



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Mississippi Valley Division

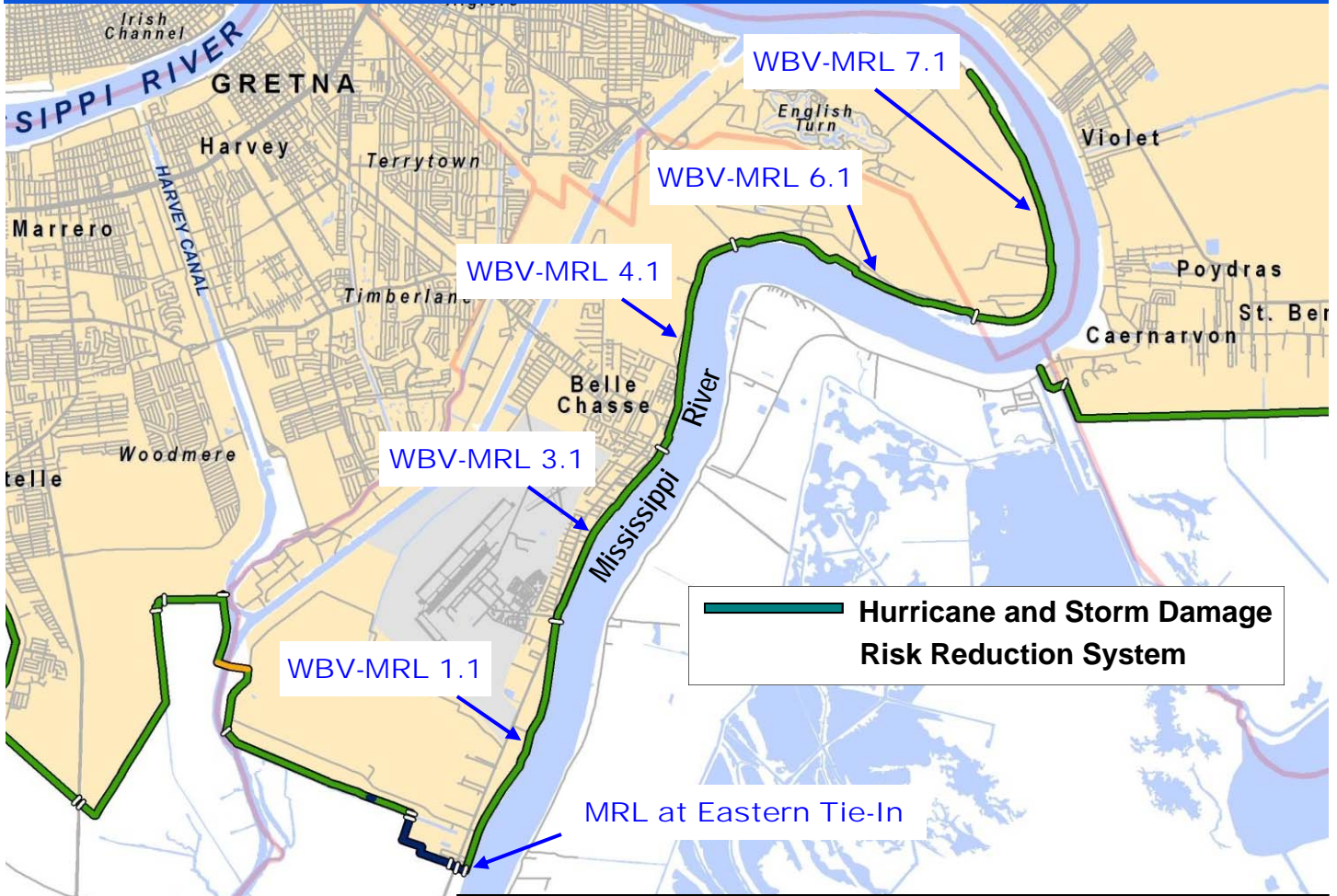


Corps Hurricane Response

Task Force Hope Status Report Newsletter

June 17, 2011

Corps resumes work on Miss. River Levees



by Susan Spaht

Construction work on engineered alternative measures has resumed on a 15.5-mile section of Mississippi River Levees that are co-located with the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System. That stretch, from Oakville to English Turn (see map), meets the requirements for

riverine flooding, but needs to be raised to meet the new 100-year criteria for the HSDRRS. Corps regulations dictate that no construction work can be performed on river levees when the river reaches 15 feet and rising at the Carrollton gauge. (see box, page 2)

