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FLOOD TRACKING CHART

Amite River Basin, Louisiana

For current data, access the USGS "Home Page" at http://wwwdlabrg.er.usgs.gov

This Amite River Basin Flood Tracking Chart can be used by local citizens and emergency response personnel to record the latest river stage and predicted flood crest information along the Amite and Comite Rivers and Bayou Manchac. By comparing the current stage (water-surface elevation above some datum) and predicted flood crest to the recorded peak stages of previous floods, emergency response personnel and residents can make an informed decision concerning the threat to life and property.

This chart shows a map of the basin, with the location of major real-time river stage stations. A graph for each site indicates the five highest recorded peak stages at that station and provides a scale on which to record the most recently reported river stage from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). For each station that is a forecast point, the predicted flood crest information from the National Weather Service (NWS) can be recorded. Winds from the southeast can affect flooding in the southern part of the basin.

During a flood, the USGS provides current river stage information to the public through news releases, and more directly through a "Home Page" on the Internet and a voice message.

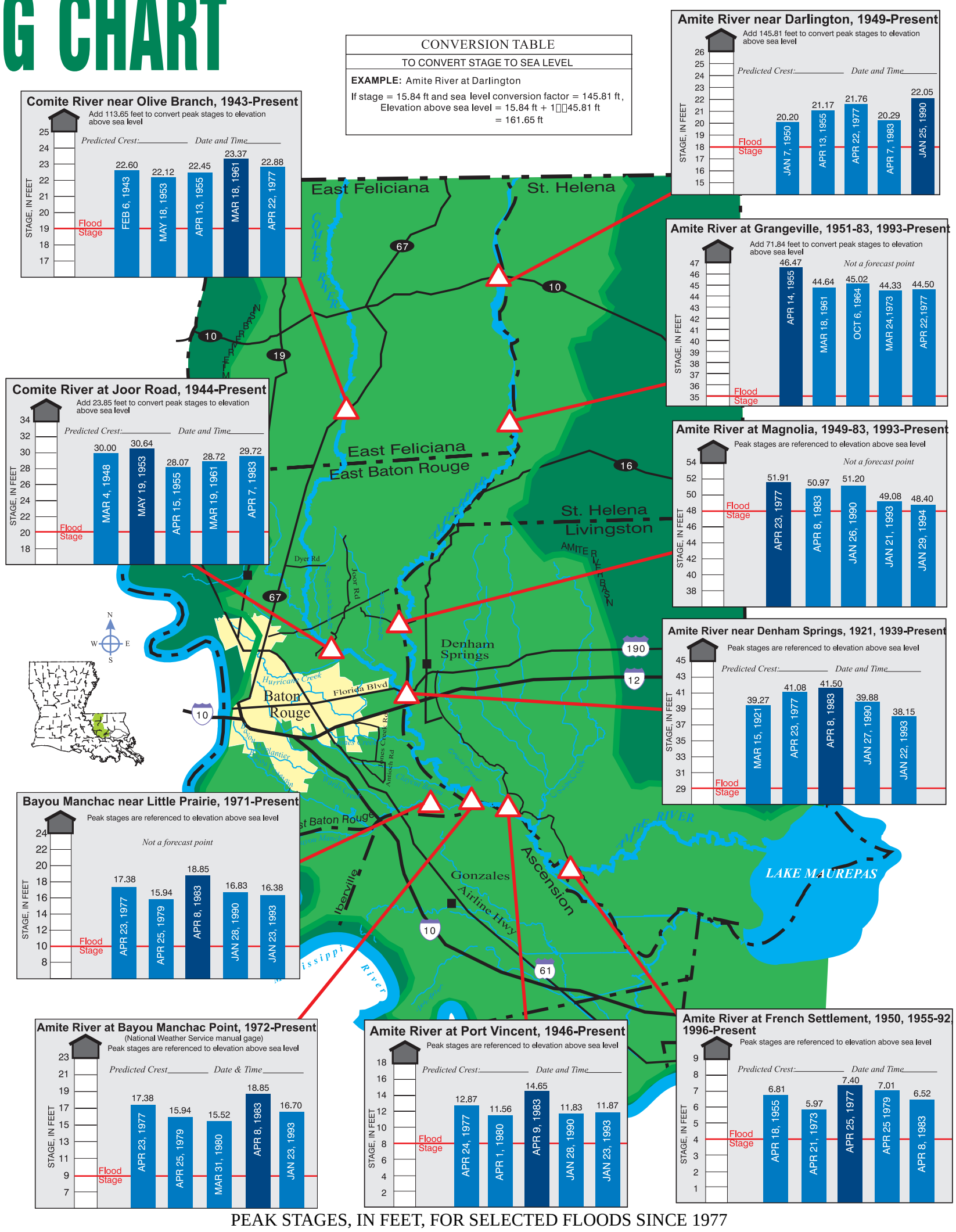
- The Louisiana District of the USGS displays available real-time river stage data on the World Wide Web at the following Uniform Resource Locator (URL) address: http://wwwdlabrg.er.usgs.gov
- A voice message, which gives the latest river stages, can be accessed by calling the Advocate Info Line[1] at 383-0000 and specifying extension 4444 for the East Baton Rouge Parish Office of Emergency Preparedness.

