



US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
New Orleans District

# Public Meeting Summary

## Westbank and Vicinity Mitigation Public Meeting May 17, 2010

<b>Location</b>	Westwego Ernest Tassin Senior Center 701 4 <sup>th</sup> Street Westwego, LA 70094
<b>Time</b>	Open House 6:00 p.m. Presentation 6:30 p.m., followed by a discussion
<b>Attendees</b>	Approx. 9
<b>Format</b>	Open House Presentation
<b>Handouts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HSDRRS Mitigation Fact Sheet (May 2010)</li> <li>• Mitigation Fact Sheet (May 2010)</li> </ul>
<b>Facilitator</b>	Rachel Rodi

### Greater New Orleans Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System Mitigation Public Meeting

Westwego Ernest Tassin  
Senior Center  
May 17, 2010



US Army Corps of Engineers  
BUILDING STRONG

#### Meeting Purpose

Mitigation Open House & Project Scoping

Meet one on one with Corps representatives, learn about mitigation, and give us your ideas on how and where to mitigate for unavoidable project induced impacts from the HSDRRS work.



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**Rachel Rodi:** Tonight is an open house and presentation to go over environmental mitigation.

The main point of tonight's presentation is to talk to us one on one and tell us where you want us to mitigate, how you want us to mitigate, and what types of mitigation you want us to do. That's your homework for after the meeting, so please start thinking.

#### Meeting Agenda

• Impacts generated by construction of the following HSDRRS projects:

- Harvey to Westwego Levee
- Lake Cataouatche Levee
- Western Tie In Levee
- Company Canal Floodwall

• Mitigation Program Objectives

• Feedback Session

- Where and how should mitigation occur?



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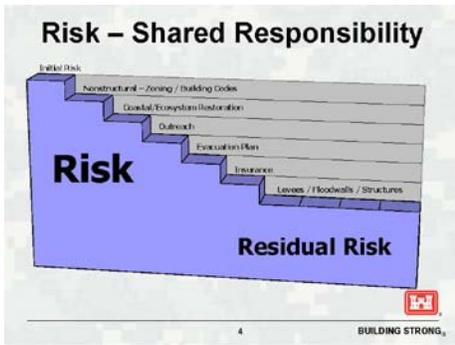
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Julie Vignes is our senior project manager and she is going to do the presentation and tell you about these projects in the back. She will talk about the Harvey to Westwego Levee, Lake Cataouatche Levee, Western Tie-In Project, the Company Canal Floodwall, then go over mitigation in general, and then we will get your feedback.

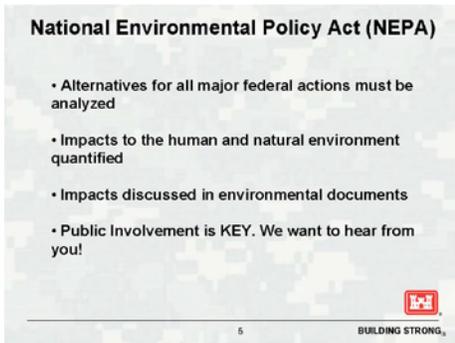
The following notes were recorded by USACE contractors. These notes are intended to provide an overview of the presentations and public questions and comments, and are not intended to provide a complete or verbatim account of the meeting. This account is not intended to be a legal document.



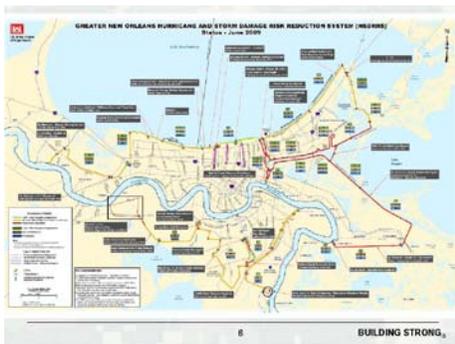
# Public Meeting Summary



This is a slide we show at most of our meetings. It talks about risk which is a shared responsibility. We all know that we automatically take on risk by choosing to live in Southeast Louisiana. But there are many things we can do to reduce risk, including zoning, coastal ecosystem restoration, outreach, evacuation planning, and having insurance. At the bottom you see levees, floodwalls and structures listed, which are the risk reduction methods we’re going to discuss tonight.



