

Public Meeting Summary

**Individual Environmental Report 16
Western Tie In
Thursday, May 28, 2008**

Location	Cytec's Tom Call Pavilion 10800 River Road Waggaman, LA 70094
Time	Open House 6 p.m. Presentation 7 p.m.
Attendees	Approx. 11
Format	Open House Presentation Discussion
Handouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status Map • Presentation • Borrow handout • IER 16 Western Tie In document
Facilitator	Rene Poche, public affairs

Rene Poche, public affairs



Thank you for coming this evening. Julie Vignes will give the presentation tonight and then we will open the floor for discussion. Before we begin I would like to recognize a few officials.

Denis Nuss	St. Charles Parish Councilman
Ismail Merhi	Office of Coastal Protection and Restoration

Before you leave tonight please pick up the status map. It was recently updated to show our progress since last year << http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil/hps2/pdf/100-Year%20Status%20Map_051209_Final.pdf>> .

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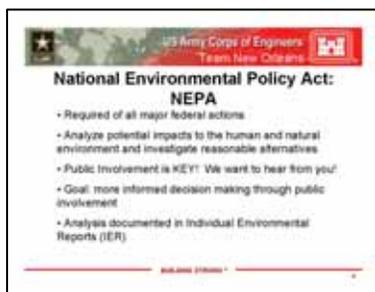
Julie Vignes, senior project manager



We are here to talk about Individual Environmental Report 16 and the proposed action that will connect the Westbank and Vicinity portion of the Greater New Orleans Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System to the Mississippi River levee system in St. Charles Parish.



We like to use this slide to tell the public how risk is bought down in the greater New Orleans area. We have identified an initial risk for the area, but by taking these steps we can buy down risk. Constructing levees and floodwalls are the last step on this staircase but in the end there is still residual risk. We can not eliminate risk but we can buy it down.



The National Environmental Policy Act is a federal regulation that requires the Corps to look at the potential impacts to the human and natural environments and to investigate reasonable alternatives. Public involvement is the key to the process. The goal is to make a more informed decision through public involvement. All of our analysis is documented in an Individual Environmental Report.



This map shows the greater New Orleans area. We have divided the area into different IER's. This section here [pointing] is IER 16 or the Western Tie In.

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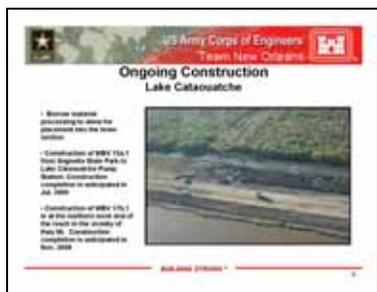
We started the process in March 2007 with scoping meetings to develop the different alternatives. Since March 2007 the current project alternatives were developed, the impacts were analyzed, and the public input has been incorporated. IER 16 is currently available for a 30-day public review. That comment period has two more days before it closes on May 30.



This red alignment is the West Bank and Vicinity Project. It goes from here [pointing], then east and south to Oakville.



Before I talk about the proposed action I want to discuss the construction that has been completed. We completed phase 1 which is from Lake Cataouatche to the pump station. Before there was a local levee at elevation 5 and it has been raised to elevation 10. We are going to go back and do an additional lift but phase 1 is completed. To the east we have an ongoing contract scheduled to be completed late this summer.



This picture shows where we have an ongoing borrow project to process the material to be placed in the levee sections. In other areas we are bringing the material in from other approved sites. The completion date is July 2009. Another project near Highway 90 is anticipated to be completed in Nov. 2009.



The proposed action is alternative 3. [Inaudible] The green strips are levee reaches. They extend and transition into a floodwall. This gray box will be a navigable closure into Bayou Verret. [Inaudible] In order to construct it south of the Cataouatche Canal [inaudible]. South of the Davis Pond project. [Inaudible] Then we

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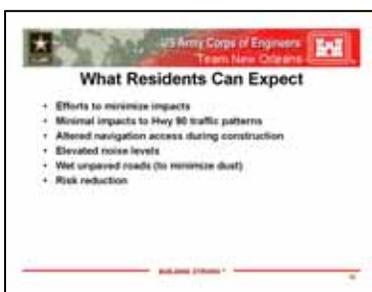
will build along the green alignment but we have to cross the Cataouatche Canal. We are proposing a permanent crossing here [pointing] and on the other section a second permanent structure. We are proposing three other temporary [inaudible] intended to be there during construction but at the end they will go away leaving the permanent structure. [Inaudible] Once we get passed the levee we have to cross Highway 90. We have to construct a T-wall and reconstruct Highway 90 then transition back into the levee here [pointing]. Both alignments are along the existing Davis Pond guide levee which is not built to the new standards. [Inaudible] We move from there north with the levee section that has two levee gate crossings. Then we cross River Road. We are looking at using a floodgate or an earthen ramp. This is a basic definition of the features of the proposed alignment.



