

## ***Morganza Action Coalition*** ***Morganza to the Gulf Hurricane Protection Project***

Morganza to the Gulf Hurricane Protection Project is a proposed \$888 million hurricane protection project to protect parts of Terrebonne and Lafourche parishes from the damages caused by hurricane storm surges. With 72 miles of levees and designed as a 100 year hurricane protection system, it will protect a population exceeding 200,000 from a Category 3 storm.

### *Levee Alignment*

- The majority of the levee alignment is built along natural ridges, roadbeds or existing levees that have been built for other purposes.
- The levee will follow existing hydrologic barriers and would cause few indirect impacts on estuarine hydrology.

### *Maximizing Ecosystem Sustainability*

- This is a first-of-its-kind hurricane protection system that incorporates twelve floodgates and thirteen environmental structures that will allow water to flow between the interior and exterior marshes of the system.
- The environmental structures will be used to maintain and/or improve the existing hydrology of the wetlands within and outside of the system and they offer a unique opportunity to maximize ecosystem sustainability while still providing storm surge protection.
- The intent of the Terrebonne Levee & Conservation District (TLCD) is to operate these structures in a way that will provide the most benefits to the surrounding wetlands.
- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is currently preparing a hydrologic model that will assess how water will flow through the environmental structures during hurricanes as well as during normal periods. This model is expected to be complete at the end of 2007.
- The project includes a floodgate and lock on the Houma Navigational Canal (HNC) near Dulac. It will be used to restrict saltwater intrusion and to direct freshwater flow from the Atchafalaya to other distributary channels in the basin including Bayou Pelton, Falgout Canal and Bayou Blue.

### *Adaptive Implementation & Management Approach*

- The project will use an adaptive implementation approach in order to address any design concerns. This will allow for discretionary modifications to accommodate new scientific data and ongoing state and federal planning processes. This has already occurred with Reaches H-3 and J-2.
- An adaptive management approach will be used for operating the thirteen environmental structures so that modifications can be made in order to maximize ecosystem benefits. An ongoing monitoring program with support from state and federal regulatory agencies will be implemented to provide critical data for the adaptive management program.

### *Ensuring Compliance & Coordination with Federal Regulations & Programs*

- In compliance with the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA), a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement was prepared for the project in compliance with other environmental regulations including the Endangered Species Act, Fish & Wildlife Coordination Act, National Historic Preservation Act, etc.

*Ensuring Compliance & Coordination with Federal Regulations & Programs (cont'd)*

- A Habitat Evaluation Team (HET), whose members consist of federal and state resource agencies with an interest in Louisiana's Coastal Zone, have been involved in the development of the project. Their role is to identify and assess any environmental impacts associated with the project and ensure that appropriate plans for mitigation of any impacts are developed and included.
- A mitigation plan is included to offset losses in particular habitat types.
- As each segment of the levee alignment undergoes detail design, a supplemental NEPA document will be produced. This will provide a more detailed estimate of direct and indirect impacts to wetlands and other resources.
- Any net impact the project has on wetlands would be mitigated as part of the project by building new wetlands or improving the condition of existing ones.
- Section 303(d)(1) of the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act (CWPPRA) requires the Secretary of the Army, in consultation with the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, to ensure that navigation, flood control, and irrigation projects are consistent with the purposes of the Louisiana Coastal Wetlands Restoration Plan.
- The project was designed to be compatible with the strategic goals of Coast 2050, the state's initial comprehensive coastal restoration blueprint. The environmental structures and the increasing tidal exchange that some areas would experience as a result of the structures are consistent with Coast 2050 goals to 'maintain exchange and interface to achieve system linkages' and 'maintain estuarine gradient to achieve diversity'.
- The project's mitigation plans include dedicated dredging for marsh creation and the distribution of freshwater from the GIWW into wetlands, which are both Coast 2050 ecosystem strategies.
- Multipurpose use of the HNC lock has been in every coastal restoration plan for the past 10 years, including Coast 2050, LCA Plan and the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan. The objective is to make more efficient use of Atchafalaya River water and sediment flow, as well as maintain salinity regimes favorable for area wetlands.

*Authorization*

The project's authorization is pending Congressional authorization in the Water Resources Development Act.

*For More Information Contact:*

*Daniel J. Walker, President*

*Morganza Action Coalition*

*985-868-2333*

###

*The Morganza Action Coalition is a non-profit group advocating the  
Morganza to the Gulf Hurricane Protection Project.*