The USGS data are used by the NWS for their forecasting models. The NWS routinely broadcasts this forecast information to the news media and on short-wave radio at a frequency of 162.40 MHz (megahertz).

Four of the stations in the upper part of the basin must have their stage readings converted to elevation above sea level. Instructions for converting stage to elevation above sea level for each of these stations are provided in the corresponding graph for that station. The dark blue bar in each graph represents the highest recorded peak stage for the station.

The table below the map lists the peak stages at each station for the floods of 1977, 1983, 1990, 1993, and 1994. For example, of these years, the highest peak stage at Comite River at Joor Road occurred April 7, 1983.

[1]Any use of trade, product, or firm names is for descriptive purposes only and does not imply endorsement by the U.S. Geological Survey.



PEAK STAGES, IN FEET, FOR SELECTED FLOODS SINCE 1977

[Elevation is above sea level except as noted; NA, not available]

Flood (year of record)	Comite River		Bayou Manchac	Amite River						
	Near Olive Branch[2]	At Joor Road[2]	Near Little Prairie	Near Darlington[2]	At Grangeville[2]	At Magnolia	Near Denham Springs	At Bayou Manchac Point	At Port Vincent	At French Settlement
1977	22.88 APR 22	27.52 APR 23	17.38 APR 23	21.76 APR 22	44.50 APR 22	51.91 APR 23	41.08 APR 23	17.38 APR 23	12.87 APR 24	7.40 APR 25
1983	19.70 APR 6	29.72 APR 7	18.85 APR 8	20.29 APR 7	39.45 APR 7	50.97 APR 8	41.50 APR 8	18.85 APR 8	14.65 APR 9	6.52 APR 8
1990	19.11 JAN 25	26.54 JAN 26	16.83 JAN 28	22.05 JAN 25	NA	51.20 [3]JAN 26	39.88 JAN 27	NA	11.83 JAN 28	5.72 JAN 27
1993	14.42 JAN 21	27.58 JAN 21	16.38 JAN 23	16.08 JAN 21	31.27 JAN 21	49.08 JAN 21	38.15 JAN 22	16.70 JAN 23	11.87 JAN 23	NA
1994	15.12 JAN 28	23.91 JAN 29	14.42 JAN 31	20.17 JAN 28	33.64 JAN 29	48.40 JAN 29	36.10 JAN 30	14.80 [3]JAN 30	10.18 JAN 31	NA

[2]Stage at these stations is reported at gage datum; see the conversion table above to convert stage to elevation above sea level.
[3]Provided by the National Weather Service.

AMITE RIVER BASIN DRAINAGE AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

U.S.Geological Survey
Open-File Report 96-649
(Revised 1998)

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS LOUISIANA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT DOTD

THE FLOOD WARNING SYSTEM OF THE AMITE RIVER BASIN

The USGS, in cooperation with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, Louisiana Office of Emergency Preparedness, East Baton Rouge Parish, Amite River Basin Drainage and Water Conservation District, National Weather Service, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, operates a Flood Warning System in the Amite River Basin. This system is a network of nine automated river stage stations (shown on the reverse side of this publication) that transmit information through radio telemetry to the USGS HydroWatch Operations Center in Baton Rouge. During floods, the public and emergency response agencies use this information to make decisions about road closures, evacuations, and other public safety issues. Emergency phone numbers for your area are listed under "Emergency Flood Phone Numbers."

FLOOD HAZARD AREAS

About 42 percent of the land area in East Baton Rouge Parish has a potential of being flooded by a 100-year flood; 70 percent in Ascension Parish, and 75 percent in Livingston Parish. The principal cause of flooding is backwater flooding along the Amite and Comite Rivers and their tributaries.

Flood maps and publications from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Federal Insurance Administration (FIA) are available for review at the local Department of Public Works, Building Permit offices, local public libraries, and the Amite River Basin Drainage and Water Conservation District Office.

Flood zone determinations are provided by the local Department of Public Works and Building Permit office. Check with your local Department of Public Works or Permit offices before you build on, alter, regrade, or place fill on your property.

HOW DO I ELEVATE OR FLOODPROOF MY HOME?

