An Environmental Streamlining Success Today
And A Building Block For Tomorrow

Louisiana 1 Improvements Project

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Project Location

- 90 miles south of New Orleans
- Connects
  - Golden Meadow
  - Leeville
  - Port Fourchon
  - Grand Isle
- Part of NHS
- HPC 44 - ISTEA Amendments
Project Context

- Vital Highway through an Environmentally Sensitive Area
- Traverses the Barataria - Terrebonne National Estuary
- Mississippi Flyway
- Port Fourchon & Grand Isle Port
Project Context

- Only land access to Grand Isle
- Major national aquaculture and seafood producer
- Offshore oil & natural gas
- Louisiana Offshore Oil Port (LOOP)
Challenges

- Existing and future LOS
- Bridge operation, maintenance and repair
- Subsidence
- Marsh loss & preservation
Challenges

- Hurricane Evacuation

- Tropical Storm Isidore
  September 25, 2002

- Hurricane Lili
  October 3, 2002

- Tropical Storm Bill
  June 30, 2003

- Hurricane Katrina
  August 29, 2005

Tropical Storm Isidore
Tropical Storm Bill
Hurricane Lili
Hurricane Katrina

Photo courtesy of NOAA
Photo Courtesy of Port Fourchon Harbor Police
Hurricane Katrina

- Streamlining matters
- Project needs often can’t wait decades for a solution
Environmental Stewardship and Streamlining: Fact or Fiction
2005 TRB Joint Summer Meeting

Proposed Action

- 17-mile 4-lane elevated highway on new location
- Bridges spanning navigable waterways
- Three access points / four connectors (two elevated)
- Staged implementation
Federal Partners

- New Orleans District COE
- NOAA Fisheries, Baton Rouge
- Eighth Coast Guard District, New Orleans
- EPA, Dallas
- FWS, Lafayette
State Partners

- LADEQ
- LADWF
- LADCRT
- LADNR – Coastal Management Division
Local Partners

- LA 1 Task Force
- Greater Lafourche Port Commission
- LA 1 Coalition
Environmental Stewardship and Streamlining: Fact or Fiction

2005 TRB Joint Summer Meeting

Team Building & Collaborative Decision-Making

- Pre-NEPA Scoping
- Numerous technical meetings
  - Wetlands Avoidance & Marsh Preservation
  - Highway Surface Run-off
  - Mitigation
  - Draft EIS Development
  - Construction Techniques
- Concurrent Reviews
- Open communication
Native American Tribal Participation

- Native American Tribes
  - 8 Federally-recognized
  - 7 State-recognized
- Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana
- “We have always been here”
NEPA Streamlining Success

- FR NOI (May 1999)
- NEPA Consultant NTP (September 1999)
- Draft EIS (October 2001)
- Final EIS (September 2002)
- ROD (January 2003)

44 Months
National Recognition

- “... landmark effort ... and a model”
- **Successes in Streamlining,** January 2004
- *Public Roads,* January / February 2004
- **2004 AASHTO President’s Transportation Award for Environment Recipient**
Post-NEPA Stewardship and Streamlining

- Final Design
  - Rookery Study
  - Subsurface Exploration
- Project Financing
  - Toll Studies
  - TIFIA Loan
Environmental Stewardship and Streamlining: Fact or Fiction

Post-NEPA Streamlining Success

- ROD (January 2003)
- Design Consultant NTP (April 2003)
- Bonds Sold (June 2005)
- TIFIA Loan Finalized (June 2005)
- Bid Letting (June 2005)

29 Months
Bid Results

- Staged Construction
  - Leeville Bridge & connectors
  - 2-lane elevated highway south to Port Fourchon
- 3 Engineering Est. - $153M
- Low Bid - $251M
- Increased cost factors
- Re-bid Project (late-2005)
Other Stewardship and Streamlining Initiatives

- Consultation Process
- Programmatic Agreement
  - Caddo Nation of Oklahoma
  - FHWA
  - LADOTD
Other Stewardship and Streamlining Initiatives

- Stage 1 Manual of Standard Practice
  - Guidance Document
  - EA / EIS
  - NEPA and Related Procedures
  - Project Management
  - Managing the NEPA Process
  - PDP Inputs / Outputs
Other Stewardship and Streamlining Initiatives

- Reimbursement Interagency Agreement
  - FWS
  - FHWA
  - LADOTD

- Funds One GS-11 Staff Position at FWS

- Expedited Reviews

- Enhanced Agency Coordination
Other Stewardship and Streamlining Initiatives

- Reimbursement Interagency Agreement
  - LADCRT
  - LADOTD
- Funds FT Staff Archaeologist & PT Student Intern
- Funded Positions Work on Other Projects freeing Senior Staff to work on Highway Projects
Other Stewardship and Streamlining Initiatives

- Statewide Cultural Resources GIS Database Interagency Agreement
  - LADCRT
  - FHWA
  - LADOTD
- Convert paper records to ArcGIS
Environmental Stewardship and Streamlining: FACT

- 2005 Environmental Summit
  - Improved Processes
  - Improved Relationships
  - Better Projects
  - Better Environment
Hurricane Katrina Aftermath Assistance

- SHPO assistance with FEMA
- Post-hurricane satellite imagery
- LIDAR 3D data
Laissez le bon temps rouler!

Source: MardiGras.org