UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Habitat Conservation Division
3500 Delwood Beach Road
Panama City, FL 32408

April 6, 2006

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**AR: LA Regional Rest. Plan. Prog.**
**Title**: Letter from NMFS, HCD to NOAA, Fisheries, April6, 2006, Re Essential Fish Habitat Consultation

Mr. John Rapp
NOAA Fisheries, Restoration Center
Louisiana State University
Sea Grant Building
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70803

Dear Mr. Rapp:

This responds to your August 12, 2005, letter to the Southeast Region of NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service concerning the draft final regional restoration plan to facilitate restoration of resources injured by oil spills in southeast Louisiana. NOAA and various resource trustees of the State of Louisiana prepared the document. Proposed therein is a process by which essential fish habitat (EFH) documentation would be included in individual Damage Assessment and Restoration Plans prepared on an incident specific basis. This is to advise you that we agree with your opinion that this EFH consultation mechanism would be consistent with the coordination requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and its implementing rule.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on your proposal. If I may be of further assistance, contact me at your convenience by telephone at 850-234-5061 or at ric.Ruebsamen@noaa.gov.

Sincerely,

Rickey N. Ruebsamen

Rickey N. Ruebsamen
Essential Fish Habitat Coordinator