

TRAIL GUIDE

to the DELTA COUNTRY



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Trail Guide to the Delta Country

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A Quarter Century of Trail Guides

by John Sevenair

The Delta Chapter of the Sierra Club was in its infancy when, almost 25 years ago, Byron Almquist put together some mimeographed sheets and leaflets in envelopes. The New Orleans Group sold this under the name *Outings Kit*. A year later Fred Barry assembled this and more information into a small green booklet, also called the *Outings Kit*. The book began to approach its current form when your current editor put together the *Guide to Louisiana Wilderness Trails and the Delta Country*, which came out in 1975. The next major changes came with the publication of the *Trail Guide to the Delta Country* in 1980. Several printings (with minor revisions) came out in the 80's. The last major revision was the Sierra Club Centennial edition of 1992.

Not only the books but the areas have changed since 1972. If I were to summarize what has happened, I would say that we have better access and more public land, but more crowding and more pollution.

The rivers show the problems and the opportunities well. When I first got involved with putting together trail guides, the Tangipahoa River was just about the only one with a canoe rental on it. Now there are a dozen outfitters on almost as many rivers, with more opening (and closing) all the time.

On the other hand, we don't have as many good rivers as we used to. Bayou Trepagnier, a state scenic river, reeks of refinery pollution from oil company stupidity and selfishness. Now we know that several beautiful canoeing streams north of Lake Pontchartrain have been polluted by dairy farming wastes and municipal sewage. That particular problem has probably existed all along; we just know about it now. Solutions is on the way, in fact; the Tangipahoa (among others) is coming back.

With such areas as Jean Lafitte National

Park's Barataria Preserve; Bogue Chitto, Big Branch, and Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuges; and the Louisiana Nature Conservancy's purchases, there are more marshes and swamps available for you to go and see in canoes. On the other hand, we've dropped areas from the book because they were too congested with powerboat traffic for good canoeing.

Cycling is growing more and more popular throughout the area. There are still plenty of fine back roads with light traffic for bicycle trips in southern Louisiana. They're a little farther away from the urban centers of New Orleans and Baton Rouge now. People have been moving out of the city, seeking the peace and quiet of the countryside—and bringing the cars, shopping centers, and congestion of their cities with them.

When the 1975 edition of this book went to press there were very few places to hike and backpack in the area, unless you were ready to go cross-country with map and compass. Once you had covered the Tuxachanie Trail and Percy Quin State Park, well, that was about it for trails.

Now we have new trails in Kisatchie, Homochitto, and De Soto National Forests. Horn and Petit Bois Islands and areas of De Soto and Kisatchie National Forests are wilderness, as they weren't a quarter century ago. Jean Lafitte National Park, the Tammany Trace, and the Louisiana Nature and Science Center didn't exist back then either. More than half of the hiking trails in this book were built in the last decade.

On the whole, things could be better and things could be worse. That they aren't worse is due in large part to hard work by the Sierra Club, other environmental organizations, and the concerned citizens of the area. We are becoming more and more aware of the threats to our wildlands and wilderness and more able to combat those threats. Keep up the good work! ■

Acknowledgements

Almost all authors get a lot of help from their friends. When you are an editor-in-chief rather than a sole author, the debts mount even higher. Jeanne de la Houssaye and Jackie Tamas rate special thanks. Jeanne designed the cover and the graphics that introduce the sections, redrafted all the book's maps, and served as editor and chief writer for the canoeing sections. Jackie has provided and collected trail writeups from the Baton Rouge Group of the Sierra Club for several editions now.

In the canoeing section, Byron Almquist (of Canoe and Trail Adventures), Mel Bellar, Jeanne de la Houssaye, Dan Earle, Kenny Lindsly, Bryan McDaniel, Leonard Naquin, and Cornell and Jan Tramontana wrote articles on the rivers and streams in the New Orleans and Baton Rouge areas. Information to update older writeups was provided by Tom Lowenburg, Terry Vinson, Black Creek Canoe Rental, and De Soto National Forest.

Articles on marsh and swamp canoeing were contributed by Byron Almquist, Charlie Fryling, James Guilbeau, Tom Hertwig, C. C. Lockwood, Melissa Lutz, Chris Resweber, David Rousmaniere, Jim Whelan, and Vernon Wright. Further information came from David Muth and rangers at the Barataria Preserve Unit of Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve. Denis Dwyer (of Adventure Sports) wrote up the sea kayaking trip to Horn Island.

As far as the Cycling section is concerned, authors of sections include Mark Clark, N. B. Day, Joey Donnelly, Mitchell Lopez, Greg Reynolds, and Al Troy. Phyllis Baudoin Griffard was also a section author, and updated several

sections from the previous edition. Most of the maps in this section were adapted from excellent maps provided by the Crescent City Cyclists and the Baton Rouge Bicycle Club.

The Hiking section grew and changed substantially for this edition. Chris Resweber wrote up several new outings, as did your editor-in-chief. Other authors of articles include Byron Almquist, George Barry, Susan Egnew, James Guilbeau, Thomas Junk, Bruce McCoy, Stuart Phillips, Adele Plauche, Jackie Tamas, Bob Thomas, and Vernon Wright. Further information came from James Guilbeau, Lydia Guillot, David Muth, Jim Nanninga, the Louisiana Nature and Science Center, the National Park Service (Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve), and the National Forest Service (De Soto, Homochitto, and Kisatchie National Forests).

When it came to producing the book, most authors sent in their writeups on computer disks rather than on paper this time. Mary Carol McNamara keyed the few sections that were submitted on hard copy, or that I couldn't translate using my computer, into her Macintosh. Jeanne de la Houssaye and James Guilbeau worked with printers. Successive Delta Chapter chairs Bob Hastings and Barbara Vincent, along with other officers and members of the chapter, provided help and encouragement within the Sierra Club and with financial matters.

Without the help of all of these volunteers, this new edition of Trail Guide to the Delta Country would never have come into existence. If it has any excellencies, they are due to the efforts of these wonderful people. The editor is, as always, responsible for any deficiencies. ■

John Severain

The Sierra Club

John Muir founded the Sierra Club over a hundred years ago, in 1892. He did this because he wanted others to share his love of the earth and all of nature. He knew that if people learned how to explore, enjoy, and value the wildlands that are their heritage, they would also work together to preserve this legacy.

Today the Sierra Club has grown to become the nation's largest and strongest group dedicated to preserving wilderness. But it is much more—its horizons now extend to protecting all the environment around us, whether in the inner city or the most remote wildlands. The Club's goal is a world which will allow all life to prosper, and in which we as people act responsibly to protect the planet that is the natural home of all living things.

The Delta Chapter of the Sierra Club is now more than a quarter century old. As the Sierra Club has fought on the national level to protect the environment, its Delta Chapter has been heavily involved with issues such as wilderness (for example, on the Gulf Islands and in Kisatchie National Forest), wetlands preservation (Coastal Zone Management, the Atchafalaya Basin), and pollution (including mercury pollution of our waterways).

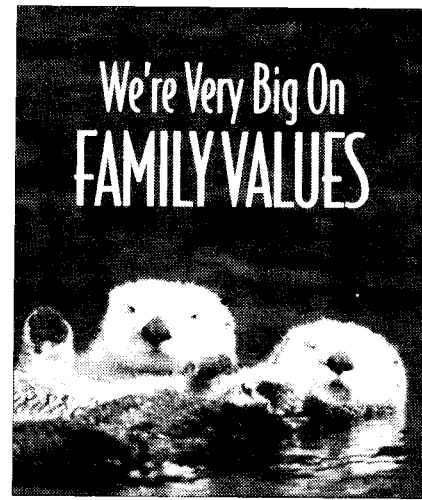
The Chapter now has five local groups scattered all across the state. People in and near New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Slidell and Covington (Honey Island Group), Lafayette (Acadian Group), and Shreveport (Kisatchie Group) can attend meetings, participate in conservation work, and go on our outings.

For more information, please get in touch with:

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Introducing the Delta Country

The lands and waters of southern Louisiana and Mississippi are fascinating, challenging, and in many ways unique. The fertility of the Mississippi Delta makes possible wildlife concentrations hard to find anywhere else in the USA. Unless you insist on rock climbing or cross-country skiing, most of the self-propelled outdoor pursuits you can think of are available. Local branches of the Sierra Club have been exploring, enjoying and fighting to preserve and protect the natural beauties and values of the area for more than two decades. This book is among both the tools and the fruits of that effort.

Geological History—Traces of four and a half billion years of the life of our planet are to be found in our area. The ends of the Appalachians lie buried miles below the surface, for example. For all practical purposes, though, what you see on the surface is the result of the interaction of the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico over the last seventy million years.

During this time the gulf has often intruded far inland, and the rocks and sediments that comprise the hills of southern Mississippi and the Florida Parishes of Louisiana were laid down then. This explains the fact that you can find shark's teeth, oyster shells, and other marine remains near the Leaf River, over a hundred miles from the sea.

Barrier islands, including Grand Isle, Ship Island, and Horn Island, build up where the Gulf washes against a sandy shore. About five thousand years ago such an island appeared in the vicinity of Lake Pontchartrain. Shortly afterwards the Mississippi Delta began to achieve its present form in the area.

Old Man River has shifted his course through the Delta many times in the course of the past few thousand years. When the river flooded and spread out over the broad flood plains, the water dropped some of its burden of silt. When the channels shifts these natural levee ridges stop growing. Then they slowly subsided along with the rest of the area. The natural subsidence rate is about 0.4 feet per century in the New Orleans area.

The river began its most recent delta shift south

of New Orleans around 9,800 years ago, abandoning earlier channels in what is now St. Bernard Parish. Within the last century the river has made the beginnings of a more radical shift to the Atchafalaya Basin, but the Corps of Engineers has so far managed to prevent this from happening. These efforts are designed to protect the economic pattern of the area, which has grown around the present course of the river.

Alluvial Ridges, Swamps, Marshes and Barrier Islands—These are the natural features that have grown up from the delta processes described above. The life of each area has evolved to fit a delicate balance of conditions, including flooding, soil type, elevation and salinity.

The alluvial ridges, because they are elevated above sea level and have reasonably stable soil, have been where agriculture and development have taken place in the area. Only small fragments remain of the magnificent hardwoods that grew on the banks of the Mississippi. Harvesting of the oaks, magnolias and other trees was a factor in the economy of Louisiana. Most such forests disappeared, and only a few small areas and some regenerating patches are left.

There are still cypress, tupelo, and palmetto swamps closer to sea level in many areas, though almost all of them are second growth. These swamps and marshes are tremendously productive of life. The nutrients and detritus produced here form the base of the food chain for a large part of the Gulf of Mexico. They support tourism, fishing, hunting, and allied industries worth billions of dollars. Despite this our wetlands still are not treated with the respect they deserve.

Drained swamps and marshes have been used for residential and urban development, especially in Jefferson and Orleans Parishes. In a natural state the productive soils of the swamps and marshes are very high in organic content. Unfortunately this same productivity creates hazardous conditions for homeowners who live in these areas. After the soil is drained it subsides at a fantastic rate, as it dries

and the organic matter in it oxidizes. Homes built on pilings often require thousands of dollars of maintenance as the land sinks away from their slabs. Roads and foundations buckle, water and sewer lines rupture, and a terrible burden is placed on area residents and taxpayers.

This is doubly tragic, as the marshes and swamps are not only vital parts of our life-support system but possess a beauty incredible to behold. Such areas as Alligator Bayou, the Barataria unit of Jean Lafitte National Park, and the Honey Island Swamp do not provide challenging canoeing or hiking, but will open your eyes (if they are not already open).

Tidal marshes, lakes, and bays stretch from the swamp to the sea. The water here is often covered by floating plants, and apparent islands can disappear into the mud under the incautious foot. Here fishermen can bring home the sort of catches that are only a memory elsewhere in the country. A large fraction of the continent's waterfowl and furbearing animals live here. *Spartina* grasses are the dominant plants of these coastal marshes.

The natural lives of marshes are not infinite. Natural subsidence eventually destroys them, and they are ephemeral in terms of geological time. In the natural order of things, however, marshes are generated in one place as they are being destroyed in another. Also, the destruction is naturally slowed by a yearly infusion of flood-borne nutrients.

The Mississippi River levee system walls off almost all of our wetlands from this renewal, and the dredging has accelerated the destruction of existing marsh tremendously. Oil exploration, navigation channels, pipeline canals, and their associated spoil banks all play a part in this destruction. The loss rate of land in south Louisiana is over fifty square miles per year, and much of the loss is careless and unnecessary. The problem is compounded by salt water intrusion into the marshes, accelerated by those man-made straight-line canals and channels.

The barrier islands have problems too, largely caused by development for recreational use. One island off the Mississippi Coast was developed. The dunes were leveled and stripped of their protective vegetation, and then the unprotected sand was washed

and blown into the Gulf. Only a sand bar is left. Two islands, Horn and Petit Bois, somehow remained nearly untouched. They are now protected as wilderness in the Gulf Islands National Seashore after campaigns lasting many years.

Rivers and Uplands—North of the swamps, Lake Pontchartrain, and the Mississippi Gulf Coast the land changes dramatically. The presence of highlands that do not flood is the cause, though many rivers, especially the Atchafalaya and the Pearl, have large swamp areas within their basins. Both of these great river basins, the focus of continuing conservation battles, have many access points and are well worth seeing.

The area's smaller rivers are the most popular for recreational canoeing. When they are pristine they are lined with natural communities that usually feature cypress or willow trees. Both of these trees are adapted to wet conditions. The cypresses have broad stable bases and knees, and the willows have the capacity to grow roots from their trunks and branches at flood stage.

Broad sand bars are pleasant for camping, but they're not always a part of the natural state of things. They often reflect misuse of land along the water's edge. Stripping river banks of their natural vegetative cover gives erosion a free hand. The finer particles and organic matter wash downstream, leaving heavy sand and gravel in a stream bed that is much wider than it was originally.

You can find a wide variety of natural communities away from the rivers. Pines and upland hardwoods form the basis for these communities, but as always the heavy hand of humanity is evident. In Louisiana and Mississippi it is often the tree farmer and not natural succession that selects the trees (and thus the animals, birds and other plant life).

This has been a brief and oversimplified introduction to the natural heritage of the Delta Country. We hope that you will be able to explore and enjoy it for many years to come. ■

Walk Softly

This book gives you the opportunity to explore and enjoy some of the most beautiful parts of one of the unique regions of the United States. We hope that you will not take advantage of the opportunities without accepting the responsibilities. We have just this one Earth, and our wilderness and wildlands are a most fragile part of it.

Those around you and those who come after you should not have their experience diminished because of what you do and what you leave behind. Some means to this end are:

The general rule about trash is, if you can bring something in with you, you can carry it back out again. Since your packages will be lighter after you've emptied them, you'll have room for other people's junk too, if you find any.

Avoid building fires as much as you can by using portable stoves for cooking. If you build a fire, keep it small, and use only dead, fallen wood. Dead wood will snap in two when you try to bend it; live, green wood will bend without breaking.

Unless your fire was built in a permanent fireplace, erase all traces of your fire (after you are sure that it's out). Scatter any stones that were blackened by the fire, turning sooty sides to the ground. Scatter charred wood away from the trail and campsite. After you break camp your campsite should look as if you had never

been there.

When necessary, dig a small personal latrine well away from camp and from any water supply. Burn toilet paper before covering the latrine hole. If paper cannot be burned, collect it in a plastic bag for proper disposal later. Don't leave tissue flowers scattered around the perimeter of your campsite, or along the trail, or anywhere else.

On steep trails, do not shortcut switchbacks, going either uphill or downhill. (A possible exception—if the trail ahead has been taken as its very own by a skunk, rattlesnake, bear, or other hazard).

Leave those disturbing items at home. Noisy audio gear, firearms, and pets are forbidden on Sierra Club outings, because any of them can destroy the wilderness experience of people far and wide. The place for firearms is at the firing range or, during open season, on legal and safe hunts.

The old ethic of the pioneer, that the world is a lawless and limitless place to be subdued and exploited, must give way. The new ethic is that of the spaceship earth; we must give thought to our fellow and future passengers, because if we don't there won't be enough to go around. We must keep this in mind in the wilderness and throughout our lives. ■



CANOEING

THE CREEKS

Canoeing

In that wet and rainy part of the world that includes the southern portions of Mississippi and Louisiana, the canoe is a very useful way to see the country. Both small channels in the marshes and swamps and broad flood plains in the river basins make for solitude. Trees muffle highway sounds, and swamps and marshes are hard to reach by land. Wilderness experiences are easier to find on the water in this area. Much of the land is intensely exploited, and hiking trail construction is not all it should be, though it's advancing.

The expertise and the equipment you need for the conditions varies with the type of water and the season of the year. Marshes and swamps usually have flat water and abundant wildlife, although the swamps of the great Pearl River and Atchafalaya River Basins have strong currents at times. The rivers north of the coast provide a variety of experiences, from leisurely summer tubing to some very dangerous canoeing at times of high water. There is almost no true white water in the area, though many streams have small drops and riffles that provide a good training ground.

For equipment in canoeing, you will need a canoe and paddles, and a life jacket for each person (both minimum common sense and the law require the latter). Fall, winter, and spring canoeing can be very cold, especially if you get wet and the weather changes. Cold rains can appear miles from the nearest shelter. Be prepared to combat hypothermia.

You'll need food and shelter for overnight trips. Equipment is available for sale or rent in most major cities, and a number of rivers have rentals nearby. Consult the Directory section of this book.

You say you've never done this before, and don't know where to start? That can be overcome too. If you are a Sierra Club member or guest, call the leaders of any trips you are interested in; they will give you an estimate of the skills needed. Many leaders of trips marked as suitable for beginners will give you some instruction. For more formal lessons, some outdoor stores provide courses in canoeing, as does the American Red Cross. Many also sell books on the subject. Consult the Directory. Know your own limitations, and don't go on trips likely to be dangerous to you.

A garbage bag is another important piece of equipment. As long as there were only a few people on the rivers, lazy canoers could leave biodegradable items behind. Now most rivers have a lot of traffic, and nothing degrades fast enough to be invisible to the group coming around the last bend. An empty container is lighter than a full one, an apple core is lighter than an apple; bring it *all* back. That old-timer who says "biodegradable" and throws things away is out of date.

The excitement of fast water, the peace of the forests, the fun of being with friends, the peace and contemplation of the wilderness: canoeing. Join us on the river! ■

Rivers Running

Many small streams and rivers have their origins north of the Louisiana and Mississippi Gulf coast. These streams flow under trees and across fields, join, and grow. At first they are narrow, and trees jam across them frequently, making canoeing extremely difficult or impossible.

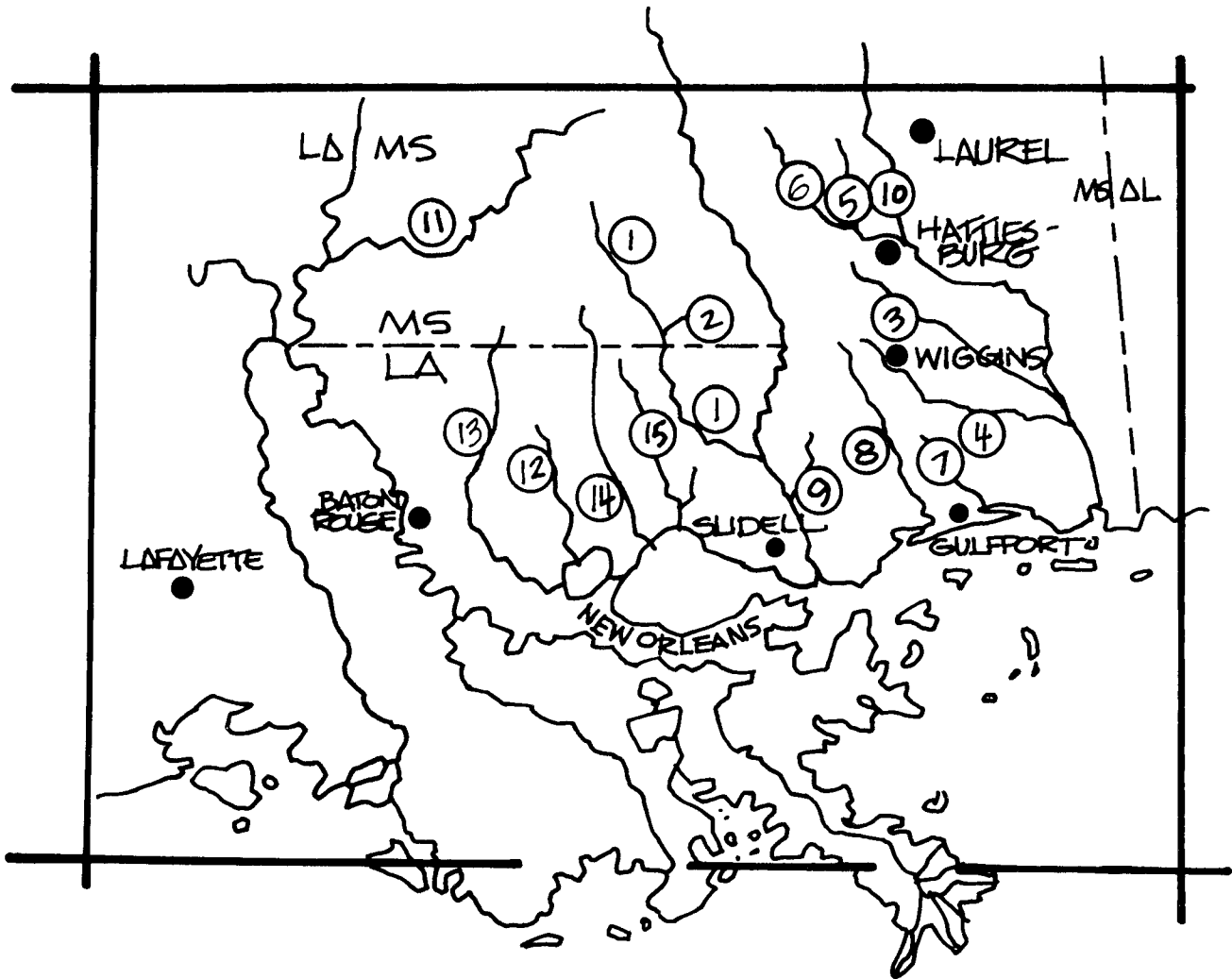
A few more streams join, and lightly laden canoes can pass, though there are still some jammed trees ("pulovers"). Then the creeks broaden and deepen to become rivers. Some are slow and easy, and some have chutes and drops and riffles through sand or clay banks. All have some branches and fallen trees as skill-sharpening obstacles. Most have wildlife on their banks. Finally, almost all of the rivers become too broad and slow for most canoers, and

power boats take over.

The personalities of our rivers change with the seasons. In spring the waters can be high and the currents fast. Sections with fallen trees and snags are dangerous under these conditions. Summer offers easy paddling (it's too hot to paddle hard) and the relief of swimming, splashing, and just lying around in the warm water. Fall is beautiful, but water levels are usually low. The winter has its own rewards and its own danger: cold (and resulting hypothermia).

Bring back all your trash and some of the trash left by other people (you'll probably find some). That way the streams will be cleaner and newer-looking when you return. You'll probably want to return. ■

The Nearby Rivers - Contents



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Canoe trails in the swamps and marshes of southern Louisiana have their own section in this book, immediately following this one.

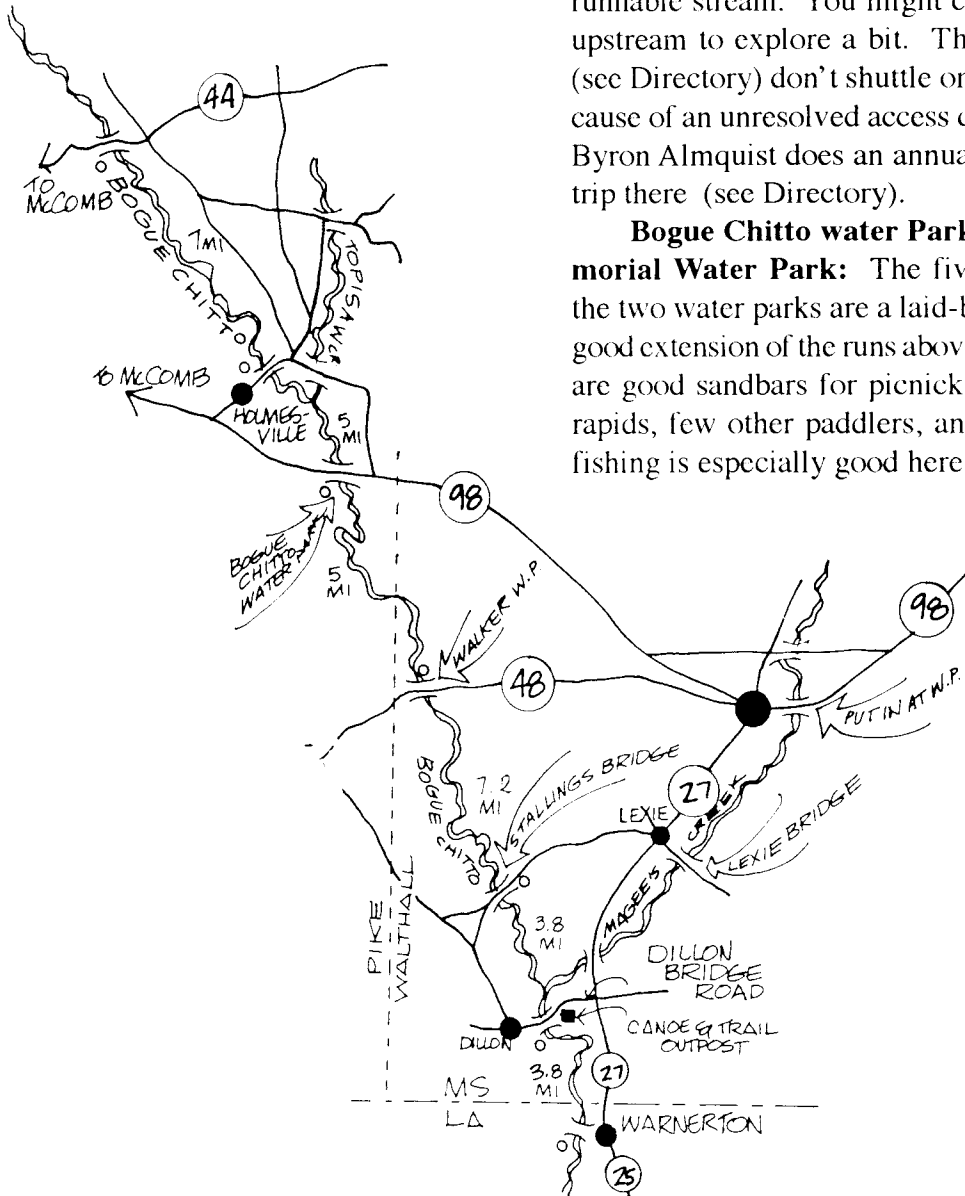
Bogue Chitto River

by Byron Almquist and Jeanne de la Houssaye

From narrow beginnings near Brookhaven to a broad and winding end in the magnificent swamps of the Pearl River Basin, the Bogue Chitto offers almost a hundred miles of year-round canoeing. There are some beautiful stretches above MS 44, but they can be full of snags and pullovers, strenuous at low to moderate water and dangerous at high. Below 44, the going is great, and there are outfitters (see the Directory) for rentals and shuttles.

MS 44 to Bogue Chitto Water Park: The access at the Hwy 44 bridge is steep, but the six miles below are a pleasant day trip, and the upper limit of year-round canoeing. Takeout is at the bridge at Holmesville. Another six river miles will take you to US 98, and just beyond that is the Bogue Chitto Water Park, an easy access with good parking, campsites and bathhouses. Fees are charged for all usages. The highlight of this second six miles is the confluence with Topisaw Creek, a sparkling green tributary, itself a runnable stream. You might consider paddling upstream to explore a bit. The local outfitters (see Directory) don't shuttle on the Topisaw because of an unresolved access dispute, however, Byron Almquist does an annual canoe camping trip there (see Directory).

Bogue Chitto water Park to Walker Memorial Water Park: The five miles between the two water parks are a laid-back day trip or a good extension of the runs above or below. There are good sandbars for picnicking, a nice small rapids, few other paddlers, and no tubers. The fishing is especially good here.

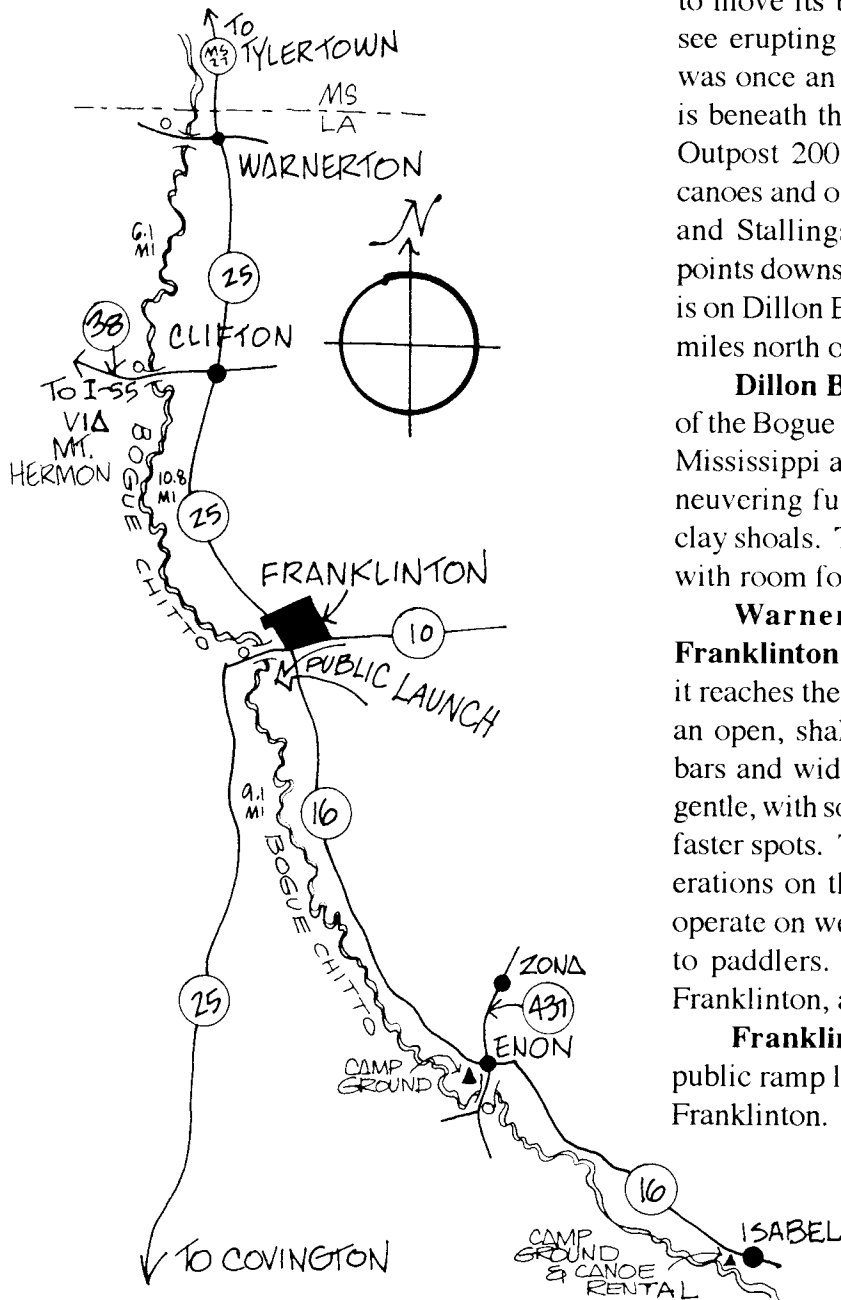


Walker Memorial Water Park to Dillon Bridge:

Walker Park, located 6.8 miles west of Tylertown, MS, on Hwy 48, is poorly maintained despite an attractive pavilion and good launch ramp, but there's lots of parking. Downstream the Bogue Chitto is wide and often shallow, with glorious sand beaches and great rock hunting. In several places the river has cut new channels, an interesting process to observe. Just above Stallings Bridge, 7.2 miles downriver, a soapstone shoal across the river has eroded into a swift, curving drop that is very easy, but lots of

fun, to paddle.

