

Rebuilding the Gulf

The Cleanup Continues

Specialty in Storm Cleanup Aids Recovery

Demolition contractor South Texas Landscaping travels throughout the southern states cleaning up after natural disasters. During the past year, the company has worked on sites ravaged by hurricanes Ivan, Dennis, Katrina, Rita and Wilma. In addition to disaster cleanup,

the crew has expertise in land-leveling, as well as the construction of berms and swells for water ways.

Since January, the contractor has averaged five sites per day over seven-day work weeks. These sites are never ideal. Humidity and remaining flood waters

make the ground conditions extra soggy and especially taxing for any form of heavy equipment.

Choosing the right equipment has been a challenge since ground conditions, space constraints and lift requirements all combined to make compact equipment too weak and large equipment too heavy. South Texas Landscaping ultimately selected a Mustang ME12002, sourced from Gulf States Equipment, Gulfport, MS, due to its combination of strength, agility and buoyancy. The 98-hp compact excavator has a 25,397-lb. operating weight and 19,665 lbs. of lifting capacity.

"Much of our equipment was too large to get into the neighborhoods, and weighed too much for the swampy soil we needed to maneuver through," says Rudy De Leon, owner of South Texas Landscaping. "The Mustang was chosen because it met our weight and size requirements."

The crew works off of landing mats in wet ground conditions. "We can't spend our time digging those mats – not to mention a machine – out of the mud," says operator Jack De Leon.

Machine weight is also important since the unit is transported from site

to site on a lowboy trailer.

Creature comforts are a further benefit in this often physically and emotionally difficult work environment. Ciro Manriquez, a foreman who operates the ME12002, often spends 10-hour days behind the controls. As such, he is happy to have an enclosed, air-conditioned cab protecting him from the muggy heat, as well as the mosquitoes that are often the only remaining neighborhood residents. Manriquez also appreciates the ability to switch rubber and metal tracks as job conditions change.

The ME12002 has accumulated 320 hours removing trees, clearing land and demolishing homes too damaged for repair. Equipped with a bucket with a thumb, it is able to handle difficult and off-size debris.

Crews will continue to work in the damaged areas until things are back to normal and homeowners can return to the communities.

"We are so proud of our employees, who have conducted themselves professionally as they clean up these homes," says De Leon. "They take their work very seriously and do their best to help these residents get back the life they had torn away."



Photo courtesy of Gulf States Equipment