



March 2020

THE PONTCHARTRAIN LEVEE DISTRICT
UPDATE

The Pontchartrain Levee District | Facts and Statistics

Portions of six (6) parishes are included in the Pontchartrain Levee District (PLD), namely, East Baton Rouge, Iberville, Ascension, St. James, St. John the Baptist, and St. Charles.

The Pontchartrain Levee District's current budget is derived principally from a 3.53 mills ad valorem tax on the six-parish area and from a limited amount of interest and royalties. Of the Pontchartrain Levee District's projected expenditures for FY 2020-2021, a total of 75% is spent on levee maintenance.

The PLD conservatively estimates that its levees protect \$1.5 to \$2 billion in assessed taxable property and improvements, as well as highways, bridges, airports, schools, courthouses, and parks. The PLD protects an estimated 500,000 people within its six-parish jurisdiction and incorporates the primary evacuation routes for 1.1 million people from the southeast (Greater New Orleans), and an additional estimated 300,000 people from the southwest via routes U.S. 61, U.S. 90, and Interstates 10 and 310.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is responsible for levee construction and related works under the federal Mississippi River

& Tributaries Flood Control Project (MR&T). The PLD, as a local assuring agency, works with the USACE to furnish rights-of-way and maintain levees, canals and caving banks. The New Orleans District of the Corps of Engineers continues to work toward completion of the MR&T Project by awarding contracts for levee enlargements. These projects are financed through federal appropriations and are completed as part of a total upgrading of the levee system. Completion of the MR&T Project, which began in 1928, depends solely on the availability of federal funds appropriated in the yearly federal budget.

There are ongoing projects in each of the six parishes comprising the PLD's jurisdiction. Currently under design and nearing construction is the West Shore Lake Pontchartrain (WSLP) Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System (HSDRRS). An update on the status of WSLP is presented in more detail in this report. The Pontchartrain Levee District and the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) are the Non-Federal Sponsors of that long-awaited project. Construction of WSLP is scheduled to be complete in the last quarter of 2023. Once complete, the project will provide the East Bank communities of St. Charles, St. John the Baptist and St. James Parishes with increased protection from storm induced flooding and rainfall events.

Local Projects Currently under Design or Construction

- Laurel Ridge Levee Extension Project, Ascension Parish
- Storm Surge Project, St. James and Ascension Parishes
- Bluff Swamp & Spanish Lake Flood Risk Reduction Project, Ascension Parish

Federally Authorized Projects Currently under Design or Construction

- West Shore Lake Pontchartrain HSDRRS Project, St. Charles, St. John the Baptist, and St. James Parishes
- Mississippi River Levee, Upper Pontchartrain LD, Seepage Control Project, East Baton Rouge Parish

Approved and Pending Project Credits and PLD Cash Contributions

Pontchartrain Levee District is seeking assistance for the cash reimbursement of \$6,714,732.38 through discretionary funds provided to the Department of the Army in the Energy & Water Appropriations bill under the following accounts:

Additional Funding

- Flood and Storm Damage Reduction -- \$115 million
- Flood Control -- \$118 million

It is understood that no less than \$35 million has been set aside for reimbursement within those discretionary funds.



Approved and Pending Project Credits and PLD Cash Contributions (continued)

For background, this funding request correlates from the Agreements of Local Assurance between Pontchartrain Levee District (PLD) and the Department of the Army for the execution of the Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity (LPV), Louisiana Project (Project) authorized by the Flood Control Act of 1965 (Public Law 89-298). These agreements obligate PLD to serve as the Non-Federal Sponsor (NFS) and to provide the local cost-share towards construction of the Project.

The first Act of Assurance between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the PLD was signed October 7, 1971 and set forth the cost shared project responsibilities of both the federal and non-federal sponsors. Under the terms of the Act of the Assurance, the USACE was responsible for 70% of the project costs and the PLD was responsible for 30%.

