US Army Corps of Engineers
Mississippi Valley Division

Corps Hurricane Response

Task Force Hope Status Report Newsletter *July 31, 2009*

"This is what we've all been striving toward..."

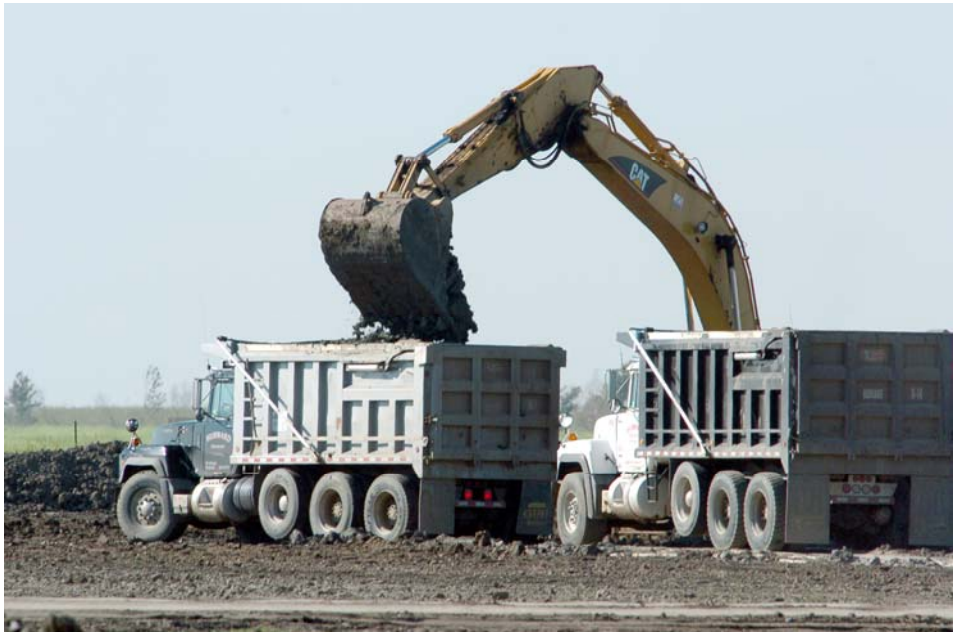
Corps moving into busiest construction phase

Construction upturn for HSDRRS to put thousands of trucks on local roads and highways

by Susan Spaht

As the Corps of Engineers moves into its busiest construction phase to complete the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System (HSDRRS) in 2011, thousands of additional trucks will be on our roads and highways. These trucks will be travelling millions of miles to make deliveries of dirt, steel and concrete to work sites. Yes, that is *millions* of miles, more than 140 million.

"Over the next year and half we'll see the bulk of the Corps' HSDRRS construction work," said Karen Durham-Aguilera, Director of Task Force Hope. "This is what we've all been striving toward: the drive to complete the levee system that will give this area the best hurricane defense in its history. This is a monumental effort that will require shared commitments and organizational teamwork at every level – the State of Louisiana, the Corps and all of our partners."



Trucks get loaded with borrow material (levee dirt) that will be driven to a levee construction site. Approximately two million truck loads of borrow will be moved over the next two years to complete the HSDRRS. (USACE Photo)

Residents of the HSDRRS five-parish area will soon be seeing increased truck traffic on our roads and highways, and may be temporarily inconvenienced by the additional traffic. "If you live and work in South Louisiana, these trucks are working for you," said Col. Alvin Lee, Commander of the New Orleans District. "We ask for your cooperation and patience during this intense construction period," he added. "We're building the System for you, your family and for the future of the entire New Orleans area."

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Trucks will be hauling:

- 29 million cubic yards of **borrow** material to various sites, which will require some 2,000,000 truckloads and 50 million miles travelled;
- 972,000 cubic yards of **concrete** requiring 97,000 truckloads and 1.2 million miles travelled; and
- 822,000 tons of **steel** requiring 41,100 truckloads and 89 million miles travelled, of which, 997,000 are local miles.

Note: these figures are valid as of July 30. Numbers are subject to change as individual designs are finalized.

The peak months for these construction materials vary.

Steel transport peaks in January 2010.

Borrow material transport peaks in April 2010.

Concrete transport peaks in November 2010.

The Corps' construction management teams are preparing for this expanding construction schedule. "Our number one priority on every construction site is safety," said Bruce Terrell, Chief of the Construction Division.

"We have quality control plans and safety plans in place that we diligently enforce. For this upcoming increase in construction we are developing job specific plans for each construction site to ensure safety and promote efficiency."