When elevating or floodproofing new or existing structures, consult a design professional, architect, structural engineer, or licensed contractor for advice. These professionals should be knowledgeable and experienced in floodproofing methods.

Many houses, even those not in the floodplain, have sewers that back up during heavy rains. One possible solution is to have a plumber install a plug, stand-pipe, or backup valve.

FEMA has published manuals on floodproofing that are available at your local library or can be obtained by calling the Amite River Basin Drainage and Water Conservation District.

FLOOD INSURANCE

Regular homeowner's insurance policies do not cover damage from floods; however, because communities within the Amite River Basin participate in FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), a separate flood insurance is available. This insurance is backed by the Federal government and is available to everyone, even for properties that have been flooded. Information about flood insurance is available through your local insurance agent. Flood insurance must be purchased 30 days prior to any claims.

Some homeowners have purchased flood insurance because it was required when they obtained a mortgage or home improvement loan. These policies may cover only the building's structure, and not the contents. During floods in the Amite River Basin, there usually is as much damage to the furniture and contents as to the structure. Check your flood insurance policy to see if your contents and furnishings are covered; if not, you might want to add this coverage.

FLOOD SAFETY AND PROPERTY PROTECTION MEASURES

If your property is known to flood or is located in a flood hazard area, and flood warnings are issued, take all necessary and appropriate steps to protect your family and property. These steps include sandbagging; turning off all electrical circuits and gas lines; and elevating furnishings, carpets, and appliances such as refrigerators, washing machines, clothes dryers, water heaters, and air conditioning compressor units.

IF LOCAL AUTHORITIES RECOMMEND EVACUATION, YOU SHOULD LEAVE! Their advice is based on knowledge of the predicted magnitude of the flood and its potential for death and destruction.

SURVIVING DURING A FLOOD — DO'S AND DON'TS

DO NOT WALK THROUGH FLOWING WATER. Drowning is the number one cause of flood deaths. Water currents can be deceptive; shallow but fast-moving water can knock you off your feet. If you walk in standing water, use a pole or stick to ensure that you don't step into deep water.

DO NOT DRIVE THROUGH A FLOODED AREA. More people drown in their cars than anywhere else. Don't drive around road barriers; they are put up for your protection. The road or bridge beyond the barrier may be washed out.

STAY AWAY FROM POWER LINES AND ELECTRICAL WIRES. The number two cause of flood deaths is electrocution. Electrical current can travel through water. Report downed power lines to the power company or city/parish emergency management office. Have your electricity turned off by the power company.

BE EXTREMELY CAUTIOUS USING RECENTLY FLOODED ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT. Some appliances, such as television sets, keep electrical charges even after they have been unplugged. Don't use appliances or motors that have gotten wet unless they have been taken apart, cleaned, and dried.

BE ALERT FOR GAS LEAKS. Use a flashlight to inspect for damage. Don't smoke or use candles, lanterns, or open flames unless you know the gas has been turned off and the area has been ventilated.

LOOK OUT FOR ANIMALS, ESPECIALLY SNAKES. Small animals that have been flooded out of their homes may seek shelter in yours. Use a pole or stick to poke and turn things over and scare away small animals.

LOOK BEFORE YOU STEP. After a flood, the ground and floors are covered with debris, including broken glass and nails. Floors and stairs that have been covered with mud can be very slippery.

The information on this page is provided in the interest of public safety and is taken from various sources including:

Federal Emergency Management Agency, 1994, National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating System coordinator's manual: Indianapolis, Ind., Federal Emergency Management Agency [variously paged].

Baker, R.H., 1997, Don't build that ark! — Use the chart! *in* Congress Watch March 1997: Washington, D.C., Congressman, Richard H. Baker U.S., House of Representatives [variously paged].

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you would like more information about one of the following agencies, please call or e-mail the individuals named:

U.S. Geological Survey
Edward H. Martin, District Chief 389-0281
E-mail: dc_la@usgs.gov

Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, Water Resources Section
Z. "Bo" Bolourchi, Section Chief 379-1434
E-mail: bbolourc@dotdmail.dotd.state.la.us

Louisiana Office of Emergency Preparedness
Mike Brown, Assistant Director 342-5470
E-mail: xbrown@hotmail.com

Amite River Basin Drainage and Water Conservation District
Dietmar Rietschier, Executive Director 336-9887
E-mail: amitebsn@communique.net

National Weather Service
Paul Trotter
E-mail: Paul.Trotter@noaa.gov

The Louisiana District of the USGS displays available current river stage data on the World Wide Web at

http://wwwdlabrg.er.usgs.gov

A voice message, which is updated by the USGS, gives the latest river stages during floods; it can be accessed by calling **383-0000** and specifying extension **4444** for the East Baton Rouge Parish Office of Emergency Preparedness.

