

APPENDIX E – SCOPING REPORT

COMPREHENSIVE ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT

SCOPING REPORT

**GREATER NEW ORLEANS HURRICANE AND STORM DAMAGE RISK
REDUCTION SYSTEM**

SOUTHEAST LOUISIANA



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**

AUGUST 2008

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 established a Nationwide policy to include a detailed statement of the environmental impacts of the proposed action for all major Federal actions that could significantly affect the human or natural environment. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Mississippi Valley Division, New Orleans District (CEMVN), has prepared Individual Environmental Reports (IER) to evaluate potential impacts associated with proposed improvements to the 100-year level of Greater New Orleans Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System (GNOHSDRRS), formerly known as Hurricane Protection System (HPS) authorized and funded by the Administration and Congress.

The NEPA also provides for an early and open public process for determining the scope of issues, resources, impacts, and alternatives to be considered. As part of the process, agencies are required to identify and invite the participation of interested persons. The agency should choose whatever communications methods are best for effective involvement of communities, whether local, regional, or National, those are interested in the proposed action. Some of the most constructive and beneficial interaction between the public and an agency occurs when citizens identify or develop reasonable alternatives that the agency can evaluate.

2.0 STUDY PURPOSE

Congress and the Administration have authorized the CEMVN to investigate, design, and construct the 100-year level of the GNOHSDRRS. The CEMVN will analyze the proposed actions in a series of IERs. Each IER will identify the proposed actions and will investigate alternatives; direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts; and mitigation for impacts to the human environment.

The purpose of the proposed action is to provide 100-year level of flood protection for the New Orleans Metropolitan area. The term “100-year level of protection,” refers to a level of protection which reduces the risk of hurricane surge and wave driven flooding that the New Orleans Metropolitan area has a 1 percent chance of experiencing each year. The proposed action resulted from a need to protect residences, businesses, and other infrastructure from storm-induced and tidally-driven 100-year storm events. The completed GNOHSDRRS would lower the risk of harm to citizens, and damage to infrastructure during a storm event. The safety of people in the region is the highest priority of CEMVN.

3.0 SCOPING PROCESS

The NOLA Environmental website (www.nolaenvironmental.gov) has been created to share with the public the efforts being made by the CEMVN and other Federal and state agencies in south Louisiana regarding the environmental compliance for proposed GNOHSDRRS projects. News releases, notices and schedules of meetings, audio files (mp3 format) of select meetings, descriptions of projects, draft and final reports, and projects’ public comment periods are listed on the site. CEMVN sends out public notices in local and national newspapers, news releases (routinely picked up by television and newspapers in stories and scrolls), and mail notifications to stakeholders for each public meeting. CEMVN has recently started sending out e-mail notifications of the meetings to stakeholders who requested to be notified by this method. The CEMVN issued a public scoping meeting announcement detailing proposed projects and IERs, and meeting times and locations to all interested parties in March 2007. Public meetings will continue throughout the planning process.

Nine scoping meetings were held between March and April 2007 in the New Orleans area to gather public comments on the proposed 100-year GNOHSDRRS projects (Table 1). By way of these meetings, the CEMVN initiated an analysis of the potential impacts to the human

environment that may occur if the CEMVN were to complete this work. Ideas and issues taken from these meetings will be incorporated into the NEPA study process for the Draft IERs. CEMVN is preparing for the proposed GNOHSDRRS projects.

Table 1. Public Meeting Locations

Meeting No.	Meeting Dates and Locations
1	March 27 - Dougie V's Restaurant, Banquet Hall, 13899 River Road, Luling
2	March 28 - Westwego City Council Chamber, 419 Avenue A, Westwego
3	March 29 - American Legion Hall, Post 366, 12188 River Road, St. Rose
4	April 3 - Our Lady of Holy Cross College, 4123 Woodland Drive, New Orleans
5	April 4 - St. Bernard Parish Gov't Building, 8201 West Judge Perez, Chalmette
6	April 5 - Jefferson Parish Regional Library, 4747 W. Napoleon Avenue, Metairie
7	April 10 - Belle Chasse Auditorium, 8398 Highway 23, Belle Chasse
8	April 11 - Avalon Hotel & Conference Center, 10100 I-10 Service Road, New Orleans East
9	April 12 - National WWII Museum, 945 Magazine Street, New Orleans

Each of the nine scoping meetings began with a description of the CEMVN environmental process under the alternative arrangements and preparation of IERs, followed by a presentation on the proposed work, with an emphasis on the work in the sub-basin where the meeting was being held (Table 2). A question and answer period followed after which meeting participants were provided the opportunity to comment. Participants were asked to consider alternatives to the proposed actions, as well as what important issues, resources, and/or impacts relative to the project the CEMVN should consider in the IERs. In particular, the presentations posed the following two primary questions to the public participants.

