



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Mississippi Valley Division



Corps Hurricane Response

Task Force Hope Status Report Newsletter

August 14, 2009

Corps of Engineers committed to its goal:

100-Year Level Protection in June 2011

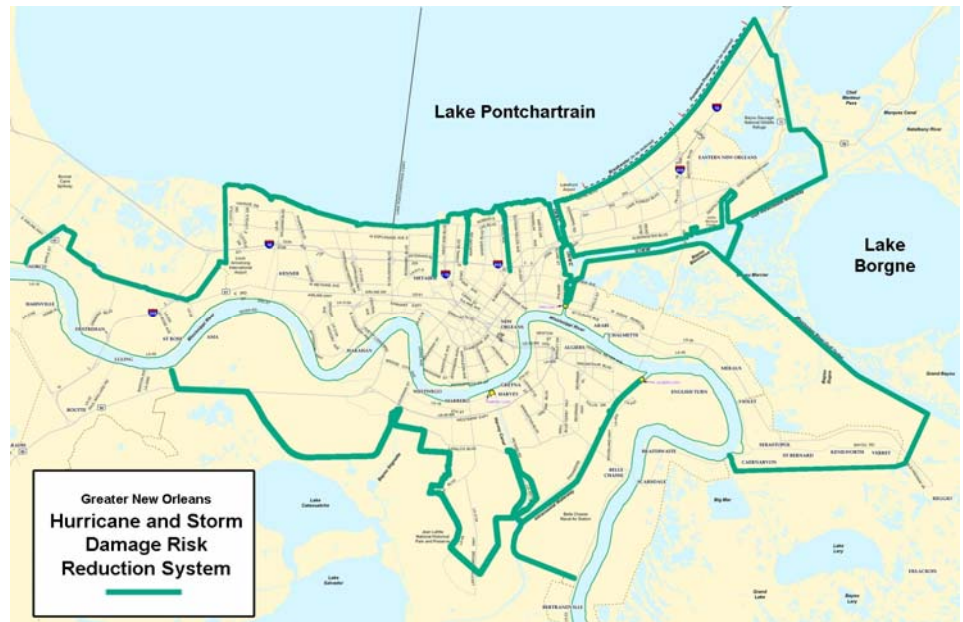
**Monumental effort
requires continued
shared responsibilities
with all agencies involved**

by Susan Spaht

“We set a goal of having 100-year level surge protection in place for the greater New Orleans area by June 2011, and that is what we continue to work toward,” said Karen Durham-Aguilera, Director of Task Force Hope. “It is a goal that is ambitious and aggressive, but achievable.

“All along, we said we cannot achieve this monumental effort alone – it will require continued shared responsibilities, organizational teamwork and constant effort by the Corps of Engineers, the State of Louisiana, the Levee Authorities, the Parishes, other Federal agencies, all of our partners.”

The Corps of Engineers is constructing a nearly \$15 billion program – the Hurricane and Storm Damage



The Corps of Engineers is building the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System with a goal of completing 100-year level protection in June 2011. Construction of the System involves more than 350 contracts.

Risk Reduction System (HSDRRS) - in a mere six years. It is an unprecedented and enormous effort that involves development of new design criteria, project modeling, environmental compliance including more than 125 public meetings, and acquiring private and government-owned real estate. Additionally, the Corps is responsible for construction of interior drainage projects under the Southeast Louisiana Urban Flood Damage Reduction Project

(SELA), and other auxiliary features authorized and funded by Congress.

Partner Responsibilities

The Corps is responsible for design, plans, specifications and construction of HSDRRS projects, and meet-

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ing important milestones with its partners to assure its June 2011 goal. "These are milestones that must happen to get to the goal of 2011," said the Director.

