

November 10, 1999

# **COMPREHENSIVE HURRICANE PROTECTION STRATEGIC PLAN**

Where Louisiana should be in the future and how to get there

## **INTRODUCTION**

Hurricanes represent a formidable threat to the Louisiana coastal zone. Statistically, the state will experience a hurricane once every four years and about once every eight years for a major hurricane (Category 3, 4, or 5). When hurricanes strike land, the storm surge accelerates erosion of barrier islands, floods fresh marsh and swamps with salt water, and rips holes in wetlands.

Although only a few permanent residents exist on the State's two occupied barrier shorelines (Grand Isle and Cameron Parish), their homes are destroyed. Services supporting the oil and gas industry, finfish and shellfish operators, and the overall coastal economy, suffer as business ceases during the event. Owners and operators must rebuild or repair their facilities, and in the worst case, they close or relocate inland or to other states.

The private sector and government have taken actions to reduce the adverse impacts of hurricanes and associated climatic events. Federal flood insurance helps return victims to pre-storm conditions. As of March 1999, the Federal Insurance Administration services 343,040 policies worth \$32.7 billion in 25 coastal parishes. These account for 90% of the policies in the state. Structures were raised (above the base flood elevation or flood proofed) to reduce the damages from storm surge. Evacuation along designated corridors from low-lying communities, lead people out of harms way. The Corps of Engineers, levee boards, and drainage districts reinforce levees, upgrade pumps, and clean and maintain internal drainage networks in anticipation of the inevitable next storm surge and torrential rain. Federal investigations now assess new and more formidable levees to protect coastal communities against storm surge.

Dealing with issues in the nation's margins has become more complex during the past decades as the American public rushes to the coast. Previously, an agency focused on one problem and proposed a solution that tradition dictated as obvious. Established procedures for considering projects do not meet demands by today's diverse constituency. Agency must look beyond their perceived restrictions to formulate multi-objective projects involving many partners at the federal, state, and local levels of government as well as the public and private sectors. Bringing all the necessary parties together requires a systematic approach that is efficient while being effective. The Governor's Office will develop a Comprehensive Hurricane Protection Strategic Plan.

In general, strategic plans improve performance, stimulate forward thinking, clarify future directions, solve major organizational problems, and build teamwork and expertise. The purpose of strategic planning is to provide the Governor's Office with a framework in which decisions can be made which have an impact on the state's protection from hurricanes. The Strategic Plan will present those actions the state will take immediately to reach its hurricane protection objectives. The plan will decide what will be done, how it will be accomplished, where it will occur, who is responsible for the actions, and the schedule for activities. Five major benefits will be realized from this effort. First, the state will improve its sense of direction relative to hurricane protection projects, coastal wetlands restoration projects, and its mitigation plans. Second, the strategic planning process will result in better performance of state agencies by eliminating or minimizing conflicts among agencies and their missions. Third, all participants will increase their understanding of the need for a coordinated approach when addressing hurricane protection. Fourth, the planning process will give everyone an earlier awareness of problems that must be addressed. Finally, the strategic plan will result in more effective decisions.

A strategic plan contains key elements:

- vision
- philosophy
- mission statement
- environmental scan
- goals and objectives
- set of strategies; and
- accountability

### **VISION**

State, federal and local governments will more closely coordinate their programs and activities to save the Louisiana taxpayers money and reduce the time for implementing flood damage reduction projects and provide increased public safety.

### **PHILOSOPHY**

The Governor's Office commits to providing positive, effective leadership in reducing flood damages in Louisiana by coordinating the development and implementation of hurricane protection plans, wetlands conservation, restoration, and enhancement projects, and barrier island restoration while assuring wise economic use of the coastal zone for subsequent generations.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission statement declares the fundamental purpose of the plan and defines the overall organizational purpose and driving forces. Generally, the mission statement is neither quantified nor measurable, but sets the general boundaries of the action, and describes what will be accomplished. A clear mission statement provides points of reference for decisions and encourages commitment from the team while stimulating understanding and support from the public, special

interests, and other agencies, and is short enough to remember. The following is a draft mission statement:

*The mission of the Comprehensive Hurricane Protection team is to provide a strategic plan for systematically coordinating federal, state, and local programs and projects in order to avoid or eliminate conflicts that cause delays in program and project implementation, to control costs to all concerns, to reduce placing the general public at protracted risks to hurricanes and associated climatic events, and to enhance educational programs that inform the general public about hurricanes.*

Mission statements do not change very often. Consequently, the Comprehensive Hurricane Protection must take the time to precisely and concisely prepare their mission statement. The best mission statements are short enough to remember.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN**

The environmental scan analyzes the situation and presents the strengths, weaknesses, and threats to the existing projects and programs from both an internal and external prospective. The environmental scan will give some indications of the internal and external conditions that will influence the selection and implementation of the strategies. Schedules should be specified for attaining each action. Agencies can make more informed decisions when presented with both the opportunities and constraints.

### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

Goals and objectives make the plan a useful document and process. Goals establish the direction for the plan in order to achieve a particular destination. Objectives identify the milestones along the way. Goals are broad statements describing the desired outcome of the plan and chart the course to the long-range end results. The formulation of goals is critical to the planning process. No ideal number of goals exists. Goals, however, should be kept to a manageable number and placed in a priority sequence.

On the other hand, objectives describe the exact results the team wants to see in the strategic plan. Objectives are specific, quantified, and time-bound statements of outcomes. Objectives represent specific accomplishments and may be measurable to determine when the action has been achieved. As such, objectives target results and outcomes.

*(See accompanying Goals & Objectives)*

## **STRATEGIES**

Strategies form the framework which guides the choices that determine the nature and direction of the state when implementing the plan. Strategies are specific courses or action that indicates how the goals and objectives will be achieved. Strategies determine the amount and type of resources that must be allocated to a goal or objective and thus are the required components of a strategic plan. Strategy building is a decision-making process that is based on good information. Strategies must be, plausible and result in more benefits than costs. If the agency is not authorized to implement a strategy or does not have the organizational capacity to accomplish the strategy, then the planning team must decide how to implement the strategy. The Comprehensive Hurricane Protection team will decide the priorities among the strategies.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

Finally, someone must be accountable for implementing the strategic plan. To determine accountability, the Comprehensive Hurricane Protection team will identify specific and measurable performance indicators. Annually, the team will monitor implementation of the Comprehensive Hurricane Protection Strategic Plan to determine how the plan is progressing, where problems exist, the proper response to addressing the problem, and the cost in dollars and time for implementing the CHPSP. Reviewers will compare actual and expected results and projected and actual schedules to determine of the objectives are on time and as desired.