Hurricane Katrina storm surge distribution and field observations on the Mississippi Barrier Islands.

Abstract

Hurricane Katrina (23–30 August 2005) struck low-lying coastal plains particularly vulnerable to storm surge flooding. Maximum storm surges, overland flow depths, and inundation distances were measured along the Gulf Coast of Florida, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana. The vehicle based survey was complemented by inspections with the reconnaissance boat along the Gulf Coast and the Mississippi Barrier Islands. The storm surge peaked to the East of Katrina’s path exceeding 10 meters in several locations along the Mississippi coastline. The storm surge measurements show that the lower floors of specially designed buildings were damaged by the surge of seawater and associated wave action, while the upper floors sustained minimal wind damage. Furthermore, the storm surge measurements along New Orleans’s Lake shore indicate that the 17th Street Canal levee failed prior to overtopping. The land loss...
on the barrier islands resulted in an increased vulnerability of the US Gulf Coast to future hurricane storm surges.

Keywords
Hurricane Katrina; storm surge; barrier islands; Mississippi; Alabama; Louisiana; Florida; pinus; beach erosion

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