



US Army Corps
of Engineers
New Orleans District

News Release

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Protecting London Canal floodwall and levee

Trees and fences within 6 feet of levee toe will be removed

NEW ORLEANS—In another step to protect hurricane levees and floodwalls from trees that undermine their integrity, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will soon begin to remove 450 trees and stumps along the London Avenue Canal in New Orleans.

All trees and fences within six feet of the levee toe will be permanently removed.

Fence removal is necessary to allow the Orleans Levee District to maintain and inspect the vegetation-free area. Periodic inspections of the levee toe are necessary to identify seepage or other potential problems. Tree and fence removal will be done at federal expense.

Work will begin Saturday inside the floodwall north of Robert E. Lee Boulevard. Next week, the work will shift outside for fence and tree removal in property owners' yards, beginning at Robert E. Lee on both sides of the canal. Completion will take several weeks.

Louisiana law provides for removal

These actions are being taken under right-of-entry granted by the Orleans Levee District. The right-of-entry is based on a Louisiana law that provides for the removal of any objects within six feet of levees that interfere with levee safety or obstruct inspection and maintenance of the levee (Louisiana Revised Statutes 38.225 and Attorney General Opinion 06-0168). Along the London Canal, the floodwalls are anchored in levee embankments.

“Many of these trees are in the backyards of people’s homes adjacent to the London Canal, so we recognize our responsibility to take particular care. Only the trees and fences on the levee or within six feet of the levee’s toe will be removed,” said Michael Stout, a project manager for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

“The root systems of these trees invade the levee section and provide channels for seepage that can threaten the levee. Additionally, roots ripped out during a tropical storm would worsen the seepage and reduce the stability of the levee, potentially resulting in failure,” Stout said.

The Corps awarded two contracts under the Small Business Administration’s 8(a) program for small and disadvantaged businesses:

West side of canal. Three Fold Consultants LLC, New Orleans, got a \$576,400 contract to remove 170 trees and other woody vegetation.

East side of canal. Resource One, Lettsworth, La., got an \$840,000 contract to remove 280 trees and other woody vegetation.

The contracts include stump and root removal and related repairs to Corps standards such as refilling and compacting the holes.

The London Canal tree-removal project will help to protect the Gentilly neighborhood and, beyond it, other areas of New Orleans. The removals will be done on both banks, from Pump Station 3 at the head of the canal to Robert E. Lee Boulevard near where it empties into Lake Pontchartrain.

All of the property owners have been informed, by letter and newspaper notices, at least two weeks before the present that the trees and fences will be removed. The owners can rebuild fences beyond six feet of the levee toe, at their own expense. Other structures within six feet, including sheds and garages, will not be removed at present. The Orleans Levee District will evaluate each structure on a case-by-case basis in consultation with property owners. No timetable has been set for these evaluations.

Survey markers in color

The Corps has designated the area with survey markers where the fences may be rebuilt. To minimize project impact, the contractors and Corps representatives will enter from the canal side of each property.

Colors designate the survey markers' meaning:
--**white** for the levee's toe, where levee meets the ground.
--**blue** for six feet beyond levee's toe.

"The tree and fence removal is part of the Corps' determination to insure that hurricane defenses are improved to the maximum permitted by law," Stout said. "Wherever that restoration is being done, the Corps is implementing lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina."

The Corps acknowledges that plans have been made to erect permanent pumps and gates at the mouths of the London Avenue and two other drainage canals nearby, the Orleans Avenue and the 17th Street canals.

"That work will take years to complete, so meanwhile the Corps needs to maintain the canal-side protection. We are confident that the temporary gates and pumps will work as designed. But it's also important for the canals to be capable of safely passing optimum drainage outflow to the lake generated by Pump Station 3 during heavy rains" without endangering the levee-floodwall, Stout said.