



US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
Mississippi Valley Division



# Corps Hurricane Response

Task Force Hope Status Report

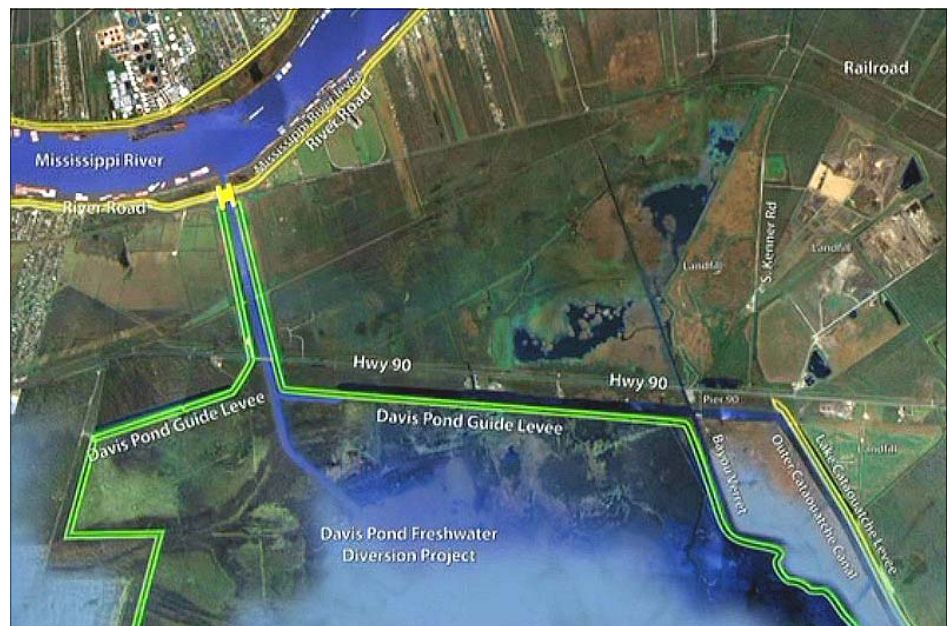
December 8, 2008

## Three design alternatives being considered for the Western Tie-In project

*Risk reduction alternatives include navigation and drainage structures, earthen levees and floodgates*

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is obtaining feedback from internal and external stakeholders on three design alternatives that will connect the Lake Cataouatche Levee to the Mississippi River Levee. The project, called the **Western Tie-In**, is part of the West Bank and Vicinity portion of the Greater New Orleans Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System (HSDRRS). It is located in the western portion of Jefferson Parish and the eastern portion of St. Charles Parish (see map on page 2). The selected alternative will reduce the risk of storm surge from a tropical event that has a one percent chance of occurring in any given year.

The three alternatives for the West-



Taken from the Corps' on-line video, this illustration shows the location of the Western Tie-In. Six construction contracts will be awarded to build this portion of the HSDRRS. (USACE Illustration)

ern Tie-In levee are covered in Individual Environmental Report (IER) 16. The alternatives include a variety of combinations of navigation and drainage structures, earthen levees, and floodwalls. A feature common to each of the alternatives will be a crossing at Hwy. 90 and two railroad floodgates.

To design and construct the Western Tie-In, the Corps must consider impacts to:

