



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Mississippi Valley Division



Corps Hurricane Response

Task Force Hope Status Report

January 30, 2009

Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration (LACPR) effort

Roadmap for saving our coast

**Technical Report
outlines wide array
of viable
alternatives**

By Susan Spaht

Given the enormous challenges associated with restoring Louisiana's coast and protecting the region from hurricane and storm damage, Congress directed the Corps to develop a technical report, in consultation with the state of Louisiana, for comprehensive hurricane protection and coastal restoration.

The directive required the Corps to develop a full range of flood control, coastal restoration, and hurricane and storm damage reduction measures for south Louisiana. This was accomplished by using a comprehensive and integrated systems approach that contemplates providing risk reduction for a storm surge equivalent to a "Category 5" hurri-



The Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration evaluation covers 26 Louisiana coastal parishes that were divided into five planning units based on similar geographical and hydrological characteristics. (USACE Illustration)

cane.

The purpose of the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration (LACPR) effort is twofold. The first objective is to develop and assess a wide array of alternatives that address hurricane surge risk reduction along the entire Louisiana coast. The second objective is to effectively communicate the remaining flood risk and tradeoffs associated with each alternative to state and Federal decision makers, as well as the general public, so informed decisions

can be made regarding appropriate measures for long-term protection and restoration in coastal Louisiana.

LACPR is a collaborative effort managed by the Corps of Engineers that generated a technical report to guide Congress and other decision makers in selecting projects for construction

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to accomplish storm risk reduction and coastal restoration for Louisiana.

The LACPR evaluation covers 26 coastal Louisiana parishes that were divided into five planning units (see map) based on similar geographical and hydrological characteristics. This area is equivalent to the size of the entire state of West Virginia.

To meet the Congressional directive, the Corps prepared a Draft Final Technical Report that contains:

1. A description of the risk facing coastal Louisiana;
2. A description of how the report was created;
3. A discussion of multiple lines of defense as a strategy to address coastal protection problems;
4. A description of a suite of structural, nonstructural and coastal measures that could be implemented;
5. A description of the hydrologic modeling analysis (how water behaves);
6. A description of the criteria – also known as metrics – used to measure the effect or performance of individual alternatives;
7. A description of the Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis used and stakeholder's participation in the process to determine stakeholder preferences on what is most important to be addressed;
8. Scoring and ranking of potential plans using the results of the stakeholder Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis and other decision



(Photo by Regmar Hanemann)

criteria such as cost efficiency, risk reduction effectiveness, and environmental impacts;

9. A tradeoff analysis so that decision makers and the public understand potential consequences and what they will have to give up (tradeoff) in order to gain other desired benefits of alternative plans;
10. A proposal on how to proceed, including potential and viable implementation strategies.

Benefit to the Community

The LACPR initiative represents the first Congressional mandate for coordination of coastal restoration and hurricane risk reduction in Louisiana. It encompasses all of coastal Louisiana and integrates water resources objectives of hurricane protection, flood control and coastal restoration, with the primary focus on contributions of each to hurricane surge risk reduction.

The size of the planning area and the complexity of the science involved required significantly more hydrodynamic analysis, technical coordination, decision processing, and internal and external review than envisioned when the directive was issued. The Corps understood the responsibility and need to have the hydrology correct to fully assess performance of the alternatives which will allow for well-informed decisions.

A similar directive was underway for the State of Mississippi. As the public engineers responsible for water resource development, the Corps performed measures to ensure the project alternatives addressed the system needs and regional impacts of both Louisiana and Mississippi.

For these reasons and the sheer magnitude of the analysis and the external review requirements, the report took longer to complete than originally requested and anticipated..

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The report offers five to six viable recommendations for each of the five planning units. Although any of these viable plans would significantly reduce risk and benefit the environment, each offers different challenges and impacts to that particular area and the resident population. Any could be implemented if desired by the Administration and/or Congress, but the Corps recommends a continued dialogue between its Federal and state partners, as well as stakeholders, prior to Congressional action. Implementation would require additional study and National Environmental Policy Act compliance.



Troy Constance

“The State and its residents, as the direct bearers of the resultant benefits and tradeoffs of the plans, should be the ones to determine their preferences,” according to Troy Constance, Branch Chief of the Protection and Restoration Office at the Corps’ New Orleans District.

