

3. PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

3.1. STUDY AUTHORITY

The Bayou Sorrel lock feasibility study is an interim study being conducted under the authority provided by resolutions passed by the United States Senate on September 29, 1972 and by the United States House of Representatives on October 12, 1972. Those resolutions both contain the following:

“... the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors, be, and is hereby, requested to review the reports on the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (Louisiana-Texas Section, including the Morgan City-Port Allen Route) submitted in House Document 556, 87th Congress, Second Session, and subsequent reports, with a view to determining the advisability of modifying the existing project in any way at this time, particularly with regard to widening and deepening the existing and/or authorized channel.”

Study authority for the flood control portion of the project is provided by the comprehensive Flood Control, Mississippi River and Tributaries project, authorized by the Flood Control Act of 1928 (Public Law 70-391), as amended.

3.2. NEED FOR ACTION

Navigation delays associated with the Bayou Sorrel lock and the inability of the lock to withstand an Atchafalaya Basin, Louisiana, project flood are the reasons why there is a need for action in this area. A 1992 reconnaissance study by the USACE concluded that the Bayou Sorrel lock was in need of immediate capacity increase. The Bayou Sorrel lock passes navigation through the EABPL. Due to changes in the project flood flow-line and subsequent upgrading of the EABPL, the lock gates are now 8 feet lower than the design elevation for the EABPL.

3.3. PUBLIC CONCERNS

Local residents are concerned about the navigation traffic in the area, which contributes to bank erosion, noise, and disturbance. Many residences are located along the bank of the GIWW at Bayou Sorrel, and vessels pass and sometimes stop, close to the residences. Bayou Sorrel residents are also concerned about vessels striking the only bridge leading to their homes and businesses. When the bridge is out of service, residents must travel many miles on dirt and gravel roads to get in and out of their community, or they must cross the GIWW by boat.

3.4. PLANNING OBJECTIVES

Objectives of this study are to determine the most cost effective and environmentally acceptable method for relieving navigation delays at the Bayou Sorrel lock and/or providing adequate flood protection at the site to pass an Atchafalaya Basin, Louisiana, project flood.