Stallings is an alternate take out, but the 3.2 miles between there and Dillon Bridge contain some of the most fun on the river, a huge shoal that runs diagonally across the river creating a small drop, and Bogue Chitto Falls, which once deserved its name, but is now just a pleasant little bump. Sandstone outcroppings on either side attest to the former height of the falls. The river widens just before Dillon Bridge as it is joined by Magee's creek, and flows along a bluff that it is steadily eroding as the river continues its drive to move its bed eastward. The "geyser" you'll see erupting from the river near the right bank was once an artesian well on dry land. Takeout is beneath the bridge, or at the Canoe and Trail Outpost 200 yards further. The Outpost rents canoes and offers private shuttles to both Walker and Stallings, and by special arrangement, to points downstream. It has a nice campground. It is on Dillon Bridge Road, a left turn off MS 27, 2 miles north of the state line.



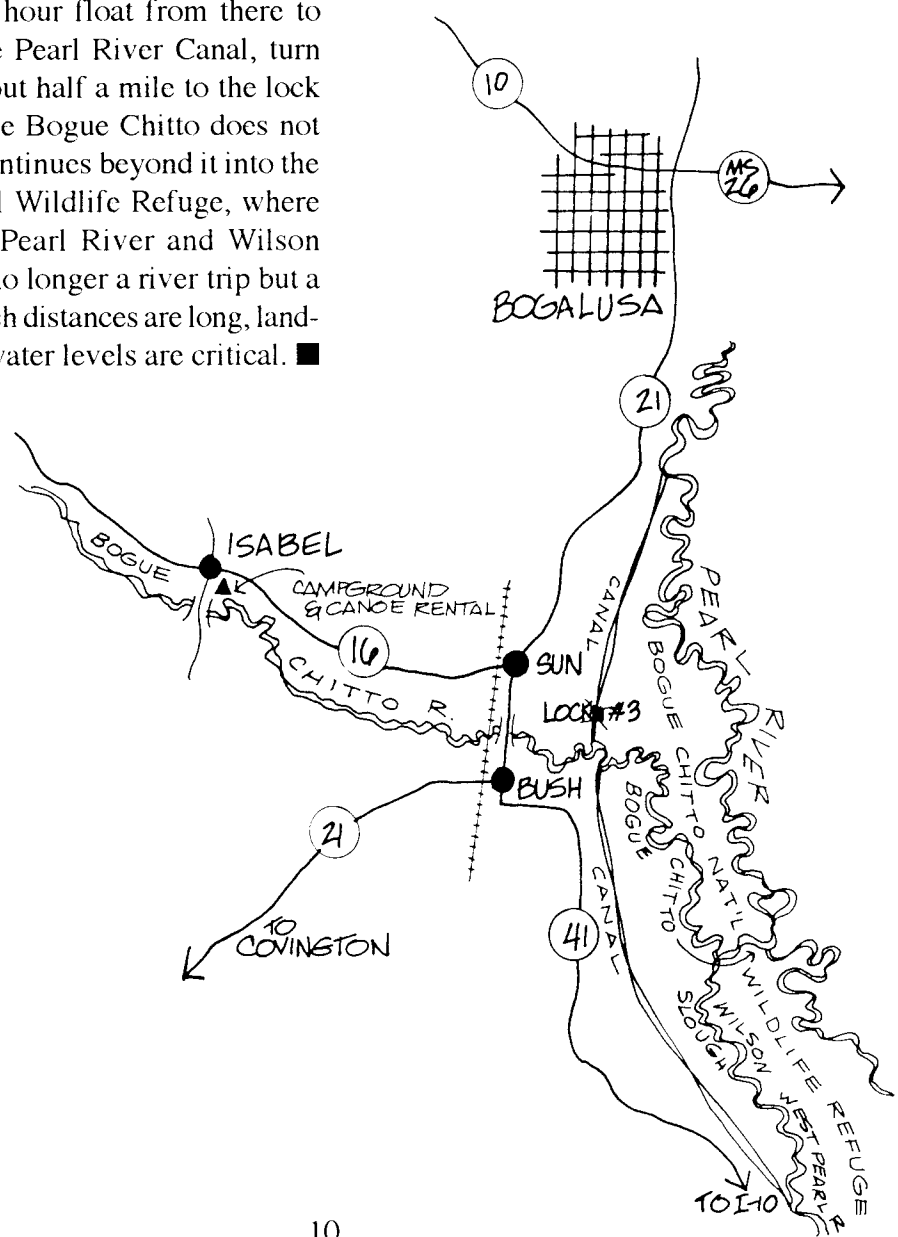
Dillon Bridge to Warnerton: This section of the Bogue Chitto crosses the state line between Mississippi and Louisiana, and offers some maneuvering fun in the way of deadfall and a few clay shoals. The take-out is steep but negotiable, with room for a few vehicles.

Warnerton to Clifton, Clifton to Franklinton: From here the Bogue Chitto, until it reaches the Pearl River Basin, consistently has an open, shallow river bed with frequent sandbars and wide, sweeping bends. The current is gentle, with some natural obstacles and occasional faster spots. There are some sand and gravel operations on these portions, but since they don't operate on weekends, they're seldom a nuisance to paddlers. Take out is below the bridge at Franklinton, at a public boat launch.

Franklinton to Enon: Launch from the public ramp located off LA 16 going south from Franklinton. This is the longest stretch between

access points on the Bogue Chitto, and is rather long for a day trip, but it has more wilderness character than the two sections above it. The canoe rental at Isabel (see Directory) arranges shuttles for this run. Just above the take out point there are a number of camps, and the campground above the Hwy 437 bridge is a good take out, with a fee for parking. You can also take out at the bridge.

Enon to Lock # 3: The campground at the 437 bridge can serve as a put in, and so can the bridge. There are bridges downstream at Isabel and Sun, and the outfitter at Isabel (see Directory) shuttles a 4 hour float from Enon to its own campground, and a 5 hour float from there to Sun. On reaching the Pearl River Canal, turn left (north) and go about half a mile to the lock and takeout point. The Bogue Chitto does not end at the canal, but continues beyond it into the Bogue Chitto National Wildlife Refuge, where it meets up with the Pearl River and Wilson Slough. By then, it's no longer a river trip but a swamp trip, one in which distances are long, landmarks are scarce and water levels are critical. ■



Magee's Creek

by Jeanne de la Houssaye and Kenny Lindsly

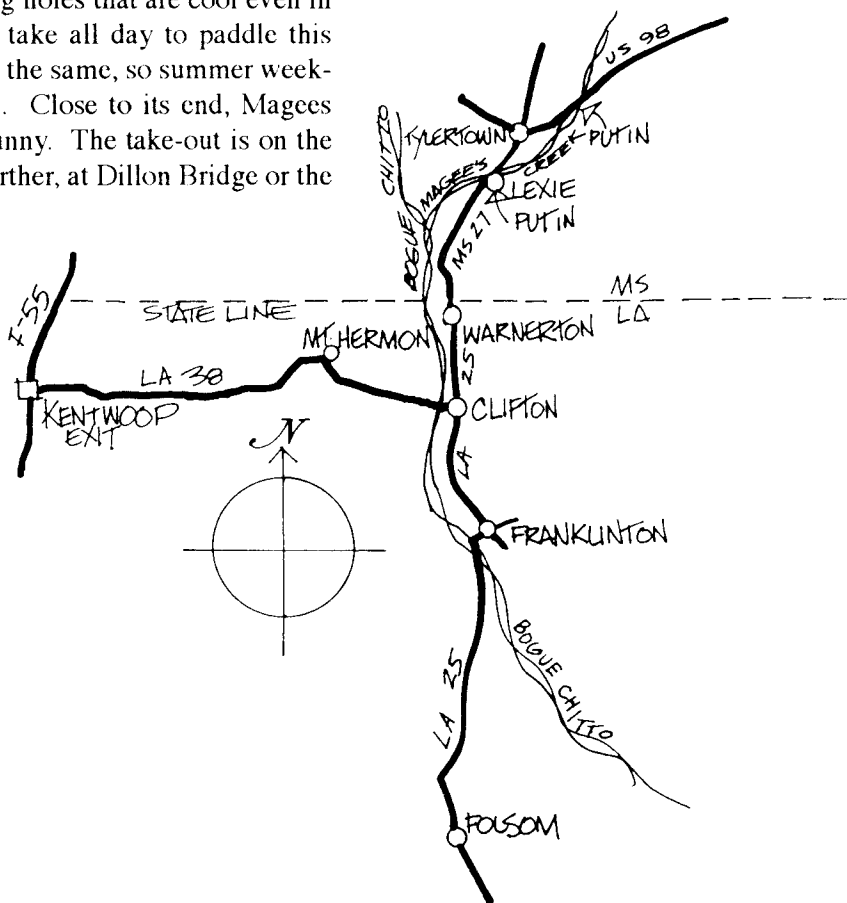
A tributary of the Bogue Chitto, Magee's Creek is runnable below the US 98 bridge at Tylertown. From US 98 the float to the confluence with the Bogue Chitto takes 5 or 6 hours, including a few stops for lunch and enjoying the sandbars and swimming holes. Putting in downstream at Lexie bridge shortens the trip by at least a third and avoids most of the challenges.

Just below Tylertown the creek is narrow and twisting, and some maneuvering skills are necessary to negotiate fallen trees. The creek has recently cut a new channel and is especially narrow and swift at that point. It meets up with its old bed at a very large clay shoal, where it drops a good five feet in gentle increments. There is often not enough water to float this drop, and canoes must be pulled over it. When there IS enough water, this is a rapids *guaranteed* to dump the inexperienced or the unwary!

Below Lexie there are few difficulties and many pleasures. Beaches both shady and sunny are spots to kick back, picnic, and look for fossils. Several large tributaries form swimming holes that are cool even in midsummer. We like to take all day to paddle this stretch. Lots of folks feel the same, so summer weekends can find it crowded. Close to its end, Magees widens out and is very sunny. The take-out is on the Bogue Chitto, 1/2 mile further, at Dillon Bridge or the Canoe and Trail Outpost.

Magee's is serviced by the Canoe and Trail Outpost, which rents and shuttles canoes to both put-ins and to several venues on the Bogue Chitto. They also shuttle private canoes. They have parking, showers, and a snack bar, as well as a shady, rustic campground with bath houses.

Getting there: To reach the Canoe and Trail Outpost, take Louisiana Hwy 25 north from Covington. The highway zig-zags through Franklinton, but if you bear left, you can stay with it. When you see the Washington Parish Fair Grounds you know you're on the right road. LA Hwy 25 becomes MS Hwy 27 at the State Line. Exactly two miles north of the State Line, turn left on Dillon Bridge Road at the Outpost sign. In a little less than a mile, you'll see the Bogue Chitto on your right, and then you'll cross a bridge over an old channel. The Outpost is on your immediate left, before you cross Dillon Bridge. ■



Black Creek

by Cornell and Jan Tramontana

One of Mississippi's prime canoeing streams, Black Creek flows, for much of its course, through DeSoto National Forest, providing paddlers with a true wilderness experience. The fossil-hunting is outstanding. Sand and gravel bars, clay shoals, and clear, tannin-colored water make this beautiful creek a mecca for canoeists and campers, so solitude is rare during warm weather, especially just above and below Brooklyn, where Black Creek Canoe Rental (see Directory) has its outpost on Old US 49. To reach the outpost, take US 49 north of Wiggins and watch for the signs at Brooklyn.

Hwy. 11 to Brown's Bridge, Brown's Bridge to Camp Dantzler Bridge: These two 5-mile sections lie outside the National Forest, and present more challenges than those that lie within. Above Brown's, the creek is narrow and twisting, and shallows and pullovers may be encountered at low water. Just below, a small shoal is fun for beginners, and riffles and gravel bars are numerous. There is adequate parking on the northeast side of the Hwy 11 Bridge, and plenty of parking at Brown's Bridge.

Camp Dantzler Bridge to Brooklyn (Old US 49 Bridge): Just below Camp Dantzler the banks are heavily wooded and sandbars are scarce. At low water some clay outcroppings provide excitement, and a large sandbar a mile and a half below the bridge is a good campsite. Eight miles down this thirteen-mile stretch, Black Creek enters DeSoto National Forest, and **Big Creek Landing** provides access and a picnic area. Here the creek begins to broaden and slow down, and sand beaches become frequent. Take-out is at Old US 49, across the creek from Black Creek Canoe Rental.

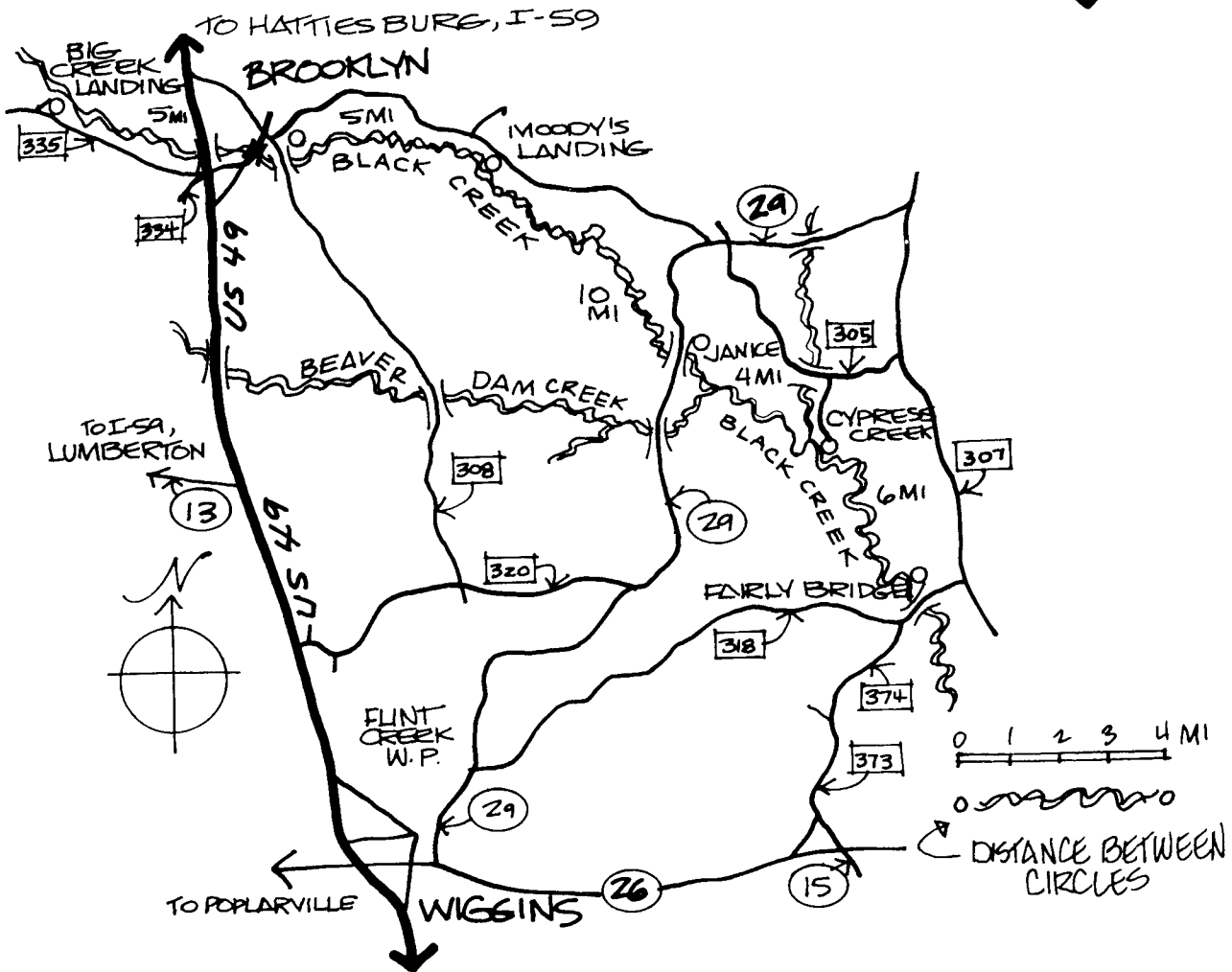
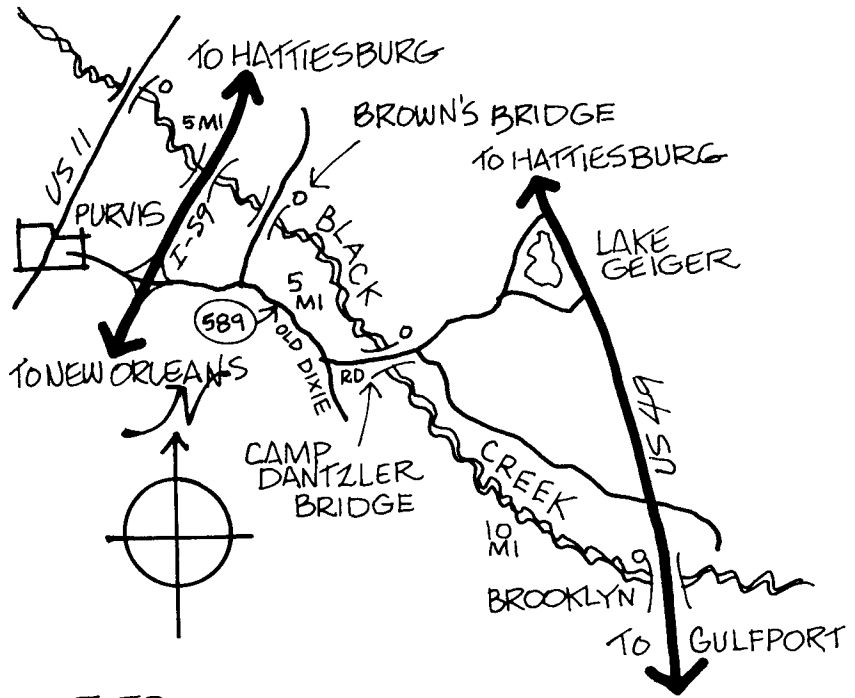
Brooklyn (Old US 49 Bridge) to Moody's Landing: There's a color-coded depth gauge at the bridge. Brown means you should canoe above Brooklyn only, green means optimum paddling conditions, yellow is for experienced canoeists only and orange means don't go. A call

to Black Creek Canoe Rental will get you the info you need. At low water the stretch down to Moody's is (literally) a drag. At a good water level it floats a canoe easily, and provides a fun-filled, 5-mile, 3 1/2-hour day trip with lots of obstacles and sunny beaches. Moody's Landing is an improved Forest Service site, and Black Creek Canoe Rental runs frequent shuttles.

Moody's Landing to Janice Landing: High banks and a towering hardwood forest give this ten-mile, 5-hour section the awesome aspect of a cathedral. From here to Fairly Bridge Black Creek is designated a National Wild and Scenic River. The take-out at the Hwy. 29 bridge at Janice is another improved Forest Service site.

Janice Landing to Fairly Bridge: This is an outstanding stretch of creek for canoe camping, providing a proliferation of sand beaches, a few easy riffles, and an established campground four miles downstream from Janice Landing. The Sierra Club favors this section to introduce beginners to canoe camping. The campground at Cypress Creek, an improved Forest Service site, is car-accessible, so a three-way shuttle can allow gear to be left in camp and paddlers to enjoy the creek unencumbered — and no one has to learn the hard way not to overload a canoe! The entire run is only 10 miles, allowing for lots of stops and plenty of time at the campground, where there is a neat rope swing. The take out at Fairly Bridge is another Forest Service development, and there Black Creek leaves the National Forest. Black Creek Canoe Rental Shuttles to all locations within the National Forest.

Below Fairly Bridge: River banks are largely private property from here to the creek's confluence with the Pascagoula, and the creek becomes slower and swampier. There are about 6 creek miles between Fairly Bridge and MS 26 (between White's Crossing and Benndale), but a good 20 miles from there to MS 57. There is no further public access to Black Creek. The next take out is many slow, swampy miles away, at Three Rivers on the Pascagoula. ■



Red Creek

by Jeanne de la Houssaye

The creek earns its name with its clear, red-brown water. For most of its canoeable length, it is wild and remote, and less crowded than Black Creek to the north. Earl Higgins of the New Orleans Sierra Club runs an annual three-day trip from Hwy 49 to Ramsey Springs. A more ambitious leader might try to make it in two, but Earl wisely allows for scenery, solitude, swimming and basking. Two outfitters rent canoes and shuttle at US 49; see the Directory for details.

Hwy 26 to Perkinston, 10 miles: When the water is high enough, an especially beautiful and remote section of the creek above 26 is runnable, but most of the time a proliferation of deadfall makes the going slow and tedious. Below 26 there are few if any pullovers, though some paddling skill is needed to maneuver around obstacles and over one small shoal just upriver of the old US 49 bridge (which should be run on the extreme left). Kirby Creek enters on river right at about midway, and is ideal for picnicking, exploring, and hunting for petrified wood. A profusion of white sand beaches marks the second half of this run. Paddling time is 5 to 6 hours.

Getting there: The Hwy 26 bridge is 3 miles east of the intersection of US 49 and MS 26 at Wiggins. An alternate put-in at Batson's Fish Farm, a mile closer to Wiggins, is by reservation only; call the outfitter at Perk Beach.

Perkinston to City Bridge, 6 miles: It's this section of Red Creek we mean when we say that *most* of the creek is wild and uncrowded. Most people who paddle Red Creek paddle this stretch, and for good reason: It's short, easy, shallow and the beaches are wonderful. The two campgrounds at 49 and the easily accessible beach at City Bridge attract non-paddling picnickers and sunbathers with their barbecues and boom boxes, but in between is a beautiful float with more than enough beaches to go around. The US 49 Bridge at Perkinston is 4 1/2 miles

from Wiggins, and 17 miles north of Gulfport. See the Directory for the two outfitters located there. They service the entire creek.

Getting there: To reach City Bridge from Perkinston, drive 2 miles south on 49 and turn left on Sunflower Road. Another two miles later, turn left at Sunflower Church for another two miles. Watch for the radio tower and turn left at City Bridge Road — *not Old City Bridge Road, which comes first!* It's less than two miles to the bridge; the parking area is to the right of the road on the south side of the bridge.

City Bridge to Ramsey Springs, 14 miles: Past the noise at City Bridge, Red Creek becomes quiet and wild again. Sand bars are profuse, and many of them are high and large, making perfect campsites. The creek is often shallow, and a few pullovers may be encountered, but the remoteness makes it all worthwhile. Most of the land along the banks is part of either the Red Creek State Wildlife Management Area or a University of Mississippi forest. At Cable Bridge Landing, where there is no longer a bridge, the local folks use the old bridge road to access the beach and the tributary there. They are likely to be the only people encountered between City Bridge and Ramsey Springs, though it's not unheard of to see backwoods families fishing, or even a baptism.

Getting there: The take-out at Ramsey is a concrete boat launch south of the Hwy 15 bridge reached by a long, twisting road on the west side of the highway. It's hidden from view, and not a good place to leave your car. The lady in the brick house across the highway will let you park there for a few dollars. The outfitter at Perk Beach can arrange it for you. To find Ramsey Springs, pass up the turn for City Bridge and go almost ten miles (you're on Wire Road) to the intersection with MS 15 and turn north. You can also reach it by going north to MS 26 and east to MS 15, and then south to the bridge.

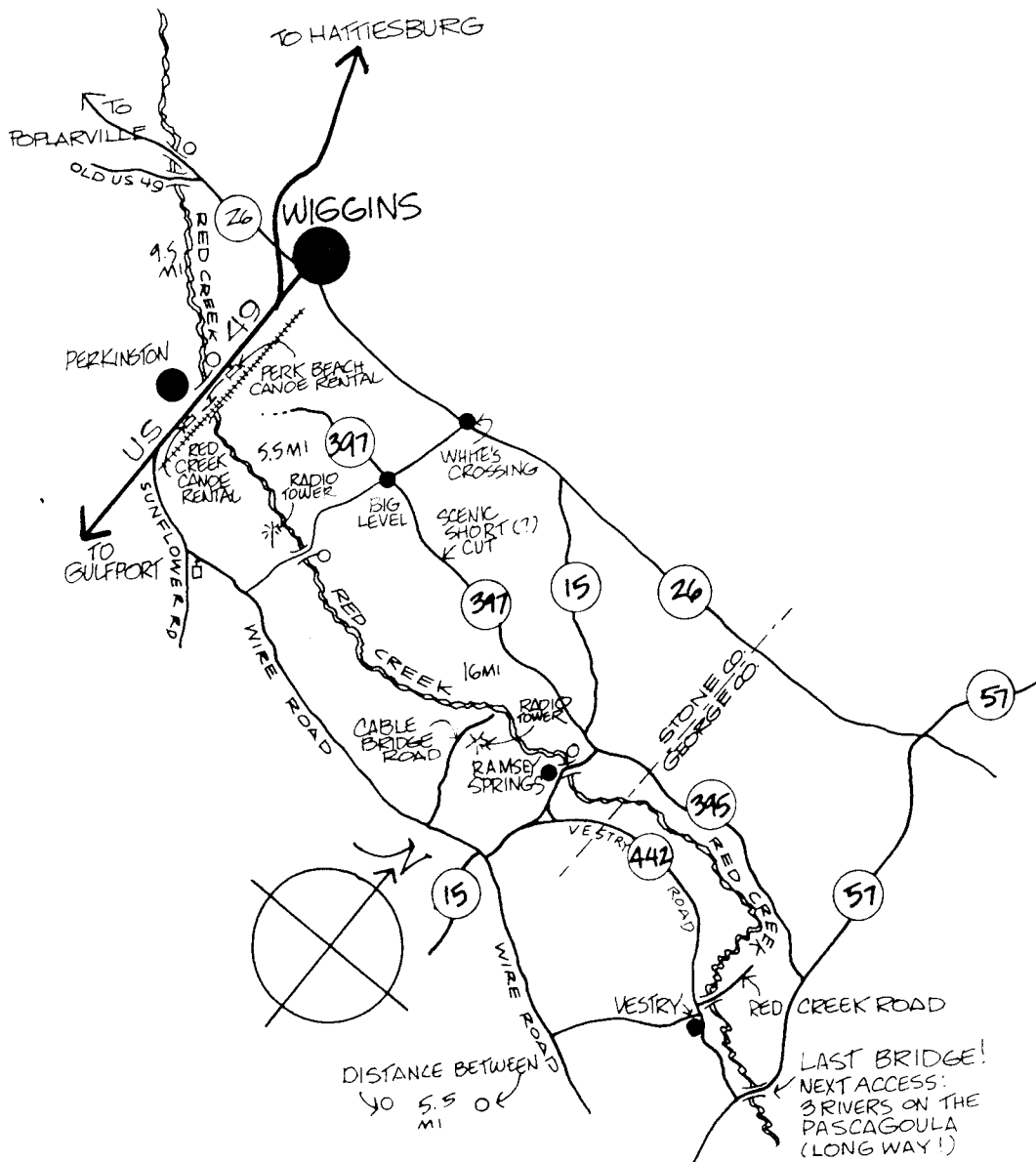
Ramsey Springs to Vestry, 12 miles: Be-

low Ramsey Springs, Red Creek becomes deeper and slower as it flows through the Red Creek Game Management Area. At this point the creek becomes deep enough for motorized fishing boats, so paddlers can no longer count on solitude.

Getting there: Vestry can be reached via Hwy 442 (Vestry Road) off MS 15 south of Ramsey Springs or Hwy 395 off MS 15 just north of Ramsey Springs. The bridge there is on Red

Creek Road, which crosses Vestry Road just west of town. A store a half mile east at the intersection of Biloxi Road is a better place to leave your car overnight than by the bridge. Below Vestry, another five creek miles brings you to another bridge at MS 57, less than 3 miles east of town. Access is easy, but it's no place to leave a car overnight.

