



Army Corp of Engineers Selects GeoPerm Over Rolled Erosion Blankets For The Reconstruction of Herbert Hoover Dike at Lake Okeechobee.

Hurricane Katrina's destruction of the dike system around New Orleans raised a red flag of concern throughout the United States and especially Florida. Those who live or do business near the Herbert Hoover Dike, located around Lake Okeechobee in Florida, express concern over the possibility of breaching or overtopping during a hurricane or other severe weather events.

Constructed during the 1910s, the small earthen dike was expanded in the 1960's to protect nearby residential and agricultural areas. Since the original dike was built, a number of hurricanes have challenged it: the Great Miami Hurricane of 1926 and the Okeechobee Hurricane of 1928, which killed thousands.

Following that event, a larger levee system was constructed around Lake Okeechobee. The last expansion created a dike 30 feet high on average in an effort to protect the area against future storm surges. Recently, the dike has been undergoing further repairs to continue that effort.

Part of the project entailed using **GeoPerm provided by Hydrograss Technologies** for a 50-acre exposed slope on the Herbert Hoover Dike near Port Myakka, Florida. The project contractor, **J.E. McAmis Inc. of Chico, California**, was working with 3:1 slopes. Additionally, the work was being done during the hurricane season, creating the element of the unknown.

"We were looking for a product that would allow us to maximize our working area on the dike, but give us the assurance that in the event there was some type of natural disaster coming up or something that could be projected three or four days ahead, it would give us coverage and a better sense of security than just having exposed soil", says Scott Vandegrift, company project manager.

"Whenever you have an open excavation or exposed soil, you are always worried about any type of rain or erosion and if a

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hurricane-type of weather event were to occur, it would definitely not be good.”

“Grassing was required in the contract. Another product had been specified, but the product was not practical”, Vandegrift says.

Vandegrift researched various hydroseeding products on the market. “Hydrograss Technologies was willing to come out to the site. They performed a test section for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to look at and worked with us on submitting a value-engineering proposal to the Corps which led to the specification being changed over to their product”, he notes.

GeoPerm is made of premium softwood and hardwood fibers that are thermally/mechanically processed, along with a natural guar gum tackifier and a proprietary crosslinking agent. This high grade **bonded fiber matrix** product combines the quickness and ease of hydromulching with the protection equal to an RECB (rolled erosion control blanket). It’s ability to hold moisture and nutrients enables the seed to break dormancy quickly and mature into a healthy turf.

“GeoPerm served two purposes”, adds Vandegrift. “One, it met the intent of The Army Corps of Engineers for a final product to stabilize the slopes and two, it allowed a method for us to get things buttoned up quicker in the event of a tropical rain. We had two 5 inch rainstorms and everything held up great. GeoPerm worked better than we expected.”

Vandegrift said, “GeoPerm performed as well or better than erosion control blankets or any other option for the challenge of exposed slopes. “I will definitely promote the use of GeoPerm for future projects”.

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