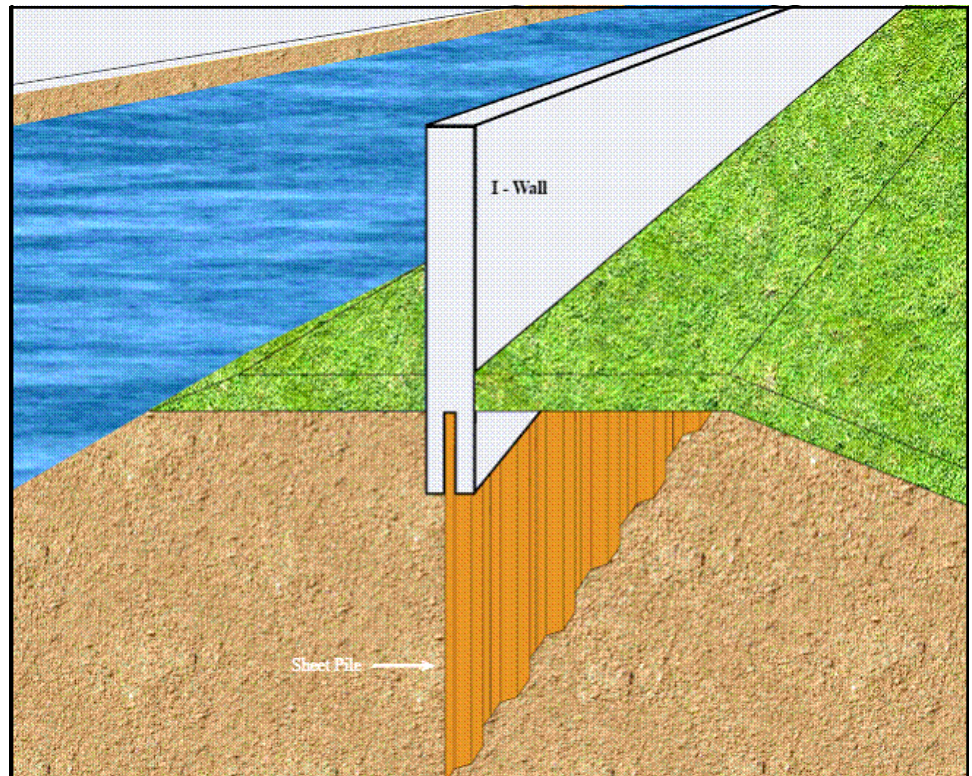
other improvements such as flood-proofing pumping stations and reinforcing levees. This alternative therefore delays the restoration of protection to authorized design levels for these areas until these structures' construction is completed.

"It should be clarified that if the navigable flood gates are funded by Congress, full design levels of protection will not be achieved along the IHNC until 2010," said Steve Sweeney, Task Force Hope deputy program manager. "While this delays the restoration of the non-damaged levees to original authorized design levels, it is a much better option for the long-term protection along the IHNC."

