



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Mississippi Valley Division



Corps Hurricane Response

Task Force Hope Status Report Newsletter

June 1, 2012

Hurricane Season: June 1 - November 30

“The System is ready to defend...”

by Susan Spaht

Tropical Storm Alberto skirted the East Coast last month with top winds of 45 mph, cancelling tourist cruises, producing showers and serving as a reminder that the 2012 Atlantic Hurricane Season was close. Then, over the Memorial Day weekend, Tropical Storm Beryl swept along the southern Atlantic states with a wide swath of rain storms and winds up to 70 mph. Alberto and Beryl were only the third and fourth tropical storms to form

before the official June 1 start of Hurricane Season in the past 31 years. Is this a sign that we are in for a busy storm season?

“It’s anomalous for sure,” said Jonathan Lamb, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in South Carolina, “but there’s really no indication this gives us any idea what the hurricane season is going to be like as a whole.”



GIWW - West Closure Complex

USACE Photo

The New Orleans area doesn’t need a reminder that June 1 is the start of Hurricane Season, especially since Hurricane Katrina hit the area in 2005. Residents of the Greater New Orleans area will stay aware and vigilant throughout the six-month season. As will the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Over the past six years, the Corps has designed and constructed - and

has nearly completed - the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System, a 133-mile perimeter defense for the five-parish area around New Orleans.

“The System is ready to defend against a 100-year storm,” said Mike Park, Chief of Task Force Hope, “even though some construction con-

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tinues. The Corps is prepared and ready to utilize the system to reduce the risk of flooding should we have a tropical event this season.”

There are 504 openings in the system which must be closed when a storm approaches. These openings include 13 navigable openings, 145 roadway openings, 42 railroad openings, 145 access openings, 153 drainage openings, as well as 6 construction gaps where the Corps and its contractors are still working.

Utilizing the new system this year will be a bit different from the past few years. According to Mike Stack, Chief of Emergency Management, “In the recent past, our Emergency Management team along with some of our contractors have been responsible for closing the system openings and construction access points – and we successfully did that for Hurricane Gustav in 2008.

“If we have a tropical event this year, our Corps-and-contractor team will be working in partnership with our sponsors: the State of Louisiana and the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East and West. Each authority will have their technical representatives participate with us in closing selected gates and utilizing selected pump stations within their authority. This is in preparation for the future when we will turn over all operational and maintenance responsibilities of these large and small structures to our sponsors who will be the owners.”



Utilization of colossal structures like the West Closure Complex, the IHNC Surge Barrier Sector Gates, the Harvey Floodgates and the Seabrook Floodgate Complex is very complicated work requiring special-



Heath Jones and Mike Stack (seated) at work on their emergency plans for the upcoming hurricane season.

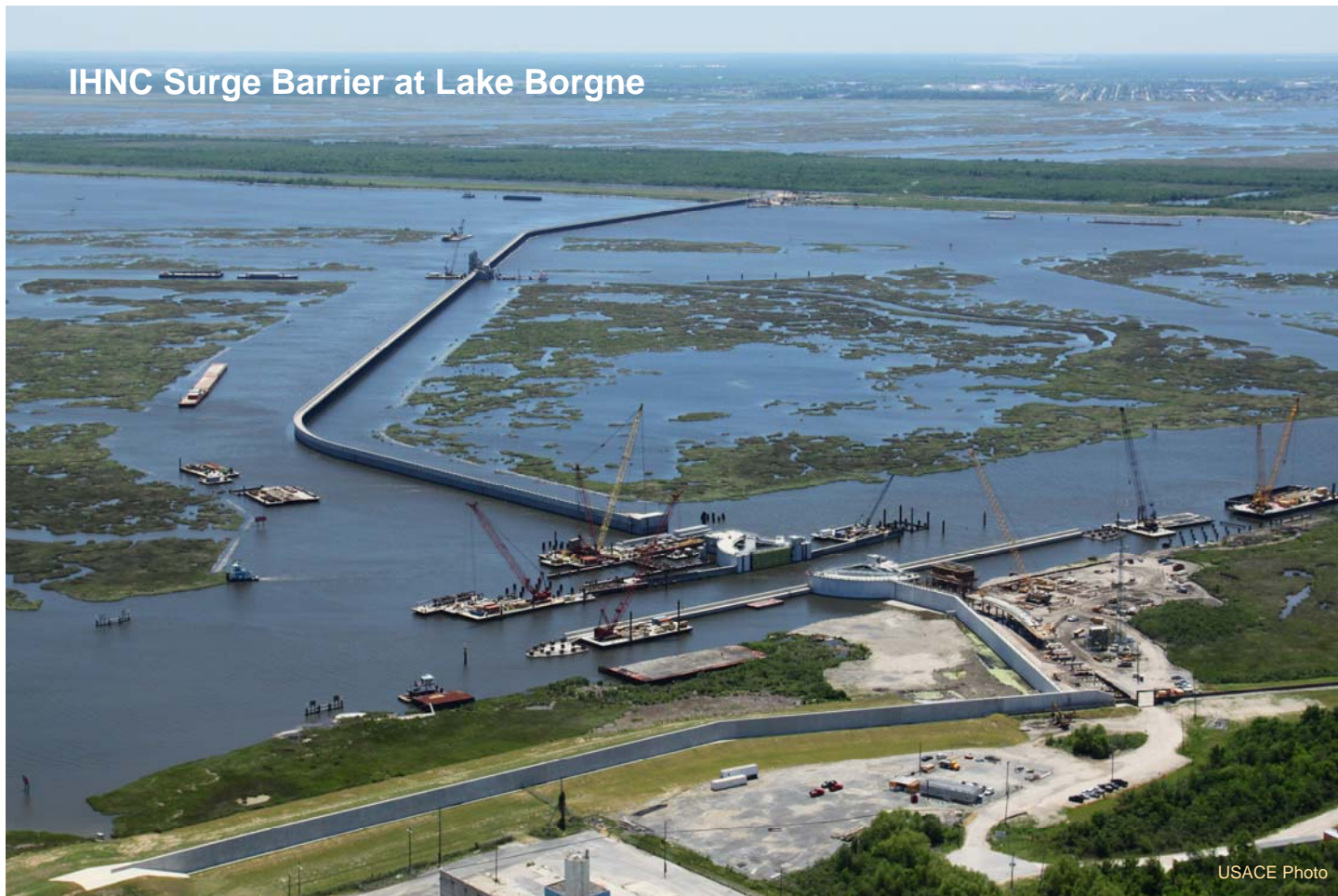
ized technical capabilities. Some of these structures are the largest of their kind in the nation and/or the world.

