



US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
New Orleans District

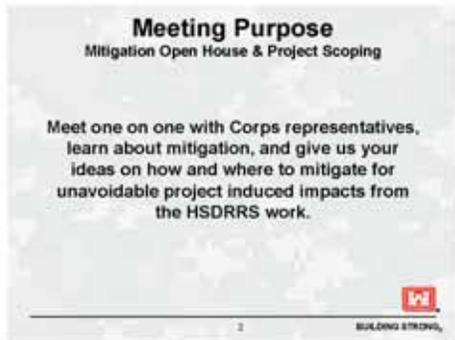
# Public Meeting Summary

## Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity Mitigation Public Meeting May 24, 2010

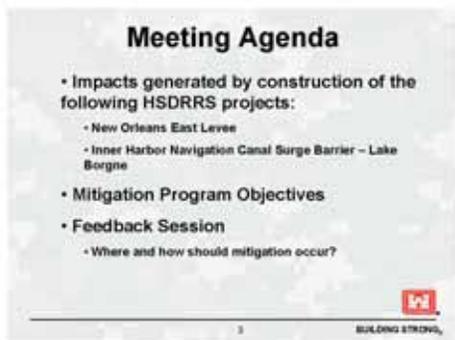
<b>Location</b>	Resurrection of Our Lord Elementary School 4861 Rosalia Drive New Orleans, LA 70127
<b>Time</b>	Open House 6:00 p.m. Presentation 6:30 p.m., followed by a discussion
<b>Attendees</b>	Approx. 10
<b>Format</b>	Open House Presentation
<b>Handouts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HSDRRS Mitigation Fact Sheet (May 2010)</li> <li>• Mitigation Fact Sheet (May 2010)</li> </ul>
<b>Facilitator</b>	Rachel Rodi, Public Affairs



**Rachel Rodi:** Good evening, thank you for coming tonight. My name is Rachel Rodi and I work for the Army Corps of Engineers Public Affairs Office.



The purpose of tonight's meeting is to meet with us one-on-one and tell us where you would like us to do mitigation for all the hurricane projects that are going on across the system.



First we will just go through the agenda real quick. Greg Miller is going to give you a project overview and he will talk about the New Orleans East Levee and the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal. Then he will talk about what we need for mitigation. Finally, we will get your feedback. We will have boards on the side where you tell us exactly where you want us to do mitigation.

We all know risk is a shared responsibility. It's not something that we can immediately get rid of. We can buy down risk through many ways such as zoning, coastal ecosystem

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restoration, outreach and insurance. We have a FEMA gentleman here, Ronnie Simpson, if you have any FEMA mitigation questions or insurance questions. Finally, we have levees, floodwalls and structures listed as a way to reduce risk. The point of all of this is to say that risk is a shared responsibility and you can buy down risk, but you can't completely get rid of risk.

**National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)**

- Alternatives for all major federal actions must be analyzed
- Impacts to the human and natural environment quantified
- Impacts discussed in environmental documents
- Public involvement is KEY. We want to hear from you!

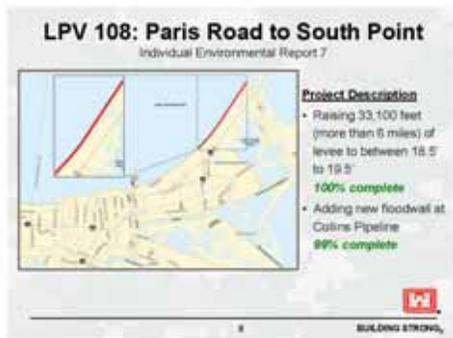
5 BUILDING STRINGS

NEPA, which is short for the National Environmental Policy Act, is part of all major federal actions and it's for impacts to humans and the environment, not just bugs and bunnies. We will discuss all environmental impacts in our environmental documents that will come out after these public meetings. Again, public involvement is key. With that, I'm going to turn it over to Greg Miller, one of our senior planners, who will go over the program for you.