The report recommends additional dialog with stakeholders and the general public regarding the positive and negative effects of the final array of alternative plans. “Tradeoffs” included in each of the plans will result in varying levels of risk reduction. Tradeoffs require giving up some uses to attain a specific level of risk reduction. For example, one plan may provide a high level of risk reduction but result in a significantly adverse direct or system-wide impact to the wetlands ecosystem.

Another example: whole communities may need to relocate or structures may need to be raised-in-place in order to attain the maximum risk reduction for that area.

Sponsors

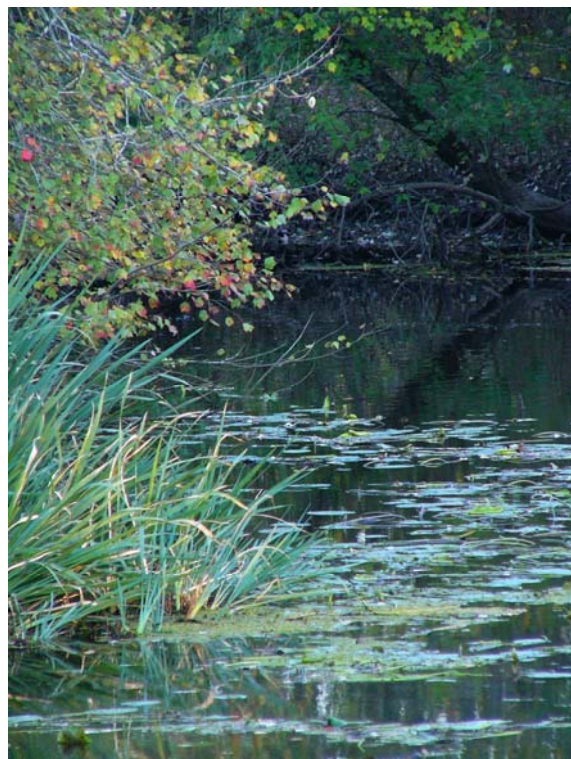
The LACPR report is 100% Federally funded. A key partner in the effort is the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA), created by the Louisiana legislature in January 2006 to integrate state, parish and local interests, as well as that of non-governmental organizations, for development of a **Louisiana Hurricane Protection and Coastal Restoration Master Plan**. The CPRA is the single state entity that interfaces with the Corps on project development.

The state’s Master Plan, a conceptual vision of a sustainable coast, and the overarching vision for LACPR, was released in May 2007. The Master Plan recommends certain actions and is a strategy and concept of what needs to be done for a sustainable Louisiana coast, and options to be considered.

The LACPR Technical Report complements the state’s Master Plan by presenting detailed technical evaluation of restoration and risk reduction components

“Continuing cooperation and partnership with the State of Louisiana is, and should be, an integral part of the risk reduction and restoration efforts for Louisiana,” said Col. Alvin Lee, Commander of the New Orleans District.

Representatives of other Federal, state and local agencies are also integral parts of the LACPR team. In addition, the Corps involved the nation’s most accomplished scientists, engineers and planners from academia, industry, other state and Federal agencies, and non-governmental organizations. The Corps also worked closely with professionals from the Netherlands to collaboratively develop the best technologies for coastal protection.



(Photo by Regmar Hanemann)

Systematic Review

Currently a second technical review is ongoing, even as the draft Final Technical Report is being simultaneously reviewed by Corps Headquarters in Washington, D.C. This technical review team consists of more than 20 Corps scientists and engineers from around the nation.

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(Photos by Regmar Hanemann)

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“This report and its findings belong to the people of Louisiana,” said Karen Durham-Aguilera, Director of Task Force Hope. “They have helped develop the report, and it directly affects them; so we want them to have a final look and present comments.”

Schedule

The LACPR Draft Final Technical Report was submitted to the Mississippi Valley Division on Dec. 19, 2008. The Division office forwarded the report to Corps Headquarters in Washington, D.C. in late December.

After its review, Corps Headquarters will send the report to the National Academies of Science’s National Research Council for a second round of independent external review. This review is expected to take place starting in early March.

