Upper Barataria Louisiana Feasibility Study

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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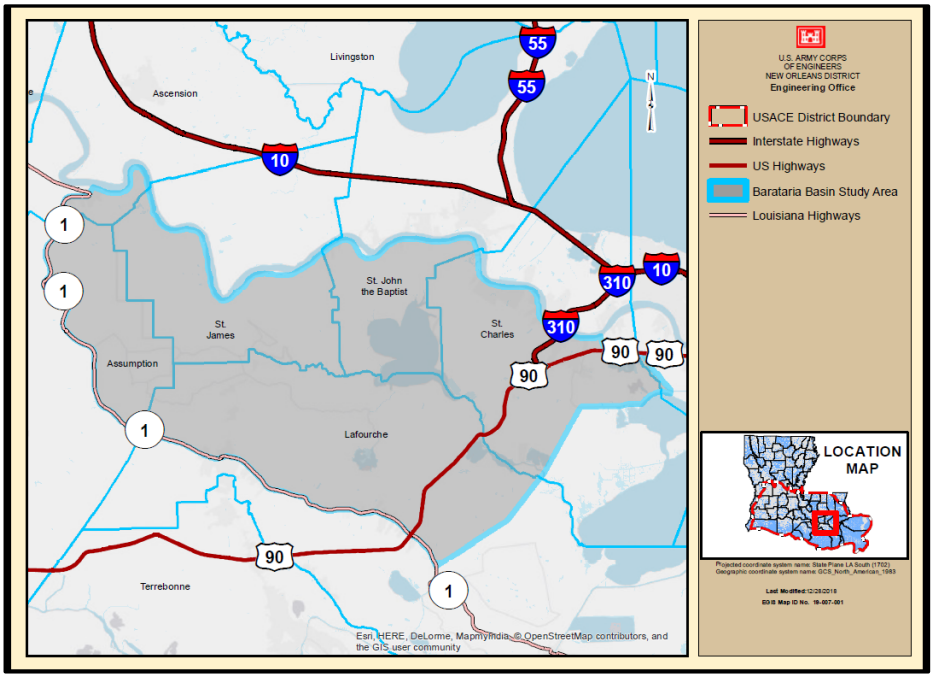
Updated May 2019

Study Authority

Resolved by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the United States House of Representatives 105th Congress that the Secretary of the Army is requested to review the report of the Chief of Engineers on the Mississippi River and Tributaries, published as House Document 308, 88th Congress, 2nd Session, and other pertinent reports to determining whether modifications of the recommendations contained therein are advisable at the present time in the interest of flood control, navigation, wetlands conservation and restoration, wildlife habitat, commercial and recreational fishing, salt water intrusion and fresh water and sediment diversion, and other purposes in the area between Bayou Lafourche and the Mississippi River System, from Donaldsonville; to the Gulf of Mexico pursuant to the authority provided by a resolution docket 2554, dated May 6, 1998.



Funding is made available for this study through the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018. Due to the limits set under the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, only flood and storm damage risk reduction measures are being investigated in this study.

Sponsor

The non-federal sponsor for the study is the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority Board (CPRAB) of Louisiana. The supplemental feasibility studies are 100 percent federally funded. Collaboration with the sponsor is vital to the study and will continue throughout the study.

Study Area (see Map)

The study area includes communities in seven southeast Louisiana parishes; St. Charles, St. John, St. James, Jefferson, Ascension, Lafourche and Assumption. The Upper Barataria Basin study area is bounded on the north and east by the Mississippi River Levee, on the west by Bayou Lafourche and extends south of U.S. Highway 90. The Upper Barataria Basin study area is part of the larger Barataria Basin Watershed covering approximately 760 square miles and characterized by low, flat terrain with numerous navigation channels, drainage canals and natural bayous that drain into Lake Des Allemandes. The study area contains a little over 25,000 structures in which ninety percent are residential and ten percent are corporate. The swamps, bays, bayous, and marshes of Barataria Basin are inhabited by more than 400 species of birds, 30 species of mammals, and 70 species of reptiles and amphibians as well as approximately 55 species of freshwater fishes.

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Problems and Opportunities

The primary issue this study will investigate is flood risk from tidal surges, coastal storm surges, and rainfall. The headwater flooding from rainfall is intensified by tidal events resulting in flood damages to industrial, commercial, agricultural facilities, and residential structures. A flood risk management project in the study area will reduce the risk of flooding for residential and commercial structures, major transportation routes, and many other commercially and culturally significant places and activities vital to the economy of the region and nation. Aquaculture, commercial fishing, crawfish farming, fishing, hunting, and tourism industries would also be significantly impacted by frequent storm surge events. The economic impact affects fishers, processors, suppliers, grocers, and restaurants at the regional and national level. A large portion of the study area is vulnerable to tidal surges and coastal storm surges also coincident with rainfall. Sea level rise and subsidence is expected to continue throughout the basin. The feasibility study will investigate alternatives that may include structural and non-structural coastal storm risk management measures. Structural measures to regulate upper basin stages and storage to facilitate damage reduction throughout the basin may consist of a combination of small scale levees and floodwall, conveyance channels, flood gates, tidal exchange structures, t-walls, and pumping stations.

Status

The current timeline for the study is three years. The present focus of the study is to work synergistically to provide the best comprehensive solutions to the Upper Barataria study area problems listed above.

Upper Barataria LA Feasibility Study –Website

https://www.mvn.usace.army.mil/About/Projects/BBA-2018/studies/Upper-Barataria-Basin/

Comments or information can be provided to:

UpperBatariaFS@usace.army.mil

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