US Army Corps of Engineers
Mississippi Valley Division

Corps Hurricane Response

Task Force Hope Status Report

July 24, 2007

Corps Releases Hurricane Decision Chronology

Chief of Engineers invites public to provide additional relevant documentation

The Corps of Engineers commissioned the Hurricane Protection Decision Chronology to document the historic record for the planning and design of the Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity Hurricane Protection Project. This study will enable the Corps and the Nation to learn from the past and be better informed for the future.

By Lt. Gen. Robert L. Van Antwerp

Lt. Gen. Robert L. Van Antwerp, new Chief and Commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, authorized the release last week of the draft Hurricane Protection Decision Chronology study. (USACE Photo)

Last week, the Corps of Engineers released a key study related to Hurricane Katrina and the New Orleans area. It is another step toward meeting our commitment to the American people to be open and transparent in communicating what we have learned since the worst storm ever to hit the coast of the United States made its devastating landfall along the Gulf Coast on August 29, 2005.

The draft Hurricane Protection Decision Chronology (HPDC), or the Chronology Report, thoroughly documents the 50-year decision history related to the Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity Hurricane Protection Project (LP&VHPP). The draft Chronology Report illustrates the complexities of Corps, project sponsor, legislative, judicial and funding decisions that involved many different people and organizations, and government at all levels, over those 50 years.

It is an opportunity for the Corps and the Nation to learn from the past and be better informed for future decision making.

The Corps commissioned the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Institute for Water Resources (IWR) to initiate an independent study soon after Hurricane Katrina to answer questions about "why" and "how" the system in place before Katrina came to be. The IWR engaged two national water policy and management experts to compile the Chronology Report and supported the team throughout their effort. The report has been thoroughly reviewed within the Corps and has additionally been

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- *Looking back* -

Aug. 1967
Applying sheet piling at France Road at IHNC.

Sept. 1965
De-watering the 9th Ward after Hurricane Betsy

Feb. 1979
Construction of the New Orleans Marina floowall.

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independently reviewed by external flood experts.

The study is a separate, but complementary, effort to the Corps-commissioned Interagency Performance Evaluation Task Force (IPET) study that was also initiated after Katrina to assess how the system performed during the storm. IPET provided the "what happened" engineering and technical answers.

The findings in the Chronology Report are important to the Corps and the Nation for many different reasons. Some of the key lessons include:

- ***Systems approaches, adaptive management over the life of projects, and risk management and risk communication are critical to the success of the Nation's public works infrastructure.***
- ***The Corps must improve its understanding and communication of risk information within the organization.***

- ***The Corps must more aggressively act as a technical advisor in communicating risk information to our Nation's decision makers.***

- ***The Nation's decision makers must understand the importance of systems approaches when authorizing, funding and maintaining critical public works infrastructure.***

- ***The Corps can empower the public to take greater responsibility for their own safety by ensuring they understand what their risks are when they live and work behind a hurricane protection system, and that there will always be risk during large storms.***

- ***Incremental decisions made over the life of a project impact the cumulative risk of projects and our systems assessments must consider cumulative decisions.***

We have incorporated what we have learned through the HPDC and IPET studies in our ongoing work around New Orleans. We are always looking for ways to better serve the Nation.

The draft Chronology Report is being released for a 30-day public comment period during which time the authors are asking the public to provide any additional relevant documentation that has not already been included.
The report is available at: http://www.iwr.usace.army.mil/inside/products/pub/hpdc/hpdc.cfm

Robert L. Van Antwerp

Lt. Gen. Robert L. Van Antwerp
Chief and Commander
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

A Chronology of the 17th Street Outfall Canal

1949 - Today

17th Street Canal

1949, post-WWII

17th Street Canal

March 2001, pre-Katrina

(USACE Photos)

17th Street Canal — July 2007

The Corps of Engineers continues to add pump capacity

Faces of Hope

Helping Louisiana Communities Recover

LaRFO Demolition Team getting the job done right

The Louisiana Recovery Field Office's demolition reconciliation team at work are, from left, Stacie Wade, Administrative Assistant; Pam Blaize, subject matter expert; and Olivia Nelson, NEPA compliance officer. (USACE Photo)

Note: the LaRFO is part of the Corps of Engineers' hurricane disaster response.

By Dave Harris, LaRFO

Talk to one of the teammates, and she pays tribute to the others. It's a consistent pattern with the employees of the Louisiana Recovery Field Office's (LaRFO) demolition reconciliation team supporting FEMA's response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

No one wants to let the others down; someone's home may depend on it.

Their mission: make sure the 5,200 remaining FEMA-eligible hazardous structures in New Orleans are properly demolished and, most importantly, never allow demolition of any house that shouldn't be demolished – even when it's a case where the owner changes his mind midway through the process.

Their combined eagle eyes have achieved total victory so far. Not one house in their charge, since the team was formed, has mistakenly been torn down. When you look at the challenges they face, you can understand why that is a remarkable achievement.

"A list of properties - anywhere from a few dozen to 300-plus - arrives from FEMA every Friday," said team leader Olivia Nelson, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance officer.

"We make sure each property has a tax assessment sheet along with a color photo of the property which helps the contractor identify the structure prior to demolition. Then I check the lists to make sure the property is listed under the correct sector."

Once a determination has been made that the list has been broken down properly, the properties are forwarded to the LaRFO contracting office.

Contracting notifies the respective demolition contractor that the properties are ready to be tested for asbestos-containing material.

Nelson's teammate, Pam Blaize, a subject matter expert, sends the information to the Corps' demo application database and records the date the properties were forwarded to Contracting for testing and tracking by the assigned file number.

