

## Louisiana Lake Pontchartrain Floodgates When?

Written by: BayouBuzz Staff

Buzz Right Back  E-Mail a Friend  Print Page

By Christopher Tidmore

The last President of the Orleans Levee District warned, prior to the abolition of the board, that the only way to guarantee that New Orleans was protected from future Hurricane flooding and that the relatively unprotected Northshore was as well, would be the creation of a massive floodgate at the Rigolets and Chef Pass outlet to the Gulf of Mexico, a position he still advocates today.

Waters that backed up in supposedly high-lying Mandeville and Slidell during Hurricane Gustav, along with the waters that lapped the tops of the floodwalls along the Bywater along the Industrial Canal proves the efficacy of Mike McCrossen's prophetic warning.

Yet, such a flood protection gate, modeled on those used in the Netherlands to protect low lying regions, is still on the drawing boards—years away.

As then Levee District Board President McCrossen explained to Bayoubuzz.com, St. Tammany Parish has few levees and no local property taxes for flood control.

As Gustav proved, even in mild Hurricanes, the Gulf waters flowing into the Lake can back up on the Northshore. However, should the floodgates at the 17th Street and London Ave. canals be closed as the generally did not need to be during Gustav, disaster could occur.

If another storm surge raised the water level of Lake Pontchartrain several feet, as Katrina did, the water would back up into previously unflooded Slidell. The only way to stop this is a two billion dollar floodgate at the opening of the Lake into Borne and the Gulf of Mexico.

"The most important thing that this region has to do other than MRGO [closing the Mississippi Gulf River Outlet in St. Bernard Parish] is the sector gates at the Chef Pass and the Rigolets to stop the Gulf waters from getting into the Lake."

Resistance from St. Tammany Parish to enact property taxes for a the local portion of the federal match along with a Congress resistant to appropriating more dollars to South Louisiana floodcontrol projects, has left the floodgate on the drawing boards.

McCrossen, now as he did during his term, blames both a bureaucratic Army Corps of Engineers unwilling to pressure Congressional appropriators and local leaders who have not stepped up.

"The formula says that the parishes that benefit most must pay a proportional part of the cost," he explained. "St. Tammany would benefit by 80%, so should it pay 80% of the cost...It has no property taxes. The Northshore doesn't vote for taxes for anything. Do you think they're going to pay for a floodgate?"

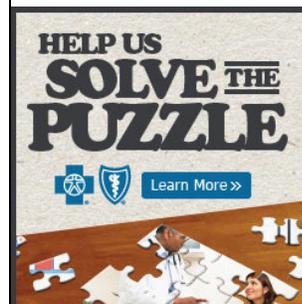
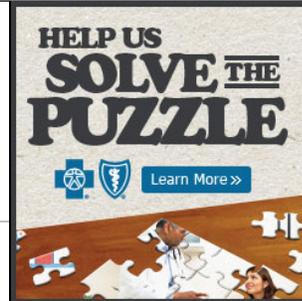
The implication was that New Orleans and the other parishes would have to shoulder the brunt of the expense. Not so, St. Tammany Parish President Kevin Davis replied. In an interview, he said, "Not under the scenario that I am aware of....We don't have an organized levee board or funded levee board here in St. Tammany. So, its my understanding that what will happen is hopefully...We aggressively pushing for that Rigolets closure in there...that would open and close during a hurricane...My understanding is that our goal was back to the oil revenues. That's where we've been the whole time. If we're able to get those revenues, that's where the money is going. And, my hope would be-originally they were talking it could be eight billion a year--its not going to be that much. Let's say it's going to be two billion a year. Or three billion. You could bond that money out and build this whole program for coastal restoration and levee protection for Louisiana."

"Davis is way off here," McCrossen contended. "Offshore Revenue is a dream today. Revenue would be forthcoming on new activity which would take some time."

Louisiana is not expected to receive funds from the new offshore drilling that was opened last year for nearly a decade. Even the Army Corps does not foresee discussing a floodgate until 2011.

