

Hurricanes and Floating Docks

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A tale of tides, winds, and floating dock survival.

Well folks, The Floating Dock Shop hails out of Baton Rouge, which for those of you visiting our website from somewhere else in the country, is about 80 miles Northwest of where Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans, Slidell, Gulfport, and Biloxi. We are also about 150 miles East of where Hurricane Rita gave Lake Charles and Beaumont a thrashing.

We felt the wind, and have dealt with a swollen city full of people that have now made their homes here due to evacuating and not being able to return.

What were we doing in the days after the storm? Besides picking up limbs that fell from the hurricane and cranking generators that would run for over a week due to power outages that followed the destruction; we were on our cell phone modem with our laptop desperately looking for any sign of life out of the area that got hit.

Picture available from: <http://ngs.woc.noaa.gov/storms/katrina/24528428.jpg>

We did this by visiting NOAA's satellite flyover picture site. After clicking through endless pictures, we found what we were looking for, a floating dock that had been installed only 8 months prior to Hurricane Katrina in Lakeshore Estates, Slidell.

According to the Slidell Sentry News in an article published in January, 2006, the sustained wind speed for Hurricane Katrina in the Slidell area was 175 miles per hour for nearly 6 hours. Other articles report gusts of up to 205 miles per hour over the same time frame.

You can imagine our delight when we were able to see our floating dock still in its original position via the above photograph zoomed in.

The homeowner reported over 4 feet of water in his home elevated 18 feet above water level due to a tidal surge at the water level of over 22 feet. The gangway on the dock was 25 feet long. The dock did have a roof structure that was blown off, but the platform survived, and did exactly what it was supposed to do--rise with the water to the highest level available according to the gangway.

Long story short, floating docks do survive hurricanes. When anchored properly, floating docks survive high tidal surges without breaking their moorings.

The homeowner in Slidell has been pleased and allowed us to go in and repair the dock fully, replacing the roof. His neighbors are, at the writing of this article, requesting quotes on their own floating docks to replace their "wooden stick built" docks that literally disappeared.