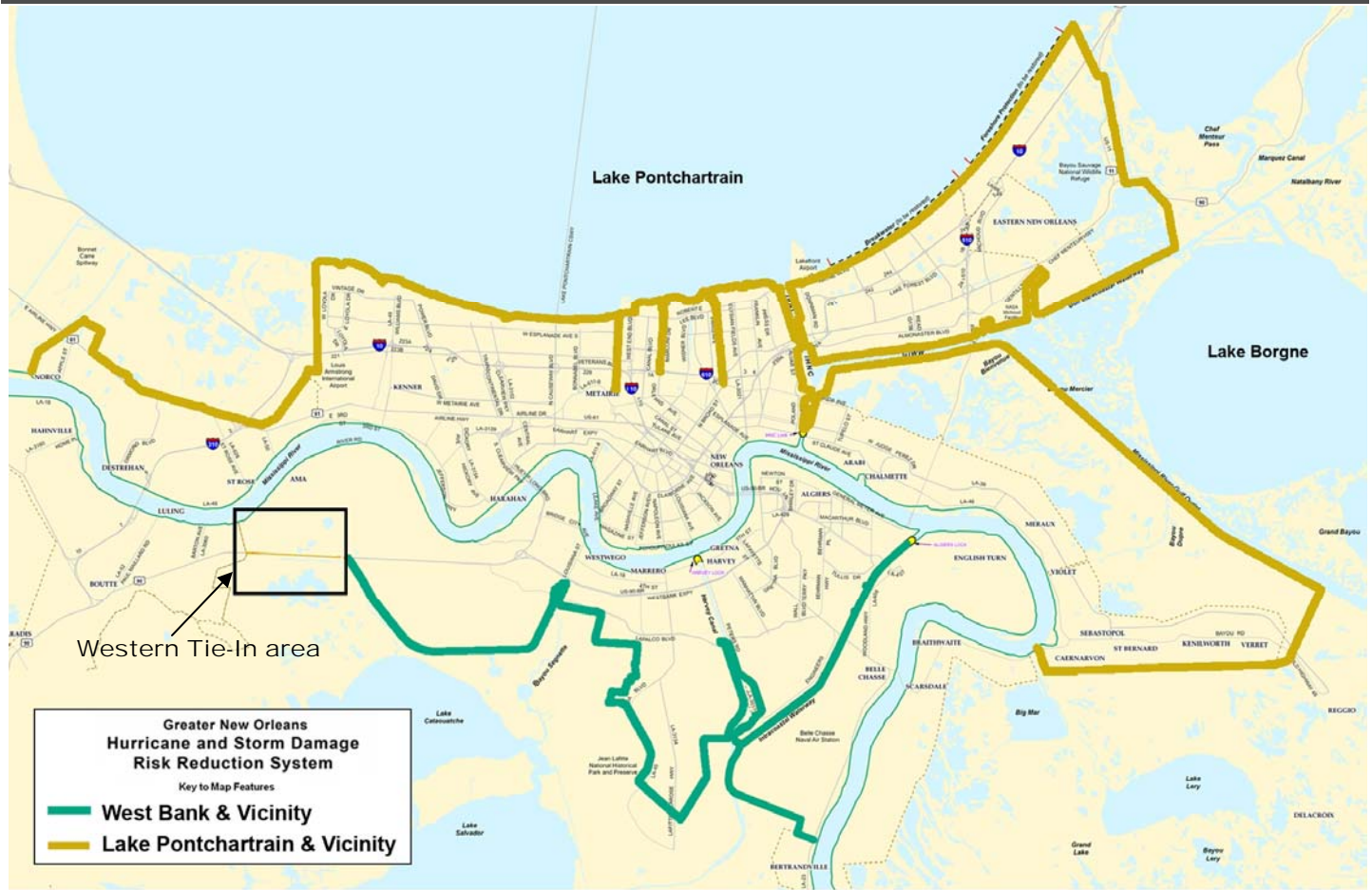
- Communities located in the unincorporated areas of St. Charles Parish.
- High-quality bottomland hardwood swamps and marsh habitat in the

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# Western Tie-In important section of West Bank & Vicinity work



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Barataria Basin

- Davis Pond Freshwater Diversion Structure
- Local businesses dependent on water access

The Corps will consider several other factors before making a decision on which alternative to recommend, such as cost, environmental issues, system reliability, social and economic impacts, and operations and maintenance considerations. All of these factors will be considered when the Corps makes a decision on which alternative will most effectively accomplish the project mission of providing the area with 100-year level of protection in 2011.

“The Corps is committed to working with our partners and stakeholders on the Western Tie-In to make the project successful,” said Mike Stack, Project Manager. “The work included in IER 16 is an integral part of the HSDRRS, and is especially important for residents and businesses on the west bank of Jefferson and St. Charles Parishes.”

The final IER recommended alternative will be decided in January 2009. At that time the public will be given a 30-day period in which to provide comments. In accordance with National Environmental Policy Act requirements, the public comments will be considered along with all of the other factors before a final design decision is made.



**Industry Day**  
*promotes dialogue, innovation and cooperation with contractors and industry leaders*

**On Nov. 21** the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers hosted a very successful Industry Day event to promote open dialogue between the Corps and industry leaders on innovative design considerations, construction techniques, and material availabilities that will expedite construction of the Western Tie-In.

*Six different contracts will be awarded for this project, totaling approximately \$150 million.*

## Corps experts discuss considerations for Western Tie-In

Excerpted from Corps on-line video at: [http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil/hps2/videos/tiein/tiein\\_video.asp](http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil/hps2/videos/tiein/tiein_video.asp)



*AI Naomi, Branch Chief*

**Quoted from  
AI Naomi, Branch Chief  
Protection Restoration Office**

"The Western Tie-In is where the West Bank & Vicinity hurricane protection levee ties in on the western side of Jefferson Parish into St. Charles Parish. We want to effectively get protection from where it currently terminates at U.S. 90 all the way to the Mississippi River. We cannot have this system open on the western flank to allow surge to enter the system.