Below 57, Red Creek becomes somewhat swampy as it approaches its confluence with Black Creek and the Pascagoula River. ■



Okatoma Creek

By Jeanne de la Houssaye

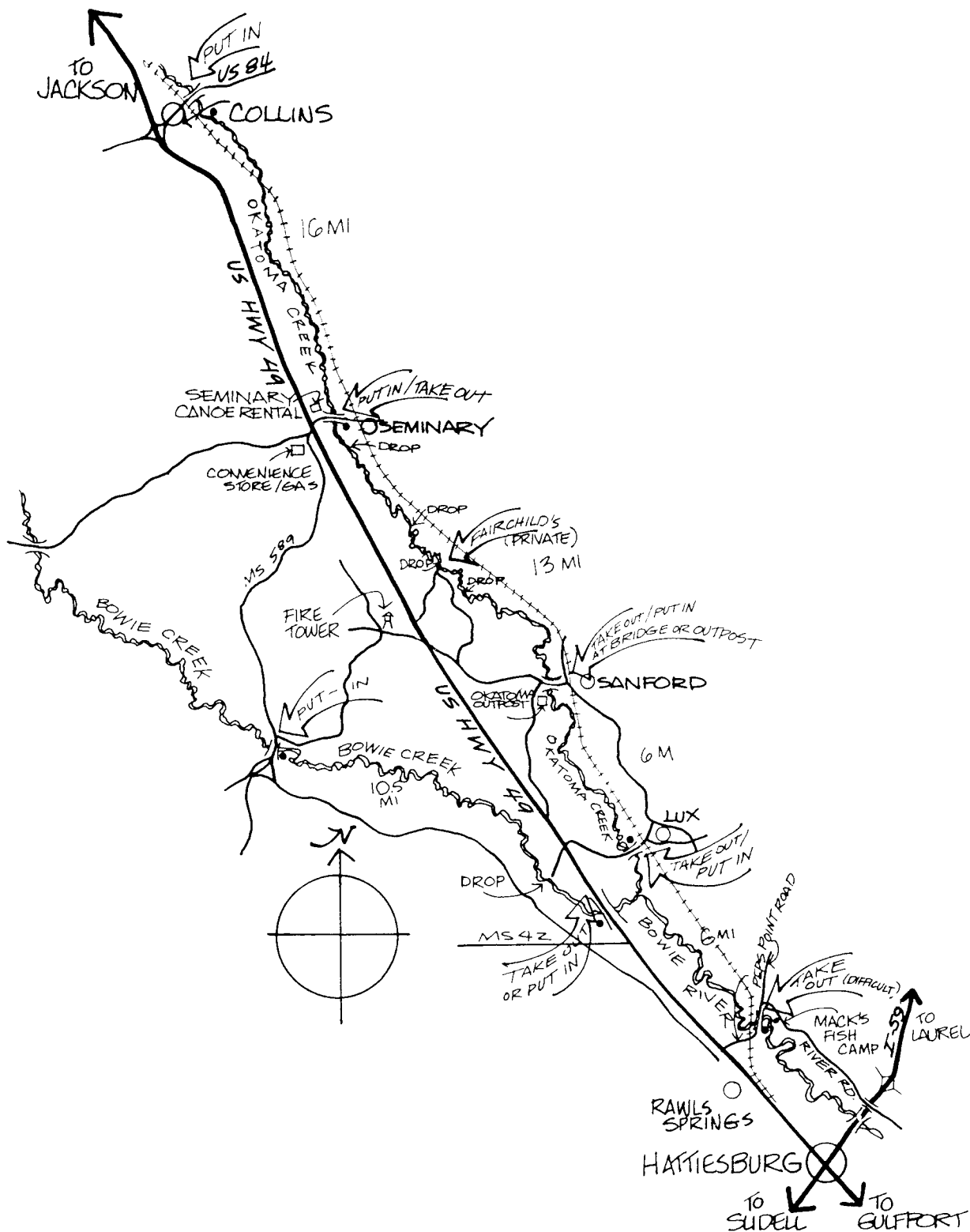
On a sunny summer weekend, the Okatoma is crowded, and with good reason: four good-size drops make the Okatoma the area's only "whitewater stream", and even seasoned kayakers go there to practice their rolls before going up to the Ocoee and the Nantahala. The Okatoma is canoeable all year below Seminary, but the water levels change rapidly. A call to either of the outfitters (see Directory) is a wise idea. The lower the water, the harder the drops will be to negotiate, and very high water is universally *verboten*. The scenery is lush and wooded for most of its length.

Collins to Seminary, 16 miles: For the last several years, this section has been so choked with deadfall that it has been unrunnable at low water and hazardous at high. Recently the canoe rental business at Seminary was bought out by some ambitious new owners who have cleared the creek of the major obstructions. They assure us that the creek above Seminary is just waiting for paddlers looking for a great long day trip. Seminary Canoe Rental (see Directory) will shuttle on this section.

Seminary to Sanford, 13 miles: This is where it's at: just a quarter of a mile into the paddle, the creek whooshes over an irregular clay ledge which must be run on the left. Between

there and Fairchild's landing, the creek drops twice more: a narrow double elbow that calls for an abrupt right, then an abrupt left, turn (if you don't make it you slide up on a big flat rock from which you can portage to calmer waters), and Okatoma Falls, which drops as much as three feet. You can stay afloat by keeping to the middle and paddling straight into the hydraulic at the bottom. Just past the falls is Fairchild's Landing, where you can end your trip by prior arrangement with the Okatoma Outpost. You can take out a half-mile downstream and take in the creek's newest rapids, created by the spring floods of '95, by arranging with Seminary Canoe Rental. The creek below this point is less adventuresome, less crowded and more peaceful. The take outs are at Sanford, either at the Outpost or at the MS 598 bridge.

Sanford to Lux, 6 miles: The steepest drop on the Okatoma was once two miles into this stretch, but the years have eroded away the clay, and there is only one ledge at low water, but there is peace and quiet and beautiful scenery. The Outpost shuttles to Lux. If you go further, you must do your own shuttle, but the mile and a half to the confluence with the Bowie is shady and remote, and the five miles on the Bowie to Peps Point are well worth the considerable effort at the take out. (See the Bowie Creek section.) ■



Bowie Creek

Jeanne de la Houssaye

I've seen it spelled "Bowie" and "Bouie." However the signs and maps read, it's all the same river, and it's a winner.

A long day float of 10 1/2 miles begins at the MS 589 Bridge 7 miles south of Seminary, MS and ends at US 49. Access is on the upstream river left side of the bridge, but vehicles must descend on the downstream left side and go under the bridge. There is a footpath on the upstream side. Parking space is limited, so it's a good idea to leave all but one car at the take-out where there is a large and highly visible parking lot. However, there have been no reports of damage at the MS 589 bridge.

Between MS 589 and US 49, the Bowie (a creek at this point) meanders between thickly grown banks with few signs of human encroachment. It's rare to find people along the banks and even rarer to encounter other canoeists. Deadfalls require maneuvering skills and make a few pullovers. There are few beaches, none big enough for camping. At one point, a clay shelf on both sides of the stream forms a chute, and is a good place for a swim and lunch. This creek saves its best for last—about an hour from take-out, a clay outcropping forms a shoal and drop that may also be portaged.

There is no gauge on the Bowie, but if the water is within an inch or two of the bottom of the concrete boat launch at the US 49 Bridge, the shoal should be at its best. It takes at least 6 hours to run this section, so get an early start since this shady stream doesn't catch the sun's last rays.

The 5.5 miles of Bowie Creek between US 49 and Peps Point are studded with white sandbars and an occasional shoal. You're unlikely to find other paddlers on this section for the same reason that might change your own mind about running it: a truly hellacious take-out at Peps Point Bridge where you'll have to pass your canoes hand-to-hand up a rip-rap embankment. At least there's some parking space, and if the creek itself isn't reward enough, there's always the 30-foot buffet bar at nearby Mack's Fish Camp when you're done (closed Sundays). The Mississippi Department of Wildlife Conservation suggests that you paddle another 4 miles and take out at the Interstate 59 bridge. Maybe they don't know that's illegal.

No outfitters service the Bowie, but the one at Seminary or the one at Poplarville (see Directory) might make an exception for a large enough group. ■

Big Biloxi River

by John Sevenair

The lower section is a good beginner stretch. The portion of river shown on the map is also good for wilderness experience; though bridges are frequent, other signs of civilization are very rare.

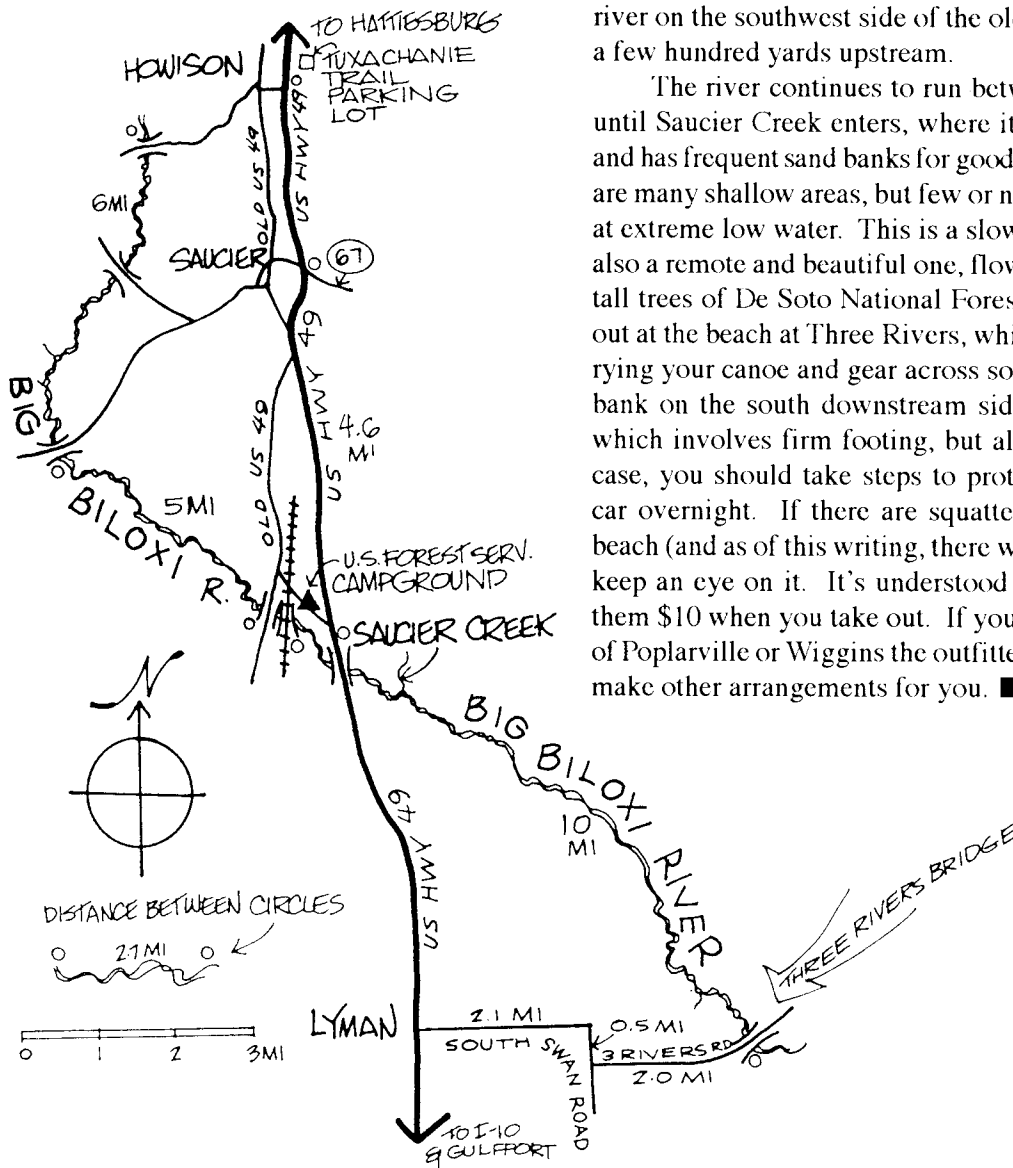
Howison to Saucier. If you pass the Tuxachanie Trail parking lot on your right while going north on U.S. 49, you passed the Howison turnoff. This turn to the west is about a hundred yards south of the trailhead. The parking area and put-in point are reached by turning right a few yards west of the river. This stretch is very narrow and twisting, overhung with trees. At high water it is pleasant and challeng-

ing, but at low water there are too many pullovers and shallows for canoeing at all.

Saucier to the Forest Service Campground. This stretch is wider than the previous one, with some clay banks and small rapids at moderate water levels. Campsites, other than at the Forest Service campground, are rare. There is an alternate takeout point at the old U.S. 49 bridge just upstream of the campground.

Forest Service Campground to Three Rivers Bridge. To reach the river from the campground, you can use the set of concrete steps at the upstream end of the fence in the main camping area. Alternatively, there is a small parking area with a path to the river on the southwest side of the old U.S. 49 bridge a few hundred yards upstream.

The river continues to run between clay banks until Saucier Creek enters, where it becomes wider and has frequent sand banks for good camping. There are many shallow areas, but few or no pullovers even at extreme low water. This is a slow stretch, but it's also a remote and beautiful one, flowing through the tall trees of De Soto National Forest. You can take out at the beach at Three Rivers, which involves carrying your canoe and gear across soft sand, or at the bank on the south downstream side of the bridge, which involves firm footing, but all uphill. In any case, you should take steps to protect your shuttle car overnight. If there are squatters living on the beach (and as of this writing, there were) ask them to keep an eye on it. It's understood that you'll give them \$10 when you take out. If you rent canoes out of Poplarville or Wiggins the outfitter may be able to make other arrangements for you. ■



Wolf River

by John Sevenair, with updating information from
Tom Lowenburg, Terry Vinson, and Jeanne de la Houssaye

This south Mississippi stream has few overt signs of civilization on its banks. Over much of its length, however, the tree-cutters have been at work all too recently, and trees on the bank are small or nonexistent. Still, the Wolf is a favorite for beauty and fun, and is very convenient for New Orleans canoers. Down to the Wolf River Cemetery use the Savannah quadrangle for more detail. There is canoe rental on the Wolf; for information about it see the Directory.

Hickory Springs to Silver Run. This stretch has a lot of congestion and pullovers, which makes canoeing hard work. This problem decreases as you near Silver Run.

Silver Run to Sellers. This is a fine piece of river. There are few pullovers (none at medium water), and in a few spots the river narrows and rushes between clay banks. There are lots of obstacles and the ability to maneuver a canoe is required. It is a good idea to check the water level before committing to the river. Sand bars for camping are hard to find on the lower half of the trip. This section and the next make a fine two-day float trip in higher water.

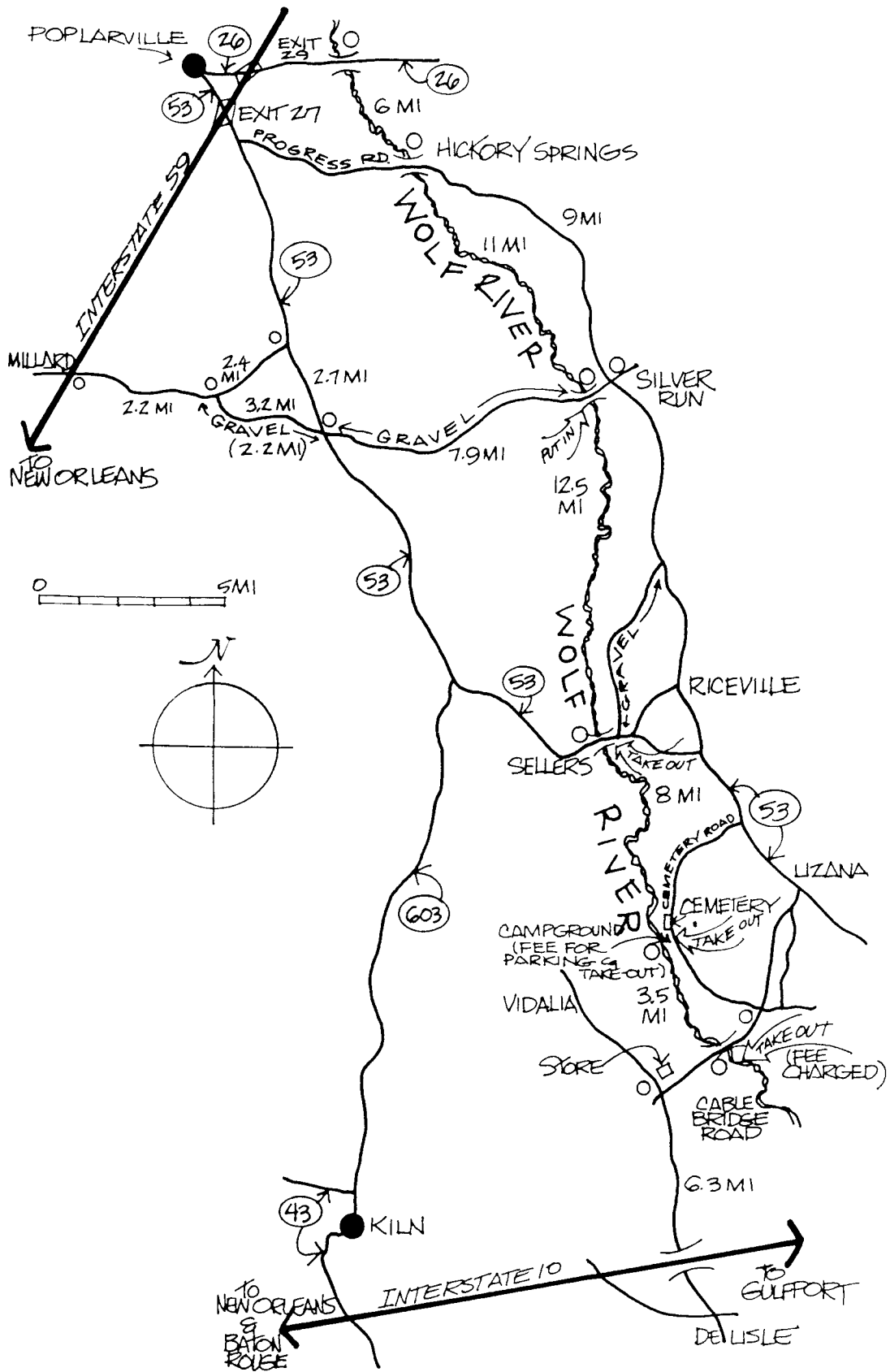
To shuttle your cars from Silver Run to Sellers, begin by going east one mile to the first paved road. There is a stop sign here, along with a "Silver Run 4H Club" sign and others. Turn right and go 2 miles to the next paved road. There is a store here with a "Clover Brand Feeds" sign on the left. Turn right and go 4.2 miles. Turn right

at a paved road that looks a little like a driveway. There is a house here with a green roof. This is Talley Shaw Road. Go 5.1 miles to the end of this road at Hwy 53. Turn right and go 0.6 miles to the Wolf River bridge. Cross the bridge and pull over on the right.

Sellers to the Wolf River Cemetery. Just below Sellers the river changes considerably. Large sand bars are common, though there are still some riffles and obstacles. A canoe trip from Sellers to the Cable Bridge Road is another good two-day trip. For a one-day trip it's very long, unless the river is high and the current faster than usual.

Wolf River Cemetery to Cable Bridge Road. This stretch is a good one for tubing. The Cemetery Road turnoff is 5.1 miles from the Sellers river crossing on Hwy 53 on the right. To reach the cemetery, go 4.5 miles from this turnoff to a dirt road on the right. The river is 0.3 miles from the turnoff. From the south, go about a mile east of the river on Cable Bridge Road and turn left onto Cemetery Road. Three miles later take the second dirt road to the left. This road can be muddy and hard to handle in wet weather.

The final takeout point is a sand bar just downstream and to river left of Cable Bridge Road. It is a privately owned canoe renter. Check the Directory and make prior arrangements. This takeout point is on the Vidalia U.S.G.S. topo quadrangle. ■



Hobolochitto Creek

Bryan McDaniel, Baton Rouge Sierra Club

Hobolochitto Creek is a little-known stream in southeastern Mississippi, known to locals simply as "Boly Creek." Though short, slow, shallow, and narrow, it is also scenic, remote, tranquil, and ideal for the floater who needs a break from commercial existence. The Bogalusa 1:100,000 topo map provides good coverage.

East Hobolochitto Creek. The East and West branches join to form Hobolochitto Creek about 10 miles northeast of its mouth at Slough Creek and just east of the Pearl River. The east branch is the smaller of the two and should only be attempted following a water level check. Floating it is most practical during periods of high water or immediately after good rains. The section from the Gipson Cemetery Road to the junction of the east and west branches is best because it contains the fewest logs. There is fair access southwest of the Gipson Cemetery bridge and northwest of Hwy. 11 bridge.

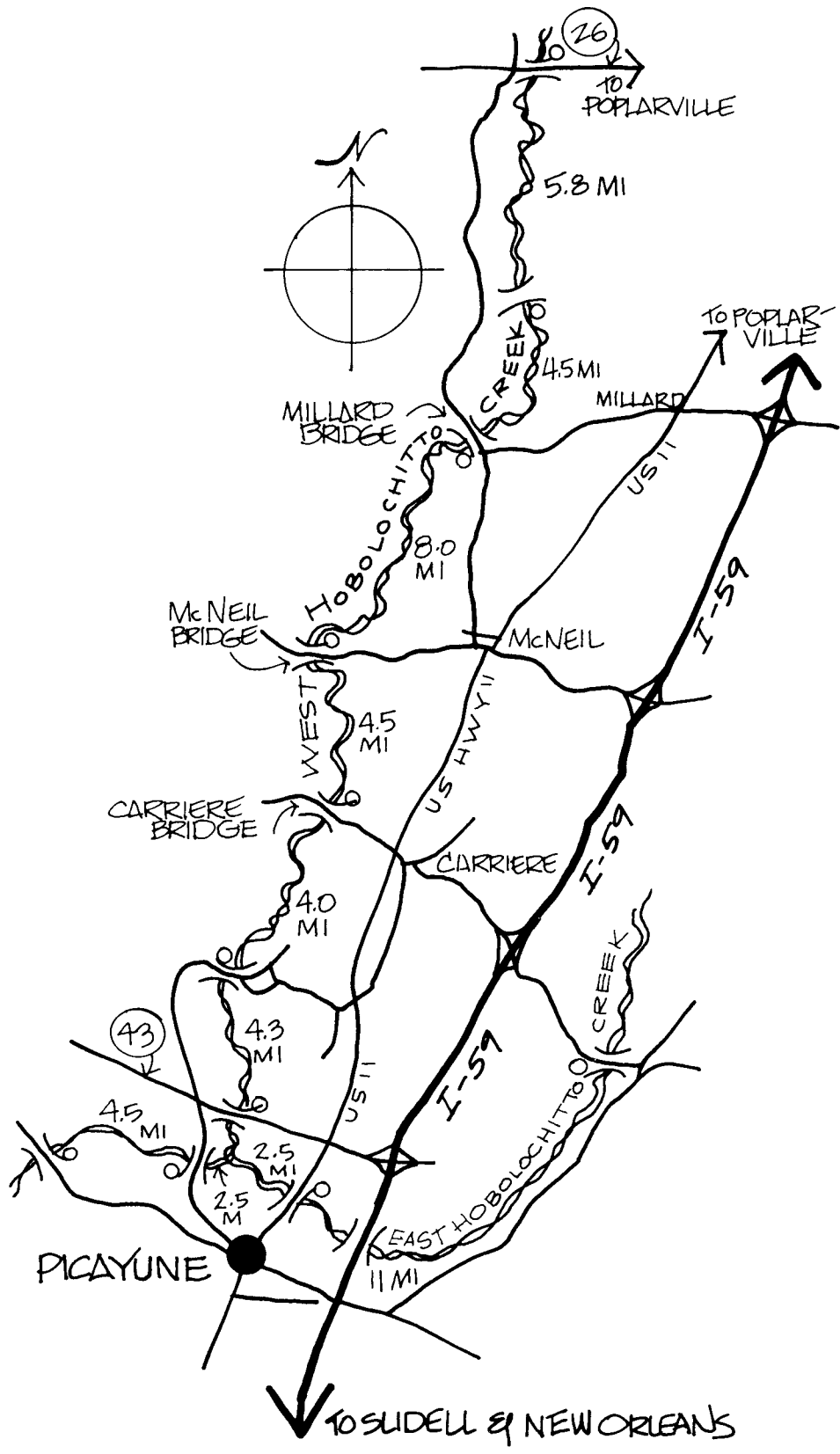
West Hobolochitto Creek. The west branch is favored among local enthusiasts because of its greater water volume. It is the scene of canoe races sponsored by groups based in Pica-yune, MS. Still, the creek is not recommended during low water seasons because of exposed sand bottoms and logs. The popular sections run between State Hwy. 26 and the Pearl River. This stretch is wild and overgrown. Sandbars are numerous but afford camping space for only small groups. As you float this stream you can observe the bottom through the clear water and sky

above, or sunbathe on the glistening white sandbars along the shore.

Access Points

1. Hwy. 26 Bridge - Eleven miles from I-59; Somes Chapel Rd. turns L just beyond bridge. Access at northeast corner (long portage).
2. Three miles north of Millard Bridge or five miles S of Hwy 26 bridge on Somes Chapel Rd., then go east. Northeast access is best but still tedious.
3. Millard Bridge - Southwest access (portage down a narrow bushy trail).
4. McNeil Bridge - southwest access. There is a parking area.
5. Carriere Bridge (George Ford Road) - Southwest access is best.
6. Liberty Rd. north - Three miles north of Hwy. 43 Bridge via the second paved right west of the bridge. Parking area with picnic table and good access on the southeast side.
7. Hwy. 43 Bridge - Northeast access. May be a long portage if the dirt road hasn't been graded lately.
8. Liberty Rd. south - Southwest (south side downstream) access. Portage: as #7.

Most access is more difficult on "Boly Creek" than on better known streams, but isn't it worth it to get away from it all? ■



Leaf River

by Leonard Naquin

You'll encounter fine shoals on this stretch, which runs 8 miles from Moselle to Eastabuchie. Some are among islands of cypress trees. With 3 miles remaining to Eastabuchie, a concrete boat ramp on river left, parallel to the bank, can serve as an emergency take-out. But with 1.5 miles remaining, one starts to hear the sound of falling water. Depending on the river level, the Leaf drops about 3 feet here, among mushroom-shaped islands of red and yellow colored clay.

Nervous paddlers can walk their boats through shallow shoals on river left. Confident paddlers should scout the chute on the far right before running it, checking for strainers after the drop. Life vests should be worn as some protection against any broken branches underwater. There is a convenient sandbar on river right after the drop.

All is not perfect on the Leaf. Immediately downstream of the put-in on the left (east) side of the river you will see the Southern Hens poultry processing plant, which is usually quiet on weekends. This and sewer pipes from private camps all vie as suspects for the moderate pollution levels in this otherwise scenic stream. More scenic clues are tributaries feeding the river with cleaner water. After 2 miles, the Leaf flows under an I-59 bridge from west to east.

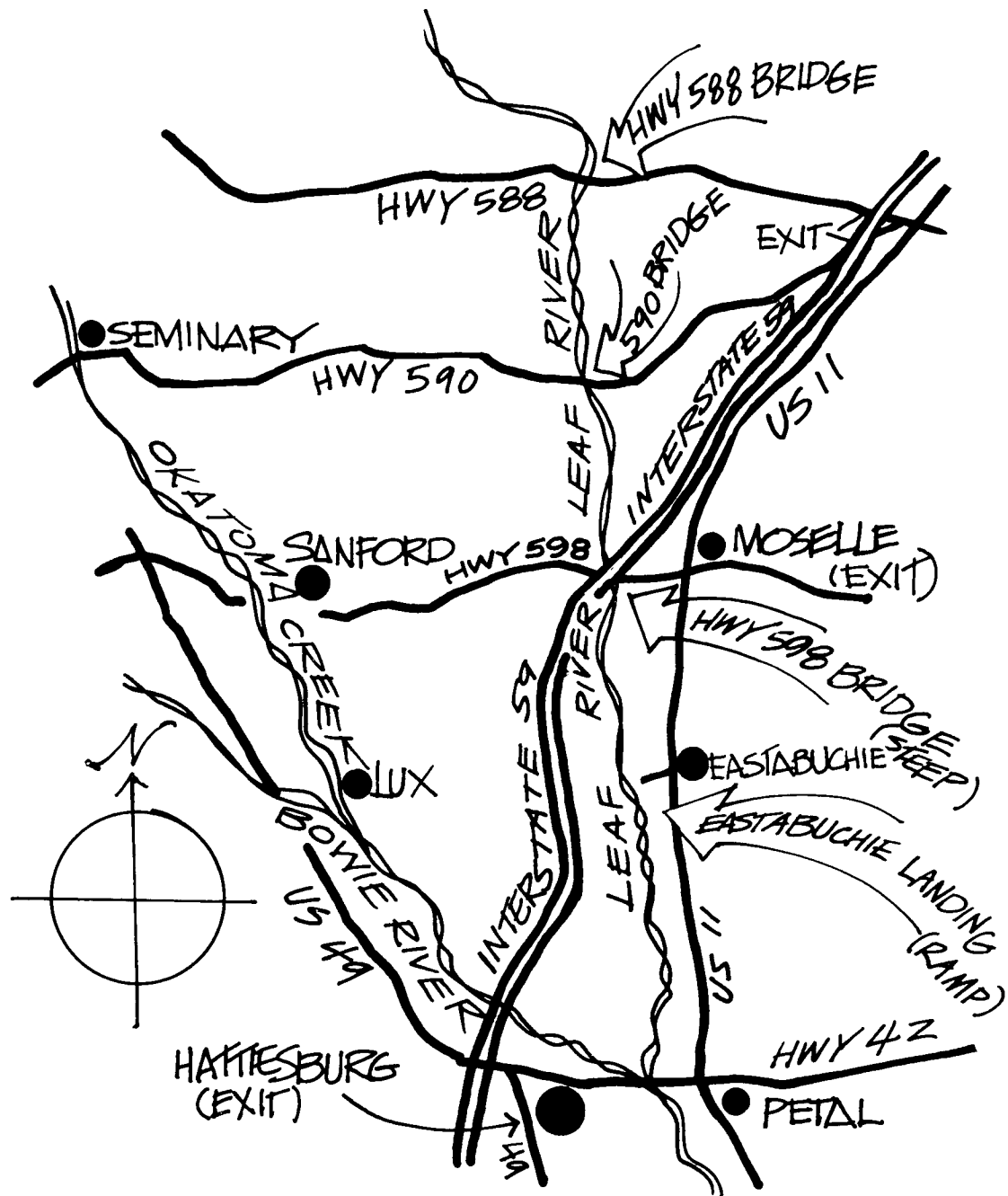
The take-out, preceded by the remnants of an

old railroad bridge, is on river right, a concrete boat ramp at the Eastabuchie Campground, which is now littered and abandoned. Leave your car here overnight only if it is comprehensively insured. If you float under the concrete and steel bridge for Monroe Road, you've enjoyed yourself too much and just missed the take-out.

Although we haven't explored the two sections below Hwy. 588 and Hwy 590, we hear glowing reports of riffles and rapids, and are anxious to try them.

Getting there: To reach the put-in, take the Moselle exit (#80) from I-59 north of Hattiesburg, turn left (west) from Moselle on the unmarked county road for 1.3 miles to the Leaf River at the Moselle Power plant. Access off road left, just after the bridge. The incline is steep, rutted and tricky when wet. There is ample parking for surviving vehicles under the bridge.

