Louisiana Watershed Initiative

Sustainability and resilience through science, engineering and objective decision making

Objective

Develop a common understanding of known flood risks, vulnerabilities and priorities in Region 6

Building on previous efforts

Region 6 planning and policy professionals worked with LWI to identify these five priorities based on their region’s flood risk and mitigation needs.

QIPs: Capital improvement projects

Agenda
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Agenda

1. Region 6 flood risk assessment
2. Break
3. Your feedback
4. Next steps
5. Public comment

Flood risk assessment

Each watershed region throughout Louisiana faces unique flood risks. To understand these risks and to prioritize solutions, we must accomplish the following:
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**CLARIFY WHAT FLOODING MEANS**

**ALIGN CIPs TO INCREASE LONG-TERM PROJECT VIABILITY**

**ASSESS EXISTING INVESTMENTS AND PROTECTION MEASURES**

**USE DATA TO EVALUATE IMPACTS**

**ENGAGE EXPERTS AND SEPARATE POLITICS FROM POLICY**
Flood Risk in Louisiana

Louisiana Watershed Initiative

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Parishes in Region 6

Working together to address risk at the watershed scale

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Region 6 watersheds

Hydrology: a science that deals with the properties, distribution and circulation of water on and below Earth's surface and in the atmosphere.
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Types of flood risk

We must consider all types of flood risk to effectively manage flood risk within Region 6 watersheds.

Types of flood risk
- Coastal floods: surge and tidal
- Fluvial floods: river floods
- Pluvial floods: rainfall-induced flash floods and urban flooding
- Backwater flooding

Coastal floods: surge and tidal

Storm surge from the winds and waves of tropical storms and hurricanes causes coastal floods. The changing tides also have a compounding impact on these types of floods.

Future flood risk: coastal surge floods

Future flood risk is understood in terms of the severity of coastal surge flooding, which can be affected by factors such as sea level rise, storm surge, and changes in land use.
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Future flood risk is understood in terms of the severity of future events and how often they will occur. This is reflected as a probability:

- 1% annual chance event: 26% chance of at least one event in any 30-year period (commonly known as a 100-year event)
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Future flood risk is understood in terms of the severity of future events and how often they will occur. This is reflected as a probability:

- 1% annual chance event: 25% chance of at least one event in any 30-year period (commonly known as a 100-year event)
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Source: 2017 Coastal Master Plan modeling analysis, Coastal Louisiana Risk Assessment model grid

Extreme rainfall or precipitation

Louisiana has some of the highest rainfall rates in the country on an average statewide basis and often experiences high water levels in its major riverine systems.

Because of our flat landscape and interconnected waterways, the impact of a rainfall event in one part of the state is often felt far beyond the boundaries of where the rain falls.
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Region 6 rainfall total
August 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Storm Total Rainfall</th>
<th>2.00</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inches</td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;0.01</td>
<td>3.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>5.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>0.25</td>
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Fluvial floods

Fluvial floods occur when excessive rain falls over an extended period of time and causes a river to exceed its capacity. A river's capacity is often monitored by checking the height of a river's crest. These events can cause dams and dikes to break and inundate nearby areas.
Flood Risk in Louisiana

Louisiana Watershed Initiative

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Pluvial floods

Pluvial, or rainfall-induced, floods result from intense rain that causes surface, flash or urban flooding. These events are independent, not caused by an overflowing body of water.

Backwater flooding

Backwater flooding occurs when water slowly rises from an unexpected direction where protection has not been provided.

Traditional gaps in understanding flood risk

The Federal Emergency Management Agency is responsible for mapping the nation’s hazardous flood areas.

FEMA Special Flood Hazard Areas:
- Provide a basis for flood insurance rates and floodplain management regulations.
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Special Flood Hazard Areas – High Risk
Special Flood Hazard Areas represent the area subject to inundation by a 1% annual chance flood. Structures located within SFHA have a 26% chance of flooding during the life of a standard 30-year mortgage. Federal floodplain management regulations and mandatory flood insurance requirements apply in these zones.
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Coastal High Hazard Areas represent the area subject to inundation by a 1% annual chance flood, extending from offshore to the inland limit of a primary frontal dune along an open shore or to the inland limit of a barrier island along a barrier shore.
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FEMA Repetitive and Severe Repetitive Loss data

A Repetitive Loss structure is an NFIP-insured property that has had at least two paid flood losses of more than $1,000 each in any 10-year period since 1978.
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- At least four NFIP claim payments (including building and contents) over $5,000 each with the cumulative amount of such claims exceeding $20,000
- At least two separate claim payments (building payments only) with the cumulative amount of the building portion of such claims exceeding the market value of the building

Case study: March and August 2016 floods

Communities are not required to build structures to withstand the 0.2% chance event, which makes structures inside and outside of SFHA unprepared for these more intense events altogether.

1,180 homes impacted in Region 6
37% of structures impacted located within a SFHA
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2016 floods
Case study: March and August 2016 floods

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2016 floods

Best practice: working with nature

Wetlands function as natural sponges that trap and slowly release surface water, rain, snowmelt, groundwater and floodwaters. Trees, root mats and other wetland vegetation also slow the speed of floodwaters and distribute them more slowly over the floodplain. This combined water storage and braking action lowers flood heights and reduces erosion.

The holding capacity of wetlands helps control floods and prevents waterlogging of crops. Preserving and restoring wetlands together with other water retention efforts can often provide the same level of flood control otherwise provided by expensive dredge operations and levees.
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Natural disasters disproportionately impact socially vulnerable populations. Understanding and addressing vulnerability can help mitigate suffering and recovery costs.

Social vulnerability is based on the following factors:
- Socioeconomic status
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Break

10-minute break
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Recap

Putting it all together
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- Future coastal surge flood risk
- Special Flood Hazard Areas, A zones and V zones
- FEMA Repetitive and Severe Repetitive Loss
- Impacts of the 2016 floods
- Wetland areas
- Social Vulnerability Index

Your feedback

Flood Risk in Louisiana
Louisiana Watershed Initiative

CDC - Social Vulnerability

Vulnerability
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Region 6
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Public comment

For additional comments or questions, you can call 504.556.9733 or email watershed@la.gov.

A recording of this presentation will be available after the meeting at watershed.la.gov/watershed-regions.