



US Army Corps  
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New Orleans District

# News Release

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### New lock at Bayou Sorrel for navigation, flood control *Public invited to comment at meeting Feb. 13 in Plaquemine*

NEW ORLEANS – Better flood control and navigation are the goals of an \$80 million proposal to replace the Bayou Sorrel Lock between Baton Rouge and Morgan City, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers said Wednesday.

A public meeting is scheduled Thursday, Feb. 13, at 6:30 p.m., in the Iberville Parish Council chambers, 58050 Meriam Street, Plaquemine.

Citizens are asked to comment on the alternatives that have been investigated in the draft feasibility study report and draft environmental impact statement.

The Bayou Sorrel Lock is located on a 64-mile-long shortcut from the Mississippi River to Morgan City that avoids a long, indirect trip through New Orleans. The shortcut is the Morgan City to Port Allen (Baton Rouge) Alternate Route of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway.

The Bayou Sorrel Lock is located at the juncture of the Alternate Route and the East Atchafalaya Basin Protection Levee. The lock is at the town of Bayou Sorrel, which lies on the protected (east) side of the levee.

Increased flood protection is proposed because the Atchafalaya Basin levee is eight feet higher than the gates of the Bayou Sorrel Lock. The gates and lock constitute continuation of the levee across the waterway. This flood-control system cannot be modified to pass a project flood safely.

A new, larger lock is proposed because vessels are experiencing delays of 2.4 to 4.1 hours per towboat-barge combination. The new lock's dimensions would be 1,200 feet long by 75 feet wide. The present lock measures 799 by 56 feet. Depth would remain 15 feet. The Corps of Engineers would buy an additional 102 acres of land to accommodate construction. At present, the Corps holds channel and dredged-material placement easements on this land.

It is expected that the study will be completed by June. Engineering and design would be completed in 2005. Then, construction would take about three years, weather and funding permitting. Vessels would continue to use the existing lock while the new one is built in the dry. Keeping the Alternate Route open would allow towboats and barges to avoid a 234-mile detour through the New Orleans area when operating between Baton Rouge and Morgan City. This would also make it possible to avoid creating vessel-traffic jams at the Corps' navigation locks on the West Bank near New Orleans.

## **Alternatives considered**

Flood-control-only plans would safely pass the project flood in the Atchafalaya Basin, but not reduce navigation delays. The flood-control only alternatives include (1) an independent float-in flood gate, located on the floodway (Atchafalaya Basin) side of the lock, and (2) A new lock with the same dimensions as the existing lock.

Flood control and navigation plans would safely pass the project flood and reduce delays to navigation. Alternatives for a new lock include 75 by 1,200 feet and 110 by 1,200 feet.

## **Draft EIS and Draft Study on Web**

See the draft environmental impact statement and draft feasibility study on the Web at: <http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil/prj/BayouSorrel/> Paper copies are also available.

## **Questions**

**Environmental Impact Statement:** Address questions to Biologist Richard Boe, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, CEMVN-PM-RP, P.O. Box 60267, New Orleans, La. 70160-0267. Telephone 504-862-1505. E-mail [richard.e.boe@mvn02.usace.army.mil](mailto:richard.e.boe@mvn02.usace.army.mil)

**Feasibility Study:** Address questions to Project Manager Darrel Broussard, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, CEMVN-PM-W, P.O. Box 60267, New Orleans, La. 70160-0267. Telephone 504-862-2591. E-mail [darrel.m.Broussard@mvn02.usace.army.mil](mailto:darrel.m.Broussard@mvn02.usace.army.mil).

## **Map**

**See locator map on page 3 for Bayou Sorrel Lock and the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway.**

# Bayou Sorrel Lock replacement

## Project would improve flood control, navigation

