

# LOCAL ACTION FOR BIODIVERSITY

A SERIES OF LOCAL CASES



## City of New Orleans, U.S.A

### Sustainability and adaptability of New Orleans

**SUMMARY:** Hurricane Katrina has set the stage for urban and rural ecological transformations on a scale never before witnessed in United States modern history. UNESCO has partnered with the Center for Bioenvironmental Research of Tulane University and the Stockholm Resilience Center in post-Katrina New Orleans and coastal Louisiana to create a world-class programme to research urban ecosystems at risk. The programme goal is to improve the recovery process in disaster impacted communities in a way that accounts for prevailing environmental conditions and incorporates sustainable practices.

### Biodiversity & biodiversity management in New Orleans

#### New Orleans as a Model Urban Biosphere

When Hurricane Katrina struck, over 80% of New Orleans was inundated by floodwaters, destroying a vast inventory of natural and built treasures. Many questions remain as to how New Orleans should be rebuilt



Twenty-two foot storm surge resulting from Hurricane Katrina (August 29, 2005) as it approached New Orleans at Highway 310 (photograph: Associated Press).

to reduce vulnerabilities and increase resilience at all levels. The objectives of the programme are to create a democratic and informed public forum to foster dialogue about recovery from catastrophic events like these, through research, public debate, grassroots exchange and policy formulation concerning social, urban and ecological resilience.

The programme has the following specific objectives:

1. Actively conduct and network research linkages between social and ecological issues;
2. Provide a forum for the general public to inform and create community-driven solutions;
3. Facilitate development of action-based, multidisciplinary projects working at the interface of human security and management of the natural environment; and
4. Provide technical expertise and inform policy to international initiatives, programmes and projects.

#### UrbanEco – a New Orleans Urban Ecosystem Knowledge Network

UrbanEco's work on the Holy Cross Historic District and Lower 9th Ward Sustainable Restoration Plan won the attention of the national non-profit Global Green, the U.S Green Building Council, and the Clinton Global Climate Initiative. Aspects of the plan have been adopted as part of the city of New Orleans' recovery projects. UrbanEco's Katrina Environmental Research and Restoration Network (KERRN) was formed in October 2005 and has grown to 150 scientist-members and continues to serve as a means of connecting researchers together, and to communities in need of their expertise.