Why are we here tonight? The National Environmental Policy Act or NEPA dictates that alternatives for all major federal actions must be analyzed, and all impacts on the human and natural environment must be quantified. We discuss these impacts in our environmental documents, called Individual Environmental Reports. We are also here to hear from you. I’ll now turn it over to Julie Vignes.



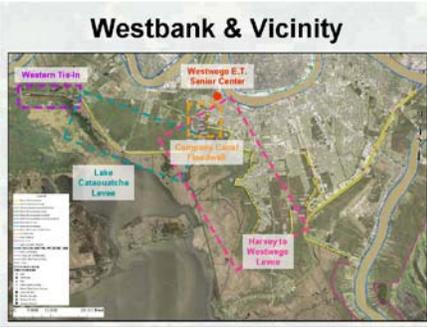
**Julie Vignes:** Hi everyone, I am Julie Vignes and I am on the project management team for the Westbank portion of the project. As Rachel mentioned, what I am going to do first is give you a little summary of the risk reduction system overall and then focus on the Westbank project. Then I’ll move on to talk about the mitigation portion of the program. This is a map of what we call the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System, or HSDRRS. The Westbank projects we’ll discuss tonight are on the Westbank of the Mississippi River. It’s a little tough to see, but you can see the alignment of the levees, floodwalls and structures that will provide the risk reduction system. On the East Bank we have the Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity project. Together, they make up our hurricane system.



In this slide, you can see that we broke the whole system down into different environmental reports and numbered them. There are approximately 20 environmental documents that each cover a portion of the system. In each document you will see a description of the construction, what impacts we associated with that construction and some information on what the mitigation requirements will be as we go forward.



# Public Meeting Summary



Tonight, we are going to talk about four of the Individual Environmental Report documents covering work on the Westbank and just orientate everyone. We'll talk about the levees and floodwalls in the Harvey and Westwego area, the Lake Cataouatche area and the Western Tie-In project.

**Harvey to Westwego Levees and Floodwalls**  
Individual Environmental Report 14

- Construction began Fall 2009
- Five of eight contracts in this area are under construction

**Plan is to:**

- Raise earthen levees along the current alignment to elevation 10.5 ft
- Shift current earthen levee alignment to the flood side
- Replace existing I-walls with T-walls

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The first project I will talk about is Individual Environmental Report 14, which covers the Harvey to Westwego levees and floodwalls. Essentially, the yellow on the image is where we are enlarging existing levees. We are enlarging these levees to provide for that 100-year level of risk reduction. There are some reaches, and a number of pump stations along this alignment where we are actually replacing existing floodwalls with T-walls of a higher elevation, or building new floodwalls. Five of the eight contracts that will construct this project have already been awarded. The remainder will be awarded in the next month or two.

**Harvey to Westwego Levees and Floodwalls**  
Individual Environmental Report 14  
Impacts - Current Working Estimate

Habitat Type	Quantity (acres)	Quality (AAHUs <sup>1</sup> )
Bottomland Hardwood Wet	90.50	67.17
Bottomland Hardwood Dry	0	0
Swamp	71.5	41.02
Marshlands	0	0

<sup>1</sup>AAHU (Average Annual Habitat Unit) is a numerical value representing the quality of a habitat

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In Individual Environmental Report 14, you will see a description of the project and then you will also see the information that we have summarized here. For the construction of this project, we have assessed that we will be impacting acres of each different habitat type. Listed here are the total acreage numbers for each impacted habitat. So in addition to quantifying the acreage that we impact, we also quantify habitat units. A habitat unit is essentially a way of measuring or calculating, not only the acreage, but the value or the function of the wetlands that are being impacted. We do this in consultation with our federal, state and environmental resource agencies, as well as the team at the Corps.

**Lake Cataouatche Levee**  
Individual Environmental Report 15

- Construction began May 2009
- Three of four contracts in this area are under construction

**Plan is to:**

- Raise earthen levees to 14.5 ft
- Enlarge earthen levee northward
- Add fronting protection floodwall for Lake Cataouatche Pump Station

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This is the Lake Cataouatche area, which falls under Individual Environmental Report 15. The yellow line shows where we are raising existing levees. At the Lake Cataouatche Pump Station, we are providing fronting protection, which is physically a concrete T-wall in front of the station. This will also provide some back flow prevention at the station itself. There is a short reach at Highway 90 that has not yet been constructed, but the majority of this work is ongoing and has been for several months.

