



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

April 3, 2009

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

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY

A Draft Individual Environmental Report # 13 (IER # 13), titled, "West Bank and Vicinity (WBV), Hero Canal Levee and Eastern Terminus, Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana," prepared by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District, is available for your review and comment. In addition, a Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 404 public notice for this project is also available for review and comment 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 (application of Section 404(b)(1) of the CWA guidelines).

The proposed action for IER # 13 would raise and/or construct levees, floodwalls, and structures to meet the 100-year level of protection required for the area to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program. The 100-year design elevation for all levees, floodwalls, and floodgates would be approximately 14 to 16 feet NAVD88. Areas affected by the proposed action include The Belle Chasse Naval Air Station, and the cities of Belle Chasse, Oakville, English Turn and other areas located within the Belle Chasse polder.

The government's proposed action for Reach 1 is to enlarge the existing Hero Canal levee along the northern shoreline of the Hero Canal, via a protected side shift, from its western terminus near the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW) and extending 12,000 linear feet eastward. The proposed action for Reach 2 includes constructing a navigable floodgate and ancillary structures across the Hero Canal, a 70 cubic foot per second (cfs) pump station at the location of the gate, an earthen levee south and west along the western boundary of the existing Industrial Pipe, Inc. landfill and along the western side of the Oakville community to the existing Plaquemines Parish non-Federal levee, a 150 cfs pump station for evacuating intercepted drainage at the juncture with the non-Federal levee, and then an earthen levee west towards Highway 23. The alignment and corresponding construction would then transition to a floodwall/floodgate complex to cross Highway 23 and the New Orleans and Gulf Coast Railway Company Railroad (NOGCR) railroad. After crossing the Highway 23 and the railroad those floodwalls would transition to an earthen levee and tie into the existing Mississippi River Levee (MRL). Two existing roads would be hardened and connected to the MRL hardened crown to serve as an emergency bypass for authorized vehicles when the floodgates across Highway 23 are closed due to a storm event. The IER # 13 Reaches are an integral part of the Greater New Orleans Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System.

Based on the Wetland Valuation Assessment (WVA), IER # 13 project implementation would result in the direct loss of 32 acres bottomland hardwood forest and 39 acres cypress-tupelo swamp habitat, 18.39 and 28.28 AAHUs, respectively.

The 30-day public review and comment period for IER # 13 and the CWA Section 404(b)(1) public notice will begin on April 3, 2009, and end on May 4, 2009. Draft IER # 13 can be viewed and commented on at <http://www.nolaenvironmental.gov>. Please contact Mr. Gib Owen; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Planning, Programs, and Project Management Division; Environmental Planning and Compliance Branch; CEMVN-PM-RS; P.O. Box 60267; New Orleans Louisiana 70160-0267, to submit your comment or request a hard copy. Requests also can be made by calling (504) 862-1337, by e-mail to mvnenvironmental@usace.army.mil, or by fax (504) 862-2088.

Sincerely,



Joan Exnicios
Acting Chief, Environmental Planning
and Compliance Branch