

# 1. Executive Summary

## **Overview**

More than 100 south Louisiana stakeholders representing numerous agencies and support groups in Louisiana, met in Lafayette, LA for a 2-day workshop to review preliminary alternatives and planning criteria for the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Project. Participants were encouraged to respond to existing plans and planning principles and offer different alternatives that may achieve project goals.

## **Introduction**

Authorization and appropriation was in the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act 2006 (P.L. 109-103). The Corps was provided \$8 M to develop a full range of flood control, coastal restoration and hurricane protection measures exclusive of normal policy considerations at full Federal expense. The Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2006, (P.L. 109-148) provided another \$12 M, but this money is not available until the State of Louisiana establishes a single state entity to act as local sponsor for construction, operation and maintenance of all the hurricane, storm damage reduction and flood control projects in the greater New Orleans and southeast Louisiana area. A preliminary technical report for Category 5 protection will be submitted in June 2006 and a final technical report by December 2007. The analysis will be done in close coordination with the State of Louisiana (and also local interests, other Federal agencies, academic researchers and international managers and scientists).

A workshop was held in Vicksburg, MS in Dec. 2005 to estimate the maximum hurricane impact. The initial plan formulation meeting was held in Lafayette, LA in Feb. 2006 to develop a set of alternative alignments for model runs. Over 100 stakeholders attended and participated. A workshop on technical approaches to engineering and new innovations was held in Vicksburg, MS in March 2006. Public scoping meetings will be held at four sites in LA in March 2006.

## **The Process**

The first day began with a series of presentations from subject matter experts, questions and answers from the workshop participants and a facilitated discussion of each presentation. In addition to scheduled presentations, workshop participants were encouraged to offer their own plans or plan perspectives. A unique methodology was used to capture an initial round of comments on each plan. Participants were linked via a wireless network of PCs which enabled them to enter comments simultaneously and anonymously. Team members were able to view the comments of all session participants without knowing who entered them. This methodology enabled workshop members to focus more on specific ideas...and less on who was offering them.

Day two focused on team development and prioritization of consensus-based principles for Corps planners, applicable to a variety of planning scenarios. The team also developed a series of structural recommendations and offered an initial prioritization of this list.

Finally, a team of GIS specialists and facilitated discussion was used to capture real-time recommendations from workshop participants on specific regional planning recommendations.

## **Major Recommendations**

The following major recommendations and recommendations emerged from these discussions:

Use recently gathered information and data about tidal surge and flooding within the South LA ecosystem to modify existing projects based on a people first priority schedule.

Flood control and coastal restoration are mutually inclusive strategies that must be properly blended for viable long-term success.

Start with existing, approved strategies for flood protection and natural resource enhancement relative to flooding, then modify those existing plans for quick implementation – don't start from scratch. Modify as necessary the inventory of existing projects.

Cost-benefit analysis; economic equity for impacted citizens, communities, and industries; sustainability; and restoration of natural ecosystems are priority principles that must be considered in any solution.

Sustainable solutions must include resource-based initiatives, recognizing that a 10-year land building effort is not a part of the 6 month proposal due to the lack of data points available for modeling this type of solution, but natural solutions must be part of the long-term solutions included in the 24-month plan.

Multiple Lines of Defense are crucial for sustainable protection of Southern Louisiana from flooding and storms.

Despite the rapid timeline mandated by Congress, maximize stakeholder participation opportunities or expect implementation delays.

The Corps will pursue rapid modeling of the options presented, without worrying about the exact siting and specific structural features, focusing instead on modeling results related to suppression of flooding risks, tidal surge, and other wind and water impacts.

Think outside the map – solutions will involve new thinking, new technologies, and materials and ideas from other places.

Subsidence cannot be over-emphasized in the planning. Combined with shoreline erosion, this issue will contribute to significant future challenges.

In addition to protecting significant populations and communities from Category 4 or 5 storm impacts, solutions such as ring levees and other localized protections for ameliorating the flooding impacts of lesser storms (top-able levees to slow down surge) may be included in planning options.

Apply lessons-learned from Dutch experiences. Avoid repeating the same mistakes, but *do plan on making new mistakes* specific to local conditions.

Over the years, inability to reach consensus or closure on proposed options, lack of funding, multiple competing political voices, and the inability of divergent interests to work together have led to the current situation of dangerously inadequate and deteriorating protections offered by man-made and natural "barriers".

Special emphasis is recommended on restoring, mimicking, and enhancing natural and historic ecosystem features to address flooding, surge and wind impacts.

Plan for expensive, ongoing maintenance for repair and modification of subsiding and eroding solutions/features.

The team recommended creation of an overall sediment budget for this project to ensure a readily available, ongoing source of sediment for the future.

Rapid time lines mandated by Congress may preclude "normal" public input processes necessitating planners to use the principles developed in the workshop as a lens for project planning and implementation.

It is time to set aside old arguments, ongoing debates and theoretical/philosophical disagreements and get to work implementing solutions before national funds and national attention turn elsewhere.

### ***Notes on Report Formatting***

Team generated input is indicated in normal typeface. The facilitation team summarized and captured key discussion themes. Italicized/asterisked team questions and discussion teams were captured by the facilitation team. Where possible, comments are identified by who offered them. This was not always possible as speakers sometimes did not identify themselves and discussions occasionally overlapped. This document is not a transcription, but a capture of key discussion themes.