There are certain environmental considerations here. Davis Pond is a fresh water diversion project that is currently functioning to introduce fresh water into the Barataria Basin. We want to make sure that whatever we do here does not negatively affect Davis Pond and its operation. Plus there are significant wetlands in the area that we have to avoid impacting as much as possible.

There are two railroads involved here and we have to make sure that we maintain access to the Port of

New Orleans and make sure that we affect those railroads as little as possible. Yet we still must get the protection system constructed through those transportation facilities.

Some of the alternatives may impact residences, and that is unfortunate. We are trying to avoid those impacts as much as possible, but we have to understand that we have a greater goal. There are thousands of people who are relying on this protection. It may be necessary to re-locate some of the residents in the immediate area in order to get that protection in place.

We have been working very closely with the officials in Jefferson and St. Charles Parishes to come up with the proper answers here. We are working with the residents and businesses in the area, and with various environmental groups. We are trying to get all the stakeholders involved in this decision so we understand where they are coming from.

This is a sensitive area; it's complex. There are residents, recreational

uses, environmental needs. But they also need to have hurricane protection. We are trying to get all this work done in 2011, and we don't want any surprises after we make this decision. We hope we can come up with a decision that everyone can live with, and that they understand that we've come up with the best possible answer to reduce risk for the West Bank of the metropolitan area."

**Quoted from  
Mike Stack, Project Manager  
Protection Restoration Office**

"The concern for the West Bank is storm surge coming up from the Gulf of Mexico through the Baratarria Basin, and through Lake Salvador and Lake Cataouache up against the HSDRRS.



*Mike Stack, Project Manager*

We've come down to three alternatives that we are considering to provide protection for the Western Tie-In and the people on the West Bank."



To view the Western Tie-In video and the see all the alternatives, go to this web site:

[http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil/hps2/videos/tiein/tiein\\_video.asp](http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil/hps2/videos/tiein/tiein_video.asp)

## *ERDC hosts IHNC simulation exercises*



**A professional towboat captain “drives” his barges through the simulated IHNC surge barrier gates during recent computer simulation exercises at the Corps’ Engineering Research & Development Center in Vicksburg, Miss.**

*By Nancy Allen*

**A**n experienced boat captain pilots a loaded barge toward the massive Gulf Intra-coastal Waterway surge barrier gates. He slows down in order to carefully plot his approach. Taking into account his speed, the wind, water velocities and flows, the captain heads down the GIWW toward the heart of New Orleans’ commercial navigation corridor, the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal (IHNC).

But the “gates” do not yet exist and neither does the captain’s “barge”. The IHNC/GIWW surge barrier will not be completed until 2011. The

Corps’ Coastal Hydraulics Lab at the Engineering Research & Development Center (ERDC) in Vicksburg, Miss., has created an interactive computer model of the surge barrier and, on Nov. 12, invited navigation industry members to participate in an important simulation exercise. Using state-of-the-art computer technology, ERDC scientists and engineers created a “virtual vista” of the 150-foot-wide surge barrier gate that the Corps is planning to build.

More than 30 participants gathered at ERDC to view advanced computer modeling simulations and share ideas about the project. Attendees

included representatives from local maritime businesses and navigation special interest groups; the U.S. Coast Guard; various state and local agencies; Shaw Environmental and INCA/Gerwick, construction contractors for the project; and Corps representatives from Task Force Hope, the Hurricane Protection Office, ERDC and the Mississippi Valley Division.

“The IHNC surge barrier project is a key element in the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System,” said Karen Durham-Aguilera,

*Continued on page 5*



**Karen Durham-Aguilera (right), Director of Task Force Hope, welcomes the attendees of the ERDC computer simulation exercises on Nov. 12.**

*Continued from page 4*

Director of Task Force Hope, in her opening remarks. "We need everyone to stay engaged and share with us your expertise to design the best possible project."

The surge barrier project is being built near the "V" confluence of the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet and the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway to prevent future storm surge from pushing into the IHNC area from Lake Borgne. The 8,000-foot barrier will include three navigable gates: two 150-foot gates (a sector gate and a barge gate) along the GIWW; and one 56-foot sector gate on Bayou Bienvenue.