Question #1: What are the most important issues, resources, and impacts that we should consider in the IER?

Question #2: Are there any other alternatives or modifications to existing alternatives that we should consider in the IER?

Table 2. Emphasized Projects

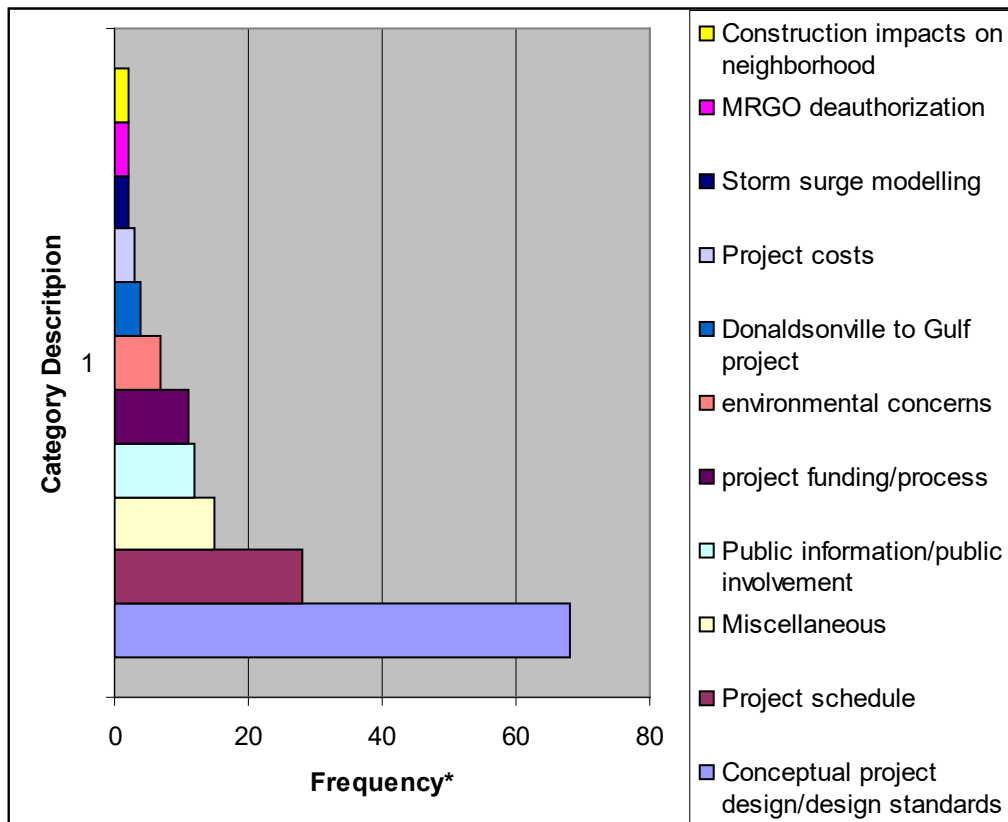
Meeting No.	Sub-Basin and Associated IERs
1	Lake Cataouatche and Harvey-Westwego; IERs #14, #15, #16, #17
2	Lake Cataouatche and Harvey-Westwego; IERs #14, #15, #16, #17
3	St. Charles; IER #1
4	Gretna-Algiers; IER #12
5	St. Bernard; IERs #8, #9, #10, #11
6	Jefferson East Bank; IERs #2, #3, #5,
7	Belle Chasse; IER #13
8	Orleans East Bank and New Orleans East; IERs #4, #5, #6, #7, #11
9	Orleans East Bank; IERs #4, #5, #11

4.0 REVIEW OF PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The public scoping process is an integral part of NEPA and enables CEMVN to gather information concerning sensitive resources and determine the public's major concerns. This information will be considered both in the CEMVN study process and in preparation of the draft IERs. Each scoping question was reviewed for content and categorized by subject matter heading. A total of 11 general categories of questions were recorded from the eight scoping

meetings' public participants (Table 3). No information was available for meeting number 6. Table 3 lists the overall number of questions per category, ranked by frequency of the category of question being asked. Table 4 lists the same information organized by meeting. If the same or similar question was asked more than once by an individual it was only counted once. Some questions crossed categories. This occurred most frequently when a question was asked that included both design and schedule for completion. These were generally assigned to the project design category.

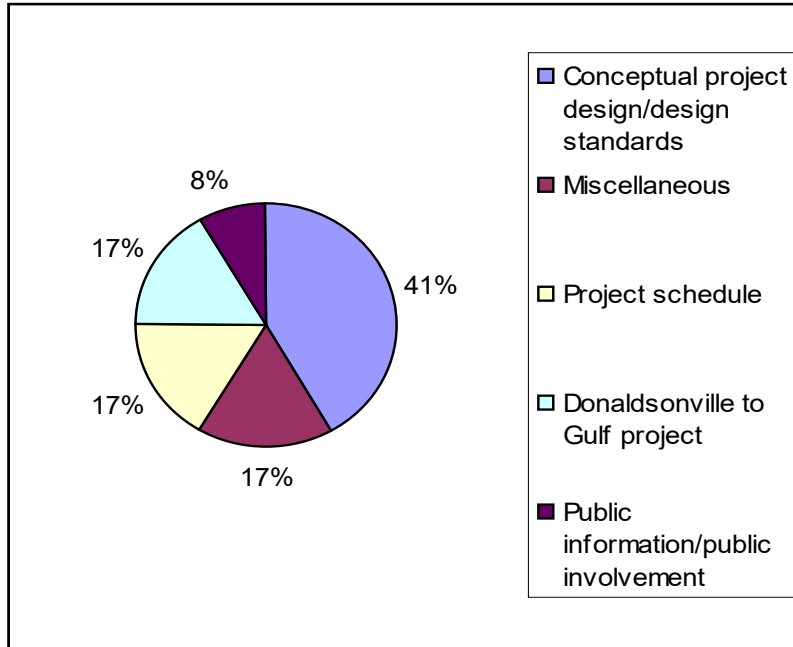
Table 3. Question Categories and Frequency of Questions



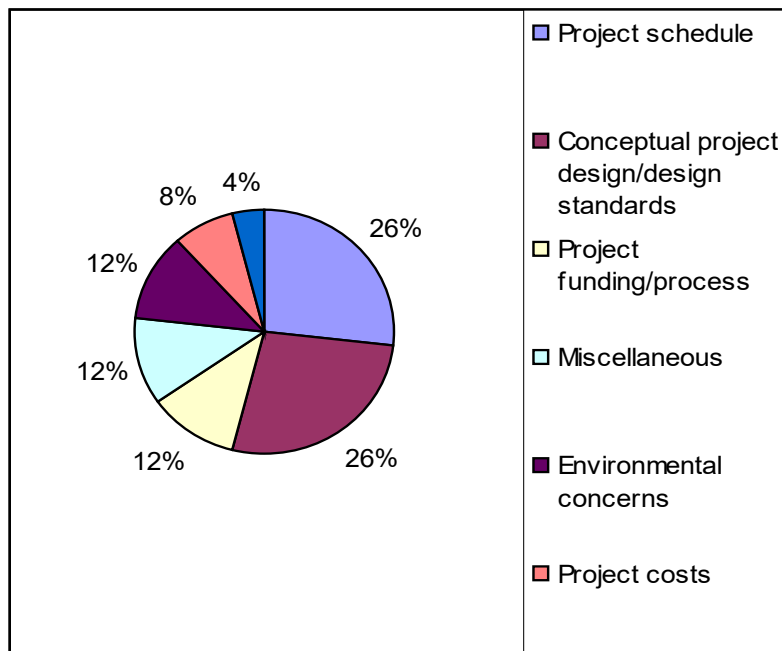
* If the same or similar question was asked more than once by an individual it was only counted once.

Table 4. Question Categories and Frequency of Questions by Meeting

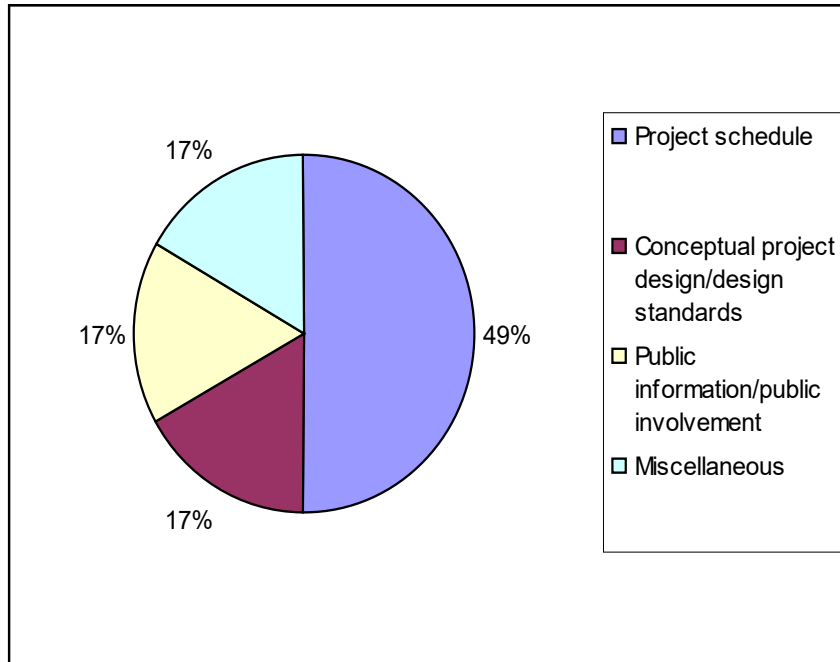
Meeting No. 1



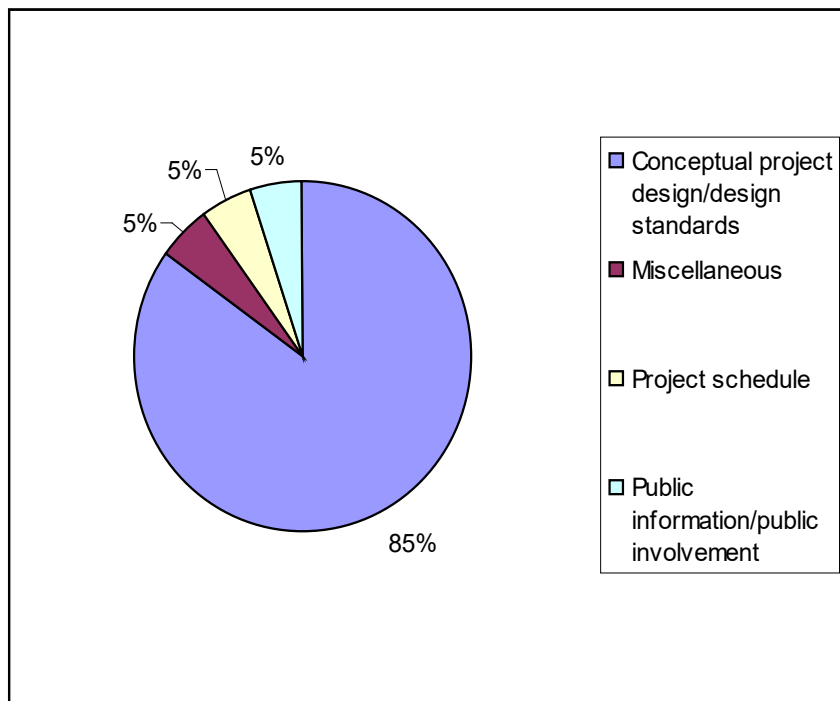
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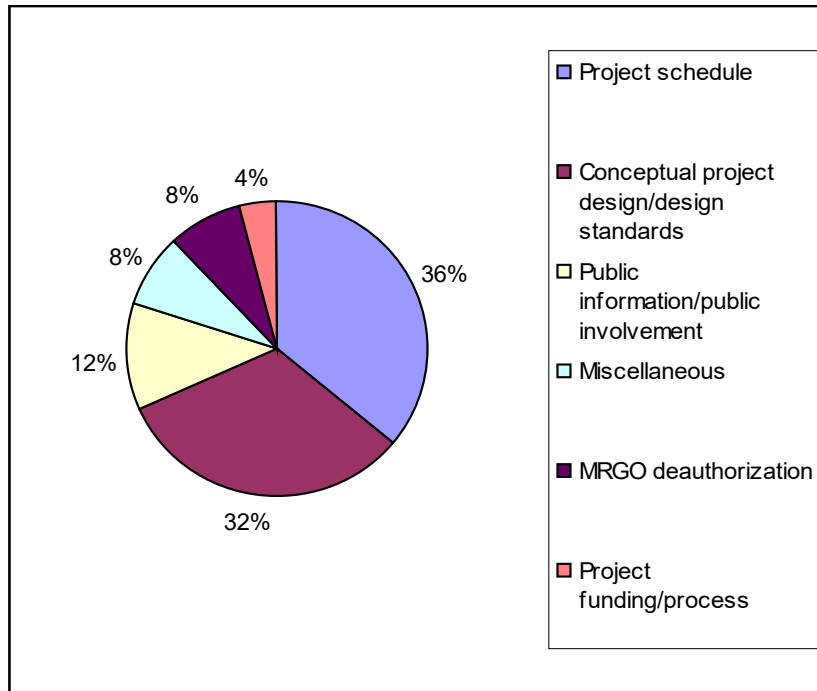
Meeting No. 3