To reach the take-out by car, take the Monroe Road exit (#73) from I-59 north of Hattiesburg, follow Monroe Road left for 1 mile from the Eastabuchie sign at the "T" intersection. The Eastabuchie Campground is at the end of an unmarked blacktop road on the left just before two slough bridges followed by the larger bridge across the Leaf River. ■



Homochitto River

Mel Bellar, Baton Rouge Sierra Club

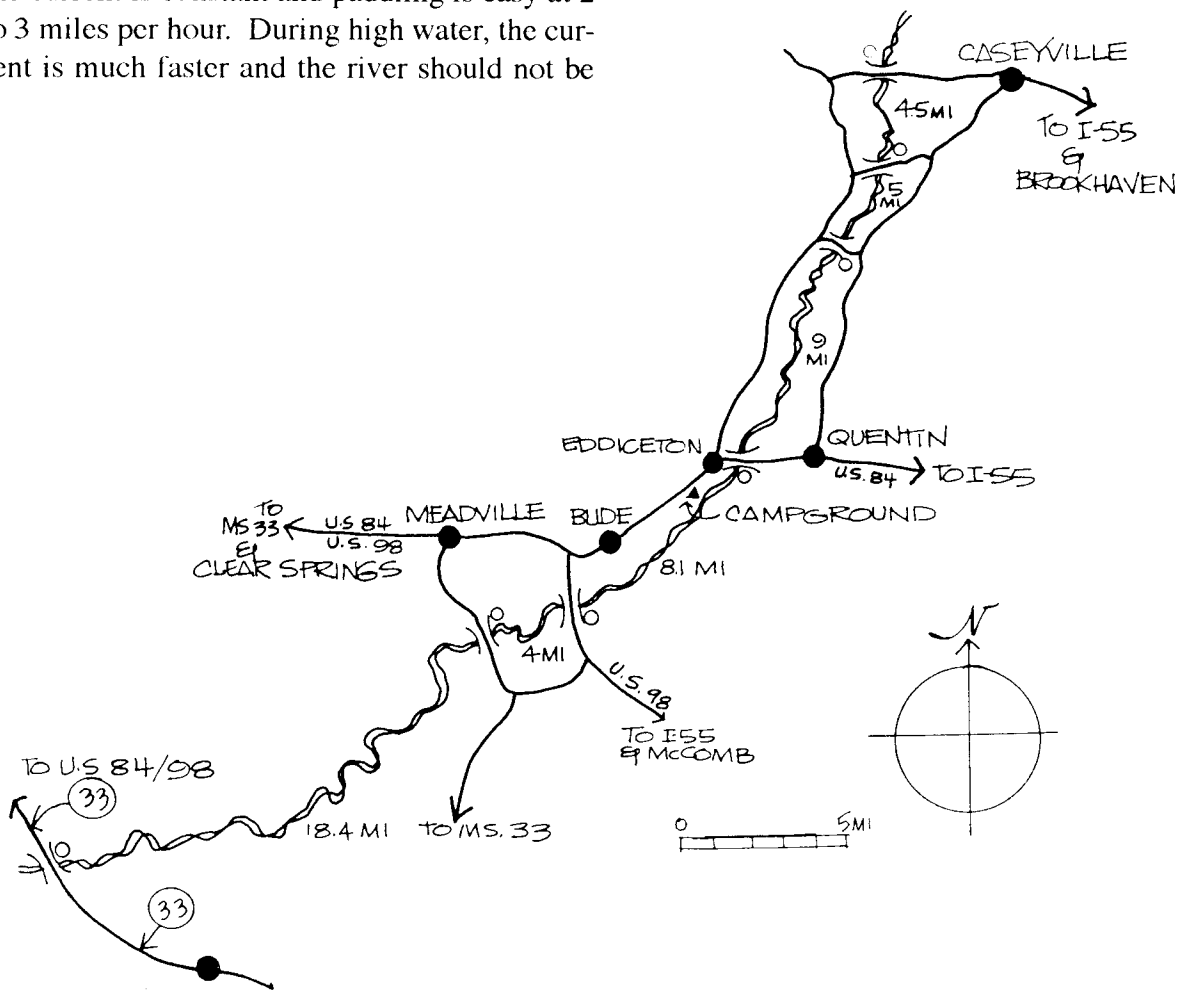
This report covers the 48 mile section of the river between MS Hwy 550 and MS Hwy 33. This section flows through the Homochitto National Forest and is therefore almost completely free of development or pollution. The water flows from several large springs just north of State Hwy 550. It is crystal clear and cold, so cold that trout can be found in it.

It flows over a wide sand basin and is almost completely free of logs and fallen trees. Isolated campsites are abundant. Many species of wildlife may be seen, including deer and wild turkey. Due to the 120 foot drop in elevation, the current is constant and paddling is easy at 2 to 3 miles per hour. During high water, the current is much faster and the river should not be

attempted by novices. At low water there will be several easy drags. Because of the sand there are no falls, but there are plenty of chutes.

A good, long one-day trip is from State Hwy 550 to U.S. Hwy 84. There is a large fully equipped public campground just south of U.S. Hwy 84 at Eddiceton at the take-out. The trip time is 7-10 hours long. A shorter one-day trip, about four hours long, is from this campground to the road south of U.S. 98.

You can put in or take out at any of the seven bridges shown on the map. ■



Tickfaw River

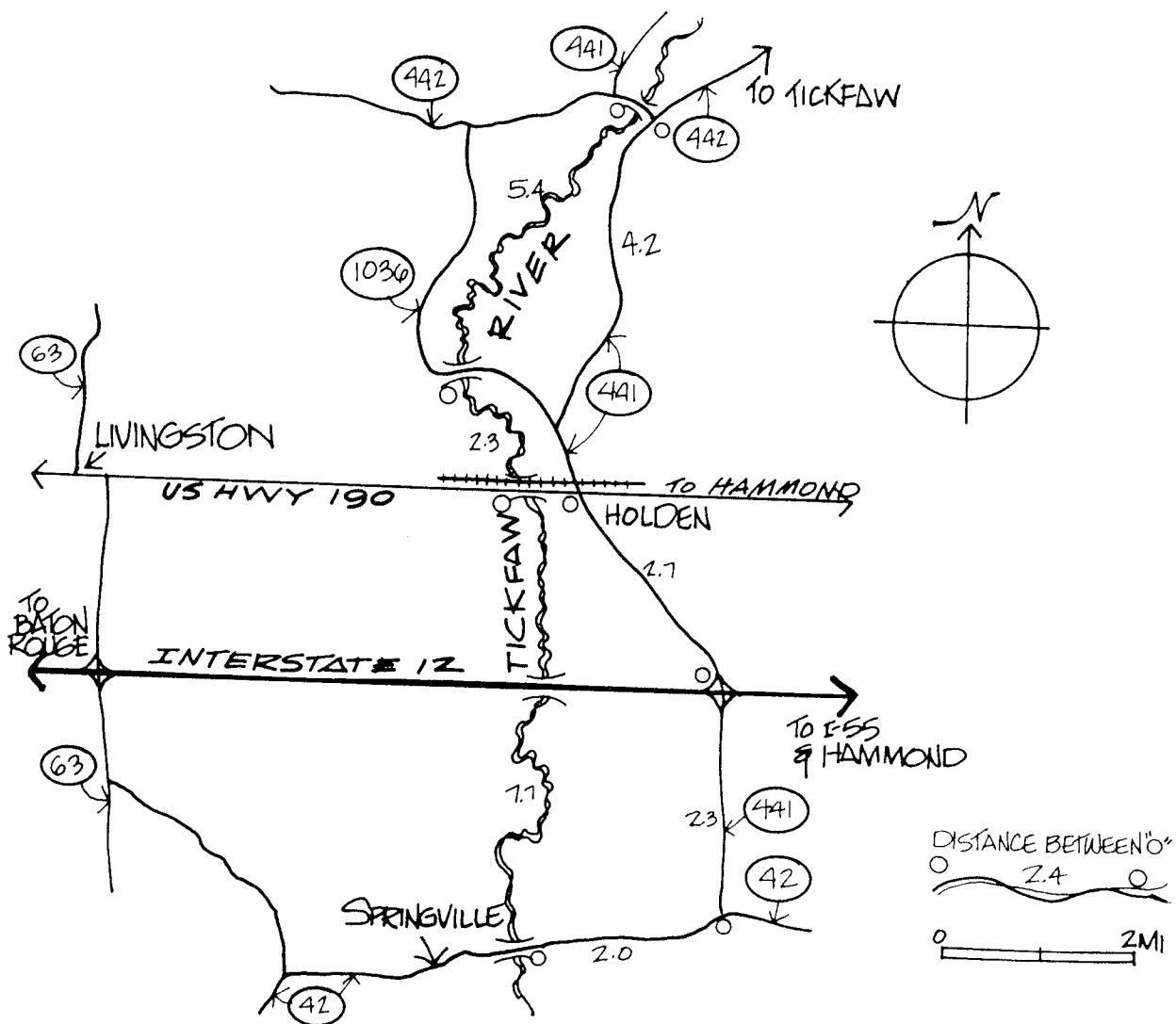
by John Sevenair

The Tickfaw River is a little-noticed stream that runs west of Hammond south into Lake Maurepas. It has gained the reputation of being exceptionally scenic, with a cool, clear current and a sheltering canopy of tree branches. Because of its narrowness, log obstructions, and infrequent campsites, this stream is best explored on day trips by small groups.

U.S. 190 in Holden is the most narrow and overhung with trees. Many have fallen across the river, which means that there will be pullovers at almost all water levels. The portion of the river between Holden and Springfield is more open but still very remote. In both of these sections campsites are almost nonexistent.

The section between La. Highway 441 and

For more details refer to the Holden and Frost topographic maps. ■



Amite River

East Fork

by Dan Earle, Baton Rouge Sierra Club

The East Fork of the Amite is canoeable in Southern Mississippi near the Louisiana border. About four miles of the East Fork above where it meets with the West Fork to form the Amite River can be used to extend length of trips or to make a good day trip in itself. The river in this section does have some pullovers so one should plan to travel light. The stream is narrow and scenic with high banks, overhanging trees, and

few sand bars.

To get to the access point in Mississippi, take LA 1044 out of Chipola off of LA 432. About 1.2 miles beyond the state line a dirt road crosses; turn to the west. There is a bridge across the river about 1.5 miles from the turn. There is parking available off the road here for a couple of cars.

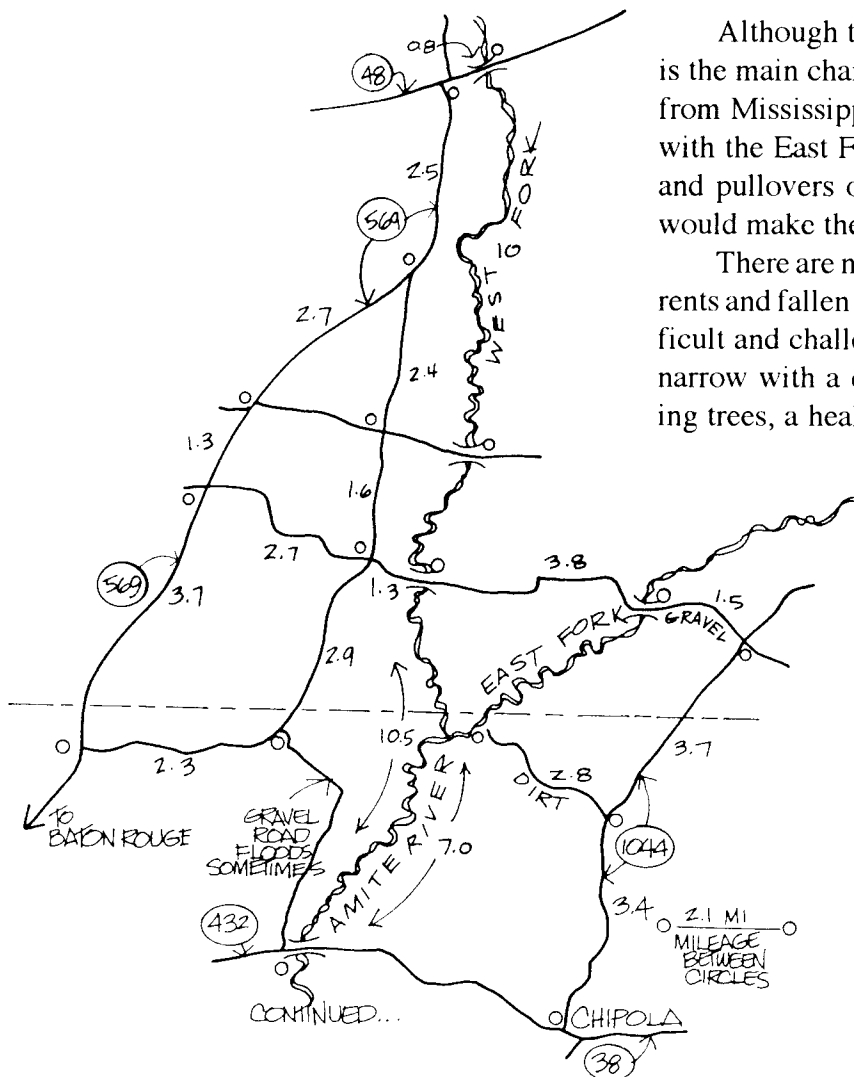
The East Fork above this point has too many pullovers to be enjoyable for canoeing.

West Fork

by Bryan McDaniel, Baton Rouge Sierra Club

Although the East Fork of the Amite River is the main channel, the West Fork is canoeable from Mississippi Hwy. 48 south to its junction with the East Fork. There are quite a few logs and pullovers on this section, and a light boat would make them easier.

There are no noticeable drops, but swift currents and fallen trees can make maneuvering difficult and challenging. The stream bed is quite narrow with a continuous supply of overhanging trees, a healthy hidden forest free of devel-

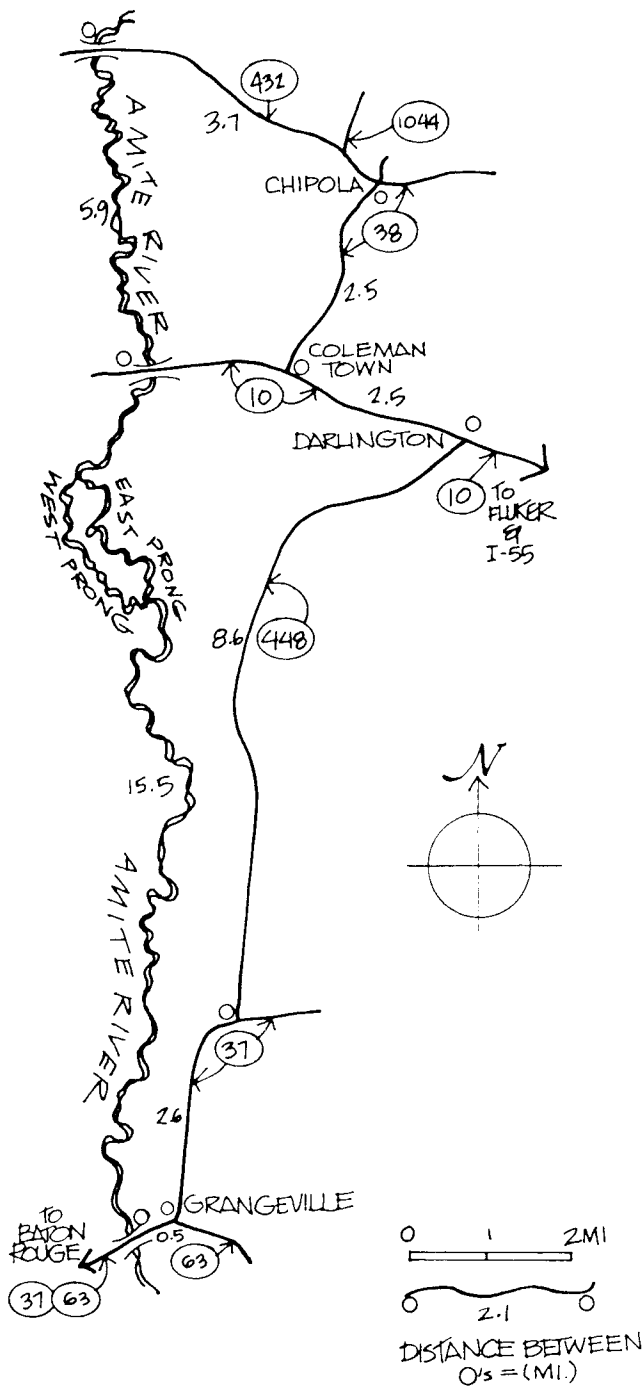


State Line to Hwy 10

by Bryan McDaniel, Baton Rouge Sierra Club

The upper Amite River from the confluence of the East and West Forks down to LA Hwy 10 has a dependable water volume, thus reducing pullovers. It provides some enjoyable stretches of riffles and swift current, coupled with twisting paths through fallen trees. Access is possible on a parish road which comes to a dead end on the east bank of the East Fork about half a mile upstream of its intersection with the West Fork. From there, to LA Hwy 432, the floater will experience a pleasant undisturbed trip of about seven miles. There are few significant sand bars for camping.

The sandbars increase somewhat below 432, but unfortunately so does the development. The area between 432 and LA 10 is very popular locally for motorcycle races. This becomes apparent from periodic sounds roaring through the trees. Many permanent camps are situated along this section, too.



La Hwy 10 to Grangeville

by John Sevenair

Here the Amite River is wide and relatively slow, with some branches and trees to dodge but no pullovers except at extreme low water. Not far south of Hwy 10 the river splits. The East Prong forms the main channel, and a short portage around a log jam leads to the West Prong. This is narrow, with a few pullovers, overhanging trees, and a strong feeling of wildness, which makes it a good change of pace from the main channel. Even in the main channel the few camps and sand and gravel operations do little to disturb the feeling of remoteness.

The stretch from LA 10 to Grangeville, with six to eight hours paddling, is a relatively long one day trip. There are plenty of sand bars for camping. This is a good stretch to take in low water. In high water conditions the river can be very wide and bland. ■

opment. The sections furthest upstream are slower and shallower; the best parts are the ones just north of the state line.

Tangipahoa River

by John Sevenair

Once the Tangi was known as Louisiana's classical canoeing river. It was (and still is) a very beautiful stream. Along with easy access from I-55 and the presence of one of the area's few canoe and tubing rentals, this made it very popular. Then pollution from dairy farm wastes and untreated sewage was discovered in the river, and warning signs were posted at the bridges. Paddlers left for other streams.

Cleanup efforts are succeeding. Local landowners, municipalities, and environmental groups are working to make the Tangi safe for swimmers and canoers again. Pollution is far

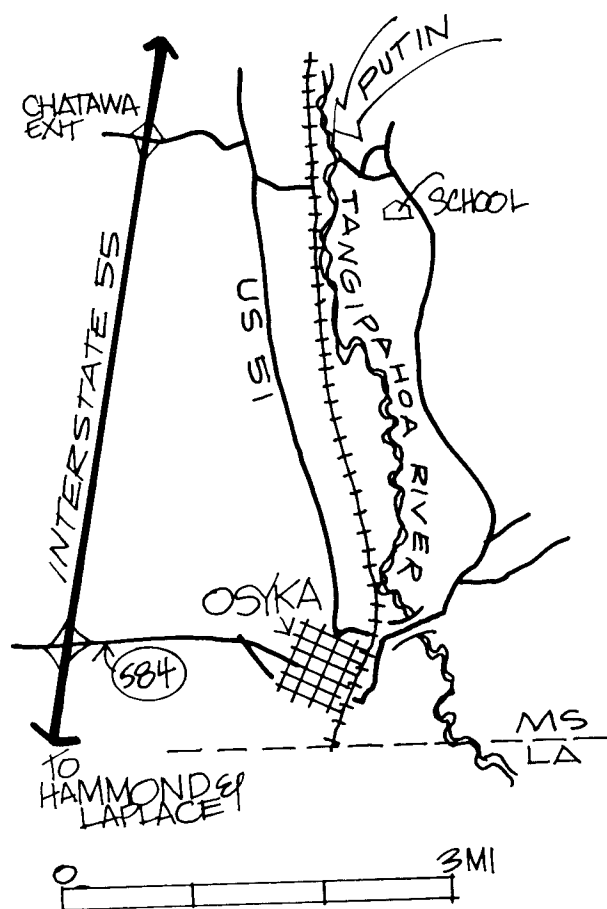
far below previous levels on this superb stream, and there is a canoe outfitter serving the river once again (see the Directory).

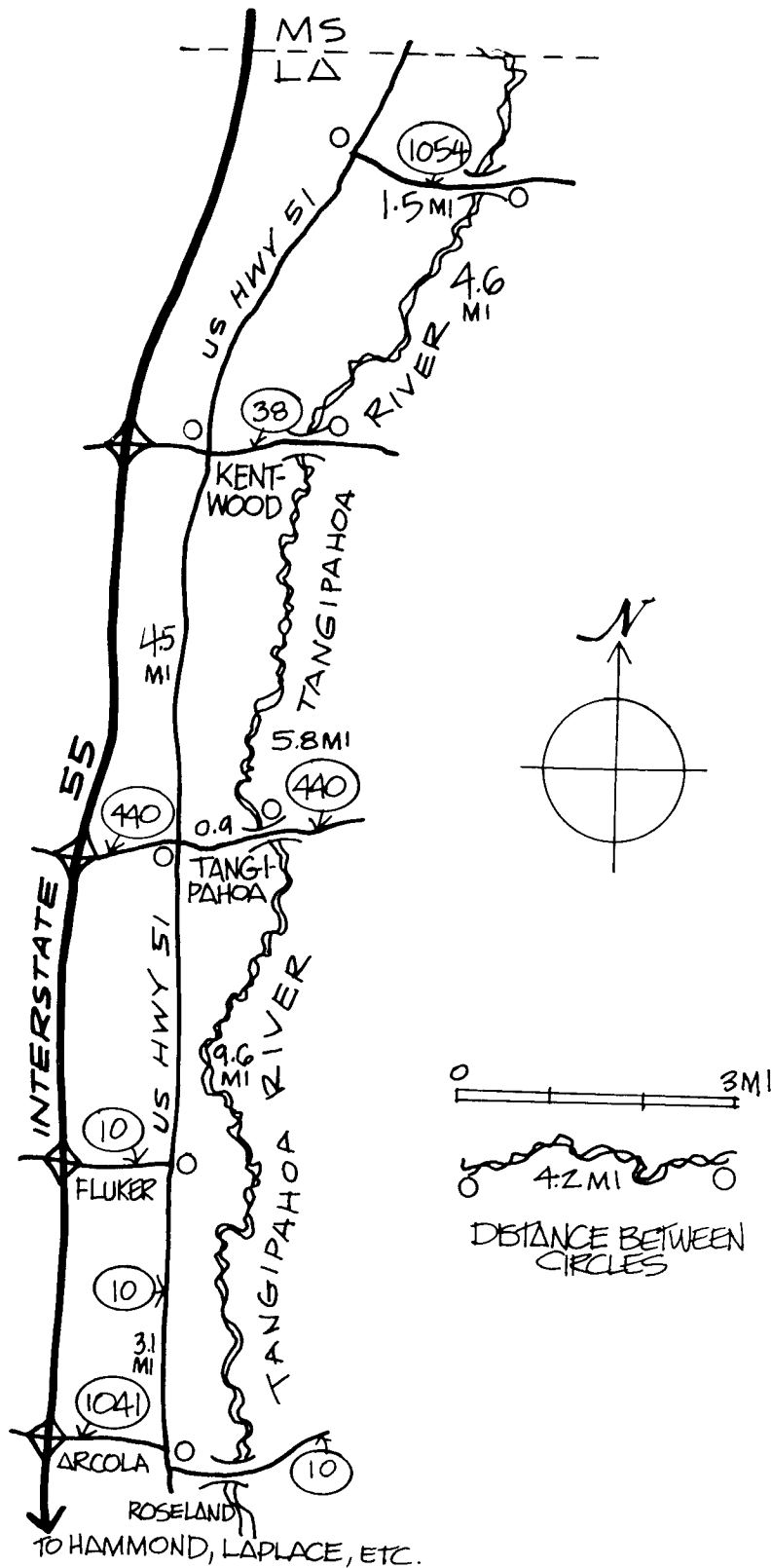
Chatawa to Osyka. This six-mile stretch of river has several pullovers, and can be a struggle at low water. When the water is high and the current fast, this portion (and most of the rest of the river) can eat canoes. There are a number of deep areas and few sandbars. In these Mississippi portions your topo map is the Osyka quad.

Osyka to Kentwood. The river is relatively deep and remote here. The river enters Louisiana just south of Osyka. LA Hwy 1054 crosses the river 1.7 miles south of Osyka and 3.7 miles north of Kentwood. LA 1054 has no I-55 exit, but can be reached via US 51. This bridge can be used to adjust the length of the trip, which totals about eight miles in length.

As the river nears Kentwood it also nears the boundary of the Kentwood and Springcreek quadrangles; you'll need both if you want the detailed information topo maps provide. If you want to avoid a chaos of topo sheets and don't feel the need for the greatest available detail, you might try the Amite 1:100,000-scale map. It covers all of the Louisiana sections of the Tangi described here. The paddling time from Chatawa, MS, to Kentwood, LA, is about eight hours.

Kentwood to Tangipahoa. The river is often narrow and twisting, overhung with trees, remote and scenic. Because of the many obstacles and several pullovers this is not a section for beginners. If you can maneuver your canoe well enough to handle this section, you're ready to start white water. Like the rest of the upper river, this section is somewhat dangerous when the river is high.





Tangipahoa to Arcola.
 This section has no major obstacles, and is the beginning of what was once the popular part of the river. There are some challenges left, however. Sandbars for camping are more frequent and some near Arcola are really large.

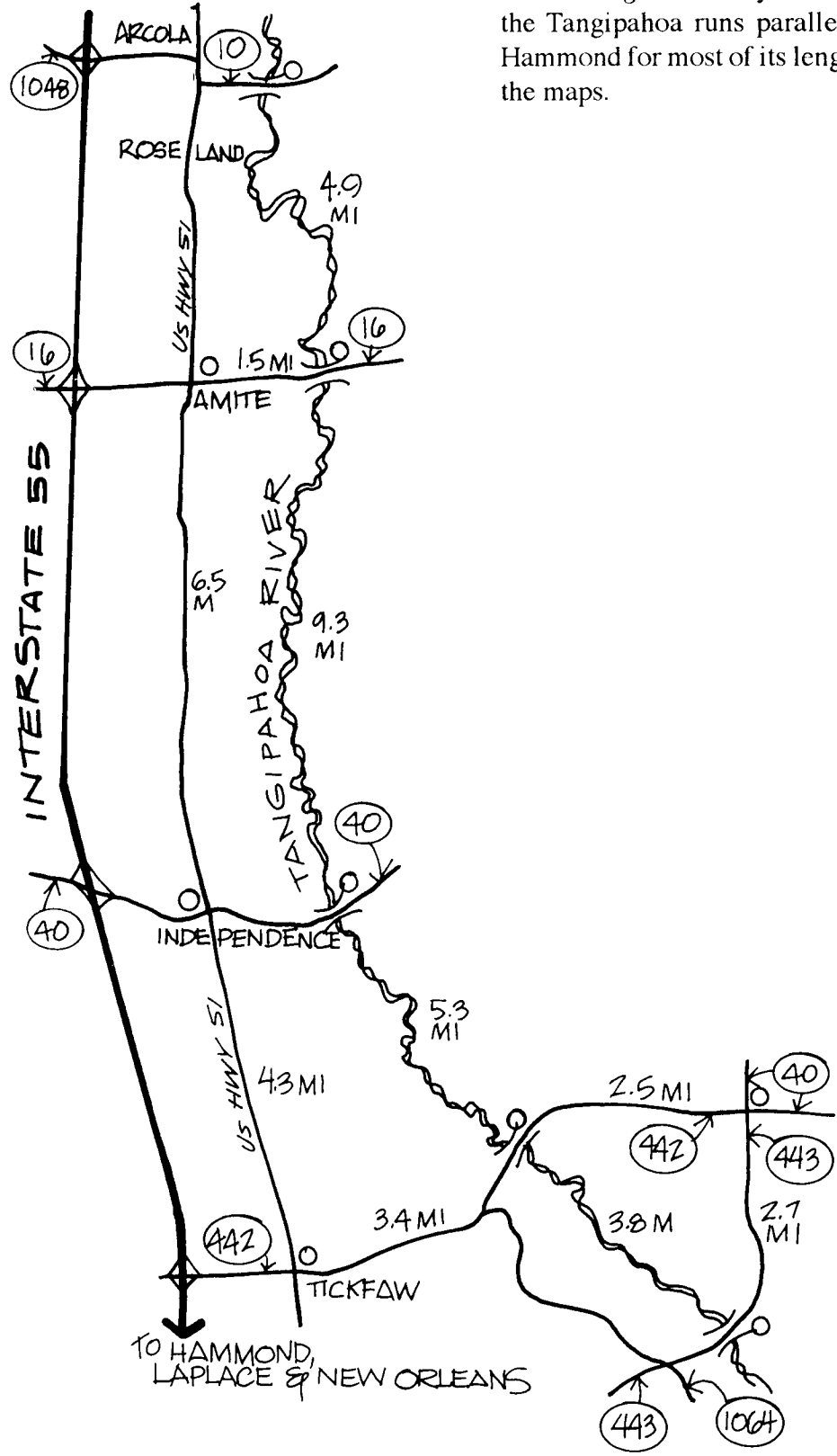
The Tangipahoa put-in point is almost exactly at the intersection point of four topo quads. South of Tangipahoa the river follows the boundary of the Chesbrough and Roseland quadrangles.

Arcola to Amite. This is a good stretch for beginners. It still feels remote, but has large sandbars for camping and swimming, fewer obstacles, and a slower current. The fishing's good, too. The river turns slightly to the southeast and enters the Loranger quad as it approaches Amite.

Amite to Independence. South of Amite the river flows onto the Hammond Quadrangle. There are a few relatively fast parts near the beginning of this stretch, but below these the river slows considerably. The best of the river is upstream.

Independence to Tickfaw and Tickfaw to La. Highway 443. These were once the most crowded on the river, due to the commercial tubing rental at Tickfaw. The river is slow, deep, and picturesque here.

Getting there: As you can see from the map, the Tangipahoa runs parallel to I-55 north of Hammond for most of its length. For details see the maps. ■



Tchefuncte River

by Bryan McDaniel, Baton Rouge Sierra Club
updated by John Sevenair

The Tchefuncte (better known to some as the "Chefunky" River) forms the boundary between the Florida parishes of Washington and Tangipahoa in its upper portion. Until recently it could be described as a little-known gem. Then its waters were tested for pollution. Its watershed is Louisiana's dairy-farming area, and bacteria counts in its waters are very high. Local environmental groups are working with government and residents to clean the area up, but it will be many years before the Tchefuncte is ready for canoes again.

