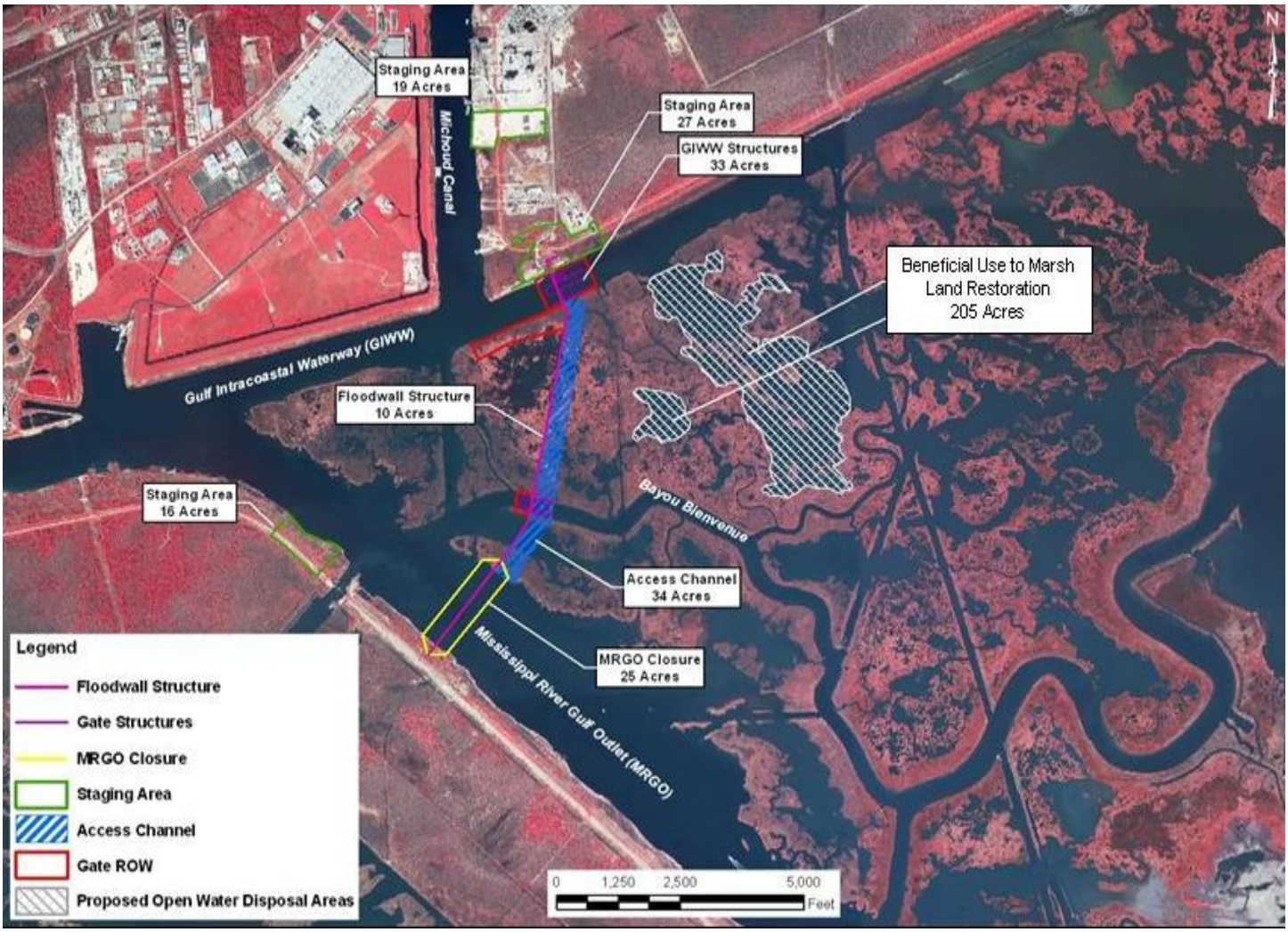
Inner Harbor Navigation Canal (IHNC) Lake Borgne Surge Barrier

Fact Sheet

Purpose: The US Army Corps of Engineers is committed to providing a 100-year level of risk reduction for southeast Louisiana in 2011 through its Greater New Orleans Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System (HSDRRS). The HSDRRS seeks to upgrade existing flood risk reduction features (such as levees and floodwalls) and introduce new features authorized by Congress and deemed necessary to complete the system. The Inner Harbor Navigation Canal (IHNC) surge barrier is a new feature, authorized by Congress in 2006, that will reduce the risk of storm damage to some of the region's most vulnerable areas – New Orleans East, metro New Orleans, the Ninth Ward and St. Bernard Parish. This project will reduce risk to these areas from storm surge generated through the Gulf of Mexico and Lake Borgne.

Location: A surge barrier, similar to a floodwall but much larger, will be constructed near the confluence of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW) and the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MRGO), generally running north-south from a point just east of Michoud Canal on the north bank of the GIWW and just south of the existing Bayou Bienvenue flood control structure. Navigation gates will be constructed where the barrier crosses the GIWW and Bayou Bienvenue to reduce the risk of storm surge coming from Lake Borgne and/or the Gulf of Mexico. Another navigation gate is planned for the Seabrook vicinity where the IHNC meets Lake Pontchartrain to block storm surge from entering the IHNC.



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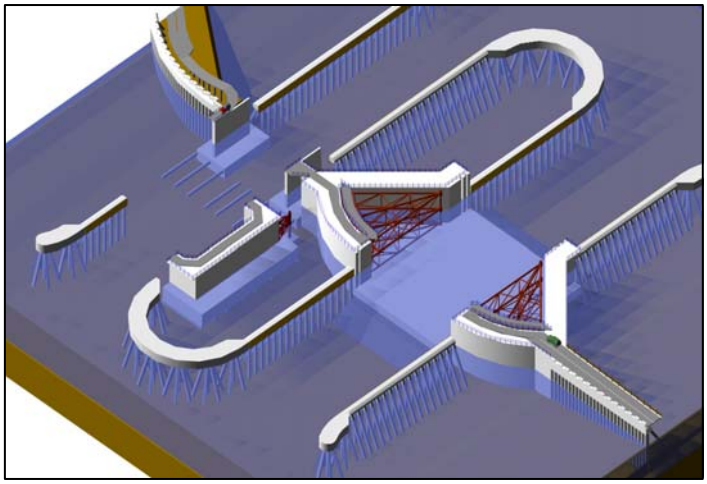
The IHNC surge barrier project allows the Corps to achieve a 100-year level of risk reduction in 2011 for some of the region's areas most vulnerable areas.

Status: In April 2008, the Corps awarded a construction contract to Shaw Environmental & Infrastructure for the Lake Borgne Surge Barrier, making this project the largest design-build civil works project in Corps history. It is highly unusual for a civil works project to be designed and constructed simultaneously. The expedited process is necessary, however, given the compressed timeframe to achieve 100-year level of risk reduction in 2011.

In October 2008, the New Orleans District Commander signed the Tier 2 portion of the Individual Environmental Report (IER), which investigated alternative alignments and designs within the location range identified by Tier 1 and explained the impacts of these alignments and footprints, construction materials and methods, and other design details. After the completion of the IER, a Notice to Proceed was issued to Shaw.

In December 2008 the Corps held a groundbreaking ceremony to mark the start of test pile driving. Construction of the barrier floodwall began on May 9, 2009.

Surge Barrier Construction Photos & GIWW Sector Gate Conceptual Drawing