



Commander's note

To responsibly fulfill our mission, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers must recognize the needs and interests of our partners, stakeholders, and above all, the residents we serve. Developing the necessary level of understanding requires going to their communities, listening to their concerns, and experiencing their culture. In pursuit of this knowledge, I travel throughout the New Orleans District's area of responsibility as frequently as my schedule allows.

Recently, I spent the better part of two weeks traveling through coastal Louisiana. By doing so, I was able to sit down with team members, community leaders, and stakeholders throughout the area. And while each community has its own set of priorities, the impact coastal land loss is having on Southern Louisiana's citizens seemed to permeate each of our conversations.

During the trip, I also had the opportunity to lead three coastal protection and ecosystem restoration town hall meetings. I believe that the tremendous turnout we had at each of these meetings further reinforces the importance that these lands mean to these communities. Many were tired from a long day's work, yet they found it important to attend these meetings. By doing so, I believe

their message was clear: Protecting Louisiana's coastal lands is vital for preserving a culture and way of life that is uniquely Louisiana.

However, the challenge to protect and restore coastal Louisiana is far too great for any single agency or group to undertake alone. It will take the collaborative efforts of us all working under a single vision to turn the tide in the fight against coastal loss. We must understand this incredibly dynamic environment and use adaptive management to capitalize on new information as it becomes available. To do so, we must maintain open and constant channels of communication. Then proven science, knowledge and innovation can flow freely; difficult decisions and trade offs can be collectively made. On behalf of the Corps of Engineers, I would like to say that we are committed to doing our part in promoting this exchange of ideas.

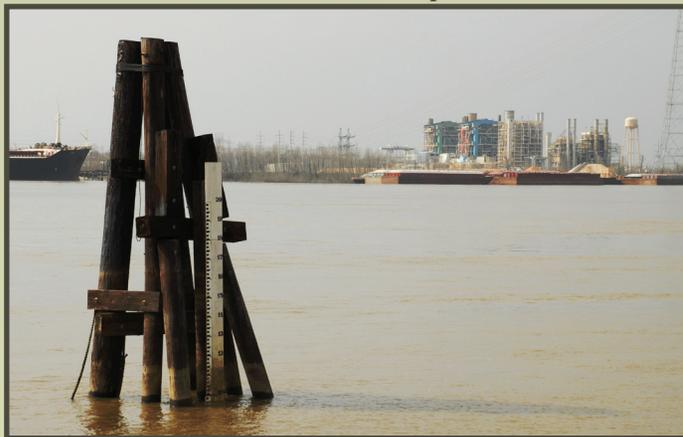
While in Lake Charles, I had the opportunity to share a meal with a young man whose family has lived in Southwest Louisiana for seven generations. Together, we can ensure that his family is able to stay in this area for many generations to come.

**Building Strong,
Col. Al Lee**

Flood fight patrols suspended

Last week we suspended our Phase I flood fight weekly levee patrols when water levels dropped below 11 feet at the Carrollton Gauge on the Mississippi River.

During this time, we will continue to maintain an activated Emergency Operations Center, closely coordinating its activities with the Governor's



Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, the Office of Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority and local offices of emergency preparedness as well as the local levee authorities and districts.

High water season typically occurs during March and April each year; at times it can extend into May and June. However, it is largely dependant on weather conditions,

including rainfall and snow melt in the Mississippi valley.

We have also had an El Nino condition that has brought above average precipitation to the southern part of the Mississippi River valley, providing above average water levels preceding the spring rise. During the fall of 2009, we experienced an unusual

rise in river levels, reaching a record height of 14.9 feet on the Carrollton Gauge. This is the highest on record in New Orleans for November since 1935.

The Mississippi River drains the third largest drainage basin in the world, exceeded in size only by the watersheds of the Amazon and Congo rivers. It drains 41 percent of the 48 contiguous states of the United States.

Public meetings

To keep the public abreast of the most current information, the Corps has scheduled the following meetings in March and April 2010.



