



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
NEW ORLEANS DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P. O. BOX 60267
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA 70160-0267

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

Planning, Programs, and
Project Management Division
Environmental Planning
and Compliance Branch

PUBLIC NOTICE

WEST BANK AND VICINITY, NEW ORLEANS, LA GREATER NEW ORLEANS STORM DAMAGE RISK REDUCTION SYSTEM PROJECT LAKE CATAOUCHE LEVEE INDIVIDUAL ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT (IER) #15

Introduction. This Public Notice is issued in accordance with provisions of Title 33 CFR Parts 336.1(b)(1) and 337.1, which establish policy, practices, and procedures to be followed on Federal actions involving the disposal of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States.

Project Authority. Raising the level of protection in the New Orleans area was authorized mainly under Public Law (PL) 84-99; PL 109-148, Department of Defense, Emergency Supplemental Appropriations to Address Hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico, the Pandemic Influenza Act, 2006 (3rd Supplemental); PL 109-234, Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense, the Global War on Terror, and Hurricane Recovery, 2006 (4th Supplemental); and PL 110-28, U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007 (5th Supplemental).

Location. The proposed action is located in Jefferson Parish, Louisiana.

Project Description. The proposed project is located on the west bank of the Mississippi River, in Jefferson Parish, Louisiana. The Lake Cataouatche levee project begins near Bayou Segnette State Park on the east, sweeps southerly in a trapezoidal configuration to the west, and ties into Hwy. 90 near the Jefferson Parish/St. Charles Parish line. The levee encloses the entire southern area. The purpose of the proposed action is to construct and maintain 100-year storm damage risk reduction to the residents and businesses in the Lake Cataouatche area. The project would increase the elevation of existing levee reaches to meet the 100-year level of protection. All elevations are referenced to NAVD88 (2004.65) datum. The term "100-year level of protection," refers to a level of protection that reduces the risk of hurricane surge and wave-driven flooding that the New Orleans metropolitan area experiences by a one percent chance each year.

Although a segment of the contiguous West Bank and Vicinity (WBV) project, this project originates where Hwy. 90 intersects the line of protection and continues to approximately the Bayou Segnette State Park boundary. The project is designed to use existing rights-of-way (ROW) within previously disturbed areas to minimize environmental consequences. The design, construction, and maintenance would be similar to that previously designed and constructed by the CEMVN along this alignment. The existing Lake Cataouatche Levee alignment is described with three distinct reaches and the proposed actions for reaches 1, 2, and 3 are as follows:

Reach 1 – Levee for the Western Tie-In to End of BFI Landfill

From the western terminus of this section at Hwy. 90, the line of protection proceeds southeast for a distance of approximately 3,900 feet. The existing ROW and available land between the current levee centerline and the BFI landfill is approximately 300 feet and the available ROW on the flood side of the centerline is 250 feet. The proposed action in this reach would take place within the existing ROW, but would have to shift slightly west, approximately 110 feet, into the Outer Cataouatche Canal to accommodate the larger levee. The 100-year height would be approximately +14.5 to +15.0 feet. The new levee would require approximately 150,000 cubic yards (CY) of earthen material to construct. The construction footprint on the protected side would fall entirely within an area of recent construction activity and stay within the area of previous disturbance. Although within the existing ROW, the flood-side construction would require building the toe of the levee approximately 40 feet out into the Outer Cataouatche Canal. This would result in approximately 17,500 cubic yards of fill being placed into low to moderate quality wetlands (6.5 acres) and open water (3.5 acres.)

Reach 2 - Lake Cataouatche Levee from the BFI Landfill to the Bayou Segnette State Park

The proposed action for this reach is for construction of approximately eight miles of levee entirely within the existing construction ROW and area of previous and recent disturbance. The 100-year height would be approximately +14.5 to +15.0 feet and would require approximately 1.6 million cubic yards of earthen material to construct. This reach includes approximately 27.0 acres of low quality bottomland hardwood wetlands.

Reach 3 - Lake Cataouatche Pump Stations 1 and 2 Floodwall

The proposed action for this reach would involve the construction of approximately 1,550 feet of floodwall to approximately +15 to +16 feet protecting the Lake Cataouatche Pump Stations 1 and 2. In addition to the new floodwall, the Pump Station No. 2 discharge basin would be relocated slightly to account for the flood side shift of the floodwall at Pump Station No. 2. The modifications would also include butterfly valves at all discharge tubes and construction of a permanent crossing of the north-south drainage canal for future maintenance and construction access.

Discharges by Others. No discharges are anticipated by others.

Other Information. On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina caused major damage to the Federal and non-Federal flood control and storm damage risk reduction systems in Southeast Louisiana. Hurricane Rita followed this storm on September 24, 2005, and made landfall on the Louisiana-Texas state border, causing damage to the Greater New Orleans Storm Damage Risk Reduction System (GNOSDRRS) (formerly known as the Hurricane Protection System) in southern Louisiana. Since the storms, the USACE has been working with state and local officials to restore the Federal and non-Federal flood control and GNOSDRRS and related works in the affected area.