EMERGENCY FLOOD PHONE NUMBERS

Requests for assistance during a flood should be made to the local or parish emergency officials.

Ascension Parish
- Office of Emergency Preparedness 621-8360
- Sheriff's Office 621-8300
- City of Gonzales (Dispatcher) 647-7511
- Town of Sorrento (Dispatcher) 675-5355

East Baton Rouge Parish
- Office of Emergency Preparedness 389-3035
- City of Baker (Fire Department) 775-3711
- City of Zachary (Public Works) 654-0201

Livingston Parish
- Sheriff's Office 686-2241
- City of Denham Springs Police Department 665-5106
- Walker 8:00-4:30 (Police) 664-3125

St. James Parish
- Emergency Operations Center 562-2364
- Sheriff's Office 562-2200

East Feliciana Parish
- Sheriff's Office 683-5459
  654-0081

St. Helena Parish
- Sheriff's Office 222-4413
- Fire Department 222-4343

American Red Cross* 291-4533

***1-800-256-4733** *if outside the Baton Rouge calling area*

Prepared by

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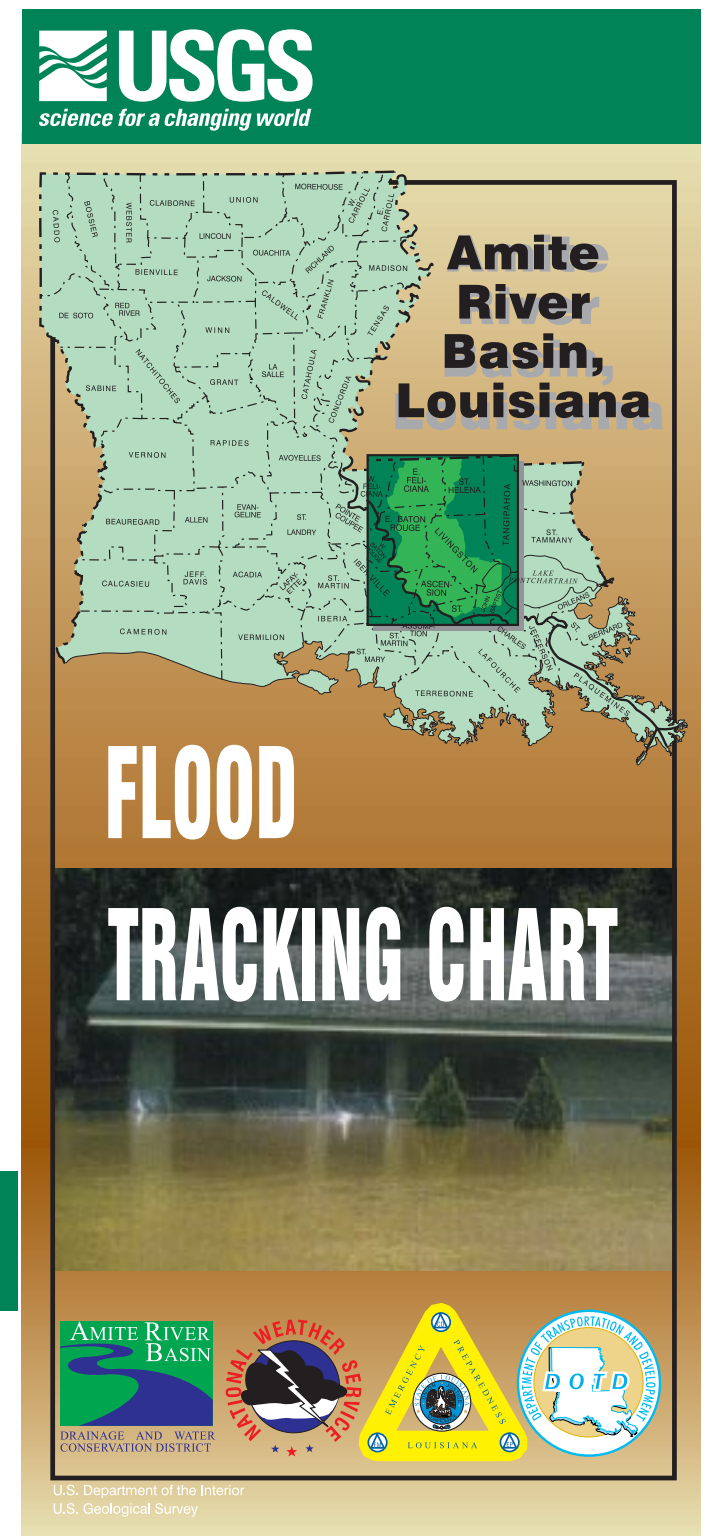
Prepared in cooperation with: