M. J. "MIKE" FOSTER, JR.
GOVERNOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AGENCIES SEEK INPUT ON DRAFT REGIONAL RESTORATION PLAN DEVELOPED UNDER NEW STATEWIDE PROGRAM PROMOTING RESTORATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES INJURED BY OIL SPILLS

State of Louisiana and federal natural resource trustees are soliciting public comments on a draft Regional Restoration Plan to restore natural resources injured by oil spills. This draft Region 2 Plan is the first of nine regional plans to be developed under the statewide Louisiana Regional Restoration Planning Program.

The State of Louisiana, the U.S. Department of Commerce/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the U.S. Department of the Interior have developed a statewide program to expedite restoration of natural resources injured by oil spills and reduce the cost of Natural Resource Damage Assessments—the process by which trustee agencies assess and restore resources injured by oil spills.

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. 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. The draft Plan describes the affected environment, biological resources, and associated habitat types, as well as the natural resources/services that are likely to be injured by an incident, appropriate restoration types for each of the potentially injured resources/services, and available restoration projects that have been identified to date.

One of the key features of the draft Region 2 Plan is the determination of a representative unit cost to restore predominant habitat types in the region as part of a cash settlement. The proposed predominant habitat types in Region 2 are coastal herbaceous wetlands, oyster reefs, and coastal-forested wetlands.

For more information about the Louisiana Regional Restoration Planning Program and/or to receive a copy of the Draft Region 2 Regional Restoration Plan, please contact:

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The draft Region 2 Plan will be released on or before September 23, 2003. Written comments should be submitted to William Conner by October 23, 2003, at the address listed above.

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