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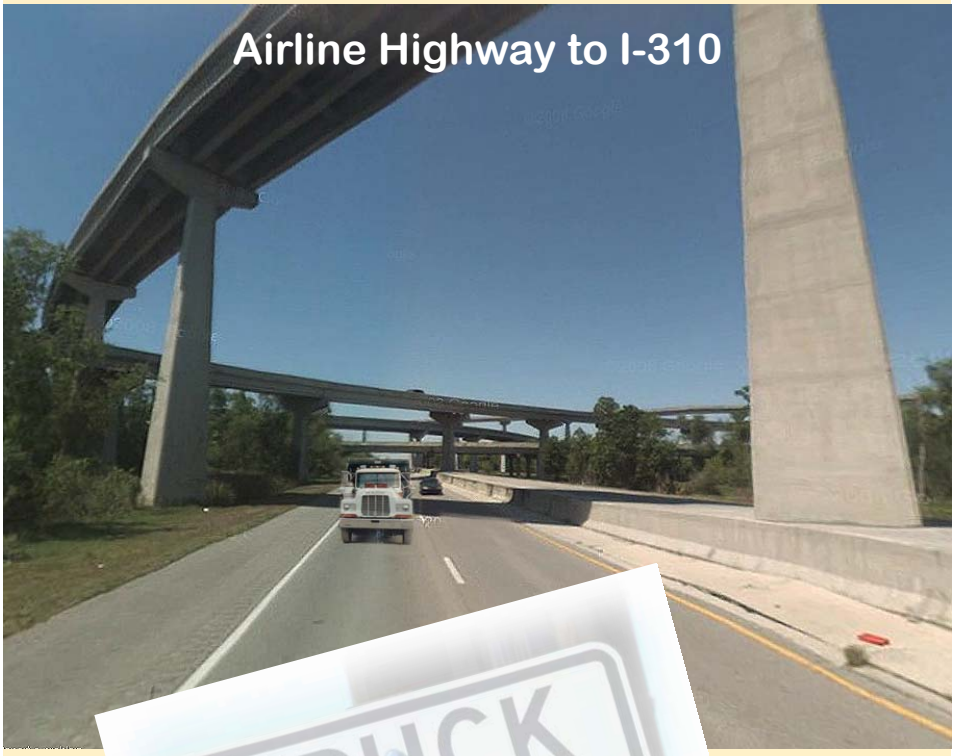

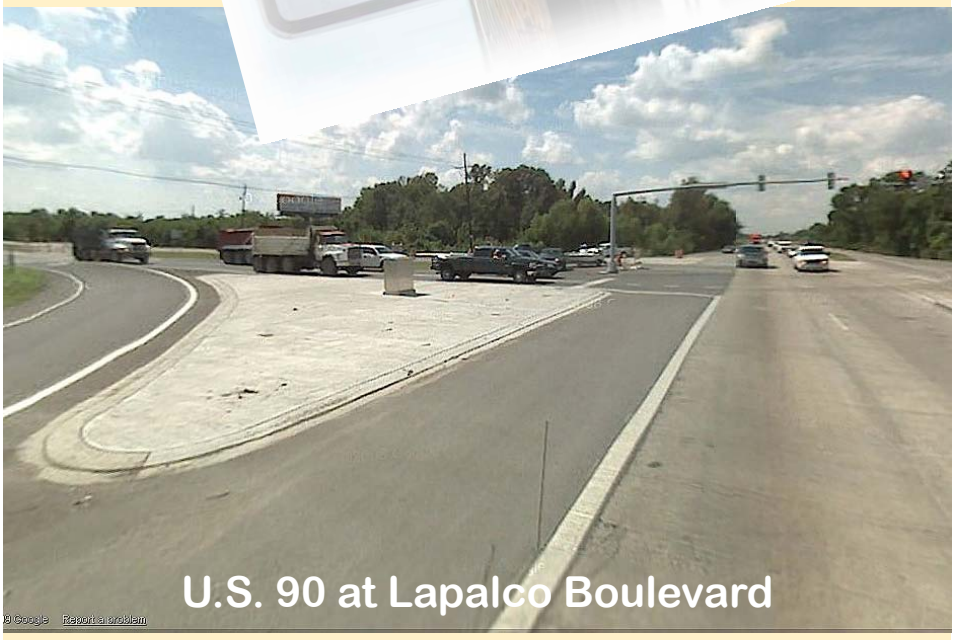

These two highway intersections will be among the most frequently used by Corps construction trucks making deliveries

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Terrell explained that the Corps' construction management personnel are working with local sponsors and agencies to control busy construction sites. For example, he said, "we might set up special turn lanes for trucks at some sites to make turning safer and to prevent traffic jams."