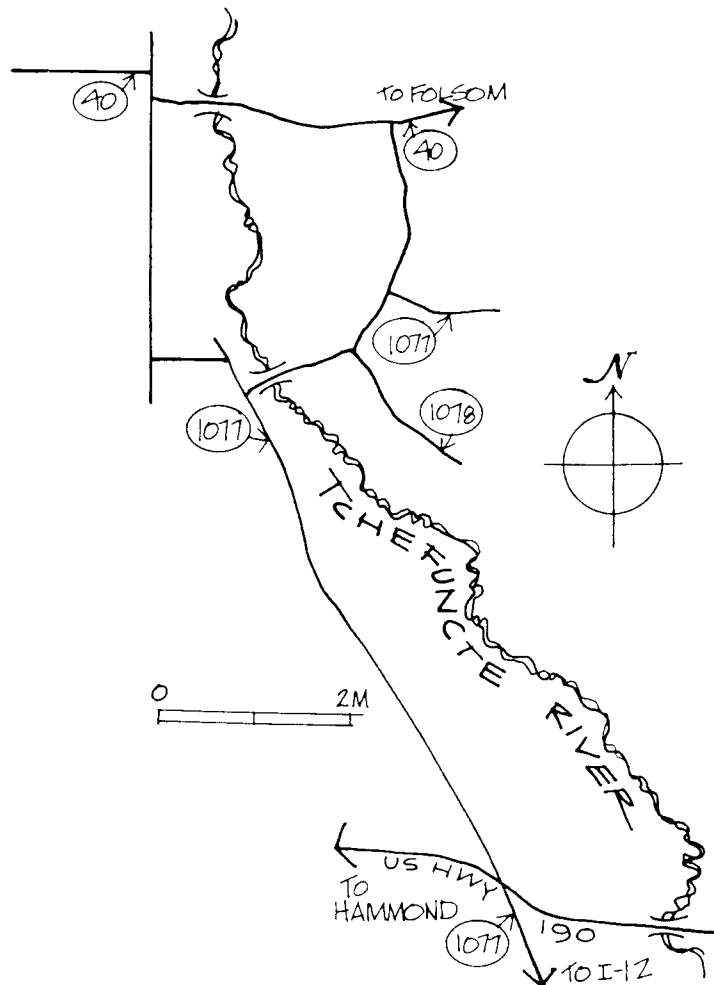
The Tchefuncte and the Tangipahoa are included in this book as grim warnings. Even areas that look beautiful and pristine are not immune from damage and degradation. To check on the status of this and other streams, check the Directory section of this book under "pollution."

Along the northern portions of the section described here especially, the stream bed is too narrow to allow fallen trees to be carried downstream during high water. The upper reaches of the "Chefunky" should probably be floated only at high water, generally in spring and early summer. This will result in fewer pullovers. Even at that, don't put in above Highway 40 unless you are equipped with a light canoe, strong arms, and a chain saw!

The best stretch for canoeing is between Highway 40 and Highway 190. The section is remote and unspoiled because it is seldom travelled. Thus, put-ins and take-outs are more difficult. The put-in at the Highway 40 bridge is best at the southwest corner, but it is posted. The southeast access is fair. The water in this stretch is slow, shallow and clear. Drops of any

consequence are absent, but some experience is necessary to maneuver around the good supply of fallen trees. Cool and quiet pools will tempt the hot paddler to take a refreshing plunge (when the pollution problem is finally cleared up). A number of well-placed rope swings add to the fun.

There is an additional access bridge at State Highway 1077 about 4 miles downstream from the Highway 40 bridge. Access at the Highway 190 bridge is best to the southwest, or you can make arrangements at the campground on the northeast corner. The stretch from Highway 40 to 190 is approximately 16 river miles and makes for a leisurely two-day trip. There are a few small sandbars suitable for camping. ■





CANOEING

**THE MARSHES
& SWAMPS**

The Marshes and Swamps

The part of the world around the mouth of the Mississippi River is unique in the extent and richness of its wetlands. These lands nourish the abundant fisheries of the Gulf of Mexico and its surrounding waters, and provide superb habitat for innumerable birds and mammals. Swamp travelers will see this wildlife best from the silent platform of a canoe or kayak. Forget the images from the old horror movies. Swamps are places of wonderful and abundant life.

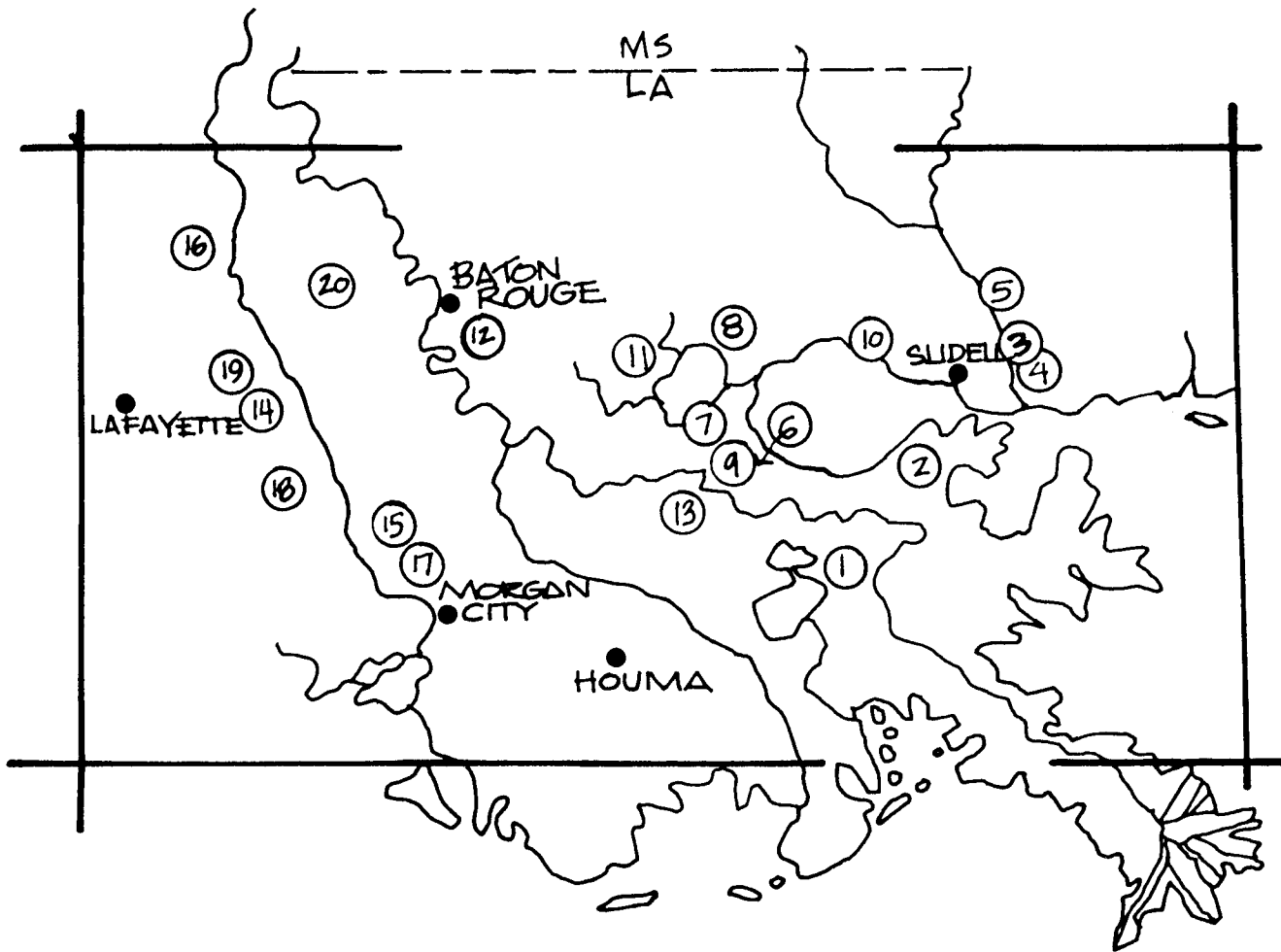
Strong currents are rare in the swamps, so you will have time to correct your paddling mistakes. This makes for easy canoeing. Also, there are swamps close to the major population centers of the area, even New Orleans and Baton Rouge. There are some cautions to be observed, though, especially for travel in the river basin swamps of the Atchafalaya and the Pearl.

Floods can change the landscape remarkably in these basins. What seems a clearly-defined watercourse on the map can become a sea of

water, moving through the trees without regard for normal channels. At times like this you have to be careful. You can also get lost in the great basins. Make sure you bring the appropriate topographic maps. These are published by the U.S. Geological Survey, named in this book, and available from many outdoor stores and map specialists. Also bring a compass, and know how to use the map and compass together. Learn to navigate slowly and carefully. Try simpler trips (such as Barataria, Alligator Bayou, or Cane Bayou) first, or go on a Sierra Club or other trip with a leader.

You will probably need to prepare for biting insects, except in winter. Occasionally you'll encounter a water moccasin. The frequent sightings of herons, egrets, ibises, hawks, and other birds; and the occasional sighting of a barred owl, a bald eagle, or an alligator will more than compensate for this (or you're reading the wrong book). ■

The Swamps and Marshes - Contents



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Barataria Canoeing

by John Sevenair

The Barataria Preserve Unit of Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve has three launching areas for canoes and some beautiful and interesting swamp and marsh waterways. The map in the section entitled "Barataria Hiking" shows these.

Blockage of waterways by water hyacinths is a problem in warm weather, though the National Park Service does clear these plants from its waterways. Bayou Coquille is too shallow for canoeing when the water is low. For up-to-date information as to what is passable and what isn't, call the Visitor Center. There are commercial canoe rentals near the park, and some deliver canoes inside the park. For further information see the Directory.

The **Kenta Canal** launching area is near Bayou Barataria at the southern end of the park. This is a late nineteenth-century logging canal. Unlike more modern oilfield and pipeline canals, it is narrow, and the vegetation on the spoil banks has matured. This gives the Kenta Canal a more natural and aesthetically pleasing aspect. The ground is relatively high here, but soon the banks become lower and the canal enters a marsh. There are some small side channels that will take you a few dozen yards into the marsh, and two spurs that take you back into the swamp. Nutria are abundant here.

About two miles north you encounter the Bayou Coquille Trail. After following it for another half mile you can stop at the Marsh Overlook. One mile further on is Twin Canals; there is a second canoe launch here. When open, the last mile and half of Kenta Canal is probably the most beautiful and remote portion.

Bayou des Familles is the remnant of a former tributary of the mighty Mississippi. A narrow fringe of swamp borders it today. Be-

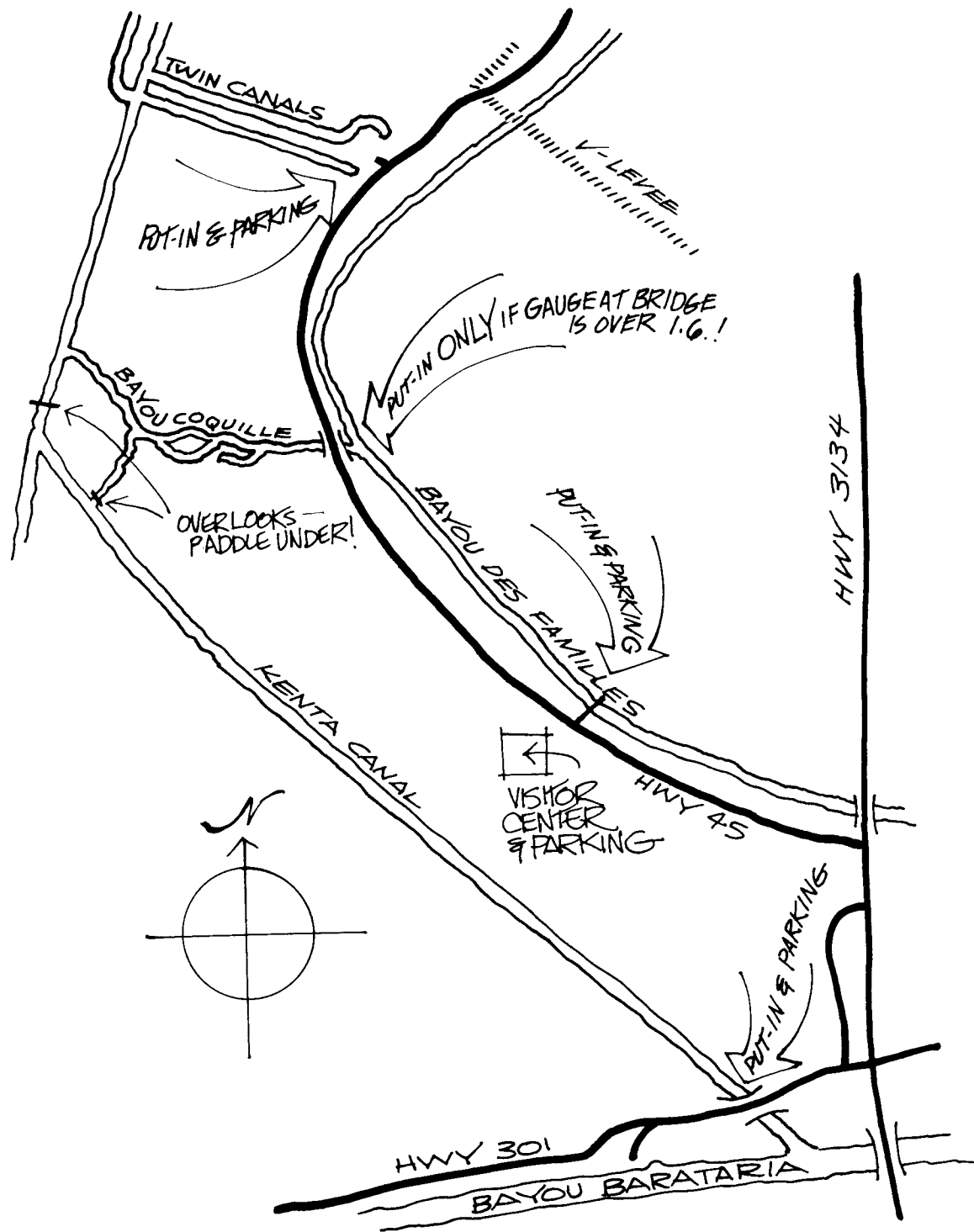
cause it parallels the highway, automobile noise can be disturbing, but the bayou is beautiful and rich with wildlife. There is a canoe launching area with parking lot near the park's Education Center, which is just off the east side of LA 45 just south of the Visitor Center.

Bayou Coquille is the most beautiful waterway in the park, and can be used as part of a route between either the Twin Canals or Kenta Canal launch and the Bayou des Familles launch. It's subject to being clogged by water hyacinths during warmer weather, and is impassable when the water is low. We recommend that you call the Visitor Center for this information before you take your canoe to the park. There is a water gauge where the bayou goes under Hwy 45, which should read 1.6' or higher for canoeing.

Motorboats are excluded from all of the waterways described above. The remaining Preserve waterways, such as Pipeline, Tarpaper, and the Horseshoe canals, are all canoeable, but may have to be shared with motorboats. Under certain conditions these canals provide access to the old trapper's ditches, *trenasses*, which lace the marsh. The *trenasses* provide entry to the heart of the marsh, and afford an intimate eye-level view of its plants and wildlife. Check with the Visitor Center to see if any are accessible.

Low water can be caused by dry weather or by low tides; this area far from the Gulf of Mexico is still subject to tidal flows. The rich wetlands that contribute so much to the food supply and the quality of life in Louisiana, and that protect the area from tides and storms, are rapidly disappearing.

The author is indebted to personnel of the National Park Service for information and assistance with this section. ■



Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge

by James Guilbeau

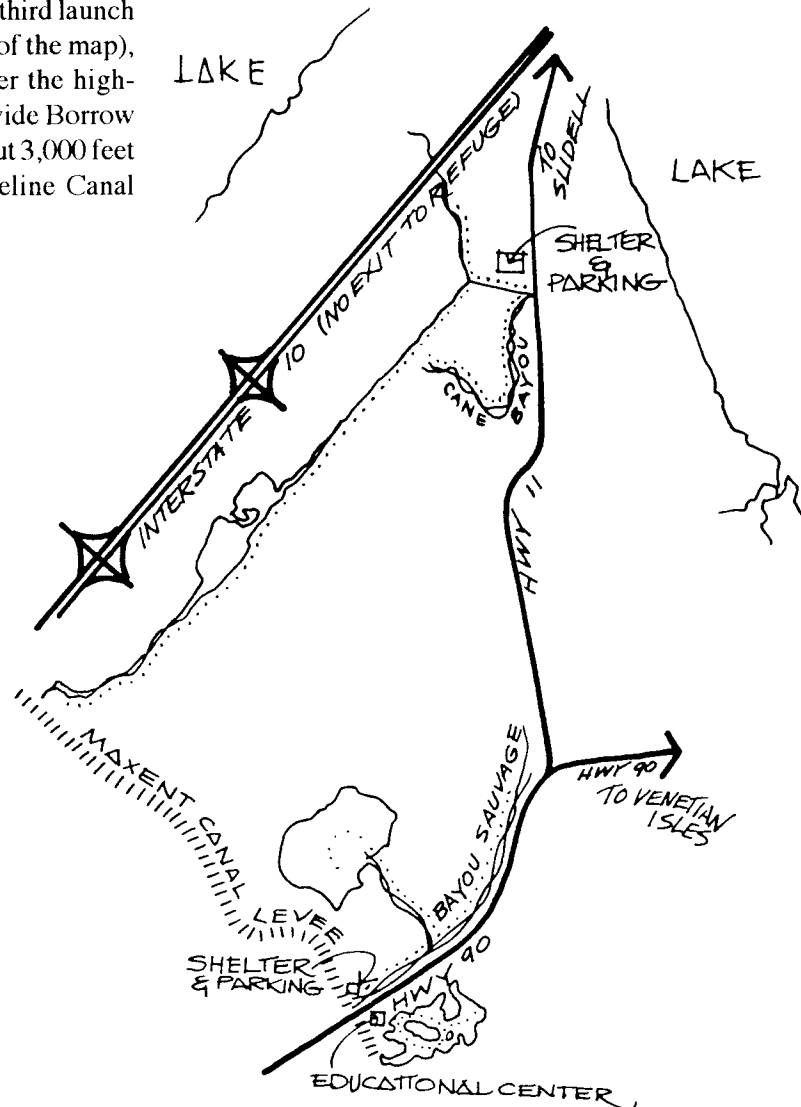
There are three canoe launch points in this eastern New Orleans refuge. One is at the parking lot at the southern corner of the refuge. This lets you canoe on Bayou Sauvage, which runs parallel to US 90 between forested banks. This is an old distributary of the Mississippi River. Paddling about a quarter of a mile leads to an intersection with a canal that runs north 4,000 feet to Blind Lagoon.

The second launch point is at the Educational Center. This gives access to a broad marshy area between US 90 and the CSX Railroad embankment. There is also a short boardwalk in the marsh behind the Educational Center house. The third launch point is on US 11 (near the top of the map), where three culverts pass under the highway. This gives access to the wide Borrow Canal, which parallels I-10 about 3,000 feet from it. The intersecting Pipeline Canal

goes directly south two and a half miles, allowing access to Blind Lagoon.

If you explore any of these waterways in the summer or when the water level is low, it would be prudent to bring a push-pole. Smaller channels are frequently blocked by organic material.

Getting there: To reach the put-in at the southern corner of the refuge, exit US 90 (Chef Menteur Highway) from either I-10 or I-510 in New Orleans and go east. You will see signs and a parking area on your left after crossing the Maxent Canal. The Educational Center is on the south side of US 90, about half a mile east of the park boundary (and the previous launch point). The third launch point is two miles south of the I-10 Irish Bayou exit, the last exit from I-10 in eastern New Orleans. ■



The Pearl River Basin

by Byron Almquist, Canoe and Trail Adventures

The Pearl River Basin, the flood plain of the Pearl River, is primarily a bottomland hardwood forest. The basin is approximately 50 miles long, with the upper 40 miles heavily forested. The Pearl River itself is the boundary between the states of Louisiana and Mississippi. The Louisiana communities of Bogalusa, Sun, Bush, Pearl River and Slidell border the basin. On the east side there are the Mississippi cities of Picayune and Pearlinton.

The basin averages about five miles across, and contains an estimated 160,000 acres that alternate between being wet and dry. There are three segments of the basin that are now publicly owned and managed. From north to south, they are:

The Old River Wildlife Management Area of 14,000 acres is located entirely on the Mississippi side of the Pearl River. Access to this management area is northwest of Picayune, Mississippi. The land is administered by the Mississippi Department of Wildlife Conservation (Area Manager, Rt. 1 Box 251E, Poplarville, MS 39470).

The next public land is the Bogue Chitto National Wildlife Refuge, 37,000 to 40,000 acres, located mostly in Louisiana east of the towns of Pearl River and Sun. The land is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Bogue Chitto National Wildlife Refuge, 1010 Gause Blvd., Bldg. 936, Slidell, LA 70458).

The oldest area is the Pearl River Game Management Area, which is located roughly from I-59 south to U.S. 90. The managing agency is the Louisiana Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries (P.O. Box 98000, Baton Rouge, LA 70898-9000. This area of 35,000 acres is the one most closely associated with the words "Honey Island Swamp."

All three agencies will send maps and information about lands they administer on request. The total area of all of these publicly managed lands is approximately 90,000 acres. The result is that about half of this outdoor jewel, the bottomland forests of

the Pearl River Basin, is public property.

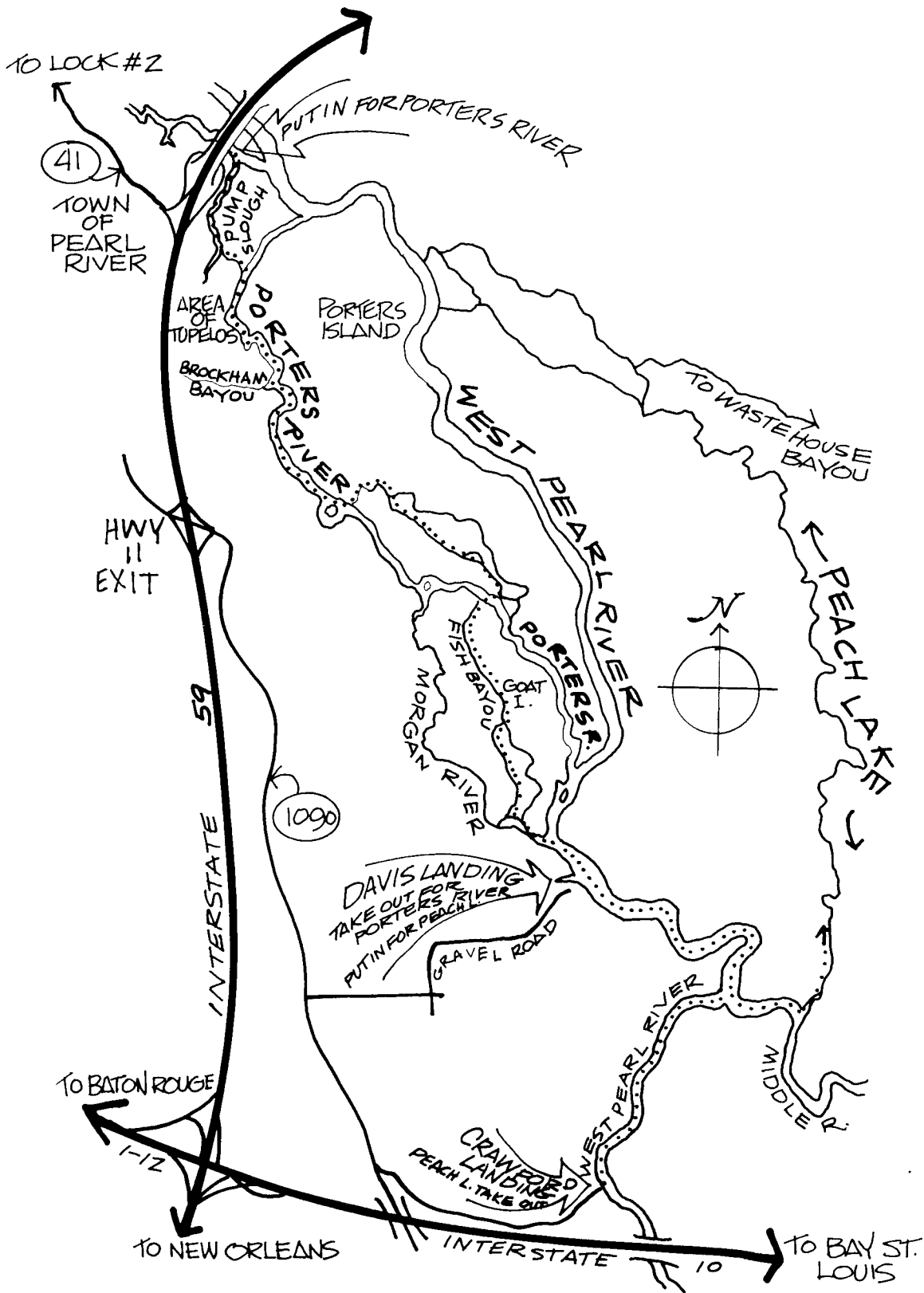
The most dramatic annual changes in the basin are the floods of the Pearl River and the resulting overflows into the flood plain. Winter and spring are the seasons of annual highs, and summer and autumn bring the lows. The river often goes up and down ten feet in the course of a year. The water level is listed every day in the New Orleans daily newspaper, the *Times-Picayune*, on the weather page.

There are daily river level readings for the Pearl at the cities of Bogalusa and Pearl River. For the paddler, the ideal reading is around flood stage. This means that every possible channel will have water, yet the majority of the land will be available for hiking or camping. For hiking and backpacking, the lower the better, since that means a person can wander almost at will, crossing the larger streams on logs if necessary.

To explore the basin, a detailed map is of immense value. The United States Geological Survey (USGS) publishes two maps in the 1:100,000 scale - Bogalusa, LA, and Gulfport, MS. In addition there are nine 7 1/2' topo maps that provide complete detail of the entire basin. By using the USGS and agency maps anyone can have as much wilderness adventure as they desire.

Exploring the labyrinth of the basin is like learning how to move around in a city. Gradually the repeat visitor will feel as comfortable exploring the forest as he does in the city, where there are familiar main streets and numerous alternative ways to reach a destination or to return to the starting point.

If you decide to explore the Pearl River Basin, try the simplest routes first, proceeding to the more adventuresome. The descriptions here are of the main routes only; there will be numerous other opportunities to explore depending on water level, time, and inclination. ■



Pearl River Basin Porters River

by Byron Almquist, Canoe and Trail Adventures

This route is open only during high water - over 9' on the Pearl River gauge. When followed by the adventurous paddler, it offers considerable variety - narrow sloughs, a tupelo pond, and two islands which can be explored without getting permanently lost. Because the most intricate portions of the trail are through islands the less-than-accomplished explorer will eventually emerge into a large stream. That stream will ultimately go to the West Pearl, which flows past Davis Landing, the takeout point.

Put in at the public boat launch underneath the I-59 bridge over the West Pearl. Proceed down Pump Slough past the houseboats, ignoring a channel which goes from the launch straight out to the West Pearl. Before reaching the end of the open water, turn left through a 20' cut, which will eventually lead into Porters River.

Float down to a place where the channel divides around an island. At the head of the channel that goes around the island to the left is an excellent picnic spot - a high beach area with a beaver pond behind it. After lunch go through the left channel, and 50 yards past the end of this channel turn left into a 20' cut that leads back into Porters Island. By following the current, the paddler can explore the center of the island and eventually come back to Porters River.

If time and curiosity allow, locate Fish

Bayou, which is almost across from the exit out of Porters Island. This route allows the paddler to explore the interior of another island - in this case, Goat. Again, follow the current, relax, and enjoy the sights and sounds around you. The paddler will then come out into Morgan River, which shortly flows into the West Pearl. Shortly after that, turn into Davis Landing on your right for your takeout.

The maps for this trip are the Nicholson and Haaswood quadrangles.

Getting there: Access to the trail is from the public launch beneath I-59 on the West Pearl River. To reach the launch, take I-59 5.2 miles north of its intersection with I-10 near Slidell to the Pearl River exit. (Ignore an earlier Pearl River South exit). For the shuttle to Davis Landing from the I-59 parking lot, turn right into the exit road and proceed 0.5 miles to the top of the hill, turning left onto the Interstate at the I-59 South sign. Take I-59 1.4 miles south, exiting at the U.S. 11 sign. Turn left at the stop sign and proceed over the Interstate into what becomes LA 1090. Follow this highway 2.5 miles, turning left onto a narrow blacktop road immediately past a trailer court. Proceed 0.6 mile to a dead end, turn left onto a gravel road, and follow it 1.1 miles to Davis Station. The one-way route is 6.1 miles and takes approximately 15 minutes. ■

Pearl River Basin Peach Lake

by Byron Almquist, Canoe and Trail Adventures

This is a suggested route for times when the Pearl River is below eight or nine feet on the gauge at Pearl River. The main attraction is Peach Lake, which is never too low to paddle, and which also offers the unusual feature of having

the current flow in two directions - and in the central portion, not at all. The explanation is that water enters Peach Lake at both of its ends and then spills over into the adjacent Wastehouse Bayou watershed.

Peach Lake, continued.

Put in at the public boat launch located at Davis Landing. (Directions to Davis Landing are given in the preceding trip description.) Turn right from the launch canal into the West Pearl and proceed downstream. Turn left into the first opening, the Middle River, and float downstream to the entrance to Peach Lake, which is usually partially blocked by a log jam. From here, the paddler can go as far north as Peach Lake goes.

The lake is lined with water tupelo and cypress. The land gradually rises the further north one paddles, and eventually a high and dry site can be reached to picnic and explore. Alligators are present in the lake but are seldom seen. Egrets and ibises can often be found in the trees paral-

leling the lake. An oddity is a sandbar at the entrance of Peach Lake. Although it's almost always covered with water, it's a good swimming place on a hot day.

To return, paddle back to the Middle River and then back upstream to the West Pearl River. Then float down to another public launch, Crawford Landing. The upstream paddling is very difficult in high water.

The topo map for the area is the Haaswood quadrangle.

Getting there: To reach Crawford Landing from Davis Landing, return to LA 1090 near the trailer court, and turn left (south). After one mile, turn left onto a road which parallels I-10. Crawford Landing is at the end of this road. ■

Pearl River Basin From Lock #2

by Byron Almquist, Canoe and Trail Adventures

Almost adjacent to lock 2 is the largest tupelo "pond" in the Pearl River Basin. The pond has uniform-looking tupelo trees in its northern third, rows of cypress thickets in the center and then, in the southern third, another tupelo stand - only with larger trees and denser foliage overhead. There is one major source of water on the northeast corner, one major outlet on the southeast corner, and a limited number of waterways behind the eastern shore of the pond.