**Greg Miller:** Good evening and thank you for coming to this meeting tonight. I'm going to try and run through as quickly as I can, an overview of some of the construction work that we have ongoing in the New Orleans East area. I will show you a little bit of the environmental impacts that are occurring as part of the construction efforts and then show you some of the requirements we undertake in order to make up for or mitigate for the damages to habitats associated with those construction efforts.



We will start out by showing you a little bit about the entire hurricane system. We have levee and floodwall work on the Westbank that stretches from the river below Belle Chasse over to roughly the vicinity of the Davis Pond Diversion. Then we also have levee and floodwall work on the Eastbank that stretches through St. Charles Parish all along the south shore of Lake Pontchartrain, around South Point down to the vicinity of Michoud and then around St. Bernard Parish to the vicinity of the Caernarvon Freshwater Diversion. Collectively this makes up what we refer to as a 100-year Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System for Greater New Orleans. This is a lot of work, quite a number of miles of levee and floodwalls, so we have subdivided it into areas, not only to look at the types of projects or features that are needed, but also what the impacts of those features are. I'm going to move to focus in on just the New Orleans East area this evening with the next slide.

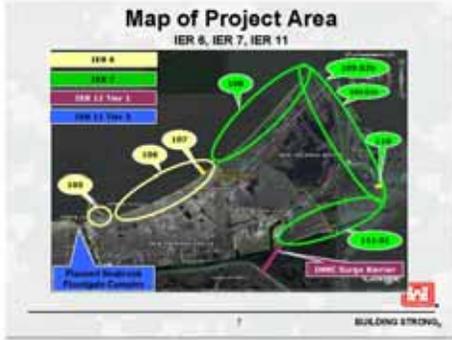


The project area runs roughly from the area of the Industrial Canal where it enters into Lake Pontchartrain, along the south shore of the lake by the airport out to South Point, down over

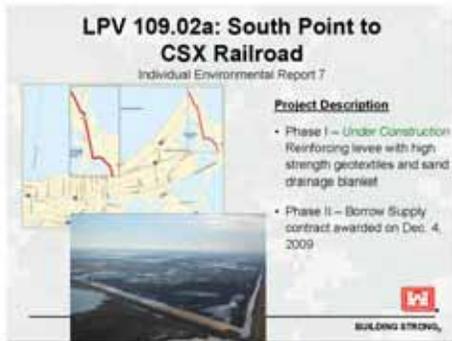
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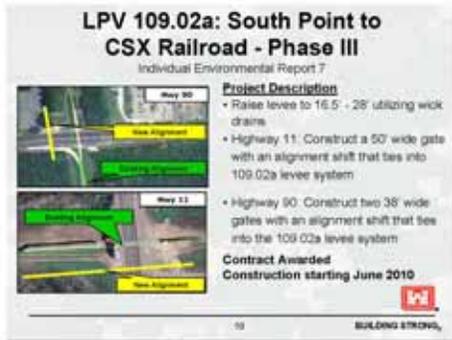
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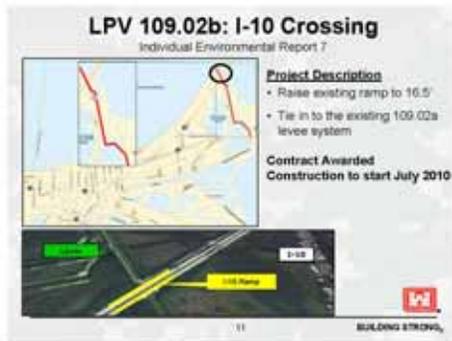
to the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway and then down to what we call the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal Surge Barrier. I'll discuss the project reaches, their features and their statuses this evening. What we have here is something called an IER, or Individual Environmental Report, and that is the document that the Corps is using to demonstrate our compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act. Those documents are grouped with sets of projects. For instance, in IER 6, you have the work around the Lakefront Airport and the levee reach here along the south shore of Lake Pontchartrain.