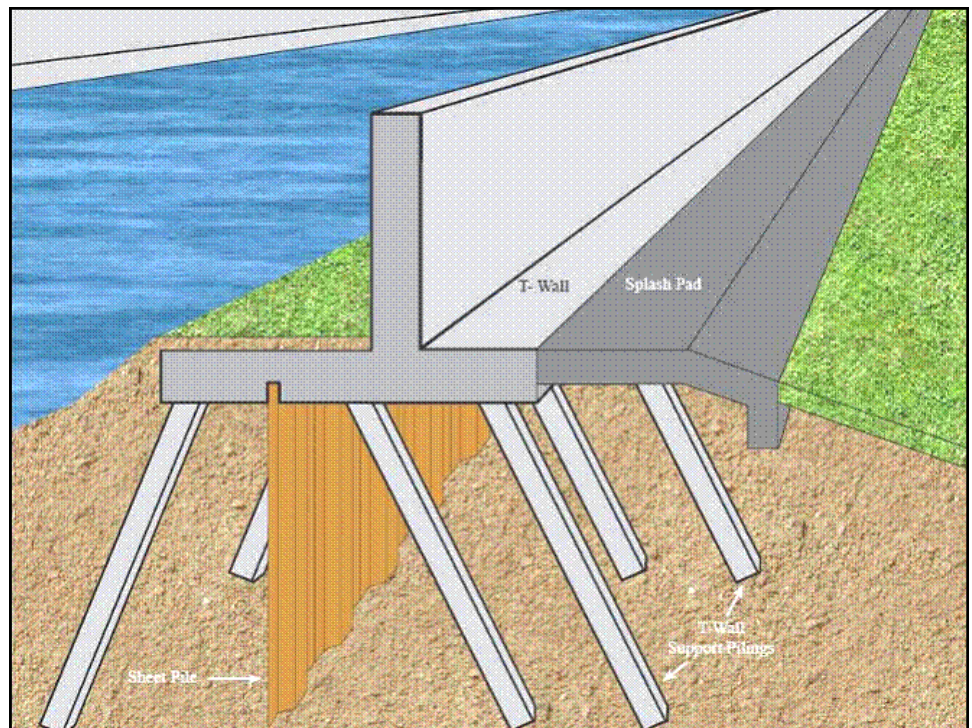
In the interim, existing repairs correct deficiencies that existed prior to the 2005 Hurricane Season and significantly reduce the likelihood of failures resulting from a similar-in-strength hurricane like Katrina.



The Corps continues to receive calls from individuals with questions regarding debris and/or tree removal on private property. For information regarding debris or tree removal, please contact (225) 218-9325 in Louisiana or (601) 631-5065 in Mississippi. More information may be found at: <http://www.mvd.usace.army.mil/hurricane/chr.php>.



I-walls consist of steel sheet piling driven deep enough to provide both stability to the wall and act as a seepage barrier. A concrete wall is then cast on top of the sheet piling to achieve the full wall height.



T-walls are cast on deep support pilings for improved stability with a sheet piling seepage barrier. Either system can improved with additional splash pads for erosion protection.

# Last vessel impacting restoration of hurricane protection removed

By Kim Gillespie

Task Force Guardian

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, working in conjunction with the U.S. Coast Guard, contractors, and private owners, moved the final vessel impacting levee repairs from a Plaquemines Parish area levee this week. The vessel, a barge, was moved from the levee by its owner this week.

Task Force Guardian, the Corps of Engineers organization responsible for the recovery of the Hurricane Protection System throughout New Orleans, found more than 150 barges and ships impeding their recovery efforts as they lay stranded on various levees and

work-sites. Removing the vessels allows Task Force Guardian to complete the repairs of the Hurricane Protection System to pre-storm condition by the start of the hurricane season on June 1, 2006.

"This is great news for Task Force Guardian," said Don Rawson, the Corps of Engineers' project manager responsible for insuring removal of the vessels. "The last barge was the only vessel that remained in the way of our construction work. There are still some boats and barges stranded throughout the area, but our mission was specific to our repair efforts and keeps us on track for meeting our June 1 goal," he

added.

Rawson also praised the efforts of the U.S. Coast Guard, which was instrumental in helping to remove the numerous stranded vessels over the last five months. The overall removal effort was at a cost of more than \$3 million and was well coordinated between the Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Coast Guard, the shipping/navigation industry, and private owners.

Task Force Guardian's repair work in the entire New Orleans area is more than 60 percent complete and in Plaquemines and St. Bernard Parishes the work is approaching the 80 percent completion mark.



## 9th Ward Face-to-Face...

Task Force Guardian Commander Col. Lewis F. Setliff III (left) updated members of the 9th Ward Homeowners' Association Sat., April 15, about the work the Corps of Engineers is doing with its contractor partners to restore the New Orleans Hurricane Protection System to pre-Katrina conditions before June 1. Using slides, a video and story boards, Setliff talked his audience through many of the 59 projects being done by Task Force Guardian. He then took questions and listened to the individual concerns of residents from New Orleans' hard-hit 9th Ward.

### 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