To reach the tupelo pond, portage your canoe from the parking lot across the lower lock, turn right, and go south down the eastern levee about 100 yards. There is open water at the base of the levee. The pond is to your right after you

put in. Ignore the small body of open water in front of you; it dead-ends shortly.

Since the pond is bordered on the west by the canal levee, a paddler can explore at will in the "pond" and then simply turn west to find the way out. Also, the current flows north to south through the tupelo pond; this helps to keep track of direction.

The topo map for the area is the Henleyfield quadrangle.

Getting there: To find Lock #2, get off I-59 at Pearl River and take LA 41 north from the town. About 20 miles north of Pearl River, between Talisheek and Bush, the short road to the lock turns to the right off LA 41. ■

Bayou Labranche

by Melissa Lutz

Before the oil refinery fiasco of a few years ago Bayous Labranche and Trepagnier were popular for Sierra Club trips. Don't dismiss this area as irretrievably spoiled, however. Bayou Trepagnier smells like an open gas tank, but Bayou Labranche still offers access to a lush cypress swamp that is teeming with life.

From the put-in point (see below), enter the cut between the trees. When you reach the end of the first canal, turn right. After a five minute paddle you will see another canal on the right with grim warning signs guarding it on either side. This leads down Bayou Trepagnier, which is polluted to the point of danger. Don't follow it unless you want to see and smell a grim reminder of the destructiveness of man.

Continue down the main channel. There will be two canals on the left leading into an open marsh. On the right you will see water in the distance beneath the trees, and finally you will come upon a channel emerging from the bank. Follow its winding path for a while and you will find yourself in the heart of a cypress swamp that hasn't been cut over for sixty years.

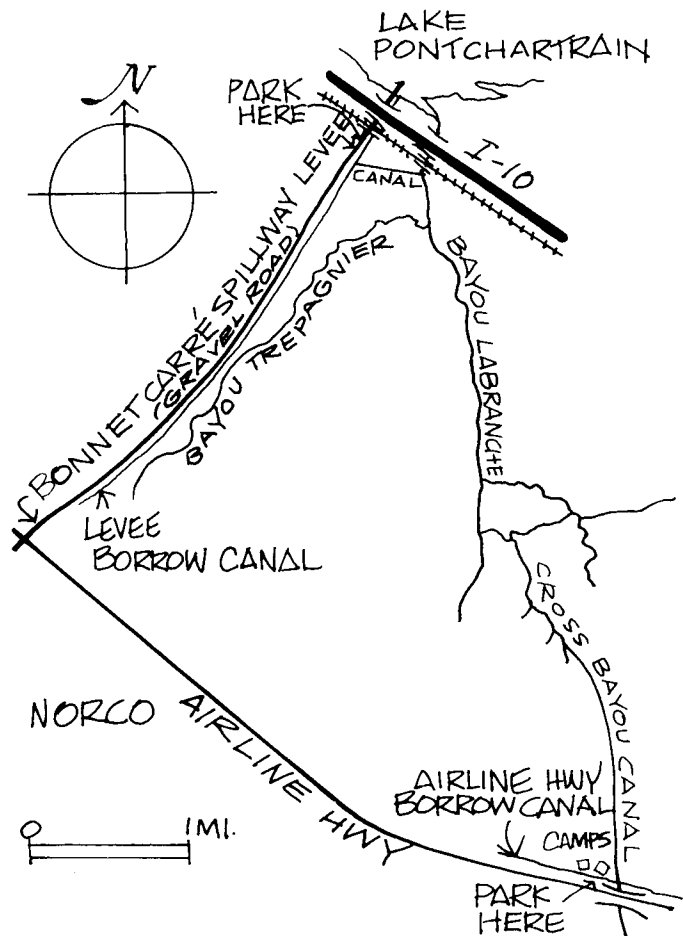
There are two main obstacles in your journey through this wonderland. The first is a fallen cypress log and the second is duckweed. Both of these are negotiable with a little work, and the rewards are tremendous. Be sure to follow the main channel as you go, and leave a trail of bread crumbs (or use your compass!) so that you can find your way back.

Trees and knees poke out of the water in every direction, and ibis, egrets, and herons weave through them in search of food. A raccoon may waddle away from the sound of your paddle, or a 'possum might peek at you through the bushes. Inevitably you will see nutria in the water and on land.

With a little effort (due to the abundance of cypress knees), you will soon come to the edge of the trees, and an open marsh will unfold before you. This is a good place to stop, rest, contemplate the nature of life, eat, and turn around. When you reach the canal, slowly float back and quietly look for alligators along the

bank. This is not for the weak at heart, for there are some twelve-footers out there.

Getting there: Bayous Labranche and Trepagnier are located twenty minutes outside New Orleans off Airline Highway (US Hwy 61). To reach the put-in point, drive through Norco on Airline Highway and turn toward Lake Pontchartrain on the Bonnet Carre Spillway east guide levee (this is eleven miles west of Williams Boulevard). Drive the levee until you reach the railroad tracks. There will be a cut in the trees on your right. Put in and take out here. There is also a Bayou Labranche put-in point on the Airline Highway, 6.7 miles west of Williams Boulevard and 4.4 miles east of the spillway east guide levee. ■



Manchac Swamps

by Byron Almquist, Canoe and Trail Adventures

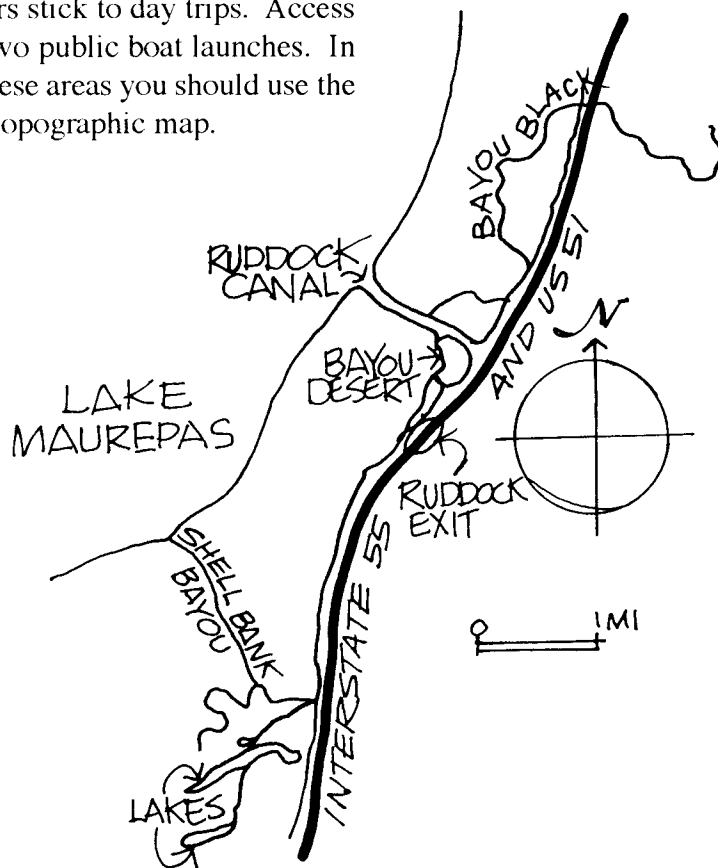
The Manchac Swamp, like the Pearl River Basin, is close to New Orleans and not much used by paddlers. Most important of all here is the excitement of exploration. It seems that you go beyond the known into the unknown. These wetlands are truly outdoor treasures.

The Manchac swamps lie between Lakes Maurepas and Pontchartrain. Their area is vast, roughly 20 miles square. It's a heavily wooded region with very little marsh. There is usually very little current or water level change. Signs of lumbering almost a century ago are still evident to the knowing eye. There are a few camps, canals, highways, and small settlements here, but most of the area is wild.

The waterways do not form a labyrinth, making it relatively easy to stay oriented. Make sure you bring a good map and compass, though, and note of any turnoffs you make. There is very little natural high ground for picnicking or camping, so most paddlers stick to day trips. Access is mainly through two public boat launches. In exploring both of these areas you should use the Ruddock U.S.G.S. topographic map.

Getting there: One launch is at the I-55 Ruddock exit, north of LaPlace. This is a good spot for a pleasant evening trip. From this launch you can paddle out to Lake Maurepas, tie up to a cypress and watch the sunset, and paddle back through the Ruddock Canal in the dark. Keep your flashlight out to see the shining eyes of watching alligators.

Another launch is two miles south of the Ruddock exit on old U.S. Hwy 51. From here there are several explorations you can try. Paddle into Shell Bank Bayou as far as you can, for instance. If the water hyacinths let you (they usually block your way eventually), you can go all the way to Lake Maurepas. You can also paddle south through a lumber canal to a lake. There is a camp at the far west end of this lake, and just past the camp is a gate out into a marsh. Water hyacinths are often a problem here too. ■

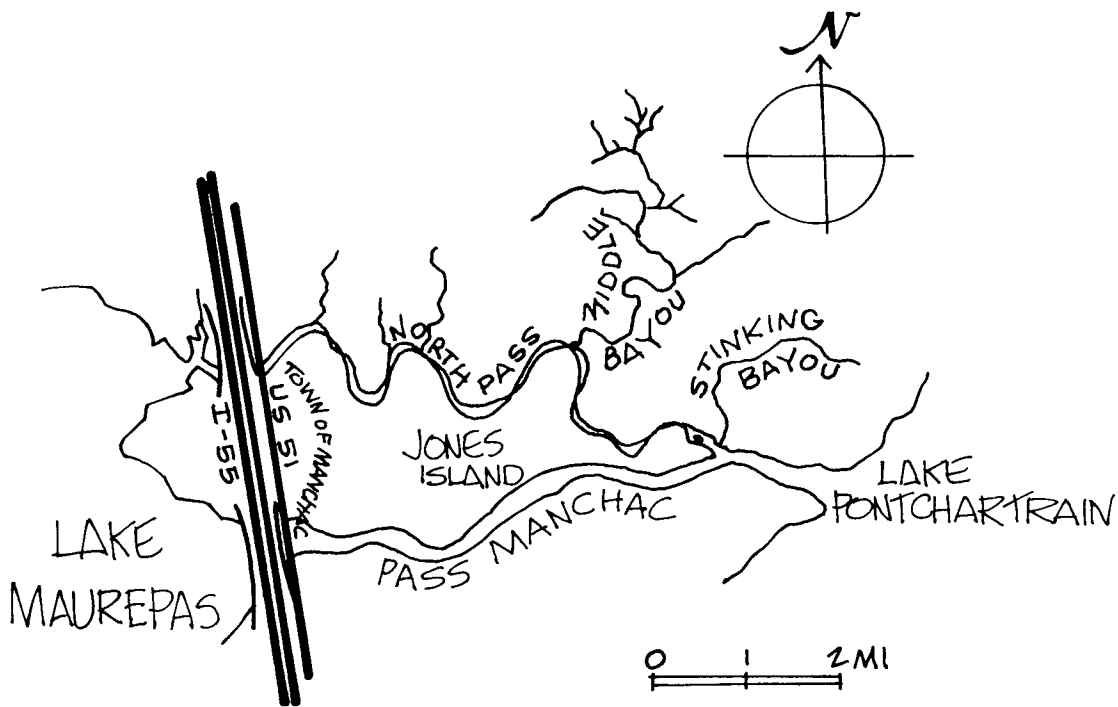


Middle Bayou Stinking Bayou

These trips let you explore beautiful and relatively remote second-growth cypress swamp. The remoteness stems from the location; the nearest road to the mouth of Middle Bayou is five miles west of it at Manchac. The bayou itself is five miles or so long, with many branches and byways. About two miles up the bayou from North Pass is a cluster of camps at the entrance to a canal. The only camping in the area is on the spoil bank of the canal; otherwise, solid ground is about nonexistent.

Stinking Bayou, with an entrance a couple of miles further east on North Pass, is another beautiful bayou to explore (despite its name). Like Middle Bayou, it winds for miles through swamps and marshes.

Getting there: To reach these bayous, take I-55 north from I-10 or south from I-12 and exit at Manchac. There is a boat launch off US 51 at Manchac just north of the exit from the interstate, or you can put in at North Pass. ■



Blind River

by Tom Hertwig, Baton Rouge Sierra Club

Many different day trips can be made on the Blind River, its tributaries, and connecting canals. With only minor variations in the cypress swamp scenery and few specific destinations, paddle as long as you want to. There are many good trips of 2 to 6 hours. The negligible current makes anything but round trips from a put-in point hard to justify.

Since most of the land along the river is posted by hunting clubs and since there is little dry land to camp on, overnight trips are awkward. The only dry land is spoil banks along the canals and fill at some of the camps (cabins). There are a handful of camps south of Airline Highway and dozens of camps north of I-10. The camps on the St. James Parish Canals have private access roads from LA 3125. All other camps are accessible only by water. Except for their straightness, most canals near the Blind River have aged enough to be as pretty as the winding river.

Topo maps and aerial photos show old railroad grades built by Lutch Moore Cypress & Lumber Co. while they logged cypress from 1890 to 1930. Still seen are a few pilings from the old rail bridges and the starburst pattern of paths made by pull boats pulling felled trees in from all directions by cable. In the 1940's, Fernwood Industries dug canals to log the tupelo gum trees. Joe Bourgeois Canal was dug for oil drilling and today there are three abandoned wells there. The St. James Parish Canals, Conway Canal, New River Canal, & Amite River Diversion Canal were all dug for drainage control. The only other landmark in the area is Our Lady of Blind River Chapel (1983) on Blind River just south of Joe Bourgeois Canal. The Blind River was designated by Louisiana as a Scenic River in 1970.

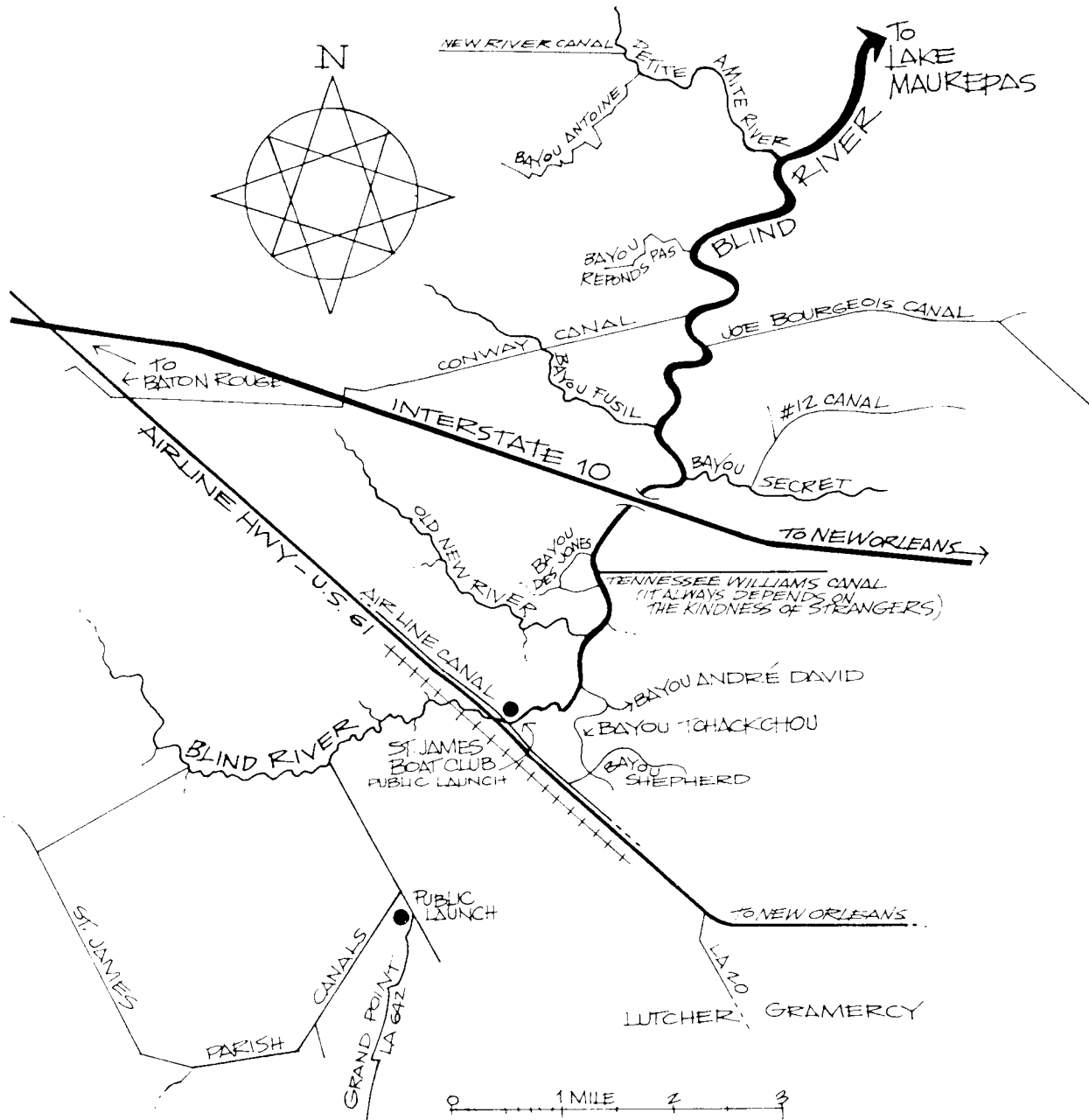
Plants & Animals: The area is worth revisiting in different seasons to see the river in its different wardrobes. In winter it is uniformly brown. In spring it is decorated with bright red swamp maple seeds, light green cypress needles, and white blackberry flowers. The dark green of summer is punctuated with flowers — yellow lily pad, blue water hyacinth and may-pop, and white honeysuckle. Cypress, tupelo gum, palmetto, and Spanish moss are everywhere. A May-June treat is to find ripe blackberries along the canals' spoil banks.

Egrets, heron, ducks, and nutria can be seen al-

most every trip. Barred owls and frogs are usually heard and occasionally seen. River otter, raccoons, opossums, ibis, woodpeckers, kingfishers, snakes, turtles, alligators, and dragonflies are seen occasionally. Be careful of overhanging branches, where snakes or wasp nests are sometimes found. Mosquitoes and deer flies can be bothersome but aren't usually a problem.

Downstream (north) of Airline: On weekends, boat traffic can be heavy on the Blind River from Airline to the many camps and favorite skiing areas north of I-10. Skiing is mostly north of Conway Canal which is 2.6 miles north of I-10. (If faced with heavy boat wake, point the bow of your canoe into the wake to minimize the chance for upset.) On the side streams, though, the quiet is disturbed only by wildlife and the occasional paddler or fisherman. All side streams shown on the map are recommended with the favorites being Old New River (or Bayou Cadet) & Bayou Fusil (pronounced 'few zee'). Most of the canals are also worth exploring. As each of the side streams narrows, duckweed patches and floating logs eventually become too numerous to muscle through. For Old New and Fusil, this is about 2 miles upstream. The Petite Amite River is also pretty, and is little used by powerboats, but its south end is 7.9 miles north of Airline. Since the Conway Canal is also not much used by powerboats, it makes a good leg for a loop trip.

Upstream (west) of Airline: To avoid almost all powerboats, avoid weekends or go upstream from Airline. The railroad bridge 0.6 mile upstream from Airline is too low for powerboats to pass under except at unusually low water. Canoes can clear it except at unusually high water, and can be portaged over the top if necessary. Or you could start upstream of the rail bridge by using the Grand Point put-in — take the unmarked half-mile dirt road to the right at the north end of Grand Point's LA 642. This public put-in has a ramp and pier on the St. James Parish Canals 1.6 miles from Blind River. The St. James Parish Canals loop connects to the Blind River at 2.1 and 3.6 river miles west of Airline. You can paddle another half hour on the Blind past the 3.6-mile canal connection, or paddle 6.1 miles of the St. James Parish Canals to loop back to the river and to Airline for an 11.8-mile trip.



There are many side streams to explore, including around the railroad & pipeline crossings just upstream of the Airline put-in. Bayou Shepherd off of the Airline canal is pretty. And there is another parish canal loop SE along Airline toward Gramercy; SW back of Lucher; NW back of Grand Point; etc. If unfamiliar with the area, take a map and a watch and assume 3 mph for relaxed-but-steady paddling.

Maps, etc.: The 7.5' USGS topographic maps are Convent (upstream of Airline; includes Grand Point); Lucher (Airline crossing, most of Old New River, & almost up to I-10 crossing); & Mt. Airy NW (slice of the Old New River, I-10 crossing, & all areas north).

Getting there, Airline Highway put-in: The overall best put-in for variety of destinations, parking safety, and least boat traffic is next to the St. James Boat Club on Airline Highway (US 61) at 5.6 miles SW of the I-10 intersection SW of Sorrento, LA. The Airline put-in is 18 river miles from Lake Maurepas, 2.9 miles from I-10, and 3.7 miles from a good-but-remote put-in at Grand Point, LA. There are boat ramps, piers, picnic tables, and lots of parking in this

facility maintained by the boat club. A small undeveloped put-in on the other side of Airline highway is usable except at high water level.

Other put-in possibilities: There is a good, well-used put-in on the west bank of the Blind River under the I-10 bridge, but it is illegal to leave or access a limited-access highway at other than formal exit and entrance ramps. It is OK to park on Airline at the Conway Canal crossing, but Bayou Fusil, the nearest winding bayou, is no closer than from the St. James Boat Club.

There is another formal put-in at the north end of Grand Point's LA 642. This put-in is on St. James Parish canals that tie into the Blind River 1.6 miles to the north. There are two put-ins 11 air miles further north that are popular with weekend Blind River powerboaters — Hill Top Inn on the Amite River Diversion Canal near LA 22 and Val's Marina on Old River between Head of Island and Whitehall. These are each 4 miles from the Petite Amite ('Pet-ah-mit') River, which is very pretty and bypassed by most powerboaters. The other end of the Petite Amite joins the Blind River 7.9 river miles from the St. James Boat Club. ■

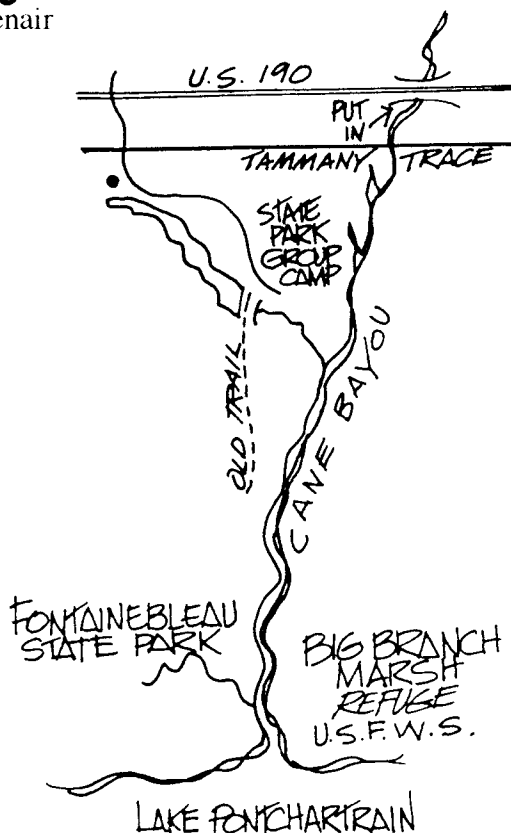
Cane Bayou

by John Sevenair

This Cane Bayou trip begins in forest and emerges into an open marsh about half way between US 190 and Lake Pontchartrain. The wide expanse of grass is reminiscent of the Everglades, but on a much smaller scale. A small side bayou to the west near the lake can be explored. When you reach the lake there are small beaches nearby for a picnic.

The round trip to the lake is about three miles, a good afternoon or evening paddle but too short for most people to make a full day of it. You do have to paddle back upstream, so watch for difficult current in high water situations. Normally there is almost no current. Cane Bayou flows between Fontainebleau State Park and the new Big Branch National Wildlife Refuge, and there are no camps to disturb the solitude.

Getting there: Access to this bayou is from US 190, just east of Mandeville and 1.3 miles east of the main entrance to Fontainebleau State Park. Park on the south (lake) side of 190, on the west (Mandeville) side of the bayou. ■



Gray's Creek

by Chris Resweber, Baton Rouge Sierra Club

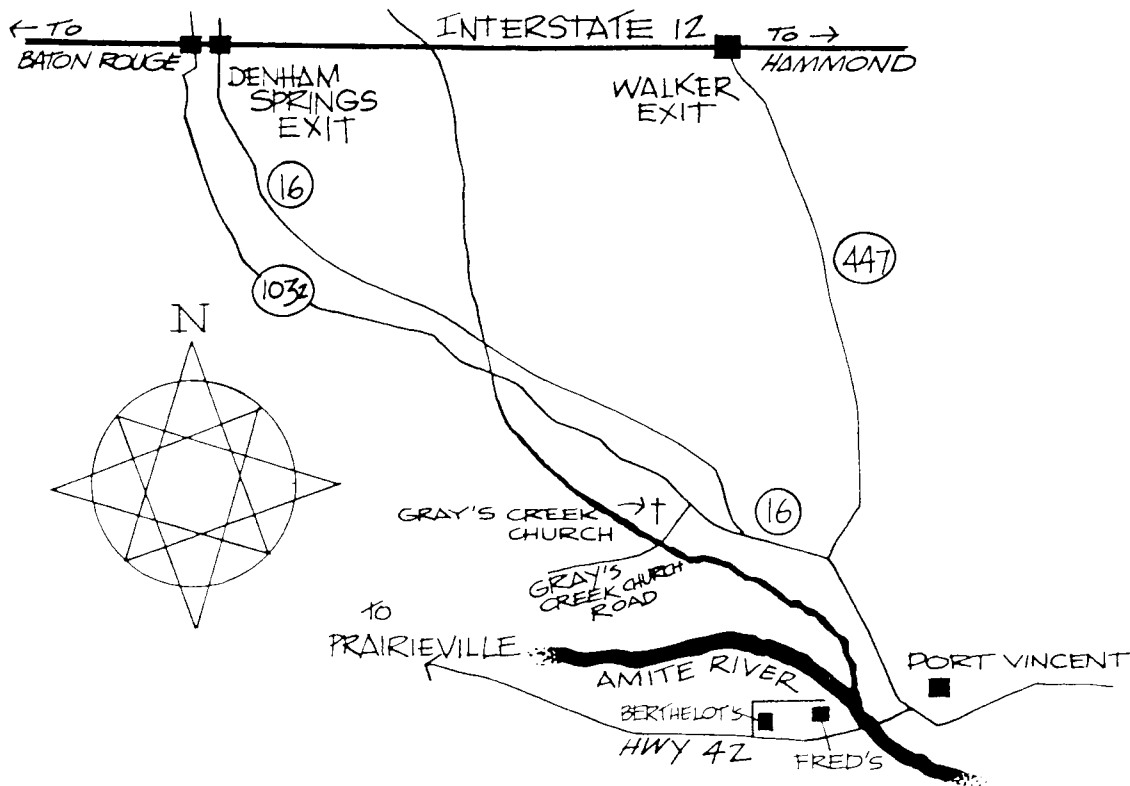
This is a good day trip or late afternoon/evening trip. It is accessible year round, but we would not advise you to canoe when the Amite River is in flood.

If you put in at Bertholot's (see below), head upstream on the Amite for approximately 1/4 mi and turn right on the Grays Creek Lake. The water is slow-moving, so paddling upstream is not difficult. As you paddle upstream the lake narrows and you enter the creek. As you paddle along you will see cypress trees with Spanish moss and, on higher ground, stands of bottom-land hardwoods such as oaks, hickory, and sycamore. Mammals that you can occasionally see, if you are quiet, include deer, raccoons, armadillo, beaver, and bobcat (rare). Herons, egrets, indigo buntings, and prothonotary warblers are a few of the birds in the area. Depending on water levels you can do some exploring in Willis

Bayou and Keys Lake. There are homes and private camps scattered along the creek; be respectful!

No canoes are available for rent. There is a place call Fred's where you can purchase drinks and use the rest rooms. Convenience stores are located on the other side of the bridge at Port Vincent. The food is very good at Bertholot's and makes for a nice end to the trip.

Getting there: Grays Creek is located in Livingston Parish near Port Vincent and is a tributary to the Amite River. Put in can be accomplished from two locations: Bertholot's in Port Vincent on Hwy 42 or on Grays Creek Rd off of Hwy 131. I recommend Bertholot's if this is your first time. This trip can be a one way in and out or shuttle of vehicles and is about 3 miles long. It is possible to go further if you want. ■



Alligator Bayou

by David Rousmaniere, Baton Rouge Sierra Club

Every city should have an area like Alligator Bayou. This is a cypress swamp wilderness just south of Baton Rouge. Here an escape from the hustle and bustle is possible.

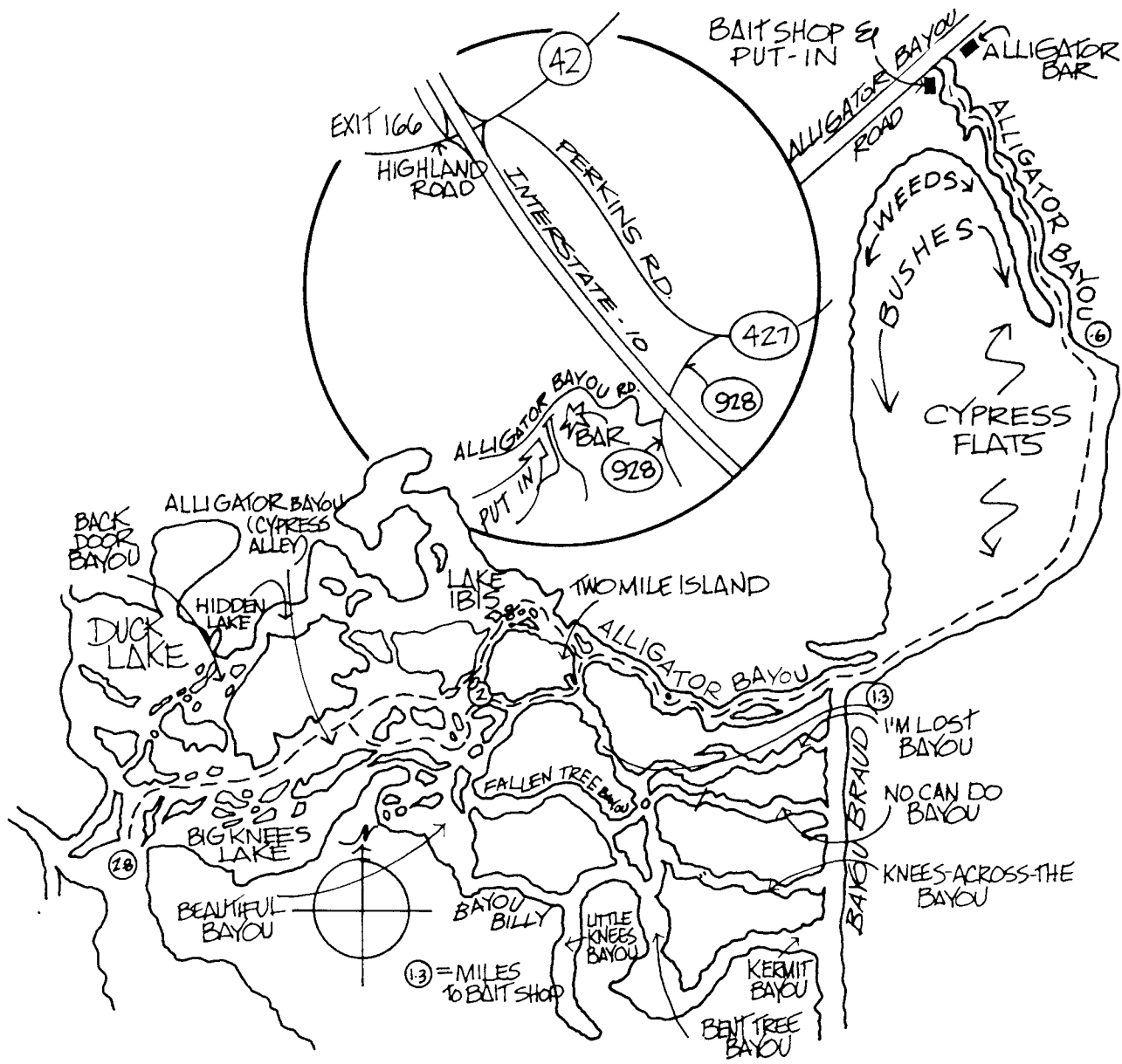
The first .6 miles of paddling winds along Alligator Bayou to Cypress Flats. To see the Flats is reason enough to paddle Alligator Bayou; it is one of the classic Louisiana swamp scenes. It is a large shallow lake with dozens of ancient, gnarled, and half alive cypress trees that escaped logging decades ago.