So for the reach of the levee that stretches from Paris Road out to South Point, we've raised that levee by a foot from 18.5 feet to 19.5 feet and that work has been completed. We are wrapping up work on a new floodwall near a pipeline crossing and we are about 99% done with that. We just have a few cosmetic type items to finish.



This is the reach from South Point to the crossing of the CSX Railroad. This is an effort that is currently under construction and it involves reinforcing levee and using a sand drainage blanket. We've also got a second phase of this where we awarded a contract to supply borrow in December of last year.

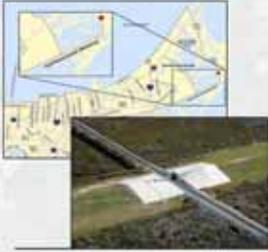


We also have work ongoing at South Point to the CSX Railroad. This is a third phase of the project and it's raising the levee from a height of 16.5 to about 28.5 feet. Then, we have a gate that is going to be under construction at Highway 11 and two additional gates at Highway 90. We have awarded that contract and we expect the construction work to begin next month in June.



# Public Meeting Summary

**LPV 110: CSX Railroad Gate**  
Individual Environmental Report 7



**Project Description**

- Construct new T-wall & gate with an alignment shift
  - Existing elevation: 20'
  - Future elevation: 27.5'

**Contract Awarded**  
**Construction to start**  
**December 2010**

12 BUILDING STRONG

We also have the reach of the levee system in the East that crosses I-10 and we are going to raise the ramp there to about 16.5 feet to tie in to both sides of the levee system. That contract has also been awarded and we expect construction to begin in July of this year.

**LPV 111.01: CSX RR to Michoud Canal**  
Individual Environmental Report 7



**Project Description**

- Raise existing levee
  - Existing elevation: 19' to 19.5'
  - Future elevation: 24' to 27.5'
- Replace and raise existing floodwall at PS 15 to 30.5'

**Construction 14% complete**

13 BUILDING STRONG

This is a railroad crossing alignment where we will have to construct a gate with new T-wall features. The existing elevation is about 20 feet and we are going to raise that to 27.5. We have awarded the contract and construction will start around the end of this calendar year in December.

**New Orleans East Levee**  
Individual Environmental Report 7  
Impacts – Current Working Estimate

Habitat Type	Quantity (acres)	Quality (AAH/acre)
Bottomland Hardwood Wet	202.0	101.4
Bottomland Hardwood Dry	0	0
Swamp	0	0
Marshlands	245	110.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>447.0</b>	<b>211.7</b>

\*AAH/acre (Average Annual Habitat Unit) is a numerical value representing the quality of a habitat.

14 BUILDING STRONG

Then the railroad crossing out to the vicinity of Michoud Canal where we have elevations roughly around 19 feet will be raised between 24 and 27.5 feet. We will also replace a floodwall at Pump Station #15. We have started construction and we are at about 16% finished with the work.

**Inner Harbor Navigation Canal – Lake Borgne**  
Individual Environmental Report 11



15 BUILDING STRONG

All of the impacts of those construction efforts are documented in IER 7 and what we show here is that we have impacted about 200 acres of bottomland hardwood wetlands, and 245 acres of marshlands in the vicinity of those projects. What you will see on this table is that we have also identified what we call average annual habitat units and this is a figure that is used to capture the benefits or the productivity of the marshlands that are impacted by our work. You will see a smaller number than the acreage number, but when we mitigate we are required to make sure that the mitigated wetland or the wetlands that we build produce at least that amount of average annual habitat unit. This is one of the major construction projects that we have as part of the work in New Orleans East. This is the Inner

Harbor Navigation Canal Surge Barrier. It reduces risk from surge that could come from Lake Borgne. On the left hand side you see a lot of the construction work underway. There are large cylindrical piles

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that are driven quite a bit into the ground and there are also batter piles that are tied into the structure. The roadway that travels along the top of it can be used for purposes of inspection. The impacts of this particular project are documented in the Individual Environmental Report 11.