To date, approximately 60 percent of the New Orleans population has returned to the area. Many residents and businesses are waiting to see positive improvements in the level of protection before returning to the area. A USACE goal of June 2011 has been set for completion of much of the work that will raise the level of protection in the New Orleans area to a new standard and provide a level of security to residents and businesses that will allow and encourage them to return to the area. Federal flood protection eligibility requires 100-year level of protection.

Properties Adjacent to Disposal Sites. The proposed action is adjacent to presently undeveloped lands and a closed BFI Landfill. Interior drainage for the protected side of the levee is maintained by Cataouatche pump stations No. 1 and 2, and the flood side is mostly fresh marsh and swamplands.

Status of the Individual Environmental Report (IER) and Other Environmental Documents. IER #15 has been prepared to address the proposed action and alternatives for this reach of the WBV project in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and the President's Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) Regulations (40 CFR § 1500-1508), as reflected in the USACE Engineering Regulation, ER 200-2-2. The execution of an IER, in lieu of a traditional Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), is provided for in ER 200-2-2, Environmental Quality (33 CFR § 230) Procedures for Implementing the NEPA and pursuant to the CEQ NEPA Implementation Regulations (40 CFR § 1506.11). The Alternative Arrangements can be found at www.nolaenvironmental.gov. The CEMVN implemented Alternative Arrangements on March 13, 2007, in coordination with CEQ. This process was implemented to expeditiously complete environmental analyses for any changes to the authorized system and the 100-year level of the GNOSDRRS authorized and funded by Congress and the Administration. The proposed actions are located in southeastern Louisiana and are part of the Federal effort to rebuild and complete construction of the GNOSDRRS in the New Orleans Metropolitan area as a result of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Environmental compliance for the proposed action would be achieved upon: coordination of the draft IER with appropriate agencies, organizations, and individuals for their review and comments; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) confirmation that the proposed action would not be likely to adversely affect any endangered or threatened species; Louisiana Department of Natural Resources concurrence with the determination that the proposed action is consistent, to the maximum extent practicable, with the Louisiana Coastal Resources Program; receipt of a Water Quality Certification from the State of Louisiana; public review of the Section 404(b)(1) Public Notice; signature of the Section 404(b)(1) Evaluation; receipt of the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office Determination of No Affect on cultural resources; receipt and acceptance or resolution of all USFWS Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act recommendations; and receipt and acceptance or resolution of all NMFS Essential Fish Habitat recommendations. The IER decision record would not be signed until the proposed action achieves environmental compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

Coordination. The following is a partial list of agencies to which a copy of this notice is being sent:

- U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region VI
- U.S. Department of Commerce, NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service
- U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Louisiana Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
- Governor's Executive Assistant for Coastal Activities
- Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
- Louisiana Department of Natural Resources, Coastal Management Division
- Louisiana Department of Natural Resources, Coastal Restoration Division
- Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality
- Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office

This notice is being distributed to these and other appropriate Congressional, Federal, state, and local interests, environmental organizations, and other interested parties.

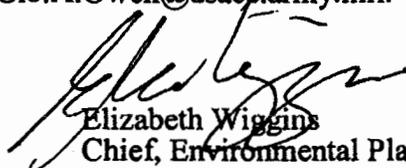
Evaluation Factors. Evaluation includes application of the Section 404(b)(1) guidelines promulgated by the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, through 40 CFR 230.

Public Involvement. Extensive public involvement has been sought in preparing this IER. The projects analyzed in this IER were publicly disclosed and described in the Federal Register on March 13, 2007, and on the website www.nolaenvironmental.gov. Scoping for this project was initiated on March 12, 2007, through advertisements and public notices placed in USA Today and The New Orleans Times-Picayune. Nine public scoping meetings were held throughout the New Orleans Metropolitan area to explain the scope and process of the Alternative Arrangements for implementing NEPA between March 27 and April 12, 2007, after which a 30-day scoping period was open for public comment submission. Additionally, CEMVN has continued to host monthly public meetings to keep the stakeholders advised of project status. The public has been able to provide verbal comments during the meetings and written comments at any time in person, by mail, and via www.nolaenvironmental.gov. All comments postmarked on or before the expiration of the comment period for this notice will be considered.

Any person who has an interest that may be affected by deposition of excavated or dredged material may request a public hearing. The request must be submitted in writing to the District Engineer within the comment period of this notice and must clearly set forth the interest that may be affected and the manner in which the interest may be affected by the proposed action.

You are requested to communicate the information contained in this notice to any parties who may have an interest in the proposed action.

For further information regarding the proposed action, please contact Mr. Gib A. Owen at (504) 862-1337, FAX (504) 862-2088, or Gib.A.Owen@usace.army.mil.


Elizabeth Wiggins
Chief, Environmental Planning
and Compliance Branch

COMMENT PERIOD FOR THIS PUBLIC NOTICE EXPIRES: April 9, 2008