US Army Corps of Engineers
Mississippi Valley Division

Corps Hurricane Response

Task Force Hope Status Report Newsletter *September 23, 2010*

SPECIAL ISSUE

Corps Letter to the Editor

in response to Sept. 19 Times-Picayune editorial

Times-Picayune
Attn: Editor
3800 Howard Avenue
New Orleans, Louisiana 70125

Dear Editor:

The editorial in Sunday's Times Picayune brought up several differences in understanding I would like to address.

Upon completion of the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System (HSDRRS), the Greater New Orleans area will have the best perimeter defense in its history. Extensive modeling, lessons learned, collaboration, risk informed processes and external peer review have enhanced the Corps' design criteria and on-the-ground construction. Scientific and engineering rigor underpins all the HSDRRS work.

The HSDRRS is being accomplished in a relatively short time, as nearly $15 billion has been funded up front for this essential construction. In comparison, the Corps of Engineers normal national civil works construction program is about $2 billion annually. The Corps has a duty to be stewards of the taxpayer's money, and a professional project management and engineering responsibility to provide a safe workplace, care for the environment, stay within budget, deliver on schedule, and maintain quality. Quality, schedule and budget are ALL important for public safety.

Through continual and rigorous analysis, and careful program management, we have determined that the HSDRRS and the authorized work in the Southeast Louisiana (SELA) project can be executed within current funds. Reprogramming is necessary from time to time to assure the funds are in the right places at the right times.

Floodwalls and transitions between floodwalls and levees are armored during initial construction; over 420 locations have been armored to date. The final levee lift must be completed before levees are armored for resiliency. The Corps is testing a variety of armoring materials including grasses, turf reinforced mats and stabilized soils using one of the world's largest wave overtopping simulators at Colorado State University.

Corrosion is an important design consideration for all HSDRRS projects. The Corps uses several measures to inhibit or compensate for corrosion, depending on the project design and environmental factors, all of which are consistent with accepted engineering principles and practices of other federal and state agencies, and private industry. The purchase of additional-steel-thickness for steel pile foundations does provide extra strength, while compensating for the potential of future corrosion.

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The Seabrook Gate Complex is on schedule. Features will be in place by June 2011 to defend against storm surge. The cost of building Seabrook will be accomplished within the funds on hand.

The GIWW West Closure Complex, another state-of-the art engineering effort, is now over 95% designed and 40% constructed. This very complex project is successful due to careful engineering and collaboration with our partners.

One of the lessons learned from Katrina that we must never forget is that flood risk reduction can only be accomplished as a system: levees, floodwalls, gates, pump stations, and other features stretch across Parish boundaries and need to work together. It also means effective partnerships between federal, state, local governances and all stakeholders are needed to deliver the complete system. It is our duty and responsibility to make decisions considering the comprehensive system, to ensure public safety, and serve the citizens of Greater New Orleans and Southeast Louisiana.

Sincerely,

Karen Durham-Aguilera, P.E.SES
Director, Task Force Hope
Mississippi Valley Division

St. Bernard floodwall construction

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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 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:
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