By letter received from USACE, New Orleans District, to the Pontchartrain Levee District dated April 15, 2016, "...In accordance with Article IV.C. of the Amendment of Assurance Agreement dated effective August 23, 2006, the government's obligation to reimburse the excess contributions is subject to the availability of appropriations. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will seek appropriations necessary to repay PLD for the \$6,714,732.38 in excess Lands, Easements, Rights-of-Way, Relocations and Disposal Areas (LERRDs)..." stemming from the original Lake Pontchartrain & Vicinity, Louisiana Project. PLD contributed \$29,081,131.16 in cash wherein PLD's share should have been \$20,855,479.05.

From the original Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity (LPV), Louisiana Project authorized by the Flood Control Act of 1965 (Public Law 89-298), USACE acknowledged that PLD's contribution exceeded the required amount by \$8,225,652.11. As such, a refund was issued by the USACE, New Orleans District, to the Pontchartrain Levee District in the amount of \$1,510,919.73 on May 18, 2016. The outstanding, remaining cash contribution of \$6,714,732.38 is requested to be acknowledged and set aside for the PLD through discretionary funds provided to the Department of the Army in the Energy & Water Appropriations bill.

In addition the excess cash contributions made by PLD to USACE in the amount of \$6,714,732.38, PLD also has \$17,109,492.76 in approved or pending project credits. PLD is seeking appropriations for excess cash contributions and accumulated project credits to be used as a funding source for other federal and local projects within PLD's six parish jurisdiction. A summary of PLD's excess cash contributions and approved and pending project credits are as follows:

Description	Approved for Credit
USACE Approved Project Credits -Project Management and Lands, Easements Rights of Way, Relocations and Disposal Areas (LERRDs)	\$10,579,810.39
Project Credits Pending USACE Approval-Project Management, LERRD's and Construction	\$6,529,682.37
Total Project Credits - Approved and Pending	\$17,109,492.76
PLD's 30% Share of Project Costs	\$20,855,479.05
PLD's Actual Cash Contributions to Corps	\$29,081,131.16
Excess Cash Contributions made by PLD	\$8,225,652.11
Corps Refund issued in 2016	\$1,510,919.73
PLD Excess Contributions to Corps	\$6,714,732.38
Total PLD Project Credits (Approved and Pending) and Excess Cash Contributions	\$23,824,225.14



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West Shore Lake Pontchartrain Hurricane & Storm Damage Risk Reduction Project, St. James, St. John the Baptist, and St. Charles Parishes, Louisiana

Project Description and Scope

- The alignment is approximately 23 miles in length, consisting of 22 miles of levee and 1 mile of T-wall
St. Charles Parish = 0.5 miles
St. John Parish = 18.0 miles
St. James Parish = 4.5 miles
- The project includes pump stations, drainage structures, gated road crossings, railroad gates, utility relocations, culvert valves / gates, and raising / floodproofing of a limited number of structures.
- Approximately 7M cubic yards of embankment material will be required for levee construction.
- In excess of 1,000 acres of new right of way will need to be acquired.
- Habitat impacts will require compensation for approximately 1,090 Average Annual Habitat Units (AAHUs).
- \$760M appropriation for the project includes funding for real estate, design, construction, etc., authorized as part of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018.

Current Project Status

- Vegetation clearing of 100' wide section of levee alignment for field investigations is complete.
- Field Investigations are complete.
- Detailed designs for most reaches began in January 2020.
- Real Estate efforts are on-going.
- Environmental clearances are scheduled to be complete in May 2020.
- Construction of access roads is scheduled to begin in 2020.



A 100' wide section of the West Shore Lake Pontchartrain levee footprint was cleared for surveying activities, including soil borings and other investigations

See www.mvn.usace.army.mil/About/Projects/West-Shore-Lake-Pontchartrain/ for additional updates.



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Mission

- To maintain the existing levee systems in a condition that will ensure their integrity and capability to withstand river stages and hurricane tidal surges, as anticipated by their design and condition;
- To improve, by construction or supporting construction by others, of new or enhanced levels of protection as design parameters change or higher levels of protection are authorized; and
- To anticipate weaknesses in the system as and before they develop, and to respond actively with necessary emergency measures when the levees are being subjected to river stages or hurricane tidal surges that would cause flooding within the jurisdiction of the Pontchartrain Levee District.

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