

Press Release



Barrier Island Reconstruction

For Immediate Release – August 14, 2009

Nearly three miles of beach has been rebuilt to hold back the Gulf of Mexico from Bay Joe Wise in southwest Plaquemines Parish. The beach stretches 2.8 miles from Pass Chaland to Grand Bayou Pass and came with a price tag of over \$34 million.

Shortly after the barrier island restoration began during the summer of 2008, Hurricanes Gustav and Ike brought the project to a halt. The tropical duo caused the construction access



channel to shoal, and damaged the containment dikes, which act as borders that hold the dredged material in place to build elevation, and the project had to be restarted.

“People often ask how a Hurricane like Ike can pass 200 miles to the West of our coast and cause so much damage, and the answer is simple: we are losing our barrier islands, which is the first line of defense,” said P.J. Hahn, director of Plaquemines Parish Coastal Zone Management.

The sediment was pumped from a borrow area offshore using a cutter head dredge. The pipeline ran almost eight miles through the Gulf to the eroding beach at Bay Joe Wise. In less than a year, over 400 acres of land were restored. The final phase of planting is currently underway. The restored beach is expected to help protect people, property, and the marsh against future hurricanes.

“When a barrier island goes it’s like pulling the plug in a bathtub, you lose all the wetlands behind it,” said Albertine Kimble of the parish’s Coastal Zone Management.

The restoration project was funded by the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act through the Louisiana Office of Coastal Protection and Restoration and NOAA’s Fisheries Service.

“We are very grateful for another coastal project that has been fully funded by state and federal money and will definitely help reduce storm surge to Plaquemines Parish,” said Parish President Billy Nungesser. “For our coastal plan we will build at a higher elevation and line the ridges with trees.”



Above: Taken in 2006; Below: Taken in 2009