"Once notified by the contractor that

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LaRFO Demolition Team Has Completed 15 of 20 Parishes

(USACE Photo)

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the testing is complete, Stacie Wade, an Administrative Assistant, attaches the NEPA report to each property record and lets Nelson know the tests are ready for review.

"I review each of the NEPA reports," Wade said, "to determine whether we concur with the inspector's findings and whether or not the property should be demolished as RACM - Regulated Asbestos Containing Materials - and/or C&D – construction and demolition, or without asbestos." If there is a discrepancy, a revised NEPA report is requested from the contractor.

The point, the team emphasized, is that there are checks and re-checks before a house is approved for demolition.

"Some addresses might have the wrong photograph, or the owner might change his mind about demolishing his property midway in the process," Wade said. "These types of errors get our attention right away because any oversight could mean that the wrong house would mistakenly be demolished.

"And after 6,500 successful demolitions," Wade added proudly, "our team has gotten it right every time."

For more information on the LaRFO, go to this link:

http://www.mvm.usace.army.mil/RFO/index.html

LaRFO Demolition Update

- 15 of 20 Parishes/Municipalities are 100% complete.
- 3,656 of 4,266 Orleans Parish demo packets have been completed (86%)

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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 hurricane recovery work to stakeholders. This is an online publication and open to public distribution.
This issue and past issues can be found at:
www.mvn.usace.army.mil/hps

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

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PUMP CAPACITY REPORT

17th Street Canal…..approx. 5,200 cfs
London Ave. Canal..approx. 2,800 cfs
Orleans Ave. Canal...approx. 2,200 cfs

As of July 24, 2007

Note: The Status Report Newsletter will give regular reports on the pump capacity of the three temporary outfall canals under construction. For more details, please visit:
www.mvn.usace.army.mil/hps

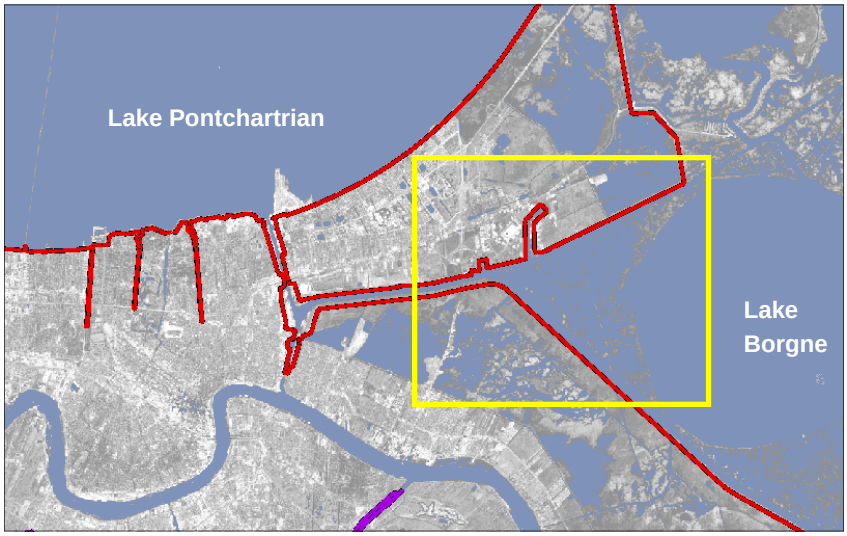
Corps Begins Contract Process for IHNC Protection

— *Largest Design-Build Civil Works Project in Corps History* —

By Susan Spaht

On July 2, the Corps of Engineers hosted 155 contractors for a contract information meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to explain and discuss Phase One of a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for a project *"to improve hurricane protection at the Inner Harbor Navigational Canal from hurricane-induced storm surges to the 100-year design elevation."*

The Project Objective, as outlined by the Corps, further explains the project as: *"a design-build project to foster innovation in a condensed schedule environment and partner with industry and stakeholders to meet the project goal."*



Shown in the yellow outline is the area under consideration for the IHNC hurricane protection contract . (USACE Illustration)

The estimated magnitude of construction is over **$500 million.**

"This is the biggest design/build civil works project in the history of the Corps," said Richmond "Rick" Kendrick, Deputy for Program Execution in the Corps' Hurricane Protection Office.

"In addition to the size and amount of the contract, this is a very unique project for a couple of other reasons," he added.

- The Corps will select contractors to participate in drafting the Request for Proposals (RFP).
- The contractor will be selected before the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) compliance is complete.

"We don't want to limit innovation," explained Kendrick, "so we are letting the contractors help write the RFPs. We'll make sure we get everything they need. Then we'll evaluate their proposals."

Kendrick further explained. "This is a huge project; it will take years to design and build. We want to give the people of New Orleans the best hurricane protection we can, as fast as we can. So, we are awarding the contract and starting the design work before the environmental report is complete. It will be a cost-plus contract that requires the design to be *site-adaptable* to the NEPA environmental report."

The NEPA report, expected by May or June of 2008, will outline where the project can and cannot be built. Kendrick emphasized that the NEPA requirements will be fully met in complete accordance with environmental law.

The project is expected to include navigable gates with barriers between. The location of the project will be the IHNC in the vicinity of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW). "This is one of the most vulnerable areas of the hurricane protection system," explained Kendrick, "as has been evidenced by the Corps' Risk & Reliability report."

Phase One proposals are due to the Corps by Aug. 1, 2007. The Corps will notify the short-listed contractors by Aug. 20 and will issue the Phase Two RFP. Those proposals are due in late Dec. 2007.

Rick Kendrick

The award of the contract will be in early March, 2008.

The project is expected to be completed and in place for the 2011 hurricane season.