



Rapid Tree Damage Assessment and FEMA Experiences Following Hurricane Katrina in Mississippi and Louisiana Coastal Communities

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The Partnership

- Mississippi Forestry Commission
- Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry
- Mississippi State University Extension Service
- Local municipalities & community groups
- Society of Municipal Arborists
- International Society of Arboriculture
- Davey Resource Group
- USDA Forest Service (Region 8 and Southern Research Station)

The Project

- Provided communities with needed professional capacity
- Coordinated urban forestry professionals
- Assisted communities with the risk evaluation of public trees

Coastal Communities Assisted

- December 2005 through May 2006
- Ten communities requested assistance through state forestry agencies

Summary of Benefits & Impacts

Immediate

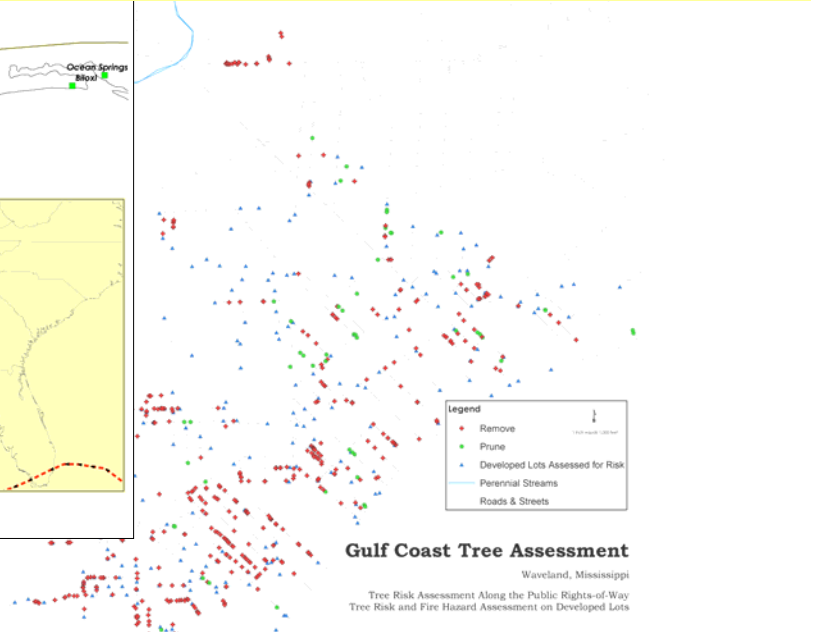
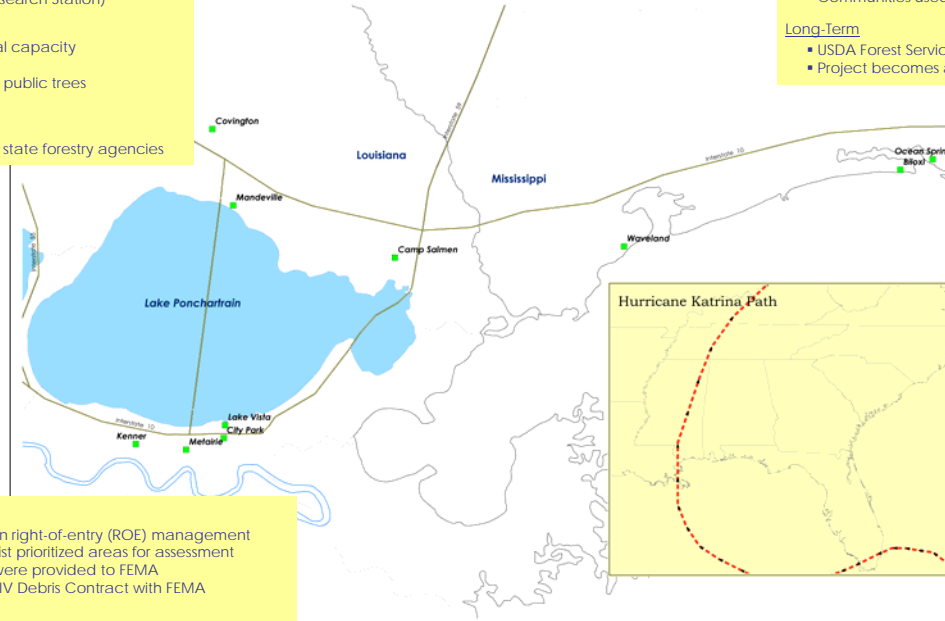
- Volunteers provided professional service to communities that lacked capacity
- Public risk was immediately reduced based on assessments

Short-Term

- City leaders & managers could use the assessments as the basis for a removal and pruning plan
- Communities used the assessment data when negotiating with FEMA for final debris removal contracts

Long-Term

- USDA Forest Service and partners have a disaster assessment methodology in place that didn't previously exist
- Project becomes a component of the overall disaster response strategy of the U&CF Coordinators and SGSF



Biloxi, Mississippi

- In January 2006 the City arborist was focused on right-of-entry (ROE) management
- Mississippi Forestry Commission & the City Arborist prioritized areas for assessment
- Assessment reports and detailed block listings were provided to FEMA
- City was reimbursed for tree removals in Phase IV Debris Contract with FEMA

Camp Salmen, Louisiana

- St Tammany Parish was opening a new park facility at Camp Salmen in late 2005
- Project volunteers provided professional assessments of tree risk along trails
- Assessment reports provided to FEMA illustrated the scope of the problem
- FEMA contracted for re-evaluation of trees along trail.
- Tree removal & pruning was part of a Saltwater Intrusion Contract with FEMA

Waveland, Mississippi

- Hancock County was affected by hurricane winds, 25' storm surge & flooding
- The Waveland area was characterized by 1,000's of standing dead trees
- FEMA's guidelines do not include removal of standing dead trees regardless of risk
- Eight months after the disaster, recovery was limited & few residents had returned
- Volunteer professionals assessed Waveland & three additional neighborhoods
- Assessment reports provided to FEMA illustrated the scope of the County problem
- Negotiations with FEMA resulted in additional debris removal contracts in 2007

Kenner, Louisiana

- In February 2006, the City of Kenner was well on its way to recovery
- Louisiana Forestry & Agriculture and City Planner prioritized areas for risk assessment
- In March, project staff extended the assessment to include the entire City
- Some high risk situations were dealt with immediately by the City
- Reports and inventory used to answer resident questions & requests
- Assessment reports provided to FEMA illustrated the extent of public risk
- Approval granted for public row tree removal debris contracting in April
- Local FEMA inspectors stopped contracted work almost immediately
- City renegotiated with FEMA in late 2006 and contracts approved for 2007 removals
- FEMA contracted for re-evaluation of trees along streets & some private property

Summary of Assessment, Value & FEMA Contracts

Community	Assessment Period	Miles	Trees	Value ¹	FEMA ²
Biloxi, MS	January 2006	147	860	\$22,900	\$180,000
Kenner, LA	March – April 2006	260	1,345	\$20,900	\$140,000
Camp Salmen, LA	May 2006	2	366	\$5,200	\$46,000
Waveland, MS	May 2006	62	1,745	\$18,300	\$1,625,000

¹ An estimate, based on equivalent consultant/days, of the value of the service provided to the communities. Travel expenses not included.
² Debris contracts awarded as a direct result of the assessments provided by the volunteer professionals.

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