When worked was suspended on the river levees in early May, each con-

tractor for the five contract reaches (see map) had removed 5,000 linear feet of the existing stone surfacing, and all were able to replace the ma-

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WBV-MRL 7.1 prior to work stoppage

USACE Photos



WBV-MRL 1.1 during work stoppage

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material ahead of the rising waters. This was important because it allowed crews access to the levees for the flood fight and for levee inspections.

“Now that the river has gone down to 15 feet and falling, we can resume our work,” said Garnet Hardin, Project Manager for the three upper reaches, WBV-MRL 7.1, 6.1 and 4.1, of the co-located levees. Before the work stoppage, crews on WBV-MRL 7.1 and WBV-MRL 6.1 had stripped the grass from 10,000 feet of the levees between English Turn and the upper portion of Plaquemines Parish and had already applied the needed lifts. “Everything was done but the

application of turf on those two sections,” Hardin explained.

The contractor for the third section, WBV-MRL 4.1, had substantially completed a 5,000-foot section. The section had been stripped of its grass and the application of the lifts had begun. “We had reached the existing elevation when work was suspended,” said Hardin. “The crews had also poured concrete for one of two lanes for the Belle Chasse ferry ramp, and we directed them to place rock on the other lane in order to have two-way vehicle access to and from the ferry.

“That was an important accomplishment,” he pointed out, “because it allowed us to maintain ferry operation which reduced traffic impacts for the area during the work stoppage period.”

Work on WBV-MRL 3.1 included stripping the 5,000-foot section of grass and adding crushed stone where the surfacing had been removed, but no lifts had been done. “Adding the stone surfacing allowed continued access to the levee for inspection and flood fighting efforts,” said Nicole Harris, Project Manager for the two lower reaches, WBV-MRL 3.1 and 1.1 of the co-located levees.

Work on WBV-MRL 1.1 included stripping the grass from the 5,000-foot section, removing 3,800 feet of slope pavement and adding stone where the surfacing had been removed, but no lifts had been done yet. Just prior to work stoppage, the contractor placed sand concrete bags and visqueen on the river side of the levee. “This was to protect the levee from the rising water in areas where the slope pavement had been removed,” said Harris. “The river

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WBV-MRL Project Managers Garnet Hardin and Nicole Harris

FYI: River levels at Carrollton Gauge

Mississippi River water elevation measured at the Carrollton gauge is used to affect work on all Mississippi River & Tributaries (MRT) levees in the New Orleans District. This covers levees from Black Hawk to Venice on the right descending bank of the Mississippi River, and from Baton Rouge to the Bohemia Spillway on the left descending bank, and all Atchafalaya Basin levees. The regulations on construction work cover surface and subsurface work on and within 1,500 feet of a river levee.



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water came up to the lower bags – so it was a successful damage-prevention method for us.”

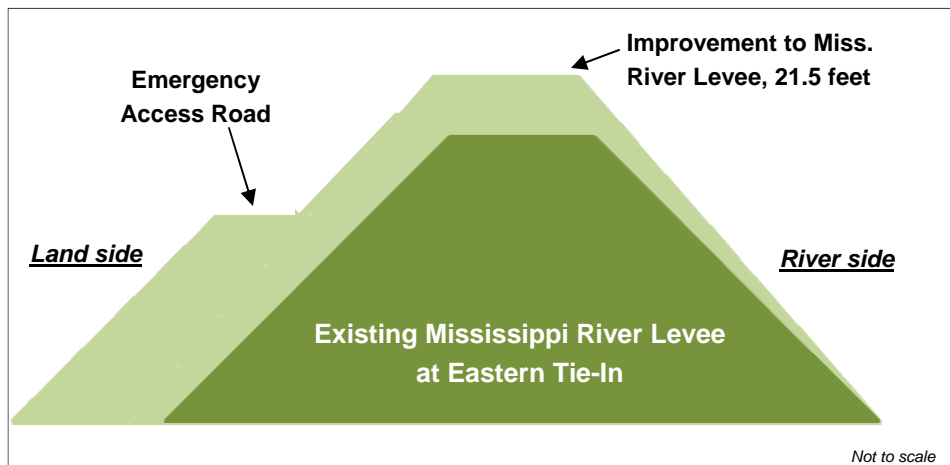
All construction work on engineered alternative measures on MBV-MRL 7.1 down to 1.1 is expected to be completed by August 15.