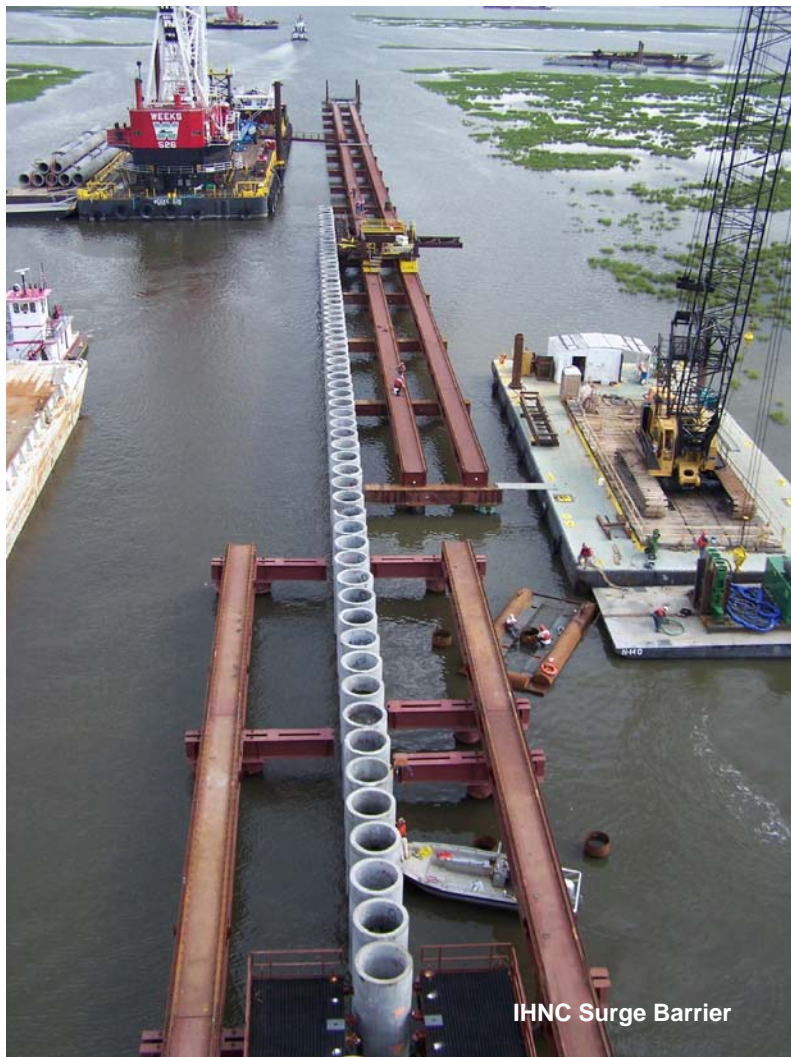
The State of Louisiana, in addition to its cost-share commitment, is responsible for acquiring the necessary real estate interests, coordinating utility relocations where necessary, and issuing rights-of-entry for construction of HSDRRS projects.

For every project, whether cost-shared or fully Federally-funded, the Corps must have a written Project Partnership Agreement (PPA), a document that defines roles, responsibilities and obligations of the Corps and the State relative to that project.

Each PPA must be completed and signed by the Army and the State within a certain timeframe to keep that project on schedule.

The Corps is dependent on the State to acquire land that is needed for construction of certain projects and, occasionally, for access to property to complete investigations. These responsibilities also must be achieved in a timely manner to keep projects on schedule.

The Levee Authorities, in many cases, own, claim or control the land needed for levees and floodwalls, and are responsible for operations,



IHNC Surge Barrier

maintenance and the integrity of levees and floodwalls after construction completion.

Parishes and/or local governments in the HSDRRS are often responsible for granting rights-of-entry to property within their jurisdiction, and are occasionally called upon to create or amend local ordinances for variances in work schedules, such as night work, and allowances for temporary construction inconveniences such as increased noise levels.

If a parish or local government encounters problems getting a right-of-entry for construction, that project could be delayed.

Many things can affect goal

To reach the critical milestone and make the June 2011 goal, it is imperative that the Corps and all its partners provide their responsible actions in a timely manner.

There are other things that can affect the schedule and cause delays, such as worldwide demand for construction materials, bad weather including tropical events, changes in designs resulting in construction changes, landowner holdouts, concerns by special interest groups, and wildlife conservation concerns and studies.

Samples of project complexities, challenges to the schedule

■ The Corps is building an unprecedented, state-of-the-art 1.5-mile surge barrier with three navigable gates across the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway and the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet, the largest design-build civil works project in Corps history. It will be the largest project of its kind in the world.

Despite a four-month delay that involved design changes/ improvements and navigational safety enhancements, that colossal project is on schedule to provide one

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percent risk reduction in June 2011. Working 24 hours a day and under lights at night, the contractor's crews have made up much of the lost time. "Our stepped-up production rate has been even more effective than we originally anticipated," said Col. Robert Sinkler, Commander of the Hurricane Protection Office. "At this rate we expect to have much of the structure completed in 2010."

■ Some projects in the HSDRRS that are planned for 100-year level accreditation in 2011 will have other continuing construction beyond that time. For example, the West Closure Complex – a project that will include the largest pump station in the world – aimed to be 100-year accredited in 2011 with work on other features continuing through 2013.

That huge project is now experiencing a two-month delay in its construction effort.

