

SCIA Meeting-TS Isadore & Hurricane Lilli

The meeting held to discuss the effects and response to tropical storm Isadore and hurricane Lilli did accomplish its goals of reviewing what took place and discussing future needs. The most important fact about the storms was that they were not extremely powerful in Lafourche and Terrebonne, but caused tremendous damage. These storms demonstrated the increased vulnerability of our area.

From the presentations and discussions, the needs of the area were identified.

- Increased hurricane protection for the area, especially Terrebonne Parish (construction of Morganza to the Gulf)
- Increased and improved evacuation routes
- Improved and better coordinated storm forecasting
- Maintaining and reestablishing our natural hurricane barriers , such as marshes and barrier islands
- Better planning for subsidence and erosion, using accurate elevation data
- Improved sheltering plans for both inside and out of the local parishes
- Improved building standards in vulnerable areas

The most important lesson from these storms is that weak tropical systems can now cause the kind of damage only powerful storms were capable of unleashing. Weak storms are much more common, which will result in much more flooding if the increased threat is not mitigated. The levees in South Lafourche which were built to deal with category 3 storms are now critical for the surge of small storms. The storms of 2002 demonstrated the need for hurricane levees throughout South Louisiana. The flooding in Terrebonne Parish would not have occurred anywhere in Terrebonne which would have been protected by a hurricane protection levee.

All the areas of need apply to some degree to Lafourche, Terrebonne, and St. Mary Parishes. The SCIA forum allowed parish leaders to better understand our situation by comparing our experiences to our neighbors. Many of the needed solutions involve large monetary investments. I have found that when there is a real need and a logical solution, money will be found. Our problem is that it is urgent that we accomplish our goals as fast as possible. At this time only luck stands between us and disaster.

Windell Curole
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