



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

1875 Century Boulevard
Atlanta, Georgia 30345

In Reply Refer To:
FWS/R4/ES

June 15, 2001

Ms. Ann H. Berger
Damage Assessment and Restoration Program Coordinator
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Office of the General Counsel
1305 East-West Highway, SSMC #4
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

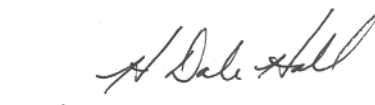
Dear Ms. Berger:

Thank you for your May 18, 2001, letter inviting U.S. Department of the Interior bureaus to serve as a cooperating agency in the development of a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for the Louisiana Regional Restoration Planning Program (LRRPP). The Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) agrees to assist in the preparation of required environmental compliance documents for the proposed LRRPP in accordance with provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (83 Stat. 852; 42 U.S.C. 4321-4327).

The Service's role as a cooperating agency will be limited to: (1) participating in meetings to provide technical work group baseline information on project area fish and wildlife resources within our trusteeship, (2) evaluating the proposed LRRPP-related impacts to those resources, and (3) providing assistance in the preparation of a biological assessment addressing the impacts of the proposed activity to federally listed threatened or endangered species and their critical habitats. Given the substantial amount of salary, overhead, and travel funds the Service has expended in pre-scoping development of the LRRPP, we request that NOAA consider providing reimbursable funding to help defray those costs associated with our continuing technical assistance.

We appreciate the opportunity to be a cooperating agency in this matter. By copy of this letter, I am assigning our Lafayette Field Office as the primary contact for this cooperative effort. If you have further questions regarding this matter, please contact Dr. Diane K. Beeman, Regional Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Spill Response Coordinator, of my staff at 404/679-7094, or David Frugé, Field Supervisor, of the Lafayette Field Office at 337/291-3100.

Sincerely yours,


ja Sam D. Hamilton
Regional Director