



## Mitigation of environmental impacts is an essential feature of the risk reduction system

Mitigation for unavoidable environmental impacts is an essential feature of the Greater New Orleans Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System (HSDRRS).

The goal of HSDRRS mitigation is to replace the functions and values of habitats that are impacted during construction of Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity (LPV) and West Bank and Vicinity (WBV) HSDRRS projects after all efforts to avoid and minimize these impacts have been exhausted.

Mitigation of environmental impacts is required by various federal laws, including the Water Resources Development Acts of 1986 and 2007, the National Environmental Policy Act, the Clean Water Act and the Fish & Wildlife Coordination Act. The New Orleans District, in cooperation with environmental resource agencies and non-federal sponsors, is addressing environmental mitigation requirements by developing mitigation plans in compliance with these laws. Funding for compensatory mitigation is provided in the Supplemental Appropriations.

Generally, mitigation will occur in close proximity to the location of the environmental impacts. For LPV, mitigation will occur south of Interstate 12 and east of the Mississippi River. For WBV, mitigation will occur between the Mississippi River and Bayou Lafourche.

### Project features as of October 15, 2010

- Impacted habitat types include bottomland hardwood wetland, bottomland hardwood upland, swamp and marsh.
- Estimated project impacts are approximately 4,000 acres.

### Project status as of October 15, 2010

#### Completed Milestones:

- |                                       |                |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| • Five Public "Scoping" Meetings      | May 2010       |
| • Initial Screening of Measures (LPV) | July 2010      |
| • Initial Screening of Measures (WBV) | September 2010 |

#### Scheduled Milestones:

- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| • Two Public Meetings                      | December 2010  |
| • Assemble Alternative Plans               | June 2011      |
| • Identify Proposed Plan                   | August 2011    |
| • Design Mitigation Projects               | September 2011 |
| • Release Individual Environmental Reports | January 2012   |
| • Final Design of Mitigation Projects      | June 2012      |
| • Start Real Estate Acquisition            | June 2012      |
| • Issue Construction Contract              | June 2013      |

## Commander's Desk

### Work in Southwest Louisiana requires strong partnerships



The New Orleans District consists of approximately 30,000 square miles of widely varying geography, topography and hydrology. Recently, I had the opportunity to travel throughout much of the western portion of the district's area of responsibility. As district commander, visits such as this drastically expand my knowledge and understanding of these communities' needs and requirements. Traveling allows me to see firsthand many of our project sites, inspect our structures and sit down with our teammates, like lockmasters Brad Blanchard at Port Allen and Charles Hebert at the Calcasieu Saltwater Barrier, stakeholders and partners whose efforts are vital in accomplishing the Corps' civil works mission.

The South Louisiana landscape is peppered with Corps projects for coastal protection and ecosystem restoration, navigation, flood risk reduction and recreation. The area's dynamic environment creates a region where needs can vary greatly over a very small area. A cookie cutter approach to project design and implementation just will not work. Flood risk reduction in Terrebonne Parish requires different solutions than flood risk reduction in neighboring St. Mary Parish.

In addition to meeting with the Corps men and women that live and work in the area, traveling through the district allowed me the opportunity to meet with our stakeholders

and partners in their communities. At each stop, we were able to engage in open and frank conversations regarding the projects and needs of each specific area.

Stakeholders, such as Channing Hayden of the Port of Lake Charles and President Naquin of St. Mary Parish, were able to provide valuable insight and regional expertise. The Corps was able to elaborate on our abilities, and sometimes our limitations, in assisting them. These conversations set the groundwork for establishing the solutions for each area's unique obstacles.

South Louisiana faces many obstacles. Overcoming these obstacles will take the combined commitment and effort of both the Corps and its stakeholders and partners, maximizing all of our abilities to overcome each of our limitations. Ultimately, developing the framework of strong partnerships necessary to do so starts with conversations such as those had during these visits.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone for the hospitality and accommodation I was shown throughout my travel to southwestern Louisiana. Every time that I have visited the area, you all have been terrific hosts. I am already looking forward to my next visit.

**Building Strong,**  
Col. Ed Fleming



*Letter to the Editor of Times-Picayune*

## Task Force Hope Director's response to Sept. 19 Times-Picayune editorial

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.

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 and 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  
Director, Task Force Hope  
Mississippi Valley Division

## Coastal Protection and Ecosystem Restoration

### 20th anniversary celebrated in Southwestern Louisiana

In recognition of the 20th anniversary of the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act (CWPPRA), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District, the CWPPRA Task Force Office of Coastal Protection and Restoration, and the parishes of Southwestern Louisiana hosted a ceremony at the Cameron Prairie National Wildlife Refuge in Calcasieu Parish on October 14 to highlight restoration projects in Southwestern Louisiana.

For two decades, CWPPRA has been constructing small-scale coastal and ecosystem restoration projects throughout coastal Louisiana. Approximately \$40 million has been used annually to construct preservation and restoration projects such as sediment diversions, marsh management, and hydro-



logic restoration. Currently the program has 147 active projects in various phases that protect and/or restore 110,415 net acres of coastal wetlands.

Roughly one hundred people came out for the event, which began in the Refuge's outdoor pavilion. During the opening ceremony thirteen projects were dedicated, including the Corps sponsored Sabine Refuge Marsh Creation project. Several coastal restoration advocates were also recognized for their dedication to the CWPPRA program over the past 20 years. The day concluded with a field trip to the Freshwater Diver-sion Introduction South of Highway 82.

