



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
New Orleans District

News Release

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Levee dirt: Corps to acquire land rights to get it

NEW ORLEANS – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers wants to acquire borrow easements to obtain the clay needed for levee construction.

In addition to money, landowners will also get the satisfaction of playing a role in the improvement of hurricane levees for New Orleans and neighboring parishes.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers needs the acreage to obtain clay to restore the levees that have lost elevation because of subsidence occurring in south Louisiana, or to strengthen a levee's cross-section.

“We need a lot of dirt over the next four years. In specific, we need clay,” said April Villa, the Corps’ project manager for clay.

“Clay is made of tiny sedimentary particles. It is preferred for building a levee. Silt and sand, whose diameters are larger, are permeable and erodable,” Villa said. “Clay compacts well, and retards water’s movement through a levee.”

“We want to acquire the rights to obtain borrow material from your land. We will consider obtaining borrow material from a site that has a minimum of 10 acres,” Villa said.

The 10 acres must be contiguous, excluding wetlands. In the event that the land parcel to be offered might contain wetlands—which cover much of south Louisiana—the government will try to avoid using them. However, if non-wetlands clay falls far short of government needs, the government would consider using wetlands for borrow.

Landowners may learn more at the web site
www.mvn.usace.army.mil/borrow and find the form on which to offer

their land for testing and possible acquisition of real estate rights for borrow. Landowners with questions or requests for forms may call 504-862-CLAY.

Borrow is a traditional term used to mean material used for levees and embankments. It is not borrowed in the strict sense of the word.

First priority will be given to sites in the Louisiana parishes in which levees are being improved: Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Charles and St. Bernard.

Preference will be given to suitable sites within close proximity to levee construction activities.

“We estimate that our needs will exceed 2,000 acres,” Villa said. “At such a magnitude, transportation costs become an important consideration.”

Borrow Material for Levees is a Web site www.mvn.usace.army.mil/borrow on which landowners may learn more and find a form on which to offer their land for testing to determine suitability as a potential borrow site. Call **504-862-CLAY** with questions or to get the offering form on paper.