



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
New Orleans District

Project Fact Sheet

Official Project Name

Jean Lafitte, Fisher School Basin Continuing Authorities Section 205 Project

Location

The study area encompasses approximately 45 acres of urbanized land located in southeastern Louisiana in the vicinity of New Orleans. Jean Lafitte is located on the eastern bank of Bayou Barataria in Jefferson Parish and is protected from Mississippi River overflow by the mainline Mississippi River and Tributaries levee system. A local levee system was constructed by the West Jefferson Levee District in response to emergency flooding and provides minimal protection due to its varying height and gaps in the alignment.

Land elevations slope gently from an average elevation of about 4 feet NGVD along the natural banks of Bayou Barataria to -1 foot NGVD in portions of the leveed area. Waters emanating in the Gulf of Mexico and nearby Lakes Salvador and Cataouatche travel across the marsh and through the many natural and man-made channels to flood the study area from the south.

Purpose

The local sponsors desire a Federal project to provide increased levels of flood protection for the study area. The desire for improvement in the study area stems from the natural growth and development occurring on the west bank of the Mississippi River, particularly within the proximity of the Fisher High School. This growth has resulted in the development of lands more vulnerable to flooding from storm tides and local rainfall. The area has experienced a recent surge in land and property values as a result of the enormous growth occurring and is likely to continue to develop given the lack of available land on the east bank of the Mississippi River in Orleans and Jefferson parishes, the presence of an existing interior drainage system, the close proximity to metropolitan New Orleans, and plans for continued improvement in the sewer and interior drainage systems by the local government.

Background

Officials of the town of Jean Lafitte, the West Jefferson Levee District, and Jefferson Parish desire a Federal project to provide increased levels of flood protection for the study area. The desire for improvement in the study area stems from the natural growth and development occurring on the west bank of the Mississippi River, particularly within the proximity of the Fisher High School. This growth has resulted in the development of lands more vulnerable to flooding from storm tides and local rainfall. The area has experienced a recent surge in land and property values as a result of the enormous growth occurring and is likely to continue to develop given the lack of available land on the east bank of the Mississippi River in Orleans and

Jefferson parishes, the presence of an existing interior drainage system, the close proximity to metropolitan New Orleans, and plans for continued improvement in the sewer and interior drainage systems by the local government.

The New Orleans District completed a reconnaissance study of the Fisher School Basin and submitted that report to higher authority in November 1994, recommending further analysis through a cost-shared feasibility study. Due to funding constraints, the study did not proceed beyond reconnaissance for approximately two years. Then on June 25, 1996, a Feasibility Cost Sharing Agreement (FCSA) was signed with the West Jefferson Levee District and the Fisher Basin feasibility study was initiated.

Authority

The study was conducted as part of the Continuing Authorities Program (CAP), under the authority of Section 205 of the 1948 Flood Control Act, as amended.

Scope

A reconnaissance study of the Fisher Basin was initiated in 1993 as the first phase of a two-phase process. The Corps typically conducts a reconnaissance study using existing data wherever possible to determine the nature and extent of the problems and to determine if a feasibility study is appropriate. In the Fisher Basin, the reconnaissance study concentrated on areas that experienced the greatest amount of damage due to flooding. The feasibility study is the second phase of the two-phase study process and is used to identify the National Economic Development (NED) plan. In feasibility, detailed engineering, economic, and environmental investigations are performed to identify economically feasible, environmentally acceptable alternatives. The NED plan is the plan that reasonably maximizes net benefits and minimizes adverse impacts to the environment and social well being.

The Fisher Basin feasibility study was not initiated until June 1996 due to funding constraints in the Continuing Authorities Program. On July 21, 1997, the scope of work was amended to include an area adjacent to the Fisher School Basin, known as the Fleming Curve. As a result, the total study area was enlarged, to encompass approximately 45 acres, and studied as a single hydraulic basin. The Fisher School Basin and Fisher Basin are used interchangeably in this document to refer to the same study area.

Interior drainage for the Fisher Basin was determined to be adequate for a 10-year rainfall event, however, exterior tidal stages frequently overtop the current levee system and to cause widespread flooding. Approximately 232 of the 309 structures (roughly 75%) within the study area are inundated below the 5-year design storm event. In feasibility, both non-structural and structural alternatives were considered in addition to the “no action” alternative. Engineering, environmental and economic investigations were used to develop a structural alternative similar to the plan recommended in the reconnaissance report.

Progress to Date

The feasibility report was approved in 1998. The Plans and Specifications (P&S) for the back levee have been completed and advertisement of the construction contract for the back levee is scheduled for later this year. The P&S for the floodwall along Bayou Baratavia are scheduled to

be completed by the end of the year, with construction scheduled to begin sometime next year. This schedule is contingent on continued support from the local community and funding from Congress.

Sponsors/Partners

West Jefferson Levee District

Town of Jean Lafitte

Jefferson Parish