"We need the gates at Chef Pass & the Rigolets today. It is on the "radar" of the Corps but not authorized yet (approved by Congress)...If he thinks the corps is going to fund that 100%, he is dreaming."

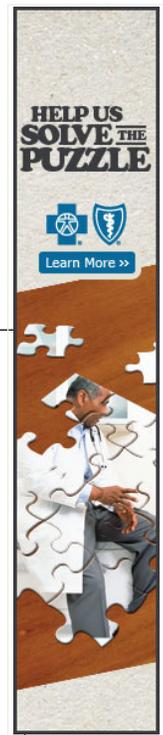
St. Tammany would have made the financial difference in such a situation. Would the voters approve such a millage? McCrossen doubted it.



### Related Articles

[Louisiana Gov. Jindal, Parish Leaders Express Frustrations With BP, Coast Guard, Feds](#)

[BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Update: Louisiana Wildlife And Fisheries Closes More Inside Waters](#)



As Hurricane Ike approached, when this newspaper went to press, the Northshore remains undefended, and the Southshore cannot expect its local levees to be up to Cat 5 Hundred year protection levels for three years.

"If we had the floodgate at the Chef Pass, we would not need 100 year protection. Our current levees would be enough," McCrossen pointed out. The Netherlands, by constructing floodgates identical to the one proposed have not endured major flooding for almost sixty years.



Advertisement

## Kiva Microfinance

"Loans that Change Lives."  
Make a Difference and  
Lend Today!

[www.kiva.org](http://www.kiva.org)

Public Service Ads by Google

[BP Oil Spill: Louisiana Announces Some Closures In Inside Waters](#)

[Louisiana BP Oil Spill Update: Tar Balls, Patties All Across Grand Isle Beach, Dead Turtle, Bird](#)

[Louisiana: BP Oil Spill Updates, Louisiana Budget, New OrleansAnd Louisiana Politics,](#)

**Also by this Author**

[Louisiana Governor Jindal Will Focus On BP Oil, Spill, Not Book](#)

[New Orleans Port Says Tanker Hit BP Spill Oil, Needed Cleaning](#)

[BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill: Louisiana Governor Jindal Urges Cooperation](#)

[BP Suttles: Top Kill Planned For Wednesday To Stop Gulf Oil Discharge](#)

[Louisiana Legislature: Perry Faces Moreno in New Orleans Brutal Special Election](#)

Bookmark and or share this article with:

 [Delicious](#)

 [reddit](#)

 [Digg](#)

 [Facebook](#)

 [StumbleUpon](#)



Comments from BayouBuzz readers

Chris, Thanks for keeping this issue out there. It seems to me that several hundred thousand people that live in Orleans, Jefferson, and St. Tammany would benefit from this levee. I am amazed that this project seems to be going no where.

*Written by Very Frustrated on 9/11/2008*

[REPORT SPAM OR ABUSE](#)

Interesting to see how the Dutch have struggled against flooding as well as how innovative they have been in their engineering.  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flood\\_control\\_in\\_the\\_Netherlands](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flood_control_in_the_Netherlands)

*Written by kpf on 9/11/2008*

[REPORT SPAM OR ABUSE](#)

Sense is usually nonsense to those in power. However, the citizens must listen to the expertise and start making demands on local, state, and national leaders for the improvements described above. It is time to put your vote to action and your blogs, your words, etc. into action also. Remember that we got that veto through Bayou Buzz and the rest of the blogs and web media sites and we got our way. Now let's give them hell once again. Hit every level of government. This state has suffered enough over the years. Let's clean house.

*Written by RhettsWife on 9/10/2008*

[REPORT SPAM OR ABUSE](#)

Sitemap

[Business](#) [Politics](#) [Advertise State](#) [Buzzback National](#) [Calendar Sci/Tech](#) [About Entertainment](#) [Sports](#) [World](#)

© 2006-2007 BAYOUBUZZ.COM ALL RIGHTS RESERVED