Though much effort occurred by an extensive team, the Corps did not receive the required real estate from the State and the Levee Authority by the June 1, 2009 milestone. Reasons for the delay were:

- On March 30, 2009 Congress and the Administration designated Bayou aux Carpes an environmentally-protected area as a part of the Jean Lafitte National Park. This happened



17th St. Interim Pumps & Gates

just days before the Corps planned to acquire 9.6 acres of the property to build a floodwall as part of the West Closure Complex. The new designation required the Corps and State team to switch gears and produce the necessary documentation

entry for construction on his property, causing further delay.

"This project is now two months behind its goal to be 100-year accredited in 2011," said Col. Al Lee, Commander of the New Orleans District, "but we are aggressively working with our construction teams to make up that time."



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■ The three Outfall Canals at 17th Street, Orleans Ave. and London Ave. are outfitted with interim pumps and closure structures that were installed before Hurricane Season 2006.

These interim structures provide 100-year level protection while the Permanent Canal Closure structures are being designed. Construction completion on the permanent structures is planned for 2013.

to complete a land swap with the Department of Interior. Also,

- A private landowner at first agreed and then delayed granting right-of-

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To provide the permanent replacements of these temporary facilities, the Army and the State must sign a PPA by late August 2009. Any delay in signing the PPA could delay this project past its scheduled construction completion milestone of December 2013, putting the public at extended risk.

ii The Lake Pontchartrain levee continuation at the Causeway Bridge in Jefferson Parish presented an interesting situation for the Corps. The original Corps plan was to simply continue the levee through the Causeway intersection and build a roadway ramp across the levee. Further geotech analyses proved that an earthen ramp of this kind and in this location would require frequent maintenance and periodic levee lifts – ongoing and expensive procedures – because of expected settlement.

Another alternative the Corps considered was the installation of flood gates across the roadway that would be closed ahead of a tropical event. The Causeway Commission, the State of Louisiana, the Levee Authority and Jefferson Parish officials voiced opposition to that plan because of concerns with evacuation and the area's reliance on the Causeway as a major re-access to the city after an event.

A third alternative under consideration was the construction of a bridge over a floodwall, allowing traffic to remain continuous and uninterrupted. Even though this alternative



Harvey Canal Floodwall

meant more time for design and construction, as well additional cost as compared to the gate, the Corps is recommending this engineering solution as the best alternative for risk

reduction. The Causeway bridge over a floodwall is being designed now and is expected to be 100-year accredited by summer 2011, and completed by 2012.

Continued improvements

Out of more than 350 contracts completed, planned or in construction for the HSDRRS, 13 contracts are currently projected to go beyond the June 1, 2011 goal. A year ago that figure was 27 contracts; but the Team continues to improve and make progress. Over the past several months, 14 contracts were moved within the 2011 goal. As it

stands now, 11 of those 13 contracts are projected to complete before the end of Hurricane Season 2011. The remaining contracts are projected to complete before year's end 2011.

“More than 160 contracts have not yet been awarded,” said Ms. Durham-Aguilera. “Until those contracts are awarded, the true construction duration is not known. The construction schedule we have now is a preliminary schedule, a working schedule. And we have been very conservative with our estimates, so we expect continued improvements.”

Several contracts have been or will be awarded through the Early Contractor Involvement (ECI) process. This method enhances production and helps shorten the timeframe of contract completion. “Using the ECI process,” said Col. Sinkler, “we expect many of our contracts that now extend beyond June 1, 2011 to have

“The Corps has an ambitious but achievable program underway to meet the June 1, 2011 goal. The Corps’ efforts in this regard remain intense.”

*Karen Durham-Aguilera
Director, Task Force Hope*

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If you would like to receive the latest information on the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System

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The Task Force Hope
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the Corps' hurricane recovery work
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a shortened duration because the design and pre-construction phases are occurring simultaneously."

Path Forward

Construction of a comprehensive System and the myriad of differing and evolving contracts results in a dynamic schedule that takes continued dedicated effort to manage. "We look at the milestones everyday," said Ms. Durham-Aguilera, "and every day we look for ways to improve and meet our June 2011 goal

of providing a System that meets the 100-year level of accreditation.

"As with everything the Corps does, safety is our number one priority," added the Director. "Should we have a tropical event while we are still in construction of the HSDRRS, we have interim protective measures for each unfinished project.

"Remember Hurricanes Gustav and Ike last year. The System held. And the System is stronger today than ever before."



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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 Corps' hurricane recovery work to stakeholders.

This is an online publication that is open to public distribution.

This issue and past issues can be found at:
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