If you don't wish to paddle in the Flats, turn left and paddle close to the spoil bank on the left. After .7 miles, you can choose to turn left onto Bayou Paul, a long boring trip to the south end of Spanish Lake, or go straight into Upper Alligator Bayou. A little more than a square mile in size, Upper Alligator Bayou (the area west of Bayou Braud) is packed with canoeing possibilities. First-timers may wish to follow the dotted line on the map.

Since they are deep and usually free of

weeds, Alligator Bayou and I'm Lost Bayou are the best ways in and out of the Upper Alligator Bayou Area. With their lush, mature cypress trees, Beautiful Bayou and Cypress Alley are a must see. Everywhere is worth exploring, especially Lake Ibis and Little Knees Bayou. However, low water, water weeds and fallen logs could restrict paddling in the bayous south of I'm Lost Bayou. Canoeists may want to orient themselves to Two Mile Island to help guide them out of Upper Alligator Bayou. It is home to a nutria power plant.

Getting there: To get to the put-in/take out point, take I-10 to the Highland Road exit (#166). Turn east for a couple of hundred yards and take the first right (south) onto Perkins Road. After two miles turn right, drive over I-10, and immediately turn right onto Alligator Bayou Road. After half a mile the road turns into gravel. After another half mile, turn left to the Bait Shop and Alligator Bayou Swamp Tours. Pay the put-in fee or rent a canoe at the Bait Shop. ■



Bayou Chevreuil

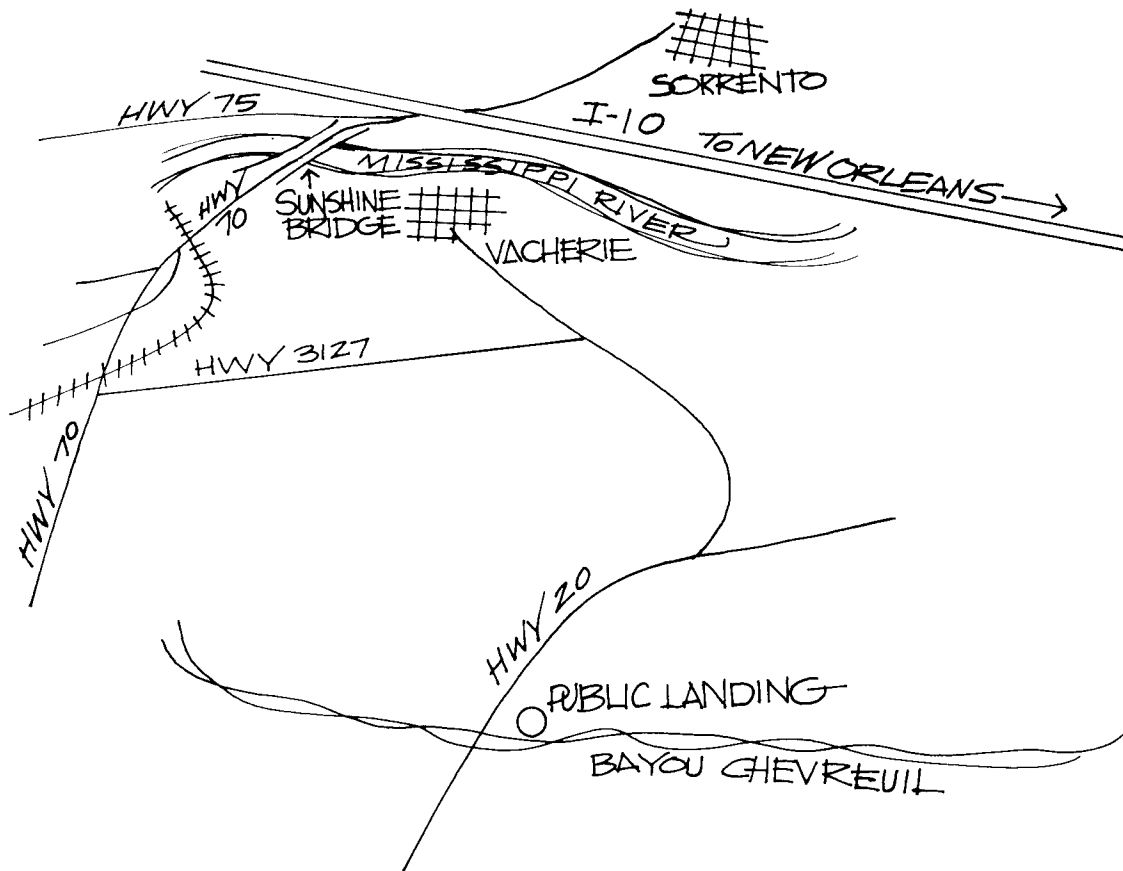
by Chris Resweber, Baton Rouge Sierra Club

Located on the St. James/Lafourche Parish line, this bayou is a wonderful place to explore south Louisiana swampland and, if you travel far enough, will take you to Lac Des Allemands. It is a very popular spot for fishing.

The bayou/swampland is lined with cypress trees and other species. Mammal life include deer, rabbit, neutra, raccoons, oppussums, armadillo, and many birds (egrets, great blue herons, crowned night herons, warblers, etc). Ther water is slow moving so you can paddle leisurely and enjoy the scenery. Bring plenty of water and a lunch; you'll enjoy your day.

Getting there: From I-10, turn on the Sunshine

Bridge exit, go southwest on Hwy 75 approximately 1/2 mi, turn left on Hwy 70, cross over Sunshine bridge (\$1.00 toll) and then over the railroad tracks. Stay on Hwy 70 toward Thibodaux. After you come to the 4-way stop signs and cross the railroad tracks, turn left on Hwy 3127 to Vacherie. When you get to the traffic light at Hwy 20 (about 16 mi) turn right heading for Chackbay. After a few miles you come to a dog leg in the road and a small community, you start seeing swampland. Just before getting to the bridge crossing Bayou Chevreuil there is the St. James public boat landing on your left. This is where you will put in. From there you can go either upstream or downstream. I've only been downstream. Hope you enjoy it! ■



Lake Martin

by Jeanne de la Houssaye

I was introduced to this piece of primeval Louisiana by Marcus de la Houssaye, a *courreur du bois* and swamp guide in the tradition of our mutual forebears.

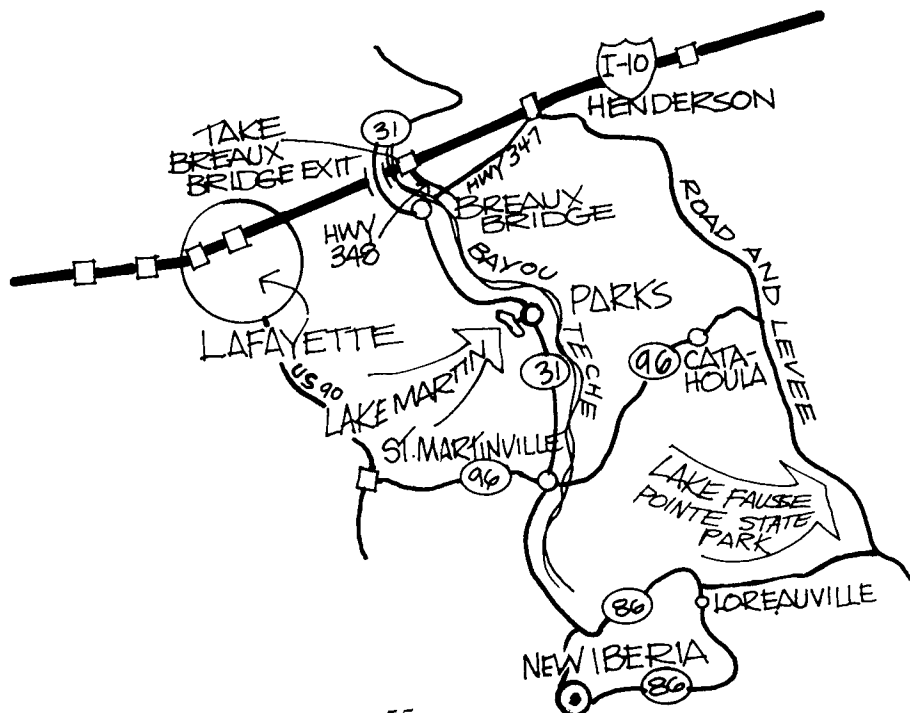
Lake Martin is a long and narrow lake running north/south, obviously an old channel of the Teche, itself a former channel of the Mississippi. It's an easy, flatwater paddle, impeded only by duckweed and other plant life. The draw here is the scenery, which is spectacular. The launching area is at the mid-point of the lake. Turn right when you get through the trees and follow the contour of the north end of the lake. Watch for egrets, ibis, and ospreys, who nest in the cypress trees and stumps. As you round the top of the lake and head back south, you'll begin to spot nutria swimming placidly through the duckweed. If you're lucky, you might see an alligator.

The south end of the lake is the best, so save it for last. A pristine grove of cypress and tupelo stand in water entirely covered by duckweed so thick your canoe hardly leaves a trace. Wander

around in here—there's no trail or channel, just maneuver through the trees. Leave lots of space between canoes; this is the forest primeval, and best enjoyed in some degree of solitude. Once, most of the still water in this part of Louisiana looked like this. Logging and dredging have taken their toll elsewhere, but in this spot the Louisiana our ancestors knew lives on. You can't get lost—eventually, you're going to emerge from this watery green wonderland into the cut in the trees that leads back to the parking lot. As a parting gift, nature will treat you to some luscious gold and orange light as the afternoon sun slants through the cypress.

Preserve it in your heart, and work to preserve it for posterity.

Getting there: Lake Martin is at Parks, which is halfway between St. Martinville and Breaux Bridge. To reach it take the LA 31 (Breaux Bridge) exit from I-10 and go south. The lake is just west of LA 31. ■



The Atchafalaya Basin

by Charles Fryling

The Atchafalaya River lies at the southern end of the Mississippi Valley and is the principle distributary of the Mississippi River. The Mississippi receives surface water runoff from 40 percent of the land area of the continental United States, and it has the third largest river drainage area in the world, approximately 1,250,000 square miles. The waters of the Mississippi funnel through the state of Louisiana on their way to the Gulf of Mexico.

The Atchafalaya River is about 130 miles in length. This is an interesting piece of trivia since the name comes from the Choctaw language meaning "Long River". For the volume of water it carries, it is one of the shortest rivers in the world. As the largest outlet of the Mississippi, from 30 to 50 percent of the water flowing down the Mississippi is diverted into the Atchafalaya.

The Atchafalaya is controlled by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. This control is accomplished by movable structures at the river's head and a series of levees running roughly parallel with the center channel of the river.

The minimum distance between the east and west protection levees is about 15 miles. On an annual basis the water elevation between these levees can change as much as 15 feet. The area within these confines is known as the Spillway or the Basin. It is in fact America's greatest river basin swamp, a magnificent wilderness, home to abundant wildlife, oil fields, endangered species, superb recreational and commercial fishing, trapping, and hunting. It is also the home of controversy, politics, and legal disputes.

Following the disastrous flood of 1927, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began to develop the Basin as a diversion route for high water headed for Baton Rouge and New Orleans. After an extended controversy over how to manage the Basin, Congress approved a Corps plan to save the Atchafalaya Basin for future generations. The plan should insure flood protection, preserve the Basin's unique wildlife and wilderness values, and insure public access.

To accomplish this it has been necessary for the government to purchase land and property rights from private owners. Lands are only being purchased from

willing sellers. However, development rights must be acquired over all lands in the Basin. Proper implementation of this plan is the current center of environmental activism. If you're interested in preserving the Atchafalaya Basin, you should get in touch with an interested environmental organization and become active.

The Basin can be roughly divided into three general vegetative types, bottomland hardwoods, cypress/tupelo swamp, and coastal marsh. The bottomland hardwoods are located in the northern part. Here one finds the greatest diversity, including the American black bear (possibly the Louisiana subspecies). The central area is the home of bald cypress trees. This is the area that has the "swamp image" most frequently associated with the Atchafalaya.

The coastal marsh is yet another image. Here trees are not present and the area can feel very open. The tree line between swamp and marsh is frequently the location for special wildlife such as Bald Eagles. Alligators can be found in all areas, but are more frequent in the bottomland hardwood areas and in the coastal marsh. Lack of land for nesting limits the alligator in the cypress swamp.

To the canoeist, the Atchafalaya Basin is a navigation challenge and a fascinating experience. Because of changing water levels, floating logs, and aquatic plants, the smaller waterways of the Basin can change dramatically over short periods of time. Wind can blow large rafts of water hyacinths into an area and block easy movement.

In the high water of spring, the whole Basin is a waterway with few campsites and near-infinite possibilities for getting lost. Losing oneself is part of the excitement of exploring the Basin. One should not fear being lost, since all one has to do is go east or west and one of the protection levees that bound the area will appear. During high water one can travel through the trees, dodging branches and following one's instincts or compass. To learn a section of the Basin, first learn the larger watercourses bounding your area of interest and then explore the interior. You should be able to recognize the larger water-

course when you emerge.

Many of the waterways within the Basin are true bayous in that they can change direction of flow depending on river height and local rainfall. During low water times in late fall you are confined to the largest watercourses, or you find yourself changing from a canoeist to a muddy hiker-wader. Regardless of the season, the Basin is not the place for someone who is unwilling to appreciate MUD. Realize that this mud is the best topsoil of our continent.

Late winter and early spring is an excellent time for canoe trips in the Basin. Water height is generally high, allowing you to get in the back areas. The main watercourses have natural levees along their banks, and this creates shallow backwater areas within a braided river pattern. These back areas have the most attractive cypress trees.

Cypress grow in fine clay soil in back areas, and willow trees grow in the sandier soil along the larger watercourses. The high water allows a more flexible travel experience, but camping areas are restricted. If you are looking for land, check along the larger watercourses. The center channel has the highest land along its banks. Also look at some of the pipeline spoil banks.

If you are crossing the center channel give it a great deal of respect. During high water with winds out of the south, you may find standing waves three feet or more in height. Use of your life vest is prudent in all of the larger water bodies in the Basin.

To the lover of wildlands and the life in them, the Atchafalaya is a bountiful feast. Bring your camera on trips into the Basin, but keep it in a waterproof container to prevent damage. Wading birds nest in the thousands. A list of the plant and animal species of the basin would take many pages: bobcat, mink, river otter, egrets, Ivory-billed Woodpeckers (well, maybe), Wood Ducks; alligators, crabs, crawfish; cypress, willow, tupelo, and thousands more. In re-

cent years, the population of nesting Osprey and Bald Eagles have increased, showing the benefit of banning DDT.

The hiker-wader will probably find the Fall season the most interesting. At this time it is easy to find land for camping. For the hiker, there are problems, even in the low water season. Often you need a boat to get to the general area you want to visit, but when you are there, what do you do with the boat?

Land ownership in the Basin is mixed. About half of the area is owned by the public in one form or another. In some areas you will find the land posted by the State Land Office. These public lands are generally open for hikers and campers. Private lands are also found within the Basin. Most landowners are very generous with their property and often allow visitors.

Get permission before entering private property. On all lands, public and private, visitors should respect the property and behave as if they were formally entertaining guests in their own living room at home.

Topographic maps and a compass are advised for any trip into the Atchafalaya.

The topographic maps of the Basin are invaluable sources of information. Unfortunately these maps are always out of date, especially in an area like the Atchafalaya where change is a constant. However, the maps will show you the pattern of land and water in the area you are planning to travel. The water courses may have moved from their map locations, but they generally continue to flow in the same direction.

Obtain current information. Many area newspapers publish water levels, and local convenience store personnel can often tell you what is happening in the area they serve. Also, outing shops in the state often maintain Basin information. ■

Atchafalaya Basin Bayou Pigeon

by Jim Whelan

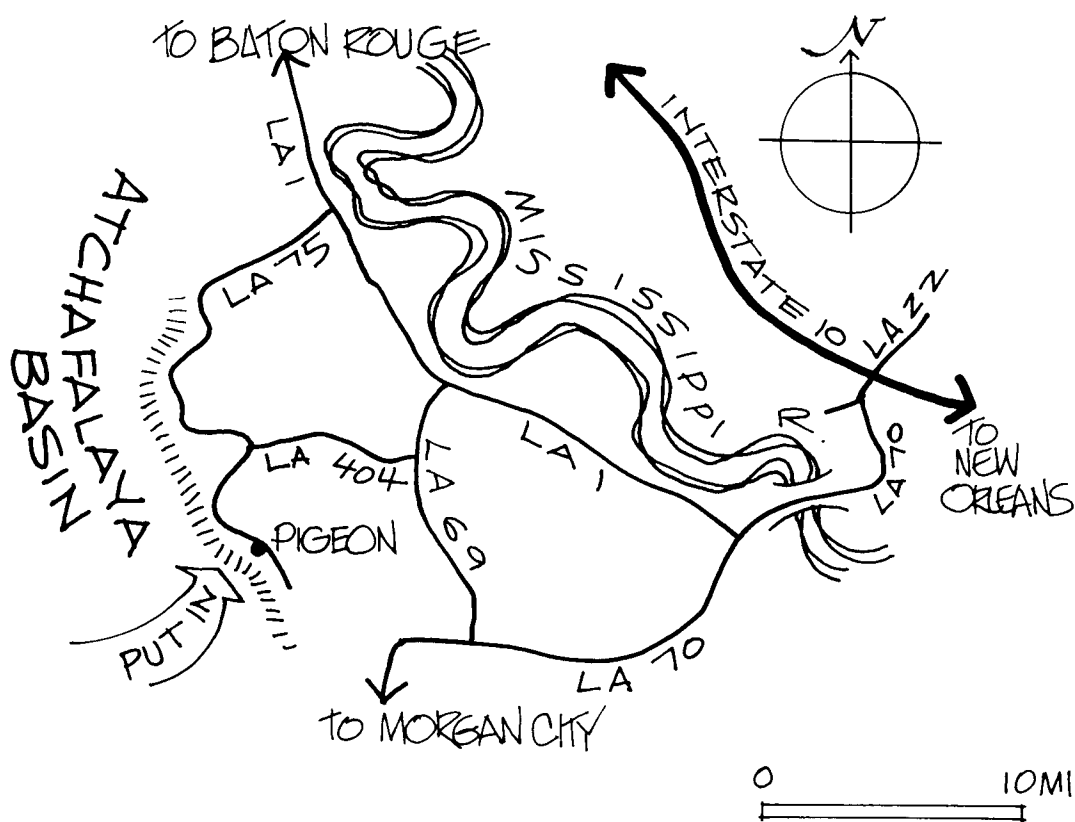
This area is about a two and a half hour drive from New Orleans and less than an hour from Baton Rouge. It offers canoeing on wide and narrow bayous and, depending on the water level, canoeing through the swamp. If you are going to paddle the smaller bayous and sloughs or across the swamp, you must be able to read and follow a topo map and not panic if you have to paddle around for an hour or two a little bewildered as to where you are.

If you are used to putting your canoes in at one bridge and paddling down to the next one, then this is a completely different ball game. What you do here is to study the maps and plan a course to follow. If you are lucky, you might end up following most of your plan, but don't be surprised when you spend several hours paddling

around before sighting a familiar landmark. Beware especially during late winter and spring; high water can cause a problem for overnight camping unless you know beforehand where high ground can be found.

The essential topographic maps are the Pigeon and the Centerville NE quads. Don't leave home without them.

Getting there: Bayou Pigeon is reached from LA Hwy 75 south of Baton Rouge and west of New Orleans. The boat launch is reached by crossing the LA 997 bridge at Pigeon, turning north (right) on the blacktop road, and driving 1.5 miles to a shell road that goes up and over the levee. The opening to Bayou Pigeon is directly across the canal. ■



Atchafalaya Basin

Two O'Clock Bayou

Vernon Wright and Jackie Tamas, Baton Rouge Sierra Club

Two O'Clock Bayou is a waterway through bottomland hardwoods in the upper end of the Atchafalaya Basin. Mature old cypress with lots of Spanish Moss stud the bayou while extensive stands of bottomland hardwoods such as oaks, hickories, sycamores, etc. grow between bayous. One of the accessible barrow pits along a railroad track has extensive beds of water lotus which bloom profusely from June through early September.

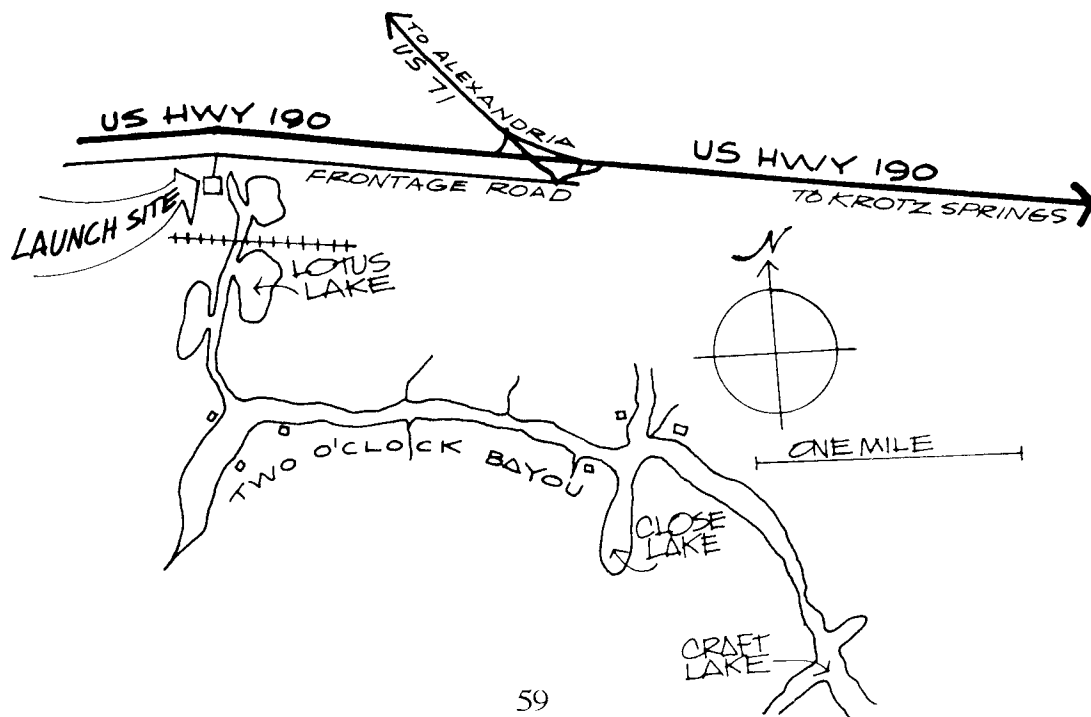
Bird life varies with the season but the summer residents include night herons (a "grosbec" rookery may still exist in the area), anhinga, and prothonotary warblers as well as many herons, egrets, and such permanent residents as barred owls and pileated woodpeckers. The lotus beds harbor many frogs including the one "Kermit" is modeled after. Alligators are also common in the lotus beds. Mammals that are occasionally seen include deer, raccoon, armadillo, and beaver. During the fall a large roost (3000+ birds) of egrets and herons usually forms somewhere near the launch site. Ask the proprietor.

From the put-in point, paddle south down the bayou and under the railroad tracks. Lotus Lake is the first barrow pit to the east south of the railroad tracks. Access is through a small cut in the bank. Continue on down the main bayou until it joins a

larger bayou one mile south. Note the landmarks carefully. Numerous short side bayous, averaging 400-500 yards long, branch off the main bayou and about two miles further down the main bayou you come to Close Lake, an old channel of the Atchafalaya River. It forms a deep bayou about one-half mile long. Beavers have bank lodges on the south end of the lake. There are at least a half dozen hunting camps along these bayous; please respect this private property.

The takeout is at the same place you put in. Close Lake is about a three mile one-way paddle. It is possible to go much farther, if you wish.

Getting there: Take Hwy. 190 west across the Atchafalaya Basin past Krotz Springs. Highway 71 meets Highway 190 from the northwest via an underpass. Access to a frontage road, paralleling Hwy. 190 (100 yds. south), is from the on-ramp from Highway 71. Get in the center lane of Hwy. 190, take the turn lane across the eastbound lanes of Hwy. 190, and go down the on-ramp to the access road to the frontage road. Turn right (west) on the frontage road and a little over one mile is a commercial boat launch. There is a fee for launching (no canoe rentals available). ■



Atchafalaya Basin

Little Bayou Sorrel

by C.C. Lockwood, Baton Rouge Nature Photographer

Little Bayou Sorrel permits a leisurely two day canoe trip in the bald cypress-tupelo habitat of the central Atchafalaya Basin. Fall is a good time here, for you can see the rusty cypress leaves and the Wood Stork. In the early winter, you can sometimes see mink swimming in the bayou before sunrise if you paddle quietly. Canoeing is easy here, for there is rarely much current, but caution should be taken as not to become caught in Flat Lake on windy days. I have seen waves up to four feet high in the shallow lake.

Park near the levee (see *Getting there* below) and carry your canoe and supplies to the barge canal. Watch for barges, then paddle directly across to where Little Bayou Sorrel meets the barge route.

After four miles of meandering down Little Bayou Sorrel, you will notice the bayou takes a sharp right. Here a smaller bayou 10-15 feet wide will be on the left side. This is Bayou Chevreuil. It meets with Bear Bayou and Bayou Cocodrie after a very interesting three-mile trip. As it grows larger, you will finally enter Flat Lake.

If you wish to stay on Little Bayou Sorrel and make it a slightly longer trip, continue on a mile and a half past the Bayou Chevreuil turn and Little Bayou Sorrel will come to a "T". Note: a quarter mile before you get to the "T" there is an oil canal to the north with a spoil disposal bank that makes an emergency high-water campsite. At the "T" take a left and go south on Big Bayou Jessie. Five miles down Bayou Jessie and you will come to Dog Island Pass, where you head east into Flat Lake. This lake's north shore is a beautiful section of cypress trees. There are

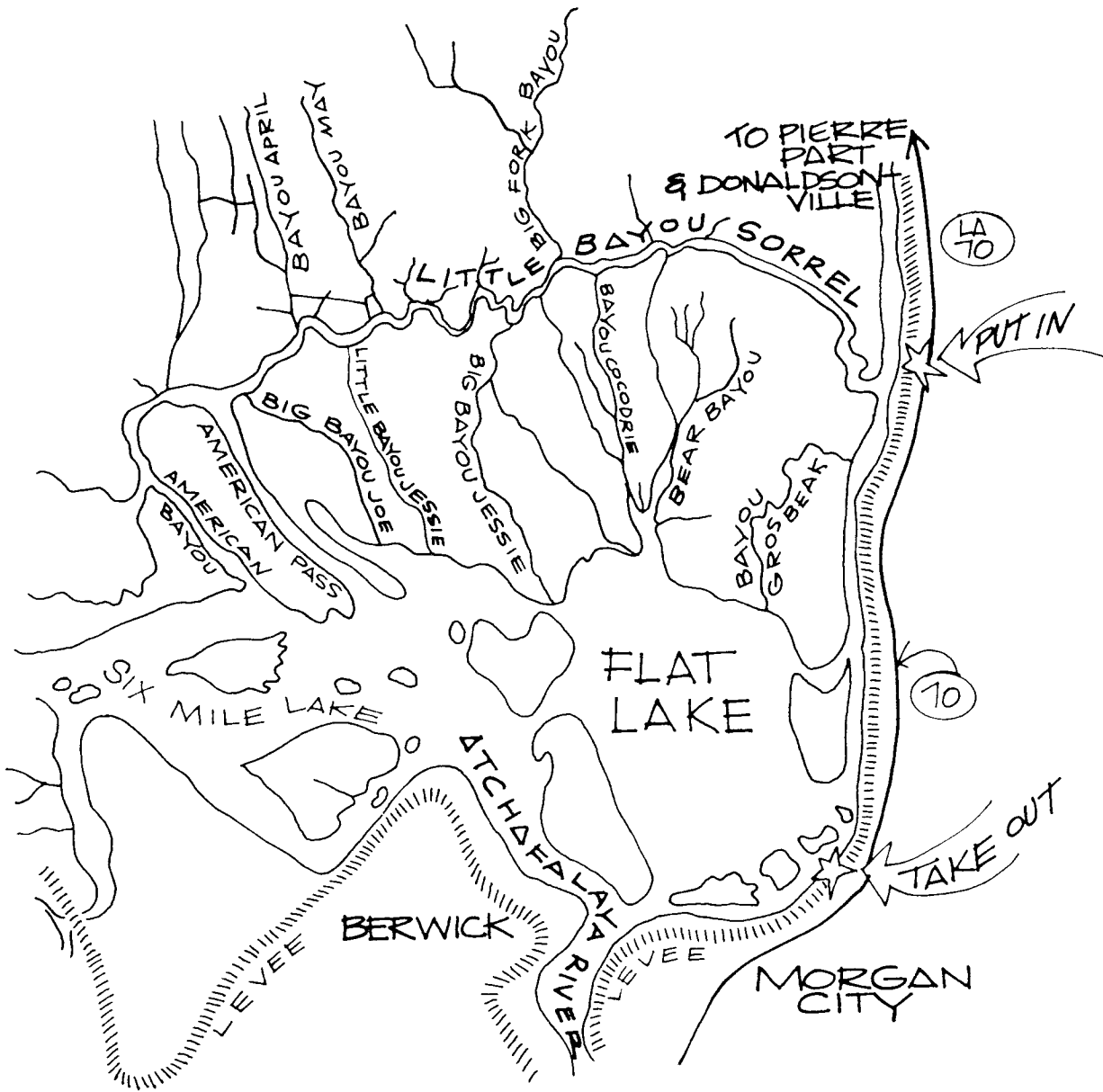
very beautiful sunsets here in October. Flat Lake is very shallow and has a lot of aquatic plants in the northeast corner.