This is a written explanation of what I discussed in the last slide. The proposed alternative ties into the Mississippi River levees. It maintains the water exchange above Highway 90 to make sure we are avoiding some impacts. This navigable closure structure in Bayou Verret would stay open most of the time. The size would be wide enough and will maintain the same water flow. There will be additional openings to the structure because we are not restricting or reducing the area.



This is the general schedule for the project. Here is tonight's public meeting and at the end of May the public comment period ends. Any comments submitted will be included and assessed in the IER. If the IER is approved and signed we would have to attain the real estate. Then we would advertise for construction. Concurrent to the IER process we are moving forward in the design process to be able to go forward and advertise by the end of July. Then we anticipate starting construction at the end of July and to be completed by June 2011.



As we go forward we have identified some impacts and how we can minimize them. There will be impacts to the highway and we would need detour lanes. We will maintain the same amount of lanes that are there now. [Inaudible] There are some access points as I described. We have increased the number of trucks for borrow. Contractors are required to have washers to make sure there is no debris on the road. [Inaudible] These locations will be temporary but not moveable during construction. People would not be able to put a boat in this location but it does maintain all activities at Pier 90. It will impact people in this area. We tried to minimize the impacts to these residents. We had discussions with the parish and we

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understand the Sheriff may have to access the water way. We want to make sure we do not interfere. In the end this area would have improved risk reduction.



This map shows all the sites we are investigating in the greater New Orleans area.



This map shows the borrow sites in Jefferson Parish on the Westbank.



This map shows the borrow sites in the Bonnet Carre Spillway in St. Charles Parish.



These are all the IERs currently available for public review. IER 13 is still open for public comment because it had been extended. IER 16 will conclude on May 30. IER 1 Supplement in St. Charles Parish will close on Jun. 13.



All these documents are available at www.nolaenvironmental.gov. A calendar is located on the Web site that includes the minutes of previous meetings. Public input is important and you can provide your comments in a number of

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ways either at public meetings, on the Web site or by contacting Gib Owen the environmental manager.



These two Web sites are filled with information on all the projects the Corps is doing in the area. To the left is a snapshot of the www.nolaenvironmental.gov Web site. On the right is the New Orleans district Web site.

Question 1. Dennis Nuss: On River Road where the crossover is, there is a lot of real estate on Highway 90. What do you expect the impacts to be with Davis Pond being there?

Response 1. Julie Vignes: We have a floodgate that allows traffic to bypass. There is still a chance emergency vessels can get by. We are working with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development. If that does not work then we will alter the alignment to be an earthen ramp.

Question 2. Dennis Nuss: When construction starts, how will it be altered?

Response 2. Julie Vignes: The berm of the levee will have the same level of traffic flow.

Question 3. Unidentified man: How long do you plan to impact the area?

Response 3. Julie Vignes: Probably a 9 to 12 month time frame. We are about 30 to 50 percent in the design, but as we further develop the designs we will get more precise.

Question 4. Jeff Roux, Ama: I think we need an earthen ramp at Highway 11 and not a gate because I do not know who will close it. Build a ramp from the east to the west side of the levee in case the Donaldsonville project comes through. I do not understand why the top of the levee has been blocked off and restricted recently. Emergency vehicles could not get around and the diversion structure has been blocked. They put pilings and cement there. There were ways to get around it with a roller gate and that has not been available. [Inaudible] Why not have a two way road instead of having an up and down road to drive on. That does not make sense to me. After seeing the traffic on River Road and Highway 90, it appears to me that it is going to flood further down before Ama. [Inaudible] River Road is a valuable evacuation route. I am worried about the pond area close to Sellers where the pump is located. [Inaudible] Next to the grain elevator there has been water through the culverts and [inaudible]. When Hurricane Rita came there was water going through there. Maybe you should put something for the natural drainage in the area.

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Response 4. Julie Vignes: When the levees close at Bayou Verret it will close the system to prevent storm surge from going into the area. [Inaudible] We could increase the pond by a couple of inches. Sluice gates will be used to minimize the closure time but it depends on the rain during an event. [Inaudible] Yes, it does increase the pond but by a few inches.

Question 5. Jeff Roux: Who is going to make sure the area is [inaudible]. Are they going to use the railroad back to Ama as a block it off so the water does not go into Ama? Who will be responsible for blocking the culverts?