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# Public Meeting Summary

**Lake Cataouatche Levee**  
Individual Environmental Report 15  
Impacts – Current Working Estimate

Habitat Type	Quantity (acres)	Quality (AAHUs*)
Bottomland Hardwood Wet	27.1	7.35
Bottomland Hardwood Dry	0	0
Swamp	0	0
Marshlands	0	0

\*AAHU (Average Annual Habitat Unit) is a numerical value representing the quality of a habitat

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Here is a summary table of both the acreage and the habitat units that we've assessed for impacts from the construction of the Lake Cataouatche levee project.

**Western Tie-In**  
Individual Environmental Report 16  
Impacts – Current Working Estimate

- Construction began October 2008
- One contract is complete. Three of the remaining six contracts have been awarded.

Plan is to:

- Build earthen levees along the current Davis Pond Guide Levee alignment to elevation 15.5 ft
- Construct bridge over floodwall (elevation 15.5) at HWY 90
- Construct two roller gates across two railroads & an earthen ramp at HWY LA 18
- Construct a sector gate across Bayou Verret

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The Western Tie-In portion of the system is described in Individual Environmental Report 16. The Western Tie-In is all earthen levee and connects to the Lake Cataouatche Levee close to Highway 90. We will put in a structure across Bayou Verret, also called Sellers Canal, and also put in a sector gate. Then we are building an earthen levee along the Davis Pond alignment where we are essentially replacing the existing levee with a hurricane risk reduction levee. Then we will be crossing Highway 90 near the Davis Pond structure with a floodwall, and we will be reconstructing Highway 90 as a bridge over the floodwall. We'll then tie it back and transition into earthen levees. We'll cross some railroad tracks and LA 18 near the Davis Pond Diversion structure, and then close the system and tie it in at the Mississippi River Levee. We've awarded three of the six contracts covered in this environmental document.

**Western Tie-In**  
Individual Environmental Report 16  
Impacts – Current Working Estimate

Habitat Type	Quantity (acres)	Quality (AAHUs*)
Bottomland Hardwood Wet	78.6	36.2
Bottomland Hardwood Dry	0	0
Swamp	0	0
Marshlands	137.8	86.3

\*AAHU (Average Annual Habitat Unit) is a numerical value representing the quality of a habitat

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Here are some of the impacts associated with the work at the Western Tie-In. We have some impacts to bottomland hardwood wetlands and some impacts to marshlands south of the Cataouatche Canal and Davis Pond Diversion area.

**Bayou Segnette Complex**  
Individual Environmental Report 17  
Impacts – Current Working Estimate

- Construction began in October 2008
- All six contracts awarded

Plan is to:

- Raise to elevation 14 ft
- Eliminate the Company Canal Floodwall from the system
- Construct a navigable Sector Gate, a Pump Station and replace floodwalls

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Here we have the Bayou Segnette Complex. The yellow alignment shows the existing I-walls that go around Company Canal. We've already installed a temporary barge gate to provide risk reduction in that area. That gate will be replaced with a permanent gated structure and earthen closure. There will be floodwalls and levees built to eliminate the I-walls. Instead we will tie-in with the gated structure earthen closure and then pick up on the other side tying in to the Segnette State Park floodwalls. All of the contracts described in this environmental document are currently underway.

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# Public Meeting Summary

**Company Canal Floodwall**  
Individual Environmental Report 17  
Impacts – Current Working Estimate

Habitat Type	Quantity (acres)	Quality (AAHUs*)
Bottomland Hardwood Wet	5.5	2.7
Bottomland Hardwood Dry	0	0
Swamp	19	17.09
Marshlands	0	0

\*AAHU (Average Annual Habitat Unit) is a numerical value representing the quality of a habitat

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The impacts associated with the Bayou Segnette Complex and the Company Canal floodwall are described here.

**Mitigation**

- Avoid impacts to natural resources
- Minimize impacts to the greatest extent possible
- Compensate for unavoidable impacts
- Mitigation plans will be discussed in environmental documents
- Mitigation is funded



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Now I want to talk about some of the mitigation objectives and principles that we have. When the Corps does a construction project, we work through a whole mitigation process. Our initial plan is to avoid all the impacts to the natural and human environment that we can. We then try to minimize the impacts and then we are left with what we call unavoidable impacts. We then have to do compensatory mitigation to compensate for those lost values and functions. The mitigation plans themselves will be discussed in an environmental document. When Congress appropriated the money to build this system, it also included funding to provide for mitigation for the unavoidable impacts.