To get out, travel southeast where you will go through a pass and cross the Morgan City-Port Allen barge route to the levee and the Flat Lake public boat ramp. If you are a strong paddler and do not want a car shuttle, you could paddle up the Morgan City-Port Allen barge route to your car at Little Bayou Sorrel. Watch the current and the barges. I suggest a car shuttle.

Camping is primitive and can be done anywhere during low water. From January to June, you may have to look for a spoil bank, if it is a high-water year. During spring high water, you can paddle off the bayou into flooded cypress and tupelo swamps. These are very beautiful, but easy to get lost in.

For maps, and you should carry detailed maps, use the U.S. Geological Survey Napoleonville SW and Morgan City, LA, 7.5' quadrangles. Another good map is the U.S.G.S. Morgan City map in the 30 x 60 Minute Series.

Getting there: To put in, drive to Belle River, La. This is on La. Highway 70 a couple of miles south of Pierre Part, which in turn is southwest of Donaldsonville. After crossing the drawbridge in Belle River, drive 8 1/2 miles down the levee road (Highway 70) toward Morgan City. After you drive the 8 1/2 miles you will see a gate in the levee. Drive through it and Little Bayou Sorrel should be just across the levee heading into the swamp. The Port Allen-Morgan City barge route is the waterway going north-south parallel to the levee. ■



Atchafalaya Basin

Bayou Gravenburg-Buffalo Cove

This is a good day trip in the Atchafalaya Basin. As the other Basin trips do, it offers a way to see this most vast and most beautiful swamp.

After launching your canoe, turn right (south) into the Fausse Point Cut, a wide canal. After two miles, there is another canal coming in on the right. Just opposite this, there is a well-beaten path. The path provides a short portage to an inlet; the inlet leads quickly to Bayou Gravenburg (see map). Once there, explore at will. This bayou is canoeable all year.

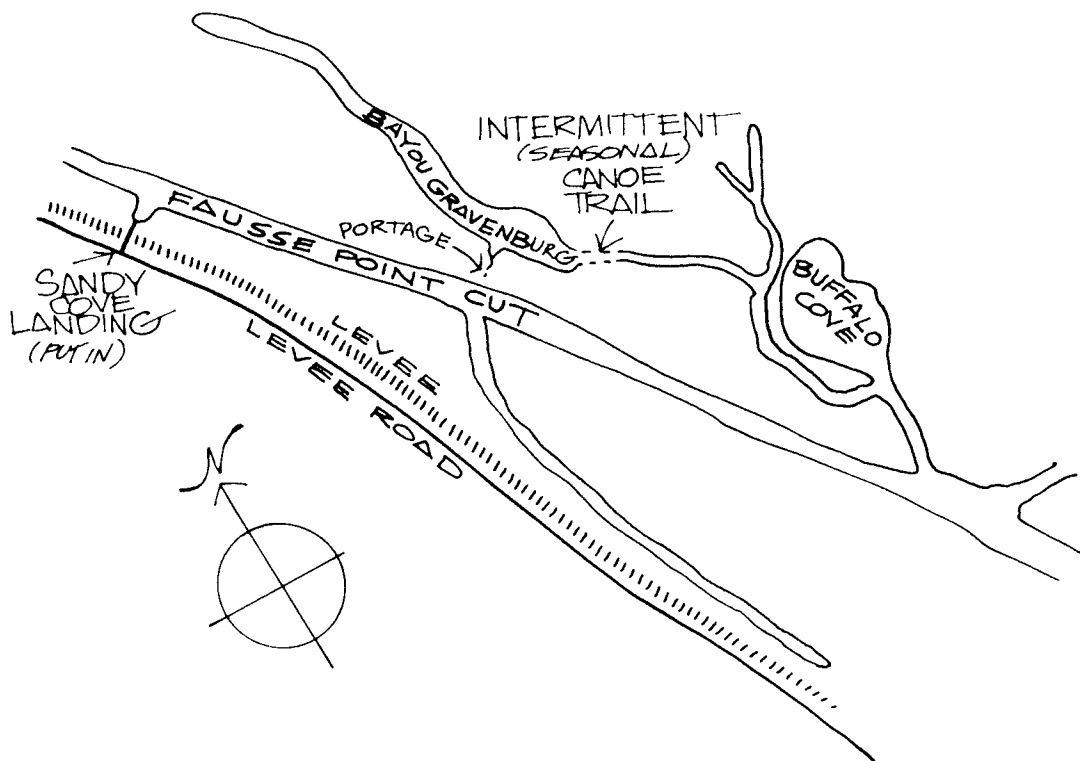
To reach Buffalo Cove, continue on the Fausse Point Cut another 2 1/2 miles to an inlet on the left and turn in. Buffalo Cove is not canoeable in low water; the best time to see both areas is the spring when high water prevails. During crawfish season, which begins around April, there is usually a canoe trail which leads from Buffalo Cove to Bayou Gravenburg (it's on the map). There may be a short water hyacinth blockage at the end. If there is, get up speed and plow on through. Good luck!

This short cut is a great benefit if you can take it because the paddle back up the Fausse Point Cut can be very tiring due to the current. You should allow a

return paddling time of 1 1/2 to 2 times as long as you took going down.

Camping is difficult. There is much undergrowth at low water, and relatively few areas high enough to emerge completely from the spring flood. When you camp, treat the area with care. Not only is much of it privately owned, but we need the Atchafalaya Basin in its natural state. Take nothing but pictures, and if you can, leave no trace of your passage. The topo maps for the area are the Jackass Bay and the Charenton 7.5' quads.

Getting there: To reach the starting point, take LA. Hwy. 96 going east from St. Martinville. Stay on 96 until you reach LA. 679, and turn right. Go to LA. 3038, turn left, and go to the end; this is a T junction into a levee road. This is the western boundary of the Atchafalaya Basin, and is a good hour's drive from St. Martinville. Turn right on the levee road. After 10 1/2 miles, you will enter Iberia Parish. The pavement ends half a mile beyond the boundary sign, just beyond the entrance to Lake Fausse Pointe State Park. The turnoff to the left to Sandy Cove Landing is 3.6 miles beyond this point. ■



Atchafalaya Basin Henderson Swamp

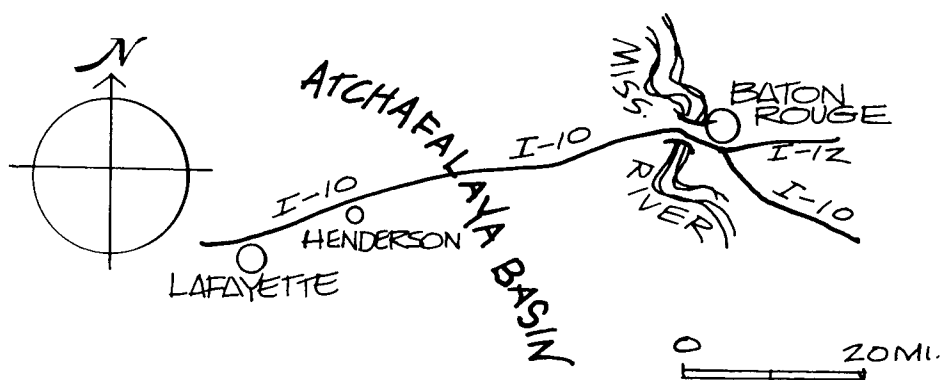
by John Sevenair

Henderson is just off I-10 east of Lafayette. Since it's on the western edge of the Atchafalaya Basin you can explore by canoe from here. The town is famous for its restaurants as well.

Lake Henderson is a mostly open body of water dotted with cypress trees. There will probably be fishermen with outboards here. A network of waterways leads you away from the lake. As long as you can see I-10 and the guide levee you should have no trouble with getting lost. If you venture up one of the many enticing bay-

ous, the usual cautions about maps apply. Your maps are the Cecilia and Butte La Rose 7.5-minute quadrangles.

Getting there: To reach the Atchafalaya Basin from I-10, take the Henderson exit and turn south. Almost immediately turn left (east). This will take you to the downtown Henderson area and the basin levee. Turn right and follow the levee. There are several places here that run swamp tours, and you may find one that rents canoes. There are also boat launches. ■



Atchafalaya Basin
Sherburne
Wildlife Management Area

by Chris Resweber, Baton Rouge Sierra Club

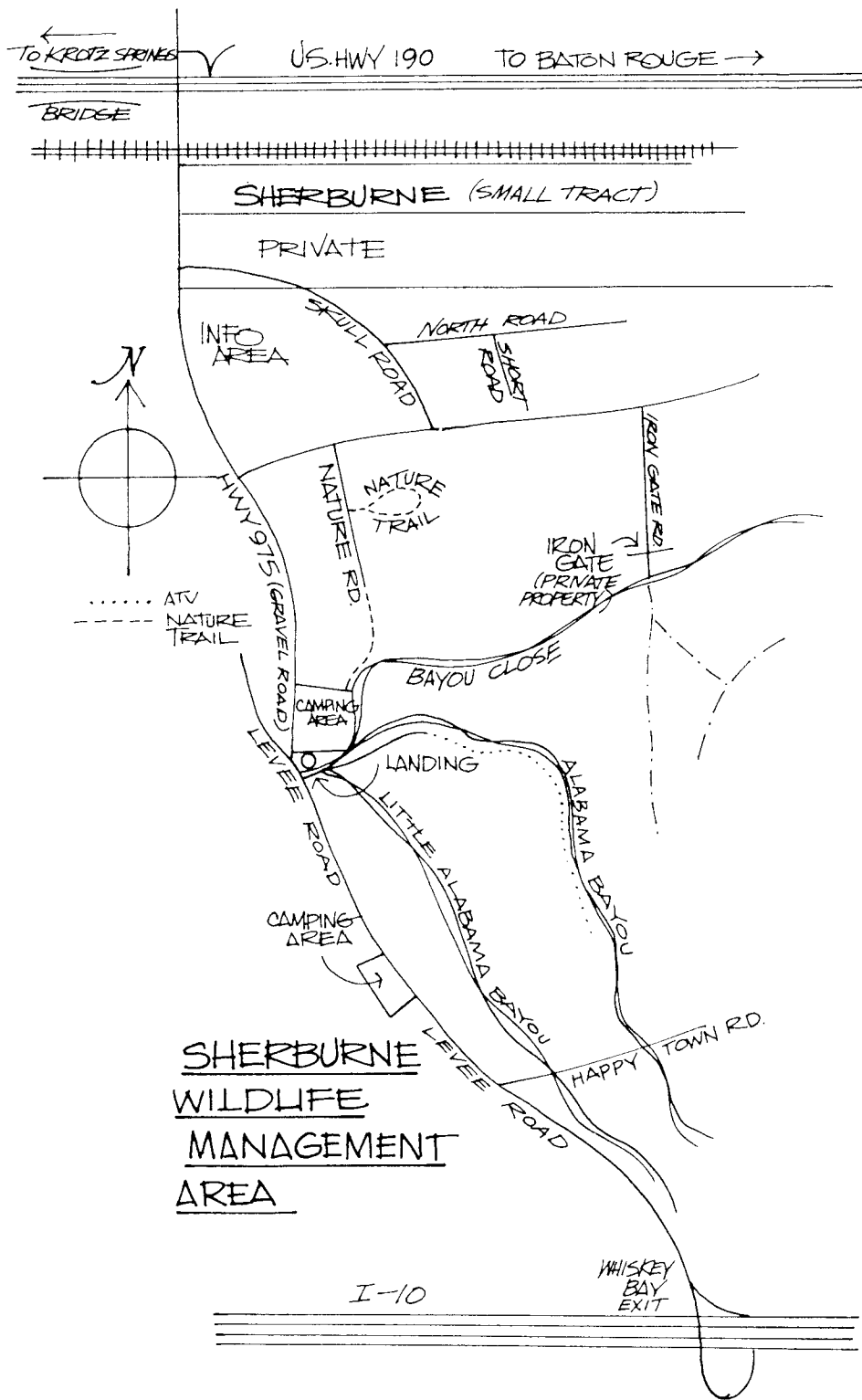
Sherburne Wildlife Management Area consists of 10,232 acres. Vegetation in the area is classified as bottomland hardwoods and includes the following trees: cottonwoods, sycamores, oak, gum, hackberry, ash, willow, cypress, bitter pecan. Midstory species include box alder, maple, mulberry, and roughleaf dogwood. Ground cover is generally sparse due to shading and prolonged flooding. Lush stands of fern are seen throughout the area. Deer, rabbits, and coons abound in the area, and turkey may be seen. This is also an excellent area for birding.

Access to the interior of the northern portion can be achieved by vehicle on improved oil field roads or by boat/canoe on the Big Alabama Bayou and Bayou Close. On the southern portion, access to the interior can be by water craft on Little Alabama Bayou or by vehicle on improved and unimproved road to the Lake Martin

campgrounds (primitive). The public boat landing is located 0.4 miles from the Management Area's main camping area and rifle range. Turn left on this road and bear left at the fork. You can also put a canoe in at the end of the main camping area.

There are also some possibilities for hiking here. See the Sherburne Wildlife Management Area writeup in the Hiking section for further information.

Getting there: Sherburne is located in the Morganza Floodway system of the Atchafalaya Basin. Access to the area is via LA Hwy 975, which connects with Hwy 190 at Krotz Springs on the north, and I-10 at Whiskey Bayou on the south. This is a state Wildlife Management Area, so you'll need a Wild Louisiana Stamp (or a fishing or hunting license) to enter here. ■



Horn Island by Sea Kayak

by Denis Dwyer, Adventure Sports

Horn Island is the largest of the islands that make up Gulf Islands National Seashore. It is fourteen miles long and half a mile wide, and lies seven miles offshore of Bellefontaine Point near Ocean Springs, Mississippi.

Horn Island is a beautiful example of a Gulf Coast barrier island. Huge sand dunes covered with sea oats and scrub brush line the coast all the way around the island. The interior is almost completely forested with longleaf pines. Several large shallow lagoons surrounded by marsh grass are located on the island between the long stretches of sand dunes.

The island is completely uninhabited except for a National Park Service ranger who is stationed on the island.

Getting to Horn Island by sea kayak

If you launch your kayak from Bellefontaine Point you can paddle the seven miles across Mississippi Sound and be standing on Horn Island in about two hours.

The crossing is not particularly difficult, but should *not* be attempted by a novice paddler. A kayaker crossing Mississippi Sound should be comfortable paddling in waves that can commonly reach three or four feet. Once you launch you may not be able to stop and rest before you

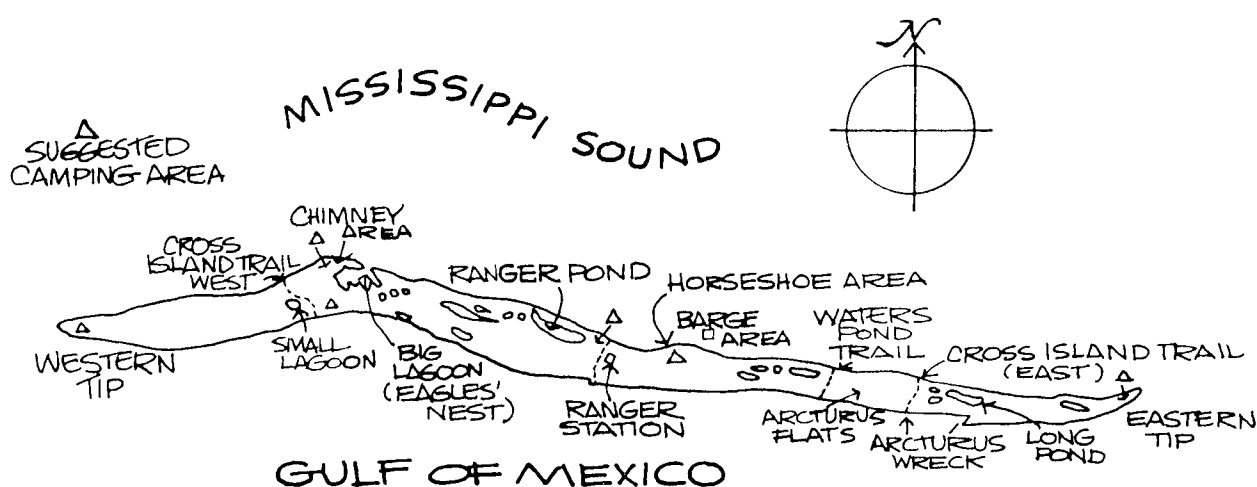
reach the island.

The best time to explore Horn Island is the winter months, when temperatures are mild and insects are not a problem. Paddlers at this time of year will have to contend with possible cold water immersion for extended periods. **Do not** attempt to make this crossing when water temperatures are below 80° without wearing a neoprene wet suit or full dry suit. You won't be able to rescue yourself or help your companions in an emergency if you aren't dressed to deal with cold water.

Before attempting this crossing, a paddler should at least have read how to do deep water rescues and practiced getting back into and emptying a swamped kayak. Never try to cross Mississippi Sound solo. Always paddle with at least one other person, and preferably with two or more. All paddlers should have previous open-water paddling experience.

When you get to the launch site you will have to decide whether or not to launch depending on the weather and water conditions. A calm surface at the shoreline may be the result of a north wind. These blow from the shore, and will be kicking up big waves once you get a mile offshore.

Listen to weather service and local TV sta-



tion weather forecasts before leaving on your trip. Pay special attention to the direction and strength of winds forecast for the next two days. Write down what the high and low temperatures will be, the water temperature, the wind speed and direction, and the chances for rain.

Mississippi Sound is part of the Gulf Intra-coastal Waterway and has a lot of barge traffic passing through. Always be on the lookout for barges traveling directly across your north-south route. Sitting in a kayak you are just a small speck floating in a sea of waves, and you will most likely not be seen by any passing tug captain. Give all barge tows a wide berth. They are traveling faster than you think, so let them go in front of you if there is any chance that you won't be able to clear their path.

I don't want to make it sound like a trip to Horn Island by sea kayak is an extremely dangerous undertaking, but you must take certain precautions to be safe. I have paddled out to Horn Island from Bellefontaine Point over twenty times, and have never even come close to an emergency situation developing.

Before launching call the Gulf Islands National Seashore ranger's office at Davis Bayou Campground (listed in the Directory). Tell them where you are launching and when and where you expect to land. They can have the ranger on the island pass by and check to make sure you have arrived safely.

Camping on Horn Island

Depending on the air temperature and insect conditions you may or may not want to camp in a windy spot. Wind will keep the mosquitoes and no-see-ums away, but will be undesirable in really cold weather. The south side of the island is usually the windiest during the summer months, but is less windy during the winter when winds tend to come out of the north. Camping behind the dunes is possible during winter months, but heavy bug populations make camping near the water a better choice in the summer.

The east and west ends of the island are bare, afford few places for insects to hide, and are good places to go if bugs are a problem. Most sea

kayakers choose the north side of the island for camping, simply because paddling around to the south side requires a much longer trip. One of the nicest places to camp is the area north of the Big Lagoon and the chimney, both of which are marked on USGS maps. A well-marked hiking trail crosses the island about half a mile west of this chimney. If you land near this trail you can stash your kayak, backpack across the island, and camp on the south shore. The south shore faces out to the open Gulf where there are no lights, so the night sky is considerably darker there than on the north shore, where lights from cities along the coast light up the horizon.

Never camp on the dunes. The sea oats and other vegetation that grow on them are fragile. If their vegetation is disturbed the dunes are open to erosion by wind and water.

Always light your fires near the water's edge, where high tides and storms will wash away any traces within a short time. Never leave fires burning when you are away from camp, and never build a fire in the woods. Horn Island is typically very dry, and much of the forest floor is covered with pine needles. A fire that gets out of control could burn large areas of the island, and there would be no possibility of firefighters coming to the rescue.

Drinking water is available on the island at the ranger station where a new well has recently been drilled. We didn't die from drinking it. Park service literature that is still being handed out refers to other wells on the island. They no longer exist. Bring all the water you will need for your trip with you. Plan on one gallon per person per day.

Don't bury any of your garbage on Horn Island. Bring it home with you and dispose of it properly. Hang your food between two trees at night or when you are away from camp. Raccoons on Horn Island have learned to come into campsites at night and raid unprotected food caches.

If you want to camp on Horn Island in the summer you will need to bring the following:

- * A tarp and poles to use as a sunshade.

* Insect repellent and lightweight long sleeve shirt and long pants to keep off what at times seems to be clouds of mosquitoes and gnats.

* A tent with no-see-um mosquito netting.

* Meat tenderizer to put on jellyfish stings that you might get while swimming in the Gulf.

* A hat with a brim and sunglasses to keep the glaring summer sun off your face and eyes when paddling and beachcombing.

Getting to the launch spot:

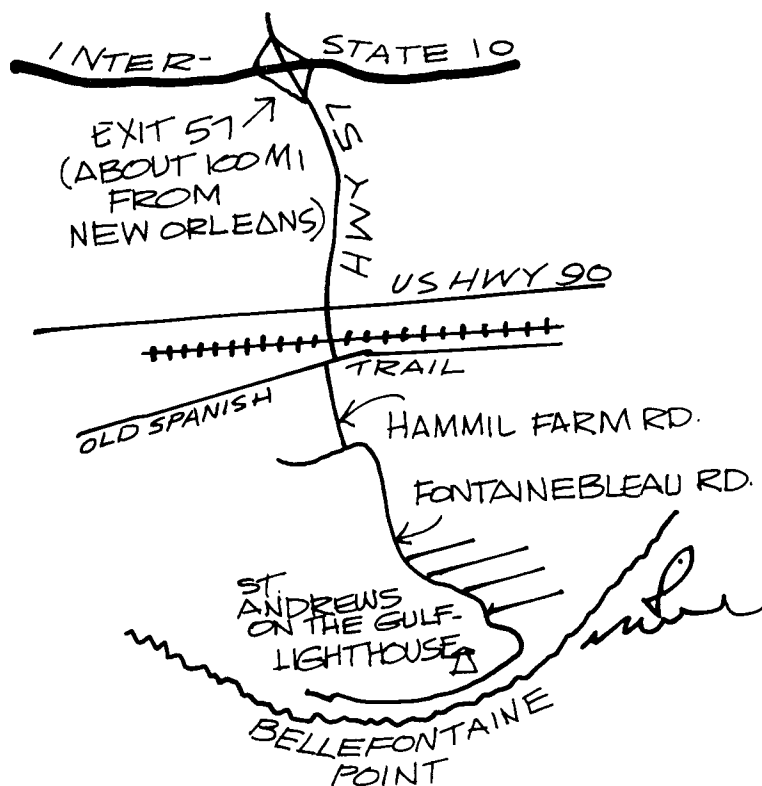
To get to the kayak launch spot at Bellefontaine Point, take I-10 to the Vancleave/Fontainebleau exit (MS Hwy 57). This exit is about a hundred miles from New Orleans. Travel south on Hwy 57 for three miles to a light at U.S. 90. Continue straight ahead and cross railroad tracks until you come to a stop sign at Old Spanish Trail, 3.5 miles from the I-10 exit. Turn right and go 0.1 mile to a flashing yellow light. Turn

left here on Hammil Farm Road. Travel south until you reach a stop sign at Fontainebleau Road at mile 4.6. Turn left on Fontainebleau Road and pass a curve on the road to the right where it turns into Bellefontaine Road. At mile 7.6 you come to an intersection where you angle off to the right (but don't make a hard right turn). The water tower at Bellefontaine Point is 8.2 miles from the I-10 exit. Park on the side of the road in front of the water tower.

Maps

The best map of the Gulf Islands is the NOAA nautical chart #11374, Dauphin Island to Dog Keys Pass. A free map and information on Horn Island may be obtained by writing Gulf Islands National Seashore (see the Directory).

Denis Dwyer is the owner of Adventure Sports and has been sea kayaking since 1984. ■





Cycling

by N. B. Day

Cycling on weekends in southern Louisiana and Mississippi can carry you across miles of beautiful countryside, surrounded by it, living in it, and not walled off from it by car windows. Cycling during the week in the city can get most people to work as fast as a car can. The bicycle is the vehicle of the future. It's good exercise, too.

If you feel unready for this, here are some brief tips on how to prepare for a long bicycle trip. For more information, consult your local cyclist club, Sierra Club cycle trip leader, or one of the several books on the subject.

First of all, what equipment is needed? Each rider should have a spare tube and a patch kit (with goo that hasn't dried out and hardened) plus a frame pump with connector. The tools you will need sooner or later are three levers for removing tires, a multiple dumbbell type wrench, and a six-inch crescent wrench. You will also need a bottle of water and a sandwich. It's amazing how many people will go on a country ride in the high summer with no food or water, even on a Sunday with all the stores closed.

The best place to carry that equipment and food is in some kind of pack that hangs on the bike, rather

than a day pack on the rider. Day packs are miserably hot after a few miles, especially in summer.

What trip to go on? That will depend on your experience, your physical condition, and your bicycle. A good rule of thumb is that you should have a ten-speed bike in good condition for any ride over twenty miles. Thirty miles is a rather tiring distance for a beginner in fairly good shape. Most of the trips in this book have a short cut back to the car, if you get tired. The fifty and sixty-mile outer loops of some of the trips given here are for experienced cyclists in good physical condition.

The group should ride on the right side of the road at all times, and no more than two abreast. When an automobile approaches side-by-side riders from the rear, the rider nearest the shoulder should speed up to allow the rider alongside to fall in behind, near the side of the road.

In heavy traffic, the group should be broken up into several groups of not more than six riders. This minimizes the possibility of an automobile's trying to pass a long string of riders, meeting an oncoming car and then whipping back into the riders.

Have a good trip! ■

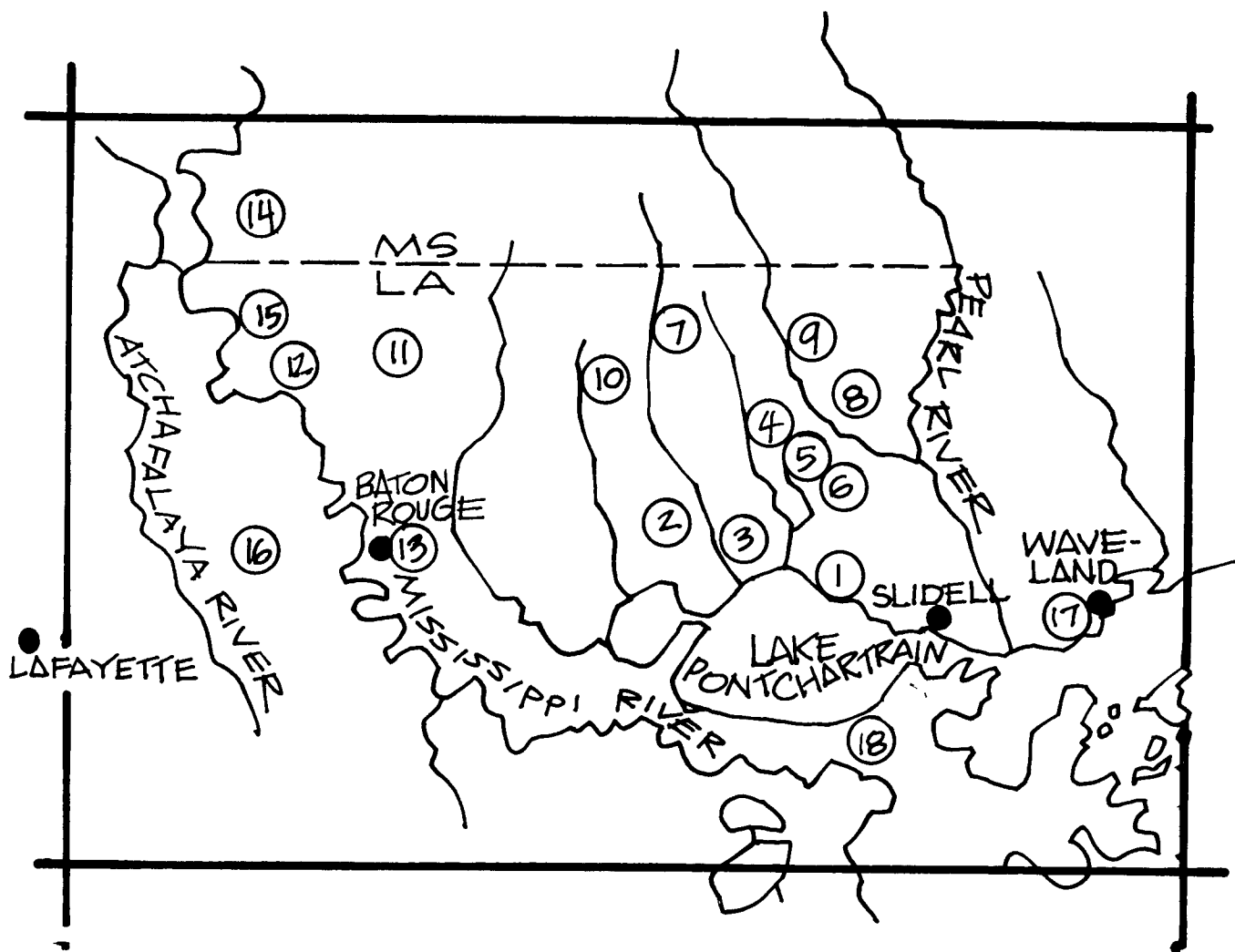
Quick Safety Check

by N.B. Day

Doing the following things will make it less likely that you will need to use your repair kit, and will decrease chances of more serious accidents, as well. Do these things:

1. See that all wheel quick-release levers (if you have them) are tightened and pointing rearwards and down.
2. Try twisting the saddle.
3. Try twisting the handlebars while holding the front wheel.
4. Apply the brakes. Check to see that the brake pads hit the rims at the same time, that they hit the rims and not the tires, and that you cannot squeeze the levers far enough to touch the handlebars with them.
5. Check the tires for proper inