

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Controls Erosion

In the fall of 2011, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) found itself in an unusual predicament. In September, engineers discovered that its multimillion-dollar laboratory, known as the Rapid Repair Levee Breach (RRLB) facility, was deteriorating because of severe, rain-induced erosion.

Without an effective solution, the facility would be rendered unusable. This was unacceptable because of the RRLB's importance to addressing the heightened national awareness about the necessity to effectively repair and maintain levees after Hurricane Katrina. The 400-acre Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC) in Vicksburg, Miss., was designed to assist the USACE in determining practical and scientifically accurate engineering methods for evaluating the most challenging applications of flood protection materials.

The USACE turned to Propex to provide a solution for this erosion control challenge. After a thorough investigation and review of the company's full product portfolio, it was determined that the ArmorMax anchor-reinforced vegetation system would provide the longest-lasting protection against further erosion. This system traditionally is used to prevent catastrophic levee failures resulting from breaches caused by overtopping during hurricane-type conditions or high water events.

More than 5,000 sq yd of ArmorMax were installed at the ERDC in November 2011 in just two days without disturbance to the operation of the facility. By January 2012, thick grass vegetation had grown throughout the affected area. Today, the system is still holding its ground, preventing erosion and maintaining its integrity, despite heavy equipment traffic from regular mowing and upkeep and significantly more rainfall in the spring of 2012 than the cause of the initial erosion.



Just as it performed behind the Penn Levee in Louisiana after being overtopped during Hurricane Ike in 2008, ArmorMax has provided the USACE with a dependable solution for protecting lives and property in areas vulnerable to hurricanes and severe floods. **SWS**

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