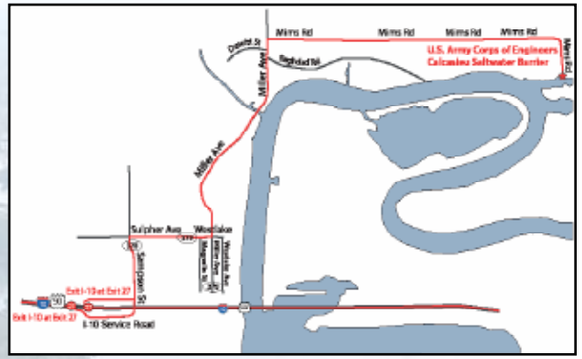
The Calcasieu Saltwater Barrier

Recreational facilities are available for public use at the Calcasieu River Saltwater Barrier. Visitors can enjoy fishing, crabbing, picnicking, and the area's scenic beauty.

A visit to the Saltwater Barrier offers a picturesque view of the Calcasieu River. Parking, picnic tables and unobstructed viewing areas are provided for observing the beauty of the river, cypress trees and wetland vegetation. The barrier also provides a free public boat launch for access to hunting and fishing sites.

...About the New Orleans District

The jurisdiction of the New Orleans District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, includes over 2,800 miles of navigable waterways, over 950 miles of levees and floodwalls, 12 navigation locks, 6 major flood control structures, 2 freshwater diversion structures, and other projects to create or protect the coastal wetlands of Louisiana.



Travel on Interstate 10 until you reach exit 27, Westlake exit. Take Sampson Street North until you reach Sulphur Avenue. Turn right and proceed on Sulphur Avenue to Miller Avenue, take a left turn at Miller Avenue and travel until you reach Mims Road. Turn right at Mims and proceed to the Calcasieu Saltwater Barrier, approximately 4 miles from Interstate 10.

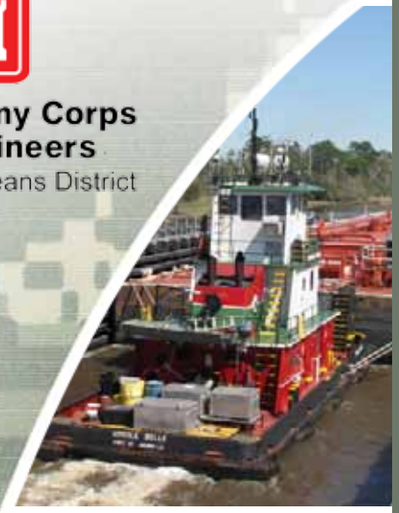
Calcasieu River Saltwater Barrier®

Visiting Hours
7:30 to 3:30 p.m.
Monday through Friday

Tours and large groups should call ahead for arrangements at (337) 433-5013

For additional information about the Calcasieu River Saltwater Barrier, call (504) 862-2201, or write to:
U.S. army Corps of Engineers,
New Orleans District, Operations Division
Post Office Box 60267
New Orleans, LA 70160-0267
Email: askthecorps@usace.army.mil
Web site: www.mvn.usace.army.mil

US Army Corps of Engineers
New Orleans District



BUILDING STRONG®

Calcasieu River Saltwater Barrier

The Calcasieu Saltwater Barrier

The History

In 1946, Congress authorized the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to construct a deep-draft channel in the Calcasieu River from the Gulf of Mexico to Lake Charles. Millions of cubic yards of material were dredged from the river so that the waterway would be deep enough to handle ocean-going vessels. Local interests believed a deep-draft channel would significantly improve and increase navigation in this area.

Those local visionaries were right. Since the channel was completed in 1953, the Port of Lake Charles has become one of the busiest ports in the nation. In 1994, the city became America's 12th largest port.

The Problem

While the deeper channel brought increased shipping and greater prosperity to the area, it also allowed saltwater from the Gulf to migrate further inland. The intruding saltwater threatened the upper Calcasieu River, which provides water for irrigating the region's rice fields. The saltwater, which kills many types of vegetation, began to destroy some of the sensitive wetlands of the Calcasieu River Basin.

The Solution

To solve the saltwater intrusion problem, in 1962 Congress modified the existing authorization for the Calcasieu River project to include construction of a dam upstream of Lake Charles. The structure, commonly referred to as the Calcasieu River Saltwater Barrier, was designed to block the saltwater from traveling north, yet not hinder critical commercial navigation on the river.

The Structure

The barrier consists of three components: a navigation structure, a floodway control structure, and a dam that prevents saltwater from flowing around the structure via the river's old loop.

Although the purpose of the barrier is to prevent saltwater intrusion, it also accommodates shallow draft vessels that frequent the river. The navigation structure consists of a concrete gate bay with hydraulic-driven steel sector gates plus timber guide walls and fenders to ensure safe passage of vessels.

The flood control structure has five steel tainter gates operated by individual electric driven cable hoists, mounted between 8-foot thick concrete piers. Stone riprap lies along the channel bottom to prevent scouring.