**Mitigation Policies**

Generally mitigation would occur:

- As close as possible to the impact area
- Within the same hydrologic basin (Barataria or Lake Pontchartrain)
- Within same habitat type
  - Replace quantity (acres)
  - Replace quality (AAHUs)
- Before or concurrent with impacts



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Here are some additional policies that govern our efforts in mitigation. In general, when we have to mitigate, we try and do it as close as possible to the area that has been impacted. We try to mitigate in the same hydrologic basin, either the Barataria Basin or the Lake Pontchartrain Basin. We also strive as best as we can to replace the quantity and quality of our impacts within the same habitat types. In other words, if we've impacted 1000 habitat units of bottomland hardwood, we will replace it with bottomland hardwood acreage and the same thing for the different marsh types, etc. We will also work toward doing the mitigation concurrent with the construction project.

**Impact types**

- Direct
- Indirect
- Cumulative



As an example, construction of the GNW West Closure Complex will generate each type of impact.

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These are the different types of impacts to both the natural and human environment. This is a picture of the West Closure Complex, which is a large project near the Harvey and Algiers canals. An example of a direct impact is a where we have to re-align the levee. If we have to build a levee where previously a wetland habitat existed, that is a direct impact. An indirect impact is the T-wall along this bank line that alters the way the water overflows the bank. The T-wall may have an indirect impact by affecting the hydrology of the wetlands. The total of all those impacts we refer to as cumulative impacts.



# Public Meeting Summary

## Affected Habitats



These are the different types of habitats for which we've identified impacts. We have bottomland hardwoods, different marsh types such as salt, brackish, fresh and intermediate. We also have some impacts associated to swamp habitats.

## Total WBV Impacts

### West Bank & Vicinity Projects

Original Construction and HSDRRS – Current Working Estimate

Habitat Type	Quantity (acres)	Quality (AAHUs*)
Bottomland Hardwood Wet	1887.70	1067.55
Bottomland Hardwood Dry	29.90	10.62
Swamp	204.65	124.88
Marshlands	137.80	66.30

\*AAHU (Average Annual Habitat Unit) is a numerical value representing the quality of a habitat

This slide represents our current total of all the impacts associated with the construction of the entire Westbank project by habitat type, acreage and habitat units.

## Total LPV Impacts

### Lake Pontchartrain & Vicinity Projects

HSDRRS – Current Working Estimate

Habitat Type	Quantity (acres)	Quality (AAHUs*)
Bottomland Hardwood Wet	473.59	227.51
Bottomland Hardwood Dry	236.00	73.44
Swamp	113.71	70.81
Marshlands	1006.39	497.53

\*AAHU (Average Annual Habitat Unit) is a numerical value representing the quality of a habitat

We are developing this mitigation plan to address impacts to both the Westbank and Vicinity project and the Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity project. This chart represents a summary of all the impacts from the Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity projects on the East side of the river

## Example Mitigation Project

### Terrebonne Parish Non-Federal Levee

• In 2008, USACE constructed a 6.5 mile surge protection levee in Dulac, LA

• To mitigate the levee construction  
• Marshlands are currently under construction  
• Bottomland hardwood credits will be purchased from a mitigation bank



View of Mitigation: Cell #2 under construction. Containment dikes at left, new levee at right. (View to the west)

This is an example of a recent mitigation project. Recently the Corps completed construction on a Terrebonne non-federal levee. The construction of this 6.5 mile levee near Dulac, LA impacted a wetland habitat. To mitigate for those impacts, the Corps is doing construction of a marshland adjacent to the levee. The levee project also impacted some bottomland hardwood habitats. To compensate for those unavoidable impacts, credits will be purchased from a mitigation bank, which is another means of compensatory mitigation.

## Mitigation Tentative Timeline

- Initial Public Meetings May 2010
- Initial Screening of Measures Summer 2010
- Final Screening of Measures Spring 2011
- Identify Proposed Mitigation Plan Summer 2011
- Release Individual Environmental Reports Spring 2012
- Individual Environmental Reports Signed Spring 2012
- Design Mitigation Projects Fall 2012
- Start Construction Fall 2013

This is just a general timeline of our projected schedule for executing the mitigation plan. First, we will continue our scoping efforts through public meetings. We will identify some alternatives, work through a screening of those alternatives and then identify a proposed plan. That proposed plan will be described in a public document, which will then be released to the public in approximately the spring of 2010. Then we can move to the construction of our mitigation, which we are projecting for the fall of 2013. Now, I'll turn it over to Rachel Rodi.