Bruce Terrell

The Corps is reaching out to and coordinating with state and local agencies that are responsible for roads and highways, schools and hospitals, businesses and neighborhood organizations, fire and police departments, and many other groups and organizations, to help make the public aware of the upcoming construction traffic situation and to mitigate any possible problems.

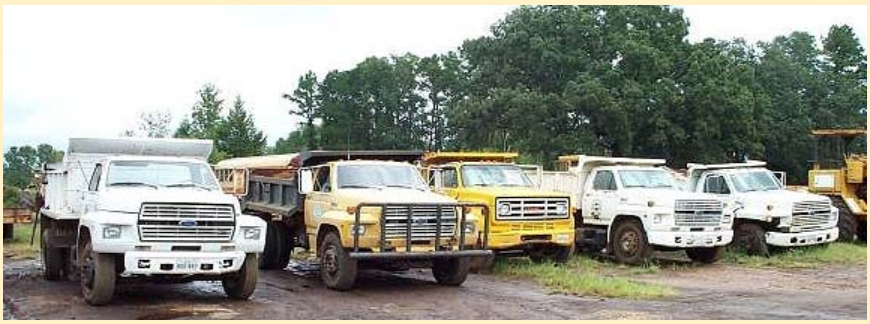
When the upturn in construction traffic begins, the Corps will provide regular updates to newspaper, radio and TV outlets to inform the public of heavy work areas where increased truck traffic can be expected.

A Web site is being created to show what type of construction work is being done, where it is happening, and the timeframe for the work in each area.

Additionally, a dedicated toll-free phone number is being established so residents can call with questions or concerns about the construction work and/or traffic movements.

Questions and Answers

More construction = More truck traffic



1. What is the purpose of all this traffic and construction work?
This activity is necessary to reduce your flood risk from hurricanes and storms to 1 percent in any given year by Hurricane Season 2011.The work is needed to complete the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System for the Greater New Orleans area. Every truck on the road is a sign of progress toward that goal.

2. When is the increased construction work going to start?
Some is already underway; peak traffic will begin in early 2010.

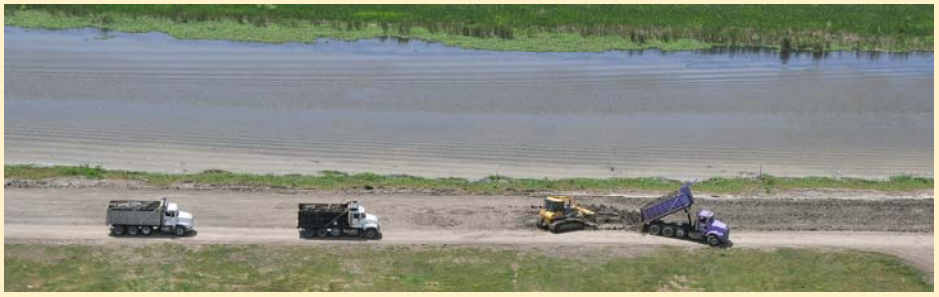
3. What impact will all these trucks and other equipment have on our air quality?
The Corps is partnering with the Environmental Protection Agency, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, and local agencies to analyze emissions. Appropriate mitigation measures will be investigated, if needed.

4. Will all these trucks be on the road during hurricane evacuations?
Construction trucks could either evacuate before or with the general population, or be secured locally.

5. Will the Corps control what routes trucks use?
Contractors will select their routes.

8. How will the increased congestion on already-busy roads be handled?
It is anticipated that contractors will schedule routes and movements to minimize congestion.

Other questions - such as what is being planned for your neighborhood and how long construction and traffic congestion will go on - will be available on a new Web site which is being developed. A dedicated, toll-free phone number is also being developed for citizens to call with questions and concerns.



Letter to the Editor

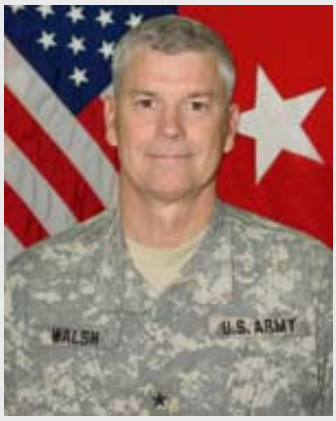
The Times-Picayune

This letter appeared in the newspaper July 28, 2009

July 24, 2009

Dear Editor:

The Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System (HSDRRS) is being built as a "system." The Corps' Decision Chronology discussed the "tyranny of incremental decisions" that led to a hurricane protection system that was a system in name only prior to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Every decision we make must be in view of the effect on the entire system. Any delay in one part puts the community at extended risk from hurricane surge flooding.