Saturday, Mar. 20 - Mar. 21, 2010

Earthfest at the Audubon Zoo
6500 Magazine Street
New Orleans, LA 70118
Corps booth daily (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.)

Wednesday, Mar. 24, 2010

Permanent Canal Closures and Pumps RFP public meeting
Dillard University, Lawless Chapel
2601 Gentilly Blvd
New Orleans, LA 70122
Open house is from 6 to 6:30
Presentation begins at 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Mar. 30, 2010

St. Charles east bank construction and IER 24 meeting
St. Charles of Borromeo
Catholic Church Auditorium
13396 River Rd.
Destrehan, LA 70047
Open house is from 6 to 6:30
Presentation begins at 6:30 p.m.

Continued, next page



Finding solutions

This is a critical year for determining the path forward for the restoration and protection of coastal Louisiana ecosystems. The economic resources and culture unique to Louisiana are threatened by the continual loss of wetlands, marshes and barrier islands. In addition, these coastal features are the first line of defense against storm surges and support the multiple lines of defense strategy for reducing risk for communities.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District has been involved in coastal restoration and protection for decades. The Coastal Wetlands Planning and Protection Act program, locally known as the Breaux Act, will be celebrating its 20th anniversary in April of this year. CWPPRA focuses on small scale projects across the entire Louisiana coast and is managed by a task force comprised of the State of Louisiana and five federal agencies, with the New Orleans District commander serving as chairman.

The New Orleans District is committed to the beneficial use of dredged material. To maintain navigation on the Mississippi River, the New Orleans District has the largest dredging program throughout the Corps of Engineers. Suitable dredged material is used beneficially in areas to the full extent that

funding will allow. Over 39 square miles of land have been created with this program at full federal expense.

In addition to the ongoing programs, the Administration has made coastal restoration a priority with the Louisiana Coastal Area program, this program focuses on large scale projects to benefit areas with the greatest rate of land loss. Also, several feasibility analyses are underway to determine ways to protect and restore coastal Louisiana and provide risk reduction for coastal communities.

To help educate the public and stakeholders about the vast array of projects that the Corps of Engineers plays a role in, the team put together a booklet comprised of project fact sheets. This booklet, "Finding Solutions," is designed to serve as a comprehensive look at all coastal restoration and protection projects and programs, whether they are already constructed, under construction, in engineering and design, or under feasibility analysis. All projects and programs reviewed in this booklet rely on coordination and teamwork with our local sponsors and fellow agencies to determine the path forward. Any member of the public can request a DVD containing this booklet by contacting the Public Affairs Office by phone, 504-862-2201, or by e-mail, AskTheCorps@usace.army.mil.

Protecting and restoring the Louisiana coast is a critical national issue and serious actions need to be taken now. The path forward must include teamwork and coordination throughout local, state, and federal levels. Difficult decisions and trade-offs will need to be made to ensure that Louisiana's coast, and all the riches it provides, will be here for future generations.



MRGO closure



Vermilion River Cutoff Bank Protection



Sabine Wildlife Refuge Marsh Creation



Sabine Refuge Permanent Pipeline



(Public Meetings, continued from previous page)

Thursday, Apr. 8, 2010
CWPPRA 20th Anniversary Ceremony for Southeast Louisiana 21997 Woodland Plantation West Pointe a la Hache, LA 70083 Ceremony begins at 10:30 a.m.

Tuesday, Apr. 20, 2010
MRGO Feasibility Study Overview public meeting Holy Angels Convent 1011 Gallier St. New Orleans, LA 70117 Open house is from 6 to 6:30 Presentation begins at 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Apr. 27, 2010
Western Tie-In construction impacts Cytec's Tom Call Pavilion 10800 River Road Waggaman, LA Open House 6:00 p.m. Presentation 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, Apr. 29, 2010
LCA Convent/Blind River NF meeting St. James Parish Courthouse 5800 LA 44 Convent, LA 70723 Open house is from 6 to 6:30 Presentation begins at 6:30 p.m.

