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le: NOS/OR&R ... September 23, 2003
er to] NMFS/HCD... [initiating ESA
nsultation for LRRPP Region 2

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE
Office of Response and Restoration
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Rickey Ruebsamen
Habitat Conservation Division
National Marine Fisheries Service
9721 Executive Center Drive North
St. Petersburg, Florida 33702-2432

SEP 2 3 2003

OCT 6 2003

Dear Mr. Ruebsamen:

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), United States Department of the Interior, and State of Louisiana are preparing a Regional Restoration Plan to facilitate restoration of natural resources injured by oil spills in southeastern Louisiana (Region 2). The Plan is the first of nine regional plans to be developed under the statewide Louisiana Regional Restoration Planning Program, identifying resources that are likely to be injured by an oil spill, suitable types of restoration that would be appropriate to compensate for the losses, as well as existing, planned, or proposed restoration projects in the region.

Region 2 encompasses the Breton Sound and Barataria hydrologic basins and the lower Mississippi River basin, delta plain, and modern Balize (Birdsfoot) delta, including State waters in the Gulf of Mexico. Bordered to the north by the headwaters of Bayou Lafourche and the Mississippi River, Region 2 extends south to the Caminada-Moreau Headland, Plaquemines barrier system, and Birdsfoot delta, and from Bayou Lafourche along its western border to the Mississippi River and Mississippi River Gulf Outlet along its eastern border. The following parishes are located either partly or completely within Region 2: Ascension, Assumption, Jefferson, Lafourche, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. James, and St. John the Baptist (see attached map).

NOAA anticipates initiating Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) consultation with your agency once the draft Region 2 Plan is completed. To assist us with our assessment of the Plan's potential effects on areas of EFH, we are requesting information on habitats in Region 2 used by managed species identified in the Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Plan.

Thank you for your attention to this request. Please feel free to contact John Rapp at (225)578-7924 or john.rapp@noaa.gov if you have any questions.

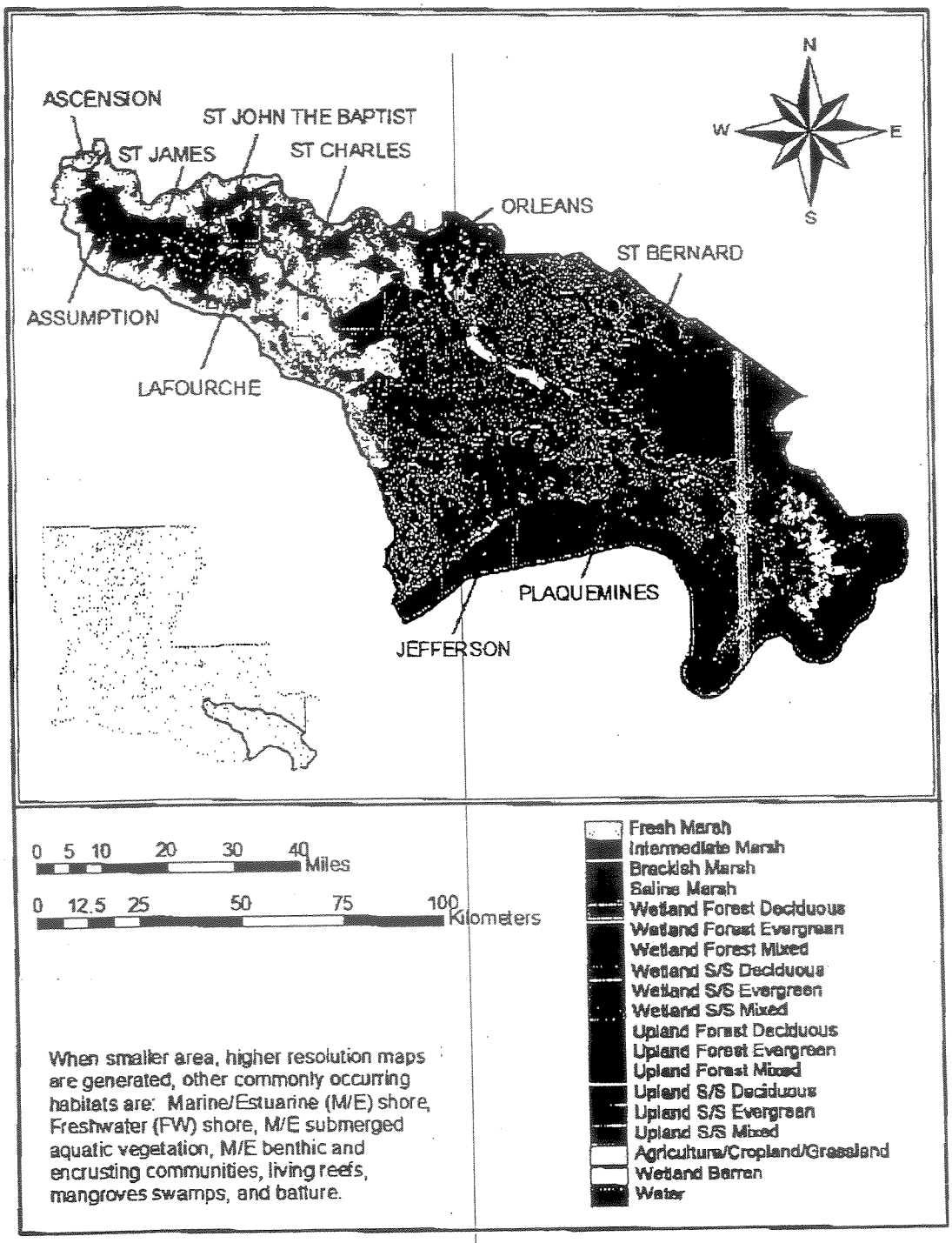
Sincerely,

William Conner, Ph.D.
Chief, NOAA Damage Assessment Center

Attachment

CC: John Rapp
Jim Hoff

Printed on Recycled Paper



When smaller area, higher resolution maps are generated, other commonly occurring habitats are: Marine/Estuarine (M/E) shore, Freshwater (FW) shore, M/E submerged aquatic vegetation, M/E benthic and encrusting communities, living reefs, mangroves swamps, and batture.