



US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
Mississippi Valley Division



# Corps Hurricane Response

*Task Force Hope Status Report Newsletter*

*December 4, 2013*

## SELA Team preparing Napoleon Ave. for Phase III



USACE Photo by Scott Riecke

by Susan Spaht

**The** Southeast Louisiana Project, known as SELA, is dedicated to providing improved interior drainage to Jefferson, Orleans, and St. Tammany parishes. The improved drainage works in conjunction with the existing local drainage and provides for a reduced risk of structural, vehicular and street flooding from rainfall events which can be associated with tropical sys-

tems as well as heavy rainfall events. Carondelet Street marks the start of Phase III of Napoleon Avenue SELA drainage improvement construction. A separate landscape contractor is clearing the neutral ground of trees and shrubs before Boh Bros. Construction begins excavation work to install new drainage culverts. When construction is complete, new landscaping and greenery will be installed to re-beautify the neutral ground.

tems as well as heavy rainfall events.

The SELA program, managed by the Corps of Engineers in partnership with the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans, Jefferson Parish, and the Coastal Protection and Res-

toration Authority of Louisiana, has 79 contracts for authorized and funded work in Orleans and Jefferson parishes, of which 76 contracts have already been issued. In Orleans Parish there are 20 authorized

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USACE Photo by Scott Riecke

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and funded SELA projects of which 17 have already been awarded.

A SELA contract was recently awarded to Boh Brothers Construction for increased drainage along Napoleon Avenue in Orleans Parish, Phase III of a three-part improvement project along this major thoroughfare in Uptown New Orleans. The \$38 million job calls for constructing approximately 3,000 linear feet of a concrete covered box culvert under the neutral ground along Napoleon Avenue from Carondelet Street to Constance Street. The new culvert will parallel an existing box culvert and will tie in to the new culvert under Napoleon Avenue at Carondelet Street and the existing box culvert at Constance Street.

### Reduced Flooding

In recent years, this section of Napoleon Avenue has suffered from flooding due to heavy rainfall. Residents are known to move their cars onto the higher land of the neutral ground whenever there is a big rainstorm, and then wait for the area to drain. "When we are finished with this drainage work, things are going to be

greatly improved for this Napoleon Avenue community," said Joey Wagner, Senior Project Manager for SELA. "There will be a period of inconvenience while construction is underway, and we ask for the community's patience. But I know the residents are going to be very happy with the results of this important work to reduce the risk of flooding for their neighborhood."

### Tree & Shrub Removal/Tree & Shrub Replacement

Before construction can begin, a licensed arborist will clear the neutral ground of all trees and shrubs on Napoleon Avenue between Carondelet and Laurel Streets. That part of the work began a couple of weeks ago. Tree removal, as with all aspects of this project, is being coordinated with the Corps' partner, the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans, as well as with the City of New Orleans' Parks and Parkways department.

After the construction work is complete, in the fall of 2016, landscaping will be restored to this section of Napoleon Avenue. "It's painful to have to remove these trees and shrubs," said Lori Wingate, the SELA Project

Manager, "but we are really excited to work with the community and the City of New Orleans at the completion of construction to develop the neutral ground landscape plans and to restore the green space and beauty of this area." Wingate invited interested residents to take a look at Phase I of the Napoleon Avenue work to see how beautiful the finished neutral ground can look. (see pages 3, 4)

### What About Mardi Gras?

The construction zone along Napoleon Avenue Phase III happens to be part of the parade route for several Carnival krewes, including Bacchus, Orpheus and Muses. Locals are accustomed to standing on the wide neutral ground to watch the Carnival parade floats roll by. For this year's (2014) Mardi Gras parades the construction impact will be minimal, according to Wingate. There is a possibility that some areas on the neutral ground will be blocked off and people will not be able to stand there. These areas will be fenced off for safety purposes.

Wingate noted that the Corps had a similar situation for last year's Mardi Gras parades when construction areas along the Phase II section of Napoleon Avenue were fenced off. "We make sure the construction area is as clean and safe as possible for the residents and parade goers," said Wingate. "And we will be prepared for this year's Mardi Gras: if the neutral ground is uneven from tire marks, or muddy from rains, we will put sand or hay around the area to make it as safe and as comfortable as possible for the parade watchers."



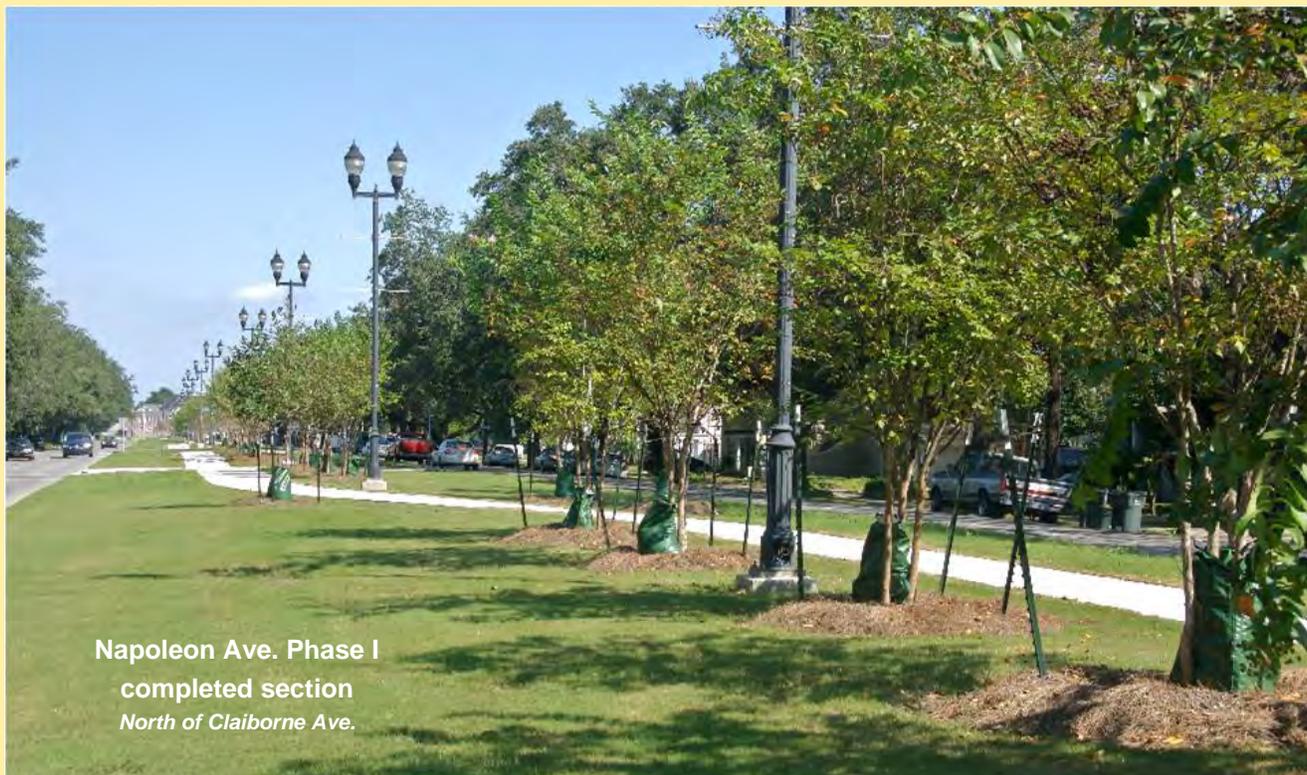
USACE Photos by Scott Riecke



## SELA Projects on Napoleon Avenue

The main goal is to improve neighborhood drainage.

An added benefit is the re-beautification of the neutral ground after construction.



Napoleon Ave. Phase I  
completed section  
*North of Claiborne Ave.*



USACE Photos by Scott Riecke

**Napoleon Avenue, SELA Phase I, construction and landscaping complete**



**Prior** to completing drainage construction, the Corps of Engineers' SELA team will meet with community residents to hear how they would like the Napoleon Ave. Phase III neutral grounds restored. "We are excited to work with neighborhood residents to develop the neutral ground landscape plans and restore the green space and beauty of this area when construction is completed," said Lori Wingate, Project Manager.

## SELA Drainage Projects in Uptown New Orleans



This recent photo of Napoleon Avenue at Perrier Street shows shrub clearing work is underway as part of SELA Phase III.

USACE Photo by Scott Riecke

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The Task Force Hope Status Report Newsletter supports the information program for Task Force Hope and its stakeholders. It also serves as the primary tool for accurately transmitting the Corps' hurricane risk reduction efforts to stakeholders.

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