This is just another shot of the project under construction. This is the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway. Michoud is just off the photo here and this is the MRGO Navigation Channel coming into the Intracoastal Waterway. As you can see the surge barrier ties into the levee system here on the St. Bernard side and then crosses over the marshlands and ties into the levee system on the New Orleans East side, making a continuous system of risk reduction.

Inner Harbor Navigation Canal  
Individual Environmental Report 11  
Impacts - Current Working Estimate

Habitat Type	Quantity (acres)	Quality (AAHUs*)
Bottomland Hardwood Wet	15	2.59
Bottomland Hardwood Dry	0	0
Swamp	0	0
Marshlands	122	24.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>26.92</b>

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

17 BUILDING STRONG

As you can see, this project is being constructed across wetlands and the impacts are identified as about 15 acres of bottomland hardwood wetlands or forested wetlands and about 122 acres of marshlands for a total of 137 acres of impact.

**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

18 BUILDING STRONG

As I mentioned, when we have construction activities that have environmental damages, we are required to mitigate. There is a sequence of steps that we follow to achieve mitigation. The first is to try if possible to avoid impacts if we can. The second is to minimize any impacts that we anticipate and then finally we would compensate for any unavoidable impacts. The mitigation plans are discussed and disclosed in the Individual Environmental Reports and the mitigation work that we are required to do is funded as part of the construction project costs.

**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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We have a series of policies that we follow in developing mitigation work in the system and generally what we try to do is have the mitigation identified in an area as close as possible to the impact of where it occurs. We also strive to have mitigation planned within the same hydrologic basin. So in the case of the work in New Orleans East, we would be planning mitigation work in the Lake Pontchartrain Basin, because that's the hydrologic unit where these levee jobs fall. We also

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try to seek to develop mitigation for the same types of habitat that is impacted by the job. We try to replace the lost habitats in terms of quantity of acres impacted as well as the benefits produced by those impacted wetlands. This is the average annual habitat unit equivalent that I talked about earlier. Finally, our policy is to try and complete mitigation work either before or concurrently with the impacts.

**Example Mitigation Project**  
Terrebonne Parish Non-Federal Levee

- In 2009, 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 #1, under construction. Underlined shows old levee, new levee at right. (View to south-east)

20 BUILDING STRONG

This is an example of a mitigation job that's in Terrebonne Parish. In 2009 we built a 6.5 mile levee near the community of Dulac, Louisiana in Terrebonne. In order to make up for the levee construction impacts to marshes, we are rebuilding a wetland in that vicinity and purchasing a small number of credits from what is called a mitigation bank to make up for impacts to bottomland hardwoods that were affected by construction of the levee.

**Example of Project Impacts**  
BHNC Surge Barrier

- Construction began May 2009
- Types of impacts:
  - Direct
  - Indirect
  - Cumulative



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This is a photo of the surge barrier that I showed a few minutes ago. I want to use the surge barrier in the East as an example of the types of impacts that can occur with the construction of one of our levee or floodwall jobs. We can have direct impacts from construction, indirect impacts and cumulative impacts. To put that in more plain terms, direct impacts are essentially what we affect by digging in the area or placing the levee. An indirect impact would be the effect on the movement of water adjacent to the new levee that's been constructed. The cumulative impact is the effect of not only this action, but all the actions in nearby areas associated with other projects.

**Affected Habitats**



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In terms of what are the types of wetlands along the coasts that can be affected by levee or floodwall work there are a number of habitats we are interested in. these include bottomland hardwood areas, swamps that are forested habitats, then salt marshes, brackish marshes, intermediate marsh and finally freshwater marshes.

