US Army Corps of Engineers
New Orleans District

Project Fact Sheet

Project
Donaldsonville to the Gulf of Mexico Flood Control

Purpose
The purpose of the project is to reduce the risk of flooding from coastal storm surge and rainfall to prevent further economic losses and environmental damage in the Barataria Basin.

Location
The study area is located in southeast Louisiana and includes portions of the Parishes of Ascension, Assumption, St. James, St. John the Baptist, Lafourche, St. Charles, Jefferson, Orleans, and Plaquemines. The area consists of an approximately 2,423 square mile, low-lying area of land and water known as the Barataria Basin or estuary. The basin boundaries include the developed natural levees on the east bank of Bayou Lafourche and the west bank Mississippi River levees on the east that extend southeast to Barataria Bay.

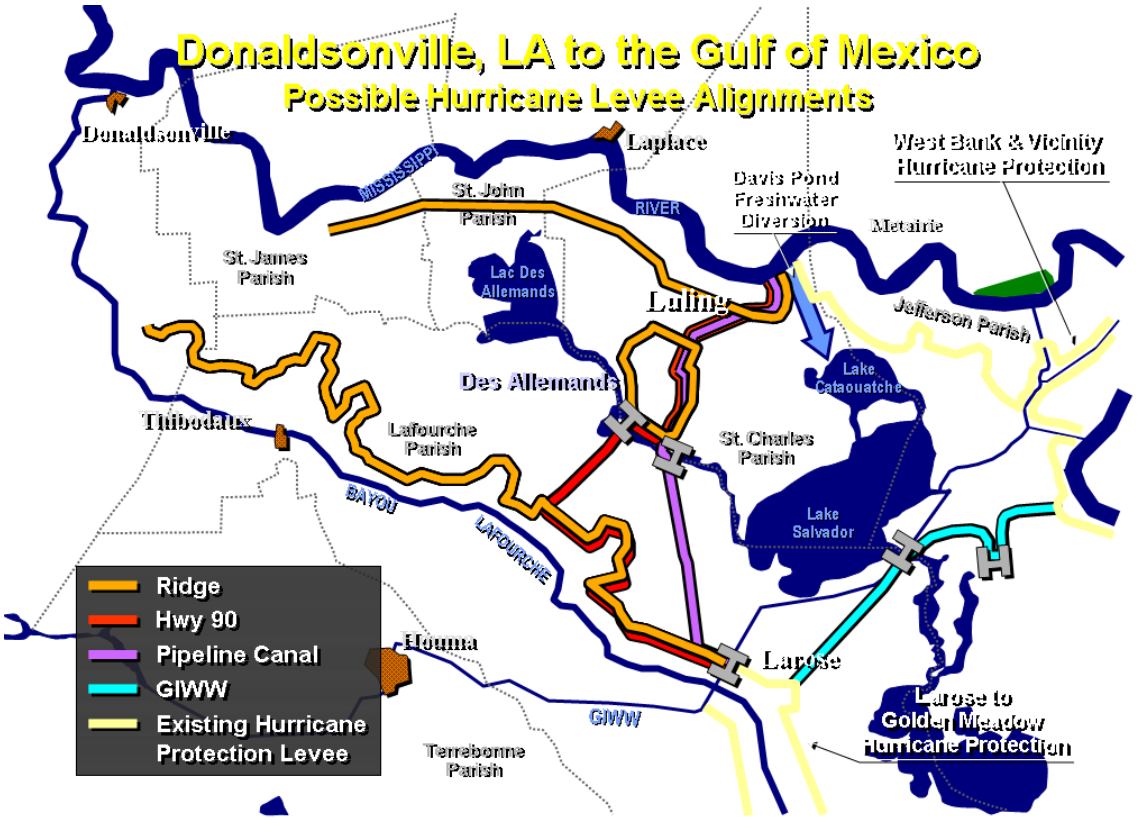
Background
The area between the Bayou Lafourche ridge and the Mississippi River west bank ridge is particularly prone to flooding. Since 1985, portions of this area have been declared federal disasters six times by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) – each time due to flooding. The primary causes of flooding in the Barataria Basin are long duration rainfall events, which are often combined with high tides and coastal storm surges. Wetland losses in the lower basin, caused by a variety of man-induced and natural processes, diminish the basin's capacity for absorbing coastal storm surge and allow for tidal effects to penetrate many miles into the basin itself via basin waterways. In addition, land subsidence, corresponding loss of Mississippi River sediments in the Barataria system, and multiple changes to the basin's natural hydrology have contributed to increased flooding and associated economic losses. It is widely recognized that efforts to restore coastal wetlands in the basin must succeed in order to provide a sustainable long term measure of protection from coastal flooding in this area.

Aside from the damage caused directly by flooding, the underlying causes of flooding have also generated environmental problems in the basin, including loss of wildlife, aquatic habitat modification, loss of water quality needed to sustain a variety of terrestrial and aquatic systems, introduction of toxic substances into basin waterways, stressed cypress-tupelo swamps caused by impounded water regimes, and disrupted hydrology which causes most upper basin drainage to be directed through Lake Des Allemands.

Benefit to the Community

The study area ranks second in population and commercial activity in south Louisiana, just behind the urbanized areas of the east bank of the Mississippi River. Commercial, industrial, residential and agricultural assets characterize the developed portions of the basin which lies within parts of nine parishes and has a combined population of 356,000 people. Improved public safety, reduction in repetitive economic loss, and environmental restoration will result from this effort.

Features



Alignment	Levee Length (miles)	Population Within	Residences Within
Ridge	163	93,000	20,000
Highway 90	53	93,000	20,000
Pipeline Canal	34	93,000	20,000
GIWW	23	356,000	119,000

Sponsors
The non-federal Sponsors for the study are the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development and the Lafourche Basin Levee District.

Status
The project is currently in its feasibility study phase, during which various alternatives to reducing storm surge are being examined, the adequacy of the existing drainage system is being assessed, and cultural, environmental, and recreational issues are being identified. The next major steps will be a feasibility report (based on the results of the study) and an environmental impact statement (EIS). The EIS will be made available to the public for review and comment. When a hurricane levee alignment is proposed, public meetings will be scheduled throughout the study area to inform the public.

Authority
The study was authorized by a resolution adopted by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the United States House of Representatives on May 6, 1998.