The Emergency Management team prepares all year for an emergency or a tropical event. As the hurricane season gets closer, the team performs hurricane practice exercises. This past April, the team had a practice with the Mississippi Valley Division, and in May the team held “table top exercises” with the expanded team at the New Orleans District. In mid-June the team will hold “field exercises”. This is a hands-on exercise held at the HSDRRS structures. At the West Closure Complex, for example, the team will utilize the huge sector gates and the massive pump station to test the proficiencies of the technicians and the performance of the facilities.

The Interim Structures at the three outfall canals - 17th Street, London Ave. and Orleans Ave. - are tested regularly throughout the year to be sure everything is in proper working order. “All 73 pumps are on a scheduled maintenance program,” said Heath Jones, Hurricane Emergency

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IHNC Surge Barrier at Lake Borgne



USACE Photo

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Manager. "Each pump is removed, inspected and 'tuned-up' as needed, then replaced at the Outfall Canal to ensure its successful performance if called upon." The purpose of these pumps is to empty accumulated rainwater from the city into Lake Pontchartrain. The purpose of the gates is to stop storm surge from entering into the canal from Lake Pontchartrain.

The Emergency Management team will also perform practice tests on the six construction openings in the system during the upcoming field exercises. These practice closures might involve closing a monolith opening with sand baskets, or manually installing a floodgate that is offline undergoing minor tweaking.

Construction Openings are openings in the system that are under construction, or openings that are used by the contractor to perform work on that section of the system.



The perimeter system is 133 miles long, or 702,240 feet. The remaining construction openings in the system amount to a total of only 500 feet, or approximately one city block.

These are the larger structures that will be tested during the mid-June field exercises:

- Inner Harbor Navigation Canal Surge Barrier
- Seabrook Floodgate Complex

- Gulf Intracoastal Waterway West Closure Complex Gates and Pump Station
- Harvey Canal Floodgate
- Bayou Segnette Gate and Pump Station
- Caernarvon Sector Gate
- Bayou Dupre Sector Gate
- Bayou Verret Sector Gate
- Hero Canal Stop-Log Structure

Except for the Harvey Canal Floodgate, all of these structures will be tested by technicians from the Corps and, at selected structures, the construction contractor with participation by the local sponsor.

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Contact Information

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Task Force Hope
(504) 862-2593

New Orleans District
(504) 862-2201

The Task Force Hope 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 risk reduction efforts 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

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Status Report Newsletter
Task Force Hope
Strategic Communications
7400 Leake Ave., Room #388
New Orleans, LA 70118
(504) 862-1949

Hurricane Season
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The New Orleans area has the best perimeter defense in its history. Yet it is important to remember that you should always heed the directions of your local authorities: when an evacuation is called for, please EVACUATE!



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Are You Ready?

"The Corps is prepared and ready should we have a storm this season," said Mike Park. "Team New Orleans has designed and built the best hurricane defense in this area's history, and we have prepared for a tropical storm or hurricane to be sure

our team members know exactly what to do. Are you prepared and ready?

"Protect your family the best way you can. Have a fly-away kit ready, keep your car gassed up, and have a plan for where you will go if local officials advise that we evacuate. We want everyone in Southeast Louisiana to be safe."



The Caernarvon Sector Gate will be one of the structures tested in mid-June as part of the Corps' field exercises in preparation for a hurricane. The Corps and the contractor will test the structure with participation by a technical representative from SLPFA-East.

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