# Public Meeting Summary

**Opportunities for Public Input**

- Regular public meetings throughout the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System (HSDRRS) Area
- Sign in tonight to get on our meeting notification mailing list!
- Construction Impact Hotline: 1- 877- 427- 0345
- Comments can be submitted at any time at [www.nolaenvironmental.gov](http://www.nolaenvironmental.gov)

Questions and comments may be submitted to  
**Telephone: 504 - 862 - 2201**  
**E-mail: [AskTheCorps@usace.army.mil](mailto:AskTheCorps@usace.army.mil)**

25 BUILDING STRONG

**Rachel Rodi:** Thanks. If you came in late, please sign in so we can get your information on our mailing list. You can give us comments tonight over at our boards, or we have comment cards that you can use to write your comments and mail them in. You can also email us at [askthecorps@usace.army.mil](mailto:askthecorps@usace.army.mil) or go on-line to [www.nolaenvironmental.gov](http://www.nolaenvironmental.gov), where the presentation from tonight will be posted along with all the supporting documents that Julie talked about. You can also call us at Public Affairs at 504-862-2201

**Resources**

[www.nolaenvironmental.gov](http://www.nolaenvironmental.gov)      <http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil>

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These are our Web sites, [www.nolaenvironmental.gov](http://www.nolaenvironmental.gov) and [www.mvn.usace.army.mil](http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil), which are also on the bottom of the fact sheets.

**Social Web Networking Communities**  
and what they mean to you

**twitter** is an online messaging and social networking system that allows people to share their daily life experiences minute-by-minute, hour by hour, and/or day-by-day via their computer or mobile phone. Team New Orleans is joining in and linking on the opportunities to connect with the public and offer reports on developments, activities, changes, and upcoming public meetings and events that will affect local communities. Check it out by going to [twitter.com/teamneworleans](http://twitter.com/teamneworleans).

Flickr is an online community platform for global photo management and sharing applications via the web. Team New Orleans has become a part of the movement and is using Flickr to visually explain our projects. Check out our photos at [www.flickr.com/photos/37671998@N05](http://www.flickr.com/photos/37671998@N05).

**facebook** is a global social networking Web site that links people from across the world and is currently ranked as the most popular of its kind. Team New Orleans is following in the trend and is using Facebook to update the public about projects, events, activities and public meetings. Become friends with Team New Orleans by visiting [www.facebook.com/search/New+Orleans+District](http://www.facebook.com/search/New+Orleans+District).

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On this slide we have our social media. We are on Facebook, Twitter and Flickr. Flickr is probably the coolest one because we have a lot of pictures there of all of our projects and we keep it up to date.

**Visit the following links to follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Flickr:**

<http://www.facebook.com/people/New-Orleans-District/100000017439096>

<http://twitter.com/teamneworleans>

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/37671998@N05>

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Again, these Web sites are listed on the bottom of the mitigation fact sheet.



# Public Meeting Summary

**Upcoming Mitigation Meetings**

- Wednesday May 19 6:00 pm – NP Trist Middle School, Meraux
- Monday May 24 6:00 pm – Resurrection of Our Lord Elementary, NOLA
- Wednesday May 26 6:00 pm – American Legion Post 366, St. Rose

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We have three upcoming mitigation public meetings. Wednesday, May 19 in Meraux, Monday, May 24 in New Orleans East and Wednesday, May 26 in St. Rose.

**What type of feedback are we looking for tonight?**

Where and how should the Corps mitigate?

- Where should we restore and create habitats?
- Where are large tracks of undeveloped land?
- Which critical natural areas should be preserved?
- Is one mitigation method preferable to another?

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Now it's your turn to give your feedback. Some of the questions we have for you include: Where should we restore and create our habitats? Where are the large tracts of undeveloped land? What critical natural areas should we preserve? And do you prefer one mitigation alternative to another? With that, we will turn it over to you guys as it's your turn to give us your feedback. Thanks for coming and if you have any questions, Julie Vignes will be in the back with her project boards and our environmental managers will be on the side of the room to take your comments.