



## Louisiana Sea Grant

March 15, 2007

Prior to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the Louisiana Sea Grant College Program devoted 1.25 full-time equivalents (FTEs) to coastal hazards issues. Since those events, the amount has increased to 3.5 FTEs. The following are examples of LSG projects involving future storm impacts mitigation and improving coastal community resiliency. Additional examples and partnerships can be found at the program's Web site: [www.laseagrant.org](http://www.laseagrant.org).

### MITIGATION PLANNING EFFORTS

- Louisiana Sea Grant developed a series of information sheets and narrated presentations to help those affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita navigate Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) programs and related legal issues during the ongoing rebuilding process. The information sheets and presentations answer questions about the National Flood Insurance Program, flood elevations, rebuilding after a flood and other reconstruction matters.
- The Louisiana Sea Grant Legal program is developing a coastal hazards mitigation guidebook, funded with a grant from FEMA. The book will be used to help educate state and local policymakers, along with residents, about relevant laws and techniques for siting buildings as communities continue the redevelopment process.
- Hundreds of local leaders, business owners and citizens participated in programs about how hurricane storm surge could affect their coastal communities. Talks and exhibits concerning hurricane vulnerability, flood zones, storm surge models and how the surge from Hurricane Rita washed over coastal parishes – prepared by Louisiana Sea Grant, the Louisiana State University AgCenter, LSU Hurricane Center and LSU Department of Geography and Anthropology – were presented during the past nine months in local libraries, as well as to government officials and civic organizations. The exhibits, organized by LSG Extension, remained on display following the public meetings.
- Landscape architecture students at LSU, via a Sea Grant funded project, have focused their efforts since fall 2005 on developing plans and designs for a new New Orleans, Delcambre, north Lake Charles and Bucktown Marina in Jefferson Parish. The students explored a range of alternatives for redeveloping safe and sustainable growth concepts that explore more disaster prepared and economically healthy communities.
- As Louisiana continues to pursue long-term coastal restoration goals, it is only fitting that its universities take a lead role in addressing the near-term, politically sensitive and economically challenging implications of the state's devastating coastal land loss problem. With that objective in mind, the LSU System Office, LSU Agricultural Center and the Louisiana Sea Grant College Program convened the first Presidents' Forum on Meeting Coastal Challenges in January 2005. At the first Forum, a panel of scientists gave a stark assessment of the current status of wetland loss, hurricane vulnerability, subsidence, spatial data and coastal resource economics. During the second Forum, state and national experts in coastal hazards, land use planning, zoning, insurance and building codes discussed possible solutions to adequately protect the health, safety and well-being of coastal residents. The third Forum, scheduled for March 20, 2007, will provide an opportunity for state and community leaders to learn about the accepted pool of scientific information on global climate change and discuss its implications for coastal Louisiana.
- A disaster programs coordinator is now part of the Louisiana Sea Grant family. She works as a leader in the Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN), helps communities and citizens understand flood damage prevention and the regulatory and insurance aspects of the National Flood Insurance Program, and works with *The Road Home* program to help Louisiana citizens get their hurricane-damaged houses in order by providing online information about repair and construction. Her outreach activities also include promoting the Louisiana House and expanding that program into coastal communities.

## HELPING BUILD COMMUNITY/COASTAL RESILIENCY

- Louisiana Sea Grant Extension agents and FEMA community relations personnel made a good team in helping the commercial fishing industry in Plaquemines and St. Bernard parishes following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Now those personnel want to see their spirit of cooperation become standard operating procedure in responding to natural fisheries disasters along the nation's coasts and have lobbied policy makers in Washington, D.C., to make such partnerships standard operating procedure.
- Louisiana Sea Grant Extension agents aided in acquiring a \$500,000 donation from Shell Oil Co. for the purchase and installation of three ice machines for the fishing industry. Each machine is capable of producing 20 tons of ice per day. Two of the machines are located in Chalmette, and the third is located in Cameron.
- Louisiana Sea Grant's ongoing assessments of damages to the state's fisheries by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita helped fishermen and state and local governments in their federal aid requests. Using LSG's work, the Louisiana Fishing Community Recovery Coalition (LFCRC), of which Louisiana Sea Grant is a founding partner, developed aid requests and determined financial assistance allocation formulas. Their work also was used in a \$50 million Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application and in an additional \$150 million federal aid request.
- A 60-ton Marine Travelift, used to move fishing boats in and out of the water, was donated by the city and port of Valdez, Alaska to Plaquemines Parish in the spring of 2006. Hundreds of fishing vessels were pushed by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita into areas from which – when the storms subsided – they could no longer reach the sea. Federal, state and local governments, as well as private citizens, pulled boats from bayous, backyards and parking lots and stockpiling them on dry land in a parish boatyard. But there has been no way to put the boats back into the water. Through the combined efforts of Louisiana Sea Grant Extension personnel, the Washington and Alaska Sea Grant programs, FEMA, the Pacific Coast Congress of Harbormasters and Valdez Port officials, the idea of donating a surplus Travelift owned by the port and city of Valdez became reality.
- More than 50 floodplain management experts, levee district officials, engineers and university researchers from across the state met on LSU's Baton Rouge campus for a Levee School Planning Workshop. The group's task was to develop a curriculum for a floodplain management and control school to provide levee commissioners, elected officials, the media and general public with a comprehensive understanding of how levees and other flood control management systems work. The curriculum will cover topics from policy and administration to structural and nonstructural flood control methods. Sponsors of the Levee School Planning Workshop included Louisiana Sea Grant and the LSU Hurricane Center, among others.
- Working in conjunction with the Louisiana Sea Grant College Program, an ad hoc citizens' steering committee in Delcambre engaged the LSU Department of Landscape Architecture and the University of Louisiana-Lafayette School of Architecture to suggest ways the community can revitalize its working waterfront. Hurricane Rita pushed a six foot storm surge into Delcambre, compounding economic problems facing the community. Students visited Delcambre to learn the history of the community, locate potential areas for redevelopment and gather ideas by talking with residents. Based on their findings, the students developed a conceptual plan for the waterfront and surrounding areas.