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HydroLink

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# STORM SURGE AND WAVE MOD PROTECTION GATES IN NEW OR

BY DAVID SCHOWALTER AND PETER GRANT

In August of 2012, Alden Research Laboratory, Inc. (Alden), headquartered in Holden, Massachusetts, U.S.A., acquired AECOM's hydraulic engineering and modeling laboratory in Redmond, Washington, and hired the associated staff. By combining the modeling talents and fisheries knowledge of Alden staff with the hydraulic modeling and fisheries engineering experience of the AECOM hydraulic engineering and modeling operation, Alden has created the largest commercial hydraulic engineering laboratory system in North America.

The AECOM laboratory was formerly known as the "ENSR hydraulics lab." and became part of AECOM in 2005 when AECOM acquired ENSR. Charles "Chick" Sweeney, P.E., started the independent hydraulic modeling laboratory in 1978. The hydraulics lab. has been a leader in the optimization of hydraulic structures and fish passage systems associated with hydroelectric power generation, working especially closely with federal agencies and hydroelectric power utilities in the Pacific Northwest. Additionally, the group has helped municipal utilities to ensure proper performance of pump stations and water conveyance systems. Capabilities include physical hydraulic modeling, 1-D and 2-D numerical modeling, 3-D computational fluid

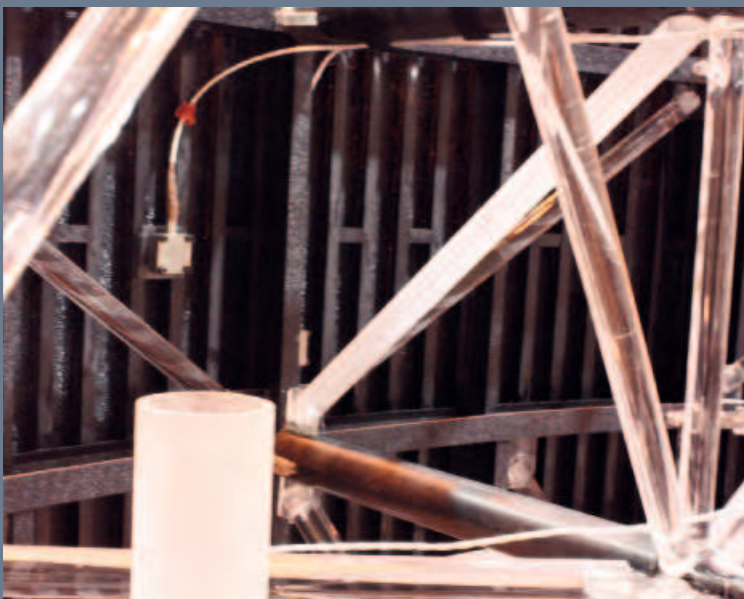
dynamics (CFD) modeling, fisheries and hydraulic engineering design, and associated field services.

Alden has been expanding geographically in recent years, having opened up an office in Fort Collins, Colorado, in 2009, and establishing a presence in Portland, Oregon, in 2011. This addition is a major milestone in an ongoing effort to better serve clients in the U.S. and internationally. It establishes Alden's presence on both coasts and enables the company to better serve the growing hydraulic design and flow modeling market. The two units have similar corporate cultures and have not been competing directly on projects in recent

years. That translates into the ability to offer more resources and more talent to the customers of both facilities. A continued collaboration with AECOM is also expected.

## Complementary Experience

While the groups centered in Holden and Redmond have similar physical and computational hydraulic modeling experience, some subtle and strategic differences exist. For example, the Redmond team has had a special focus on fish passage hydraulics and habitat protection in the U.S. Pacific Northwest and federal agency work, whereas the Holden operation was more focused on fish passage and protection in the Midwest and East Coast,



Hydroelastically Scaled Sector Gates



Storm Surge and Waves Testing

# MODELING FOR THE LEANS

with very unique facilities for using live fish in testing flumes. The Holden operation is also very well known for flow meter and flow control equipment testing and calibration, has a long history of working with the U.S. nuclear power industry on safety system hydraulics, and services the fossil power industry with gas flow modeling, especially in the area of air quality control system optimization.

While both groups have developed physical models of coastal structures in recent years, the Redmond operation's work in this area has been more extensive. The following case study provides an example of Alden's new capabilities through the Redmond acquisition. With rising sea levels and increased awareness of storm surge flooding dangers, Alden anticipates providing more of this type of infrastructure support in the coming years.

## Case Study: Storm Surge and Wave Modeling

In 2009, the Redmond laboratory developed a 3-D hydroelastic 1:20 scale physical model study of the neutrally buoyant sector gates that are part of the 3 km long Inner Harbor

Navigational Canal (IHNC) storm surge barrier in New Orleans. This modeling effort was commissioned by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in response to destruction brought by Hurricane Katrina. The IHNC surge barrier is the first line of defense against storm surge and is designed to allow some waves to overtop the structure. A polder (an area of low land) behind the surge barrier can accumulate up to 1.5 ft of additional water surface elevation during a 1 percent chance hurricane. The system's sector gates then become a large flood-relief valve and are required to open to let the accumulated water back out to sea. The study was performed to affirm the design loads under storm surge and wave conditions, and to determine loads under reverse head conditions caused by storm surge recedance.