Keith Martin, a research physicist in ERDC's Coastal and Hydraulics Laboratory, briefed the group on preliminary model animations and visuals representing water velocities and flow patterns for various locations for the 150-foot-wide sector gate. Understanding the hydraulics

at the gate (currents, velocities, flow direction, etc.) are key to how pilots navigate for their approach to and through the gate.

The meeting attendees then visited the ERDC Ship-Towboat Simulator, similar to an aircraft simulator. This unique research facility includes two separate vessel control consoles, vessel instrumentation, engine and steering controls, and a 180-degree viewing area representing the project and all its landmarks. The simulator has been used on numerous Corps navigation projects around the country to help develop optimum channel and navigation designs that are safe and economical.

Dennis Webb, Chief of ERDC's Navigation Branch, explained the simulator's capabilities and how it relates to the IHNC project. It accurately recreates vessel handling characteristics (barge size and numbers, loaded or unloaded, towboat power, etc.) and environmental impacts (channel depth and width, water current veloc-

ity, weather conditions, winds, etc.) in the area being studied.

For the IHNC gate study, the navigation industry requested 10 different barge-towboat configurations that represent typical vessels navigating the area. ERDC will continue to run simulations for various vessel configurations during normal and high tides, pre- and post-hurricane conditions, and high winds from various directions. Industry pilots from the area are being used to "drive" the vessel during the simulation runs.

A vital element of the 100-year HSDRRS, the IHNC surge barrier project is scheduled for completion in 2011. Advance Measures to provide interim risk reduction for the area are scheduled to be in place in August 2009. The \$695 million project represents the largest "design-build" contract ever awarded in the Corps' civil works program.



## TFH Director receives 2008 Presidential Rank Award

**K**aren Durham-Aguilera, Director of Task Force Hope, recently received a 2008 Presidential Rank Award for Meritorious Service.

Each year, the President recognizes and celebrates a small group of career Senior

Executives and senior career employees with the Presidential Rank Award. Recipients of this prestigious award are strong leaders, professionals, and scientists who achieve results and consistently demonstrate strength, integrity, industry and a relentless commitment to excel-

lence in public service.

The recipients are nominated by their agency heads, evaluated by boards comprised of private citizens, and approved by the President of the United States. *Congratulations, Ms. Durham-Aguilera!*

## Public Meetings important part of Corps mission

**P**ublic meetings are part of the Corps' commitment to meet National Environmental Policy Act requirements and to provide construction updates on the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System. The



Corps achieves NEPA compliance through traditional measures, supplemental measures, and alternative arrangements. Below are the last three public meetings for 2008.

**On Tuesday, Dec. 9**, the Corps will discuss the action to strengthen the Harvey to Westwego levee and provide an overview of the recommended plan to reduce risk to neighborhoods and businesses near the Harvey and Algiers canals. Impacts of projects were or will be discussed in Individual Environmental Report (IER) 14 and 12.

**Open House 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.  
Presentation 7 p.m.**

**Harvey Fire Station #61  
639 Maple Ave.  
Harvey, LA 70058**

**The Dec. 11** public meeting will discuss the status of the Bayou Dupre Control Structure, Caernarvon Floodwall, Chalmette Loop Levee and Inner Harbor Navigation Canal Surge Barriers at Lake

Borgne and Lake Pontchartrain. Human and environmental impacts of these projects are captured in IERs 8, 9, 10, 11 Tier 2 Borgne and 11 Tier 2 Pontchartrain. The presentation will also address borrow. Im-

pacts of excavating borrow are captured in IERs 18, 19, 22, 23, 25 and 26.

**Open House 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.  
Presentation 7 p.m.**

**Lynn Oaks School  
#1 Lynn Oaks Dr.,  
Braithwaite, LA 70040**

**On Tuesday, Dec. 16** the Corps will host a morning meeting to discuss the recommended plan to reduce risk to neighborhoods and businesses near the Harvey and Algiers Canals. Impacts of projects will be discussed in Individual Environmental Report 12 which will soon be released for 30-day public review.

**Open House 7:30 a.m.  
Presentation 8 a.m.**

**M-I Swaco  
4300 Peters Rd.  
Harvey, LA 7005**



*For more information or to sign up to be on a meeting notification list please visit the following web site:*

[www.nolaenvironmental.gov](http://www.nolaenvironmental.gov)

### Contact Information

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(504) 862-1708

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: <http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil/hps>

Comments and questions may be sent to the Status Report Newsletter editor at: [b2fwdpao@usace.army.mil](mailto:b2fwdpao@usace.army.mil)

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