

COASTAL ZONE

Newsletter January 2023

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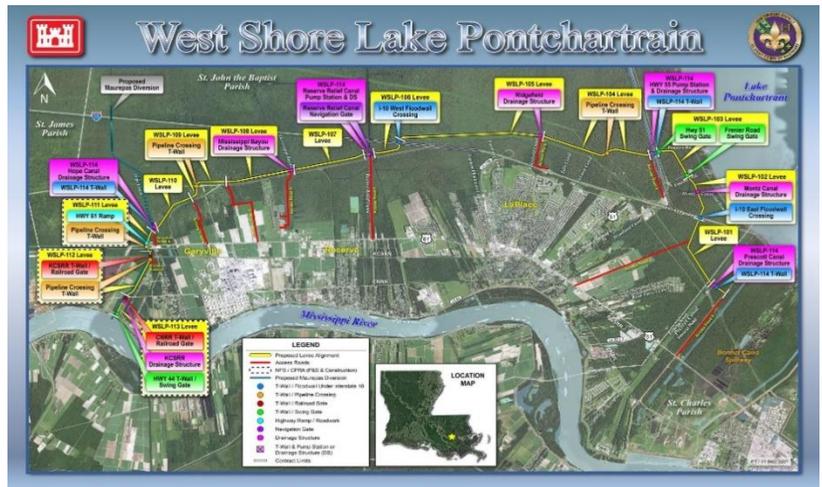
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West Shore Lake Pontchartrain Levee

The final month of 2022 marked an historic moment for the West Shore Lake Pontchartrain (WSLP) Hurricane Risk Reduction Project: the first contract for levee construction was awarded. On December 21st, 2022, Lemoine-Frazier, LLC of Lafayette was awarded \$9.35 million to construct levee reach WSLP-110, a one-mile stretch northwest of Garyville. The bid for WSLP-107 (north of Reserve) was advertised earlier this month. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) anticipates contracts for all levee reaches to continue through this summer.

While some levee reaches like WSLP-107 will be cleared and constructed under the same contract, WSLP-101/102/103 along the eastern portion of the levee alignment have been cleared and leveled with sand under separate contracts. The anticipated schedule of completion and final heights for all levee reaches can be seen below. Coordination is ongoing with the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority to ensure the western portion of the levee alignment corresponds with the Maurepas Diversion Project (see page 2).

Preliminary Levee Construction Schedule

- Existing elevation approx. -1 feet
- 2023: Construct 3 foot sand base and begin levee construction
- 2024: Levee built to heights around +6 feet
- 2025: Levee built to heights ranging +6.6 to +12.5 feet
- 2026: Levee built to full heights

*Gaps will still exist by flood gates, flood walls, drainage structures, and pump stations through 2026



Regular updates on the WSLP Levee can be found on the [Army Corps' WSLP Website](#) or [Facebook Page](#).

Mississippi River Diversions

Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp

Before levees were constructed to direct the path of the Mighty Mississippi, the river's movement shifted over time. Sediment traveling thousands of miles downriver was deposited through annual flooding to form what we now know as Southeast Louisiana.

Although the 1,600 miles of levees along the MS River make life and economic activity possible in the region, it also depletes our communities and wetlands of nutrient-rich sediment that helps revitalize and rebuild land.

CPRA Receives Permitting Authorization for Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion

Last month, the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) announced USACE approval of permits and permissions to proceed with the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion.

The first feasibility study for sediment and freshwater diversions into Barataria Basin began in 1984. Over the decades, "reconnecting the river" has been a cornerstone of Louisiana's Coastal Master Plans.

More information on the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion can be found [here](#).



LOCATION

River Mile 61, Near Ironton, LA

PROJECT DETAILS

- Controlled, gated structure
- Maximum flow: 75,000 cfs
- Width: 1,600-foot corridor
- Length: Approximately 2 miles

PROPOSED FUNDING SOURCE

Dollars from the State of Louisiana's *Deepwater Horizon* natural resource damages settlement (NRDA)

Maurepas Swamp Diversion tied to WSLP Levee

USACE, New Orleans District recently announced that the River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp Project (MSP) will be included as a mitigation component to offset WSLP Levee impacts. The integration of both projects will allow CPRA to save considerable time on permitting requirements for the MSP. Freshwater from the Mississippi River will improve the ecological health of the 45,000-acre swamp and provide additional protection against storm surge in the process.

More information on the River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp Project can be found [here](#).



Water Resources Development Act of 2022

The 2022 Congressional Lame Duck Session included passage of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2022 as part of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023. WRDA is the biannual oversight bill for USACE. Unlike many federal entities, all Army Corps directives are set by legislative action. Although WRDA does not appropriate funding, it does authorize specific projects and make policy changes for USACE.

The full text of the Water Resources Development Act of 2022 can be found [here](#).



Among many provisions critical to the Louisiana coast, WRDA:

- Prioritizes coastal restoration as a primary mission of USACE
- Extends the deadline for the third and final New Orleans Area HSDRRS payment and provides opportunities for state-led coastal restoration projects to be used as credits
- Authorizes the Upper Barataria Basin HSDRR Project & South-Central Coast Louisiana HSDRR Project
- Restores the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MRGO) ecosystem at 100% federal expense
- Provides flexibility for USACE disaster recovery funding to be used for project improvements, rather than merely pre-disaster status

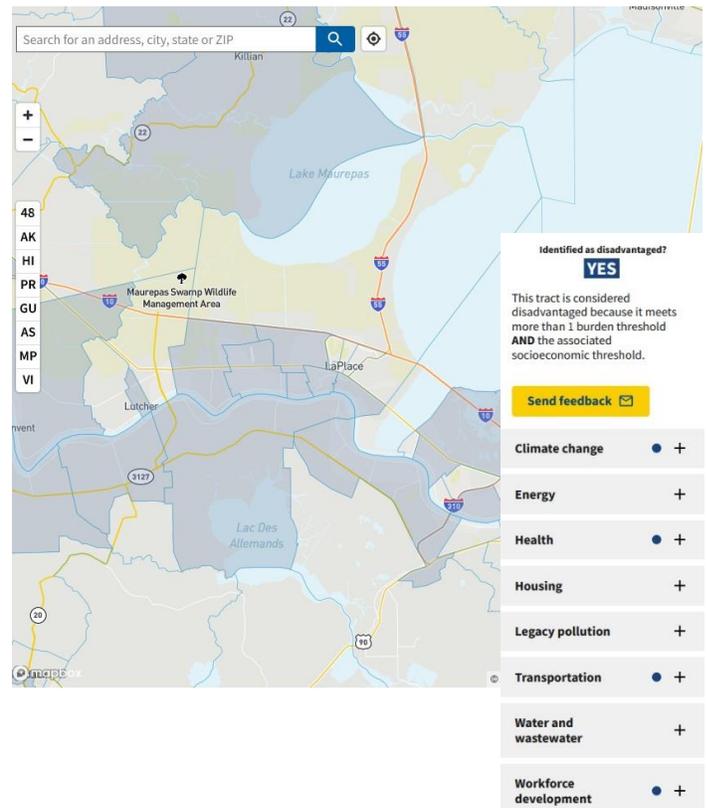


Climate and Economic Justice
Screening Tool

The White House Council on Environmental Quality launched version 1.0 of the Climate and Environmental Justice Screening Tool (CEJST). As a part of Executive Order 14008, which prioritizes environmental justice in tackling the climate crisis through the Justice40 Initiative, CEJST was developed to help identify disadvantaged communities.

This interactive tool organizes data into “Categories of Burdens,” including climate change, energy, health, housing, legacy pollution, transportation, water and wastewater, and workforce development. The user can select individual census tracts and review the tract’s score in these categories.

CEJST also helps St. John the Baptist Parish in pursuing federal funding opportunities. Explore CEJST [here](#).



St. John the Baptist Parish Coastal Updates

Airline and Main Complete Streets Project under construction.

Funded through the Office of Community Development, this project will improve pedestrian and cyclist safety and reduce flood risk through green infrastructure and drainage enhancements. Expected to be completed next year, the project will transform 1.6 miles on Airline Highway between Tiffany Drive and Main Street and 0.3 miles of Main Street between Airline and West 5th.



Sunset Park Shoreline Restoration Parish receives grant for restoration in Sunset Park.

St. John the Baptist Parish has secured a grant through CPRA's Conservation and Restoration Partnership Fund to design and construct a shoreline restoration project in Sunset Park along Lake Maurepas. The project will help combat significant erosion that has occurred and revitalize the park with new native plantings.



Resilient Housing Plan Smart Home America award kicks off resilient housing planning.

After securing a grant from Smart Home America funded by US EPA, Planning & Zoning has contracted the Louisiana-based consulting firm Desire Line, LLC to develop a Community Resilience Housing Plan. The project aims to create a stronger post-disaster housing framework for the Parish and serve as a pilot for future communities along the Gulf Coast. Please be on the lookout for public meetings later this year!



BRIC Direct Technical Assistance St. John receives technical assistance through FEMA's BRIC program.

Planning & Zoning is engaging with FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program to receive technical assist with project prioritization and development to address flood risk. The BRIC program is intended to fund proactive investment in community resilience through a variety of mitigation activities such as Nature-Based Solutions. Through BRIC technical assistance, the Parish hopes to develop a proposal for funding in future BRIC award cycles.

Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant program

Guiding Principles

Support community capability
and capacity building

Enable large infrastructure projects

Encourage and enable innovation

Maintain flexibility

Promote partnerships and equity

Provide consistency

Coastal Use Permit Updates

P20220390 (Air Products Blue Energy, LLC): MODIFIED, Application Distribution

This project involves the installation of two, approximately 9,000-foot stratigraphic test wells on the Lake Maurepas floor to conduct seismic tests that will be used to obtain geological information and assess the feasibility of using the location for carbon sequestration. In addition, channel dredging to bring in material supplies via barge, which requires water depths of 9 feet for passage.

The latest permit application modification includes construction of a temporary dock with pilings to facilitate loading/unloading by utilizing a temporary ramp structure. The Louisiana Office of Coastal Management found this modification would not impact vegetated wetlands.

