

## **LAROSE TO LOCKPORT FLOOD PROTECTION**

### **A Report by Windell Curole**

The North Lafourche Conservation Levee and Drainage District (NLCLD) was formed in 1992 to provide flood protection for the people in Lafourche Parish north of the Intracoastal Waterway. Funding was to be provided by contributions from the Atchafalaya and Lafourche Basin Levee Districts whose taxes and other income were collected from North Lafourche. The Board also began collecting a five mill tax.

Due to non-payment to NLCLD by the Atchafalaya and Lafourche Basin Levee Districts of the funds directed in the initial legislation, law suits were filed and eventually resulted in a Supreme Court decision stating the unconstitutionality of portions of the legislation which formed North Lafourche. New legislation reformed North Lafourche described as the area in Lafourche Parish west of Bayou Lafourche and north of the Intracoastal Waterway.

The NLCLD was successful in 1999 of adding five mills to the already approved five mills. In the year 2000, the NLCDL collects ten mills of tax a year from its district.

Soon after formation in 1992, the Board began to try to solve the flood needs by requesting help from the LA Office of Public Works through the Statewide Flood Control Program and the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 205 Projects.

Due to the different law suits and court actions, the Levee Board was not able to properly plan its objectives for large scale projects. Through the years, some projects were built and an excavator was purchased.

The Board is now concentrating on accomplishing the 205 project on the west side of Bayou Lafourche from the Intracoastal Waterway in Larose to the Company Canal in Lockport. In conjunction with that work is the replacement of the Tom Foret Pump Station through the Statewide Flood Control Program. Detailed engineering with construction can begin within a year once the location is chosen. A report on the possible alignment(s) of the Larose to Lockport Levee will be submitted by the Corps to the Levee District at the end of July.

### ***MAJOR ISSUES***

1. Placement of Levee includes two issues
  - a. Building the levee along the 40 arpent canal, which is the present location of the drainage system.
  - b. Building the levee in a manner to include large landowners. The different properties, DelMar Farm, Smithsport Farms, and Wahl Property are in question.
2. Placement of Pump Station

The pump station is necessary for drainage improvement for the entire area centering on the Nolan Toups Subdivision and Lockport

  - a. Placement in vicinity of present Tom Foret Pump Station along the 40 arpent.
  - b. Placement at Bayou Blue and Tom Foret pump discharge canal along the back levees of the large landowners.

*ADVANTAGES OF A 40-ARPENT ALIGNMENT*

Both a front or back alignment provides the same protection from tidal surge

- Drainage canal enlarged and deepened allowing better drainage once adequate pumping capacity is provided.
- Area of drainage smaller allowing quicker removal of rainfall. Some legal opinions seem to imply that the large landowners do have the right to drain, irrelevant of the Corps levee alignment.
- Cost of levee construction may be lower.
- Decreased potential of environmental issues.

*DISADVANTAGES OF A 40-ARPENT ALIGNMENT*

- Large landowners will attempt to maximize cost of right-of-way and possibly attempt to use law suits to stop the construction of the levee.
  - Front landowners may have to give up right-of-way and would object to loss of property.
  - Less property protected for future development.
  - Board has suggested it would maintain both the 40 arpent alignment of the levee and the present Bayou Blue alignment which encircles the large landowners.
3. Drainage work from Larose to Valentine  
Landowners would like borrow canal deepened to promote better drainage.
4. Levee work from Larose to Valentine.  
Landowners would like increases in levee quality with many landowners objecting to taking more right-of-way by the levee district.

**CONCLUSION**

It is my opinion that the Board has made its decisions in the best interest of the public. Although the issues are often difficult and complex, the Board must find a method of educating the public of the issues. The weakness of the Board is its lack of ability to inform the public that its decision are, in fact, for the public good.

The issues in the Lockport area are controversial. Some of the people interviewed stated that they believed that personal animosity had entered some of the negotiations. This condition could limit options which could benefit the public. Conversely, the Board members have worked a long time with these issues and may be justifiably frustrated.

The issues on the southern part of the system are less complex. Changing positions on the required right-of-way has caused most of the misunderstanding and complaints. Drainage needs are also prominent in this area.