Brig. Gen. Michael J. Walsh

We understand there are various public positions for permanent perimeter protection and what to build at the three Outfall Canals, commonly referred to as Options 1, 2, and 2a. But the work is not Option 1 versus Option 2 or 2a. Replacing the temporary pumps is required for ANY option. Proceeding with their replacement, and building the new pump stations so that other improvements in interior drainage and efficiencies can be added in the future, assures that the community will not experience extended risk.

The clock is ticking. The temporary pumps and closure structures at the three Outfall Canals have a limited service life. After Hurricane Katrina, the Corps quickly moved to design, fabricate, and install the temporary pumps and closure structures by June 2006. This would usually take five years. The temporary pumps were built to last for five to seven years, or through the years 2011 to 2013. In fact, they already require extra care and maintenance to ensure they continue to operate for their five-to-seven-year service life. The recent Department of Defense Inspector General's external review conducted by Parsons found that "as long as the permanent facilities proceed according to schedule and a thorough inspection and maintenance program is followed for the temporary facilities, there are no immediate vulnerabilities to catastrophic failures with the hydraulic pumping systems or their supporting systems."

The two other plans under public discussion significantly modify design of the city's interior drainage system by deepening interior drainage canals to accommodate gravity flow to the lakefront. Option 2a is the equivalent of Option 2 but with a new interior pumping station to intercept, divert, and pump Jefferson Parish (Hoey's Basin) rainwater into the Mississippi River. Neither are authorized nor funded at this time. Both would also require about a three-year engineering study and environmental compliance process so as to understand the impacts -- all this before addressing the funding issue.

Permanent replacements to the temporary pump stations at the outfall canals are necessary no matter what Options are built. Public safety can be ensured by proceeding now to replace the existing pump stations with adaptable features that make construction of other enhancements possible whenever they are authorized and funded.

The present pumps have been battle-tested by two hurricanes, Gustav and Ike, but they are still temporary. We need to move forward now. We are fully confident in our ability to implement Option 1 within cost estimates already provided to Congress. And adaptability will be built in so that modifications can be made in the future. By starting now, we can complete construction of Option 1 in 2013.

Michael J. Walsh

Brig. Gen. Michael J. Walsh
Commander
Mississippi Valley Division
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

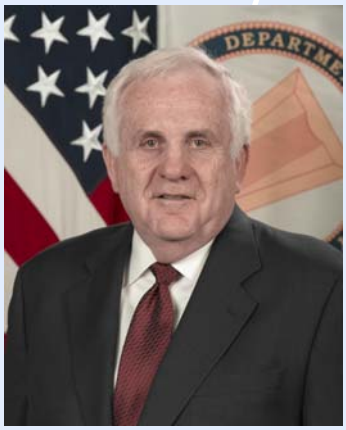
Letter to the Editor

USA TODAY

July 24, 2009

Dear Editor:

I want to commend you for the article on June 21st bringing to light the massive work and the aggressive schedule that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the State of Louisiana, and our other local partners are executing to reduce risk for the greater New Orleans area. The magnitude of the work is of staggering proportions: a nearly $15 billion construction program made up of around 350 construction contracts.



Terrence C. "Rock" Salt

I also want to commend the exceptional efforts of the Corps and its partners in restoring the system to pre-Katrina levels of risk reduction by June 2006. Constructing and installing the interim closure structures and pump stations in the three Outfall Canals would normally take three to five years to design, manufacture and install. The Corps finished the basic work in eight months, before the start of the 2006 hurricane season and less than a year after Hurricane Katrina.

The same urgency that existed in the immediate aftermath of Katrina still lives in the hearts of those Corps employees working on the New Orleans risk reduction system today. The people involved remain in constant collaboration to effect smarter engineering solutions, use state of the art engineering practices, and apply "lessons learned" to complete the system for the 2011 Hurricane Season. The focus remains on working with our partners to award construction contracts this fall so we can meet our shared risk reduction goal for the 2011 Hurricane Season.

As the Chief of Engineers, Lt. Gen. Robert Van Antwerp, promised in June 2007, we will fulfill the commitment to bring the New Orleans hurricane risk reduction system to a 100-year level by 2011 or "we are going to break our backs trying."

The Greater New Orleans area has better protection today than it has ever had before. Tested during 2008's Hurricanes Gustav and Ike, the system proved its strength. The Corps remains committed to completing the remainder of the work needed to finish this system.

Thank you again for your coverage.

Very truly yours,

Terrence C. Salt

Terrence C. Salt
Acting Assistant Secretary of the Army
(Civil Works)

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

Comments and questions may be sent to the Status Report Newsletter editor at:
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US Army Corps of Engineers

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