**Total LPV Impacts**  
Lake Pontchartrain & Vicinity Projects  
HSORRS - Current Working Estimate

Habitat Type	Quantity (acres)	Quality (AAHUs*)
Bottomland Hardwood Wet	291.59	136.31
Bottomland Hardwood Dry	236.00	73.44
Swamp	113.71	70.81
Marshlands	835.99	423.53
<b>Total</b>	<b>1477.29</b>	<b>704.09</b>

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

23 BUILDING STRONG

This is a summary of the total impacts of the Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity Levees. We have a total of about 1,477 acres of impacted habitat and you will see it's broken out here by the habitat type. For bottomland hardwood wetlands, it's about 291 acres, 236 acres for bottomland hardwood dry habitats, 113 acres of swamp and 835 acres of various marshes.

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**Total WBV Impacts**  
West Bank & Vicinity Projects  
Original Construction and HSDRRS – Current Working Estimate

Habitat Type	Quantity (acres)	Quality (AAH/Ua')
Bottomland Hardwood Wet	1867.70	1067.55
Bottomland Hardwood Dry	29.60	10.62
Swamp	204.65	124.66
Marshlands	137.80	66.30
<b>Total</b>	<b>2260.05</b>	<b>1269.35</b>

\*AAH/U (Average Annual Habitat Unit) is a numerical value representing the quality of a habitat.

24 BUILDING STRONG

We have the same type of information available on the impacts of the environment on the Westbank. On the Westbank side we've got a little over 2,200 acres of impacts to the various habitats that you see here.

**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

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With that said I will walk you bit through the schedule that we've developed for planning the mitigation that is required for these jobs. Right now we are in May and in the initial public meetings to let the public know about what the impacts are and to get your input into how to approach planning mitigation. This summer we are going to screen out our initial array of potential mitigation features and we will have a final screen of features in spring 2011. We will have an identified mitigation plan for all of the impacts on the East Bank side and the West Bank side next summer in 2011. We will have the

**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: 504-962-2201  
Email: [AskTheCorps@usace.army.mil](mailto:AskTheCorps@usace.army.mil)

26 BUILDING STRONG

Individual Environmental Reports available for public review and comment in the spring of 2012. We will have our commander in the position to sign those environmental compliance documents also in the spring of 2012. Finally, we will begin construction of mitigation work in the fall of 2013.

**Rachel Rodi:** Thanks. Besides speaking to us tonight, there are many opportunities for you to provide public input. You can always call at our main Public Affairs line which is 862-2201. Or you can shoot us an email at [askthecorps@usace.army.mil](mailto:askthecorps@usace.army.mil). You can always go onto our website where we have all our environmental reports: [www.nolaenvironmental.gov](http://www.nolaenvironmental.gov).

**Resources**

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

27 BUILDING STRONG

Tonight's presentation will be posted at [www.nolaenvironmental.gov](http://www.nolaenvironmental.gov). You can also find more information at the Corps website [www.mvn.usace.army.mil](http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil).

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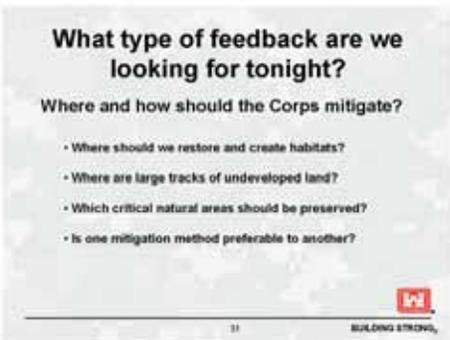


We are also on Facebook, Flickr and Twitter. If you are looking for some updated photos of all the projects, you can go to Flickr. And then on Facebook, we have all our press releases. Twitter is used more during hurricane

season when we need to get short messages out. These are the links to our social networking sites.



And finally, we have one last upcoming mitigation meeting. This will be the fifth one and it will be in St. Rose if you are interested in coming out there.



Now it's your turn. Please head to go to the back of the room and take a look at the maps and signs back there. We are looking for your feedback on where you think we should do mitigation, and what type of mitigation is preferable. Is there one type of mitigation that is better than the other? If you have some ideas, please give them to us tonight. If you have some ideas that you want to develop more, we have comment cards in the back that you can mail back to us. We also have our project boards and other information. Thanks for coming.