



TDEM

*Hurricane Ike Recovery Office
Texas City, Texas*



FEMA

Recovery News

Mar. 16, 2010

FEMA-DR 1791-TX NR-557

Local Media Contact: 409-986-2325

TDEM PIO: 512-424-2138

HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND MITIGATION AT FOREFRONT OF STORM DAMAGE REPAIRS FOR FORT TRAVIS SEASHORE PARK

TEXAS CITY, Texas – As storm repairs are being made to one of Texas’ significant landmarks, collaborative efforts are also ongoing to preserve the historic integrity of Bolivar Peninsula’s Fort Travis Seashore Park and to help reduce future storm damage to the site.

Named in honor of William Barret Travis, the commanding officer of the Alamo, Fort Travis is a notable example of how the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) helps to restore damaged historic properties and mitigate any future storm damage.

“This park has an interesting history and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places,” said FEMA Public Assistance Specialist Brian Slie. “It’s a model of coastal defense installations from a bygone era.”

That history features the heroism of Jane Long, known as ‘The Mother of Texas.’ Married to Dr. James Long, who came to Texas to free it from Spain, Jane refused to leave the fort after she was left there by her husband along with a daughter, maid and a few troops to protect them. Each morning, Jane would fire one of the cannons; her way of showing Galveston that the fort was still being defended.

When Hurricane Ike slammed ashore on Sept. 13, 2008, it brought 18 to 20 feet of storm surge to the Bolivar Peninsula and Fort Travis damaging more than 3,000 feet of promenade, many of the park’s roads and culverts, and depositing storm debris in the underground bunkers.

“It is a privilege to be able to help preserve such a Texas Treasure. Many of the local residents, during Hurricane Carla, sought refuge at the site to ride out the storm along with their cattle and other animals,” said Bob McCurdy, Texas State public assistance officer for the Texas Division of Emergency Management.

As repairs are made, FEMA’s Historic Preservation is keeping a close eye on the work. “It’s our job to ensure that these historic properties continue to keep their historic integrity and significance,” said FEMA Historic Preservation Specialist Ashley Bechtold.

For example, Historic Preservation stipulated the importance of reusing the antique bricks that were originally on the site’s promenade, even if it meant pressure-washing the old bricks or finding similar materials that would maintain the historical integrity.

-MORE-

HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND MITIGATION AT FOREFRONT – Page 2

In addition to maintaining the Fort’s historic authenticity, FEMA’s Hazard Mitigation recommended repairing the seawall sidewalk using compacted soil and sand and adding rebar to reinforce the pathway. “It’s extremely cost effective to mitigate now so we won’t have to fix it again,” said FEMA Hazard Mitigation Specialist David Cockrum.

FEMA will reimburse 90 percent of eligible repair and mitigation costs to the Galveston County Beach and Parks Department, which owns the property.

For more information, visit www.fema.gov/ike. Watch the Fort Travis webisode at www.fema.gov/medialibrary/media_records/2141.

###

FEMA’s mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.

Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, call FEMA toll-free at 800-621-FEMA (3362). For TTY call 800-462-7585.