Response 5. Julie Vignes: We do not have plans to do anything with the culverts.

Question 6. Jeff Roux: [Inaudible]. The hypothesis of what will flood in the area is wrong. Water comes south through the ponds and culverts. It still leaks. [Inaudible] Sellers pump station keeps up with the water flow. Hurricane Ike happened on Friday, Saturday the pump station ran and kept up with water in the culverts. [Inaudible] In May 1995 we had 18 inches and we did not have that many houses back toward the track. [Inaudible] I think you are estimating. Unless you block the culverts we are going to get water in the north side.

Response 6. Gib Owen: We are not changing the way the water flows.

Question 7. Jeff Roux: No, the yellow in the back [inaudible].

Response 7. Gib Owen: That is not related to the actions we are proposing. We are allowing it to continue expect for south of the pond.

Question 8. Jeff Roux: It's not a true picture of where the water will be.

Response 8. Gib Owen: We are not changing the water south of the track and only south of the track.

Question 9. Jeff Roux: You are only reducing the risk for north of the levee.

Response 9a. Gib Owen: We are reducing risk to everyone behind it. For a hurricane storm event we are reducing risk to this area [pointing].

Response 9b. Julie Vignes: The water in the lake is from surge. The risk is reduced.

Question 10. Jeff Roux: The gage at Highway 90 was a little over 3 feet. I can give you a gage of what it was at [inaudible]. It shows in the document where the gage was and if you had water at Highway 90 [inaudible]. Then we have water north of the track. [Inaudible]

Response 10. Gib Owen: That would be an interior drainage project for your parish.

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Question 11. Jeff Roux: [Inaudible] The Highway 90 pump only helps Jefferson Parish and not St. Charles Parish. [Inaudible]

Response 12. Julie Vignes: During an event there is risk with rain fall and storm surge. We are working to reduce risk for surge not drainage in a 100-year rain event. [Inaudible] We plan to mitigate with drainage structures. [Inaudible] As far as interior drainage that is outside the [scope of this] hurricane project.

Question 12. Unidentified man: According to your drawing the rail road is in the north area. Is it not your job to maintain it or is it someone else?

Response 12a. Julie Vignes: Under the railroad it is not ours. There is less ponding as you move north but the water does get that far north. This project will address that. [Inaudible]

Response 12b. Rene Poche: Some of these interior drainage question should be addressed by your parish.

Question 13. Jeff Roux: Who is going to open the sluice gates in the middle of the storm?

Response 13. Julie Vignes: The intent is the gate is to be closed as long as more water is coming into the system. [Inaudible] can start draining the water. The state will delegate down to the parish, provided it is safe to do it. It is hard to define but we have tried to address ponding by having the drainage structure there. [Inaudible]

Question 14. Dennis Nuss: This project is a concern because it will divert water more to the west rather than where it would go to the ponding area. Please look at expediting permits to the west for the Donaldsonville to the Gulf project. The thought is that this project would impact the Lulling area. Please consider that.

Response 14. Julie Vignes: We checked with the people in the regulatory department and it is progressing to a decision soon. They are doing some final analysis before they make a decision.

Question 15. Jeff Roux: There has not been a discussion of the impact on the fresh water diversion on the construction side.

Response 15. Gib Owen: There will be no impact. [Inaudible]

Question 16. Jeff Roux: The Corps is doing modifications now and you are saying it is restricting [inaudible].

Response 16. Gib Owen: There will be no impact.

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Question 17. Jeff Roux: In the IER you said, one reason to eliminate alternative 7 by Lake Cataouatche is because you would have to modify the east bank guide levee. Then there would be possible modifications to the west guide levee. The document implies you are affecting the ponding area. [Inaudible]

Response 17a. Gib Owen: This project does not impact it in any way.

Response 17b. Julie Vignes: Before I can construct this levee [inaudible]. I am not going to ask them to scale back. They are going to operate it the same way it is now. I am going to protect my section and keep it dry. We are not going to impact Davis Pond.

Question 18. Jeff Roux: Not the diversion by the river. Davis Pond has not worked since day one. Now they are spending a million to go into Company Canal with some cuts. It does not flow right when you are keeping the water level below 4 feet. That flow rate does not determine whether it operates. You said if we build that levee it would change the Westbank levee. [Inaudible]

Response 18. Gib Owen: The engineers said it does not effect that alignment.

Rene Poche, public affairs

Thank you for coming to tonight's meeting. The project managers will be around and I invite you to take the new status maps because it shows the progress of the system since last year. Thank you.