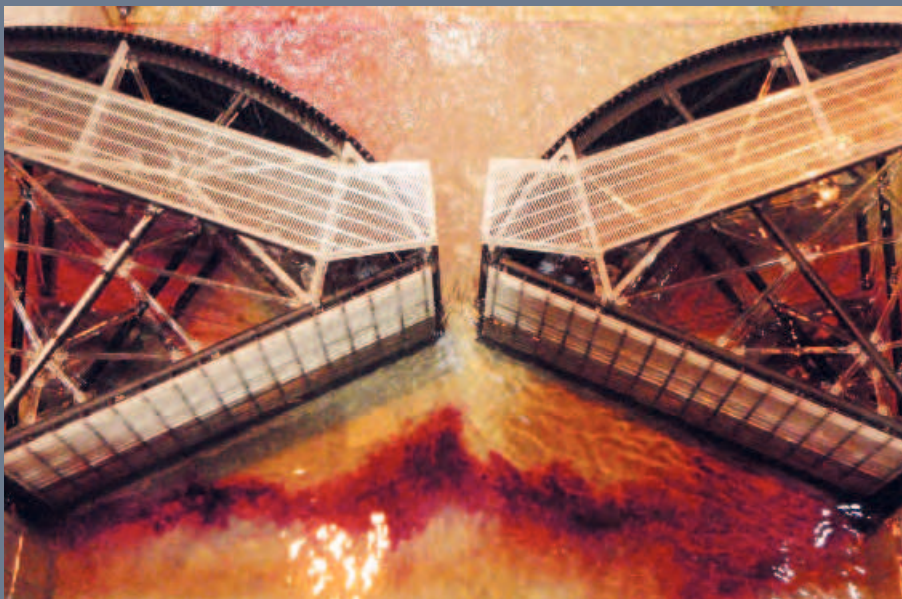
Besides being geometrically similar at a one-twentieth scale, the model components were individually designed to bend and vibrate at a scalable frequency recorded by accelerometers placed on the gate, exhibiting the effects of model generated waves with size and frequency spectrum similar to Hurricane Katrina. This



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Reverse Head Test

scaling technique is not often utilized for coastal structures like surge barriers and breakwaters but is more common for the investigation of gate vibration in a dam's floodgates. The IHNC sector gates, which are similar to radial Tainter gates turned on their side, have significantly more structural members, forming three truss layers that resist the roughly 6 m storm surge corresponding to a 1 percent chance hurricane.

The gates incorporated two buoyancy tanks per gate leaf. A large buoyancy tank near the front of the gate helps to ease gate movement by reducing the force placed on the bottom seal. A smaller buoyancy tank near the gate's axle allowed these large, 25.6 m radial sector gates to be floated in place for final assembly. The innovative use of these tanks in the sector gate design was necessary to ease the operability of the gates and to reduce operations and maintenance costs. However, this also presented the designers with challenging questions regarding the forces experienced by the gates and the plausibility of exciting resonant vibrations.

Key findings from the experiments showed that waves directly in front of the sector gates were reduced by the channel's deeper waters and the long approach walls in front of the structure. Although these waves were reduced in total height, the curvature of the sector gates tended to focus wave energy where the gates meet, occasionally creating wave pressures acting on an overhanging portion of the gate that were twice the horizontal design pressure. Vibrations, however, were only observed during overtopping events; the frequency of which were far from dangerously resonant conditions.

Confirming the magnitude of wave pressures and forces during large wave impacts helped designers make final selections for structural members and the casting design of the main bearing supporting the weight of the sector gate.

For reverse head tests (simulating the release of flood waters from the polder behind the surge barrier after a storm's passing), the gates were instrumented to monitor vibration and the 1-D

forces on the gates' actuating cylinders. During these tests, it was found that the hydraulic torque curve was considerably different than that for sector gates without buoyancy tanks (the only source of design data available up to that point). The test results created new hydraulic torque curves for sector gates with buoyancy tanks that the designers used for their selection of an appropriately sized gate opening and closing actuator.

#### **A Common Future**

The merging of AECOM's former Redmond hydraulic laboratory and Alden's legacy staff has resulted in a very rapid but smooth transition, owing to the similar culture and common technical work scope of the units. The coming years will be a building experience as the two groups work together on joint projects that combine the coastal and large hydropower facility experience in Redmond with the fisheries biology expertise in Holden.

For more information, please visit [www.aldenlab.com](http://www.aldenlab.com).



# 3<sup>rd</sup> IAHR Europe Congress

## Water - Engineering and Research

FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT

On behalf of IAHR Europe Committee, the LOC warmly invites you to participate in the 3rd IAHR Europe Congress at FEUP, Porto, Portugal, 14-16 April 2014.

With our fresh and innovative congress concept we want to welcome researchers as well as practitioners. To encourage the exchange of ideas we will offer panel discussions and workshops — but we also welcome your own ideas!

The IAHR Europe Congress will also provide excellent support for social networking by planning cultural and social events during your stay in Porto. The Portuguese northern city of Porto is the second largest city in the country and was elected the "Best European Destination 2012".

14-16 April, 2014

Faculty of Engineering of the University of Porto

<http://www.fe.up.pt/iahr2014>

#### **Congress Themes:**

- THEME A:** Hydro-Environment and Eco-hydraulics;
- THEME B:** Maritime Hydraulics and Coastal Engineering;
- THEME C:** Sustainable Water Resources and Hydraulic Engineering;
- THEME D:** Uncertainty, Extremes and Climate Change.

#### **Special thematic workshops:**

Oriented towards the promising innovative activities of young researchers, possibly managed by themselves under the supervision of convenors, within the context of the congress themes: • New Visions on Sediment Transport; • Climate Change Impacts on Hydraulics and Water Resources; • Advanced Numerical Methods in Morphodynamics; • Resistance to Flow, Diffusion and Morphology in Vegetated Channels; • Marine Energy; • Medium to Long-term Coastal Evolution; • Advanced Pressure Transient Analysis.



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