

Dear Mr. Zeringue:

Thank you for your presentation during the public meeting of the Mississippi River Commission in Houma, Louisiana, on August 23, 2002. In your statement you discussed the Morganza to the Gulf Hurricane Protection project, the Houma Navigation Canal Lock, and the Louisiana Coastal Area study.

The Morganza to the Gulf of Mexico feasibility study is complete. The Chief of Engineers' report was signed on August 23, 2002. The National Economic Development plan providing a 100-year level of protection has been selected as the recommended plan. The Pre-construction Engineering and Design (PED) phase for levees and floodgates is underway. Work is progressing on the Project Management Plan. The first construction contract is scheduled for award in Fiscal Year 2005, pending Congressional authorization and appropriation of funds for construction.

The PED phase for the Houma Navigation Canal Lock is underway and is scheduled for completion by June 2004. A determination will be made by November 2002 as to the design and type of structure for the project. The Corps is also studying the feasibility of deepening the Houma Navigation Canal to 20 feet (nominal depth) in response to the Terrebonne Port Commission's request. A draft feasibility report for this project is scheduled for March 2003.

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The New Orleans District is currently finalizing the draft feasibility report for the Wetland Creation and Restoration, Barataria Basin, Louisiana, Feasibility Study. Additionally, the District is preparing the preliminary draft feasibility report for the Barrier Shoreline Restoration, Barataria Basin, Louisiana, Feasibility Study. These two products will be incorporated into the Louisiana Coastal Area Comprehensive Coastwide Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study, which was initiated in February 2002. A preliminary draft feasibility report for this study will be completed in July 2003. The Corps will continue to work closely with the State of Louisiana in developing a comprehensive ecosystem restoration plan for coastal Louisiana.

The Commission appreciates receiving your views and looks forward to hearing from you at our future public meetings.

Sincerely,

Don T. Riley
Brigadier General, U.S. Army
President Designee, Mississippi
River Commission