Special case

One section of the Mississippi River Levee is in a different situation. That is a 1,000-foot section, WBV-09a, that is part of the Eastern Tie-In project. No work has started on this section because the plans are still being finalized. “We are going to construct an emergency bypass road on that section of the levee,” said Ted Carr, a Project Manager for the Eastern Tie-In. “The road will be ‘benched-in’ at elevation 14.5 feet along the protected side of the levee.” (see illustration) Carr explained that crews are constructing floodwalls, earthen levees and swing gates that, when completed, will close-off Highway 23 and the parallel railroad to defend against possible storm surge. This work will “tie-in” the HSDRRS to the Mississippi River.

When the Eastern Tie-In swing gates are completed and closed for a tropical event, emergency vehicles will need an access road for emergencies. That access will be the “bench road” along the MRL that is being designed now.

Because the levee in this portion is being raised from elevation 16 feet to elevation 21.5 feet, and the bench road/emergency access road is being built along the side of that 1,000-foot section of the MRL, that levee must be widened on both the pro-



tected side and the river side. “We’ll need to remove the slope paving on the river side of the levee to widen the levee and strengthen it,” said Carr. “To perform this work, we’ll have to wait for the Mississippi River to recede to a lower level – to about elevation five feet – to begin that work.



Eastern Tie-In Project Managers Stephen Amato, left, and Ted Carr.

“Public safety comes first,” said Carr, “so we will not leave a vulnerable gap on the Mississippi River Levee should we experience a storm this

hurricane season. We will use Hesco baskets on the levee to protect the area from any possible surge.”





West Closure Complex pumps and gates perform as designed

Kevin Wagner, Senior Project Manager
GIWW-West Closure Complex

USACE Photo

By Susan Spaht

On the morning of June 3, the Corps of Engineers cranked up its brand new West Closure Complex pump station and operated the connected sector gate to demonstrate to the media and the public how the new project would perform. With a puff of black smoke, the first 5,400-hp diesel engine turned on effortlessly and spewed water into the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway. Preceding that, the 225-foot sector gate was closed and opened without incident.

The West Closure Complex is home to the world's largest drainage pump station and the nation's largest sector gate. The project is truly an engineering marvel.

"We performed an operational test," said Kevin Wagner, Senior Project Manager for the WCC, "to determine that we have eight of eleven pumps operational for this hurricane season, and will be able to defend against a 100-year storm surge by closing the sector gate and sluice gates.

"Everything went smoothly - just as we had planned."

The GIWW-WCC is a major feature of the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System that provides the first line of defense from storm surge entering the Harvey and Algiers Canals. The complex significantly reduces the risk to a large area of the West Bank by removing 25 miles of levees, floodwalls, flood-

gates and pumping stations along the canals from the direct impacts of storm surge.

In addition to the pump station and sector gate, the nearly \$1 billion project consists of floodwalls, foreshore protection, water control structures and an earthen levee. The project also included dredging the Algiers Canal, beneficial use of the dredged material as well as realignment of a portion of Bayou Road in Plaquemines Parish.

Construction of this enormous project began in August 2009 and is already nearly 84% complete.





A Special Moment

Under the lights, Cajun Constructors completes the last concrete monolith for contract LPV 148.82, Verret to Caernarvon, on May 27. This section is part of the 23-mile long floodwall for St. Bernard Parish. "These critical levee improvements are key to protecting our community for generations to come," said Craig P. Tafaro, Jr., St. Bernard Parish President.



A Special Visit

On May 24, Secretary of the Army John McHugh, right, visited New Orleans and was given an HSDRRS overview by Col. Greg Gunter, G-3 for Task Force Hope. Sec. McHugh, MG Michael Walsh, Col. Ed Fleming and other dignitaries, took a helicopter tour of the system after the presentation.

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

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