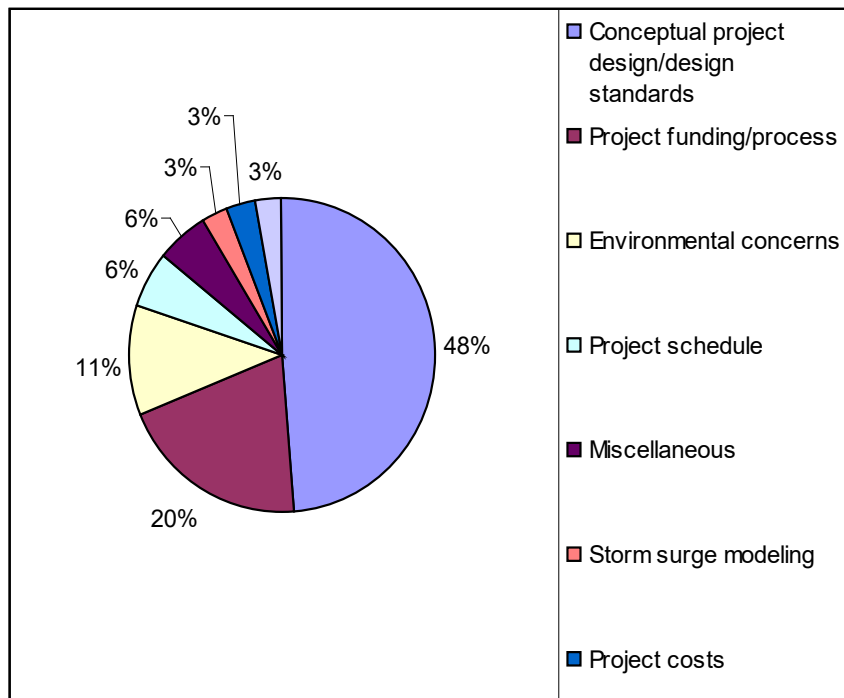
Meeting No. 4



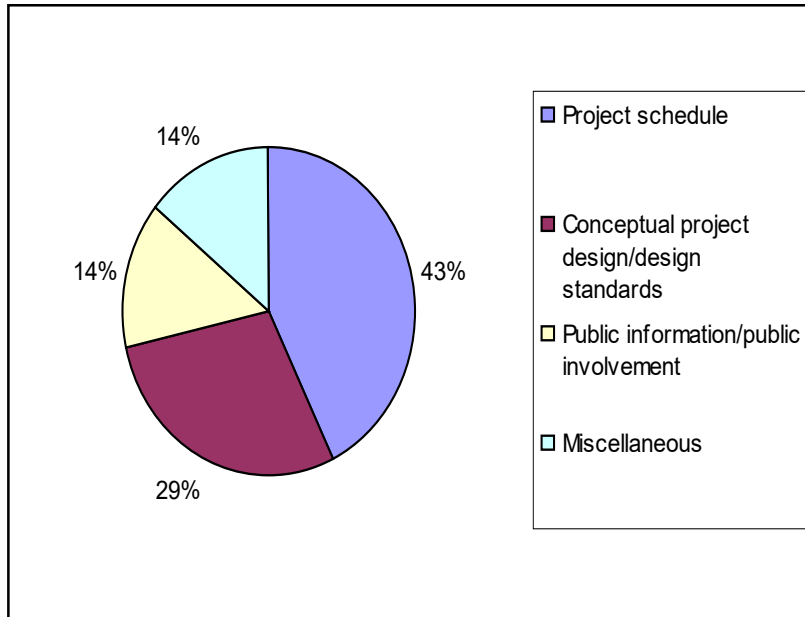
Meeting No. 5



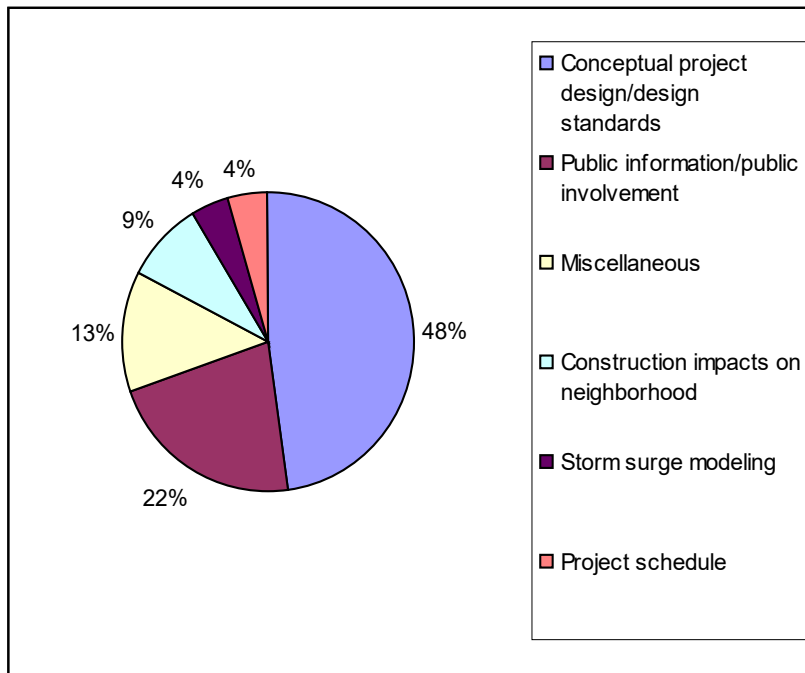
Meeting No. 6



Meeting No. 7



Meeting No. 8



* If the same or similar question was asked more than once by an individual it was only counted once.

5.0 SUMMARY OF SCOPING QUESTIONS

The most frequently asked questions generally dealt with the specifics of levee, floodwall, or pump station designs and locations within the questioner's particular region of influence. Following design questions, the most frequently asked questions were with respect to the projects' schedules, the projects' funding, and where to either obtain additional project information or to provide comments.

The remaining categories of questions were largely meeting location specific. Construction impacts from temporary and permanent pumping stations were discussed in the April 12 meeting. Questions regarding the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MRGO) were limited to St. Bernard Parish and questions regarding the Donaldsonville to Gulf Project were limited to people living south and west of the Mississippi River.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

The public's primary concern is providing protection to their neighborhoods as quickly as possible. Many commenters believe that there is far too much study and not enough action in getting the protection system constructed, and are concerned that another hurricane could again flood the area prior to the 100-year level of protection being completed. Although many people were questioning the specific details of levee heights and structural measures, and pump station locations, their overriding concern is that the protection system be completed as soon as possible. Residents along the lakeshore were concerned about construction impacts to their neighborhoods and concerned largely about pump station locations and pump station operations. Residents of St. Bernard parish were particularly concerned about the MRGO and believe that the canal needs to be closed and filled, and unless this is done there is a low probability that they can be protected from another large storm. People living south and west of the Mississippi River were interested in the progress of the Donaldsonville to Gulf project, and in a multiple lines of defense strategy. Also, in St. Charles Parish, there was a concern that the parish levee was not included in the overall protection project and that the CEMVN was hindering the parish from completing their levee project.
