



For Immediate Release:
Nov. 21, 2012
Release No. MA 2012-121

Contact:
Tim Dugan, 978-318-8264
timothy.j.dugan@usace.army.mil

Hurricane Sandy aftermath

Hurricane barriers managed by Corps engineers in New England prevent \$29.7 million in damages

CONCORD, Mass. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers team of engineers in New England responded to storm impacts in the New England region while Hurricane Sandy made a late October landfall along the mid-Atlantic coast. Damaging winds, heavy rain, power outages, high seas and storm surge with coastal flooding impacted New England. Hydraulic engineers from the Corps' New England District headquarters in Concord, Mass., monitored the rainfall throughout the region and the water levels in the region's major rivers to regulate Corps-managed dams and to minimize downstream impacts.

Engineers were on site monitoring storm surge and high tide levels at three hurricane barriers – New Bedford Hurricane Protection Barrier in New Bedford, Mass.; Fox Point Hurricane Protection Barrier in Providence, R.I.; and Stamford Hurricane Protection Barrier in Stamford, Conn. They closed the hurricane barriers at critical times to reduce potential flooding in the respective cities. The closures and operations efforts are estimated to have prevented \$29.7 million in flood related damages.

New Bedford Hurricane Protection Barrier

Engineers at the New Bedford Hurricane Protection Barrier in New Bedford, Mass., were on site during the duration of the storm event (including pre-storm and post-storm) to close the barrier to protect against local flooding from the storm surge and high tides. The barrier, completed in 1966 at a cost of \$18.6 million, provides a gated barrier across New Bedford-Fairhaven Harbor and supplementary dikes in the Clarks Cove area of New Bedford and Fairhaven. Engineers estimate that \$3,625,000 in flood damage to the city was prevented during the hurricane from operation of the hurricane barrier. The peak total height of water on Monday night, Oct. 29, was 6.8 feet (2.4 feet predicted tide plus 4.4 feet storm surge).

Fox Point Hurricane Protection Barrier

The Fox Point Hurricane Protection Barrier in Providence, R.I., has been providing flood protection to about 289 acres of the city since its construction in 1966 at a cost of \$15 million. The Corps is responsible for project features within the banks of the Providence River. Operations and maintenance responsibility remains with the city of Providence for project features outside the river banks such as dikes that flank each side of the barrier and the three vehicular street gates and five sewer gates.

Engineers estimate that \$606,000 in flood damage to the city was prevented during Hurricane Sandy from operation of the hurricane barrier. The barrier was closed during storm surge and high tides and re-opened when conditions warranted. The peak total height of water on Monday night, Oct. 29, was 9.5 feet (4.6 feet predicted tide plus 4.9 feet storm surge).

– more –

Corps-managed hurricane barriers prevent damage/2-2-2-2

Stamford Hurricane Protection Barrier

The Stamford Hurricane Protection Barrier in Stamford, Conn., helps mitigate flood damages to the city of Stamford from high tides, coastal storm surge and floodwaters. The project, completed in 1969 at a cost of \$14.5 million, consists of three principal features – the West Branch Barrier, the East Branch Barrier, and the Westcott Cove Barrier. Engineers estimate that \$25,516,000 in flood damage to the city was prevented during the hurricane from operation of the hurricane barrier. Engineers staffed the Stamford Barrier 24/7 and closed the barrier during the duration of the storm event, starting on Saturday evening, Oct. 27 and through Tuesday afternoon on Oct. 30. The peak total height of water on Monday night, Oct. 29, was 11.1 feet (4.0 feet predicted tide plus 7.1 feet storm surge). Officials said this is a new historic high for Stamford (including before the hurricane barrier was constructed).

Cape Cod Canal

The U.S. Coast Guard closed down navigation traffic through all of Cape Cod Bay, Buzzards Bay and the Cape Cod Canal in southeast Massachusetts during the height of the hurricane, from Sunday, Oct. 28 at about 4:45 p.m. until Tuesday, Oct. 30 at about 2 p.m. The team at the Cape Cod Canal office in Buzzards Bay, Mass., managed operations at New Bedford and Fox Point hurricane barriers. They also monitored wind speeds in case sustained winds reached the level that would close down the Cape Cod Canal highway bridges to traffic. Sustained winds did not reach the point to require closing of the Canal bridges.

Public safety is the top priority in operating the hurricane barriers and other Corps projects. In the aftermath of any natural disaster such as this, the Corps' focus while working with other federal, state and local agencies is to: support immediate emergency response priorities; sustain lives with critical commodities; provide temporary emergency power and other needs; and initiate recovery efforts by assessing and restoring critical infrastructure.

New England District river data and reservoir data are available at <http://www.nae.usace.army.mil>. Select "New England River Watch." Additionally, updates are available on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/CorpsNewEngland> and on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/CorpsNewEngland>.

#