Public review of the report will follow in summer of this year. When all

comments and review findings have been addressed, the report will go to the Chief of Engineers for transmittal to the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works). This transmittal is anticipated to be in late summer. When cleared by the Administration, the report will be submitted to Congress.



To learn more about the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration effort, go to this web site:
www.lacpr.usace.army.mil/

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

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SELA agreement signed for \$1.3 billion



Officials attending the SELA signing ceremony are, from left, Ron Maestri and Elton Lagasse, Jefferson Parish councilmen; New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin; Jackie Clarkson (partially hidden), New Orleans Council President; Kazen Alikhani, Director of Drainage, Jefferson Parish; Garret Graves, Chairman of CPRA; Hon. John Paul Woodley, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works; and Karen Durham-Aguilera, Director of the Corps' Task Force Hope. (USACE Photo by Scott Riecke)

"It's a Grand Slam day...and an excellent example of federal, state and local entities partnering for success."

- Karen Durham-Aguilera, Director, Task Force Hope

On January 16, the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers signed a Project Partnership Agreement (PPA) to put into place an overarching cost-sharing agreement for the Southeast Louisiana Urban Flood Damage Reduction Project (SELA). The agreement will pave the way for construction of \$1.3 billion of SELA features in Orleans and Jefferson Parishes.

Specific features of the SELA project include drainage canal improvements and construction of new drainage canals, replacement of bridges, provision of backup power at existing pump stations, and construction of

new pump stations, and associated intake and discharge works. Work conducted under the SELA project supports the parishes' master drainage plans, and generally provides flood protection on a level associated with a 10-year rainfall event, while also reducing damages from larger events. SELA was initially authorized in 1996.

The agreement was signed by the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) Chairman Garret Graves and the Honorable John Paul Woodley, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works.

The CPRA reached cooperative en-

deavor agreements with both the Sewage and Water Board of New Orleans and the Jefferson Parish Council to serve as the single non-federal sponsor for the SELA project with the Corps.

"The CPRA promised to make this agreement a reality in order to ensure that much needed drainage improvements in the New Orleans area are made, and we delivered on that promise," Graves said. "This funding is an enormous boost to the flood fighting efforts of the parishes, the state and the Corps."

Also signed during the ceremony were agreements that would give the State of Louisiana 30 years to repay their share of the \$14.3 billion Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System (HSRRS) construction. The non-federal share is approximately \$1.5 billion.

"With these agreements signed today, all the financing is in place to ensure completion of the 100-year level of risk reduction in the greater New Orleans area in 2011," said Secretary Woodley. "While most Corps Civil Works projects are cost-shared, because of the special circumstances facing Louisiana after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, we were able to take advantage of a rarely-used law that allows the United States to pay the full cost up front, giving the state 30 years to repay their share."

"It's a Grand Slam day," said Karen Durham-Aguilera, Director of the Corps' Task Force Hope. "We cannot meet our goal alone and this is an excellent example of federal, state and local entities partnering for success."





Company Canal gated structure and levee get go-ahead

Col. Alvin Lee, Commander of the New Orleans District, has signed an environmental document that allows the Corps to finalize designs to reduce risk and provide 100-year level of protection for communities and businesses along Bayou Segnette near the Company Canal.

"Now that the location of the gate has been determined, our project team is working on the design for the gated navigable closure structure and levees," said Gary Brouse, Project Manager. "The navigation gate would only be closed during a tropical event."

The government action to reduce

risk to parts of Westwego and surrounding areas of the West Bank was outlined in Individual Environmental Report (IER) 17, entitled "Company Canal Floodwall, Jefferson Parish."

The government will replace the existing 9.5-foot floodwalls with a 14-foot floodwall, construct approximately 1,000 to 1,200 feet of earthen levees, construct a new pump station, and construct a 56-foot wide navigable sector gate across a new navigation channel.

The Company Canal project area extends from the Bayou Segnette State Park boundary to the New Westwego Pumping Station.

Access for construction equipment and materials to the site could be provided by barge from Bayou Segnette, a pontoon bridge across Bayou Segnette, a temporary access road on the stability berm of the proposed levee, or a combination of these.

IER 17 was released for public review on Nov. 3, 2008 and was followed by a 30-day public comment period. The Corps' action was discussed at several public meetings throughout the metro area.

For more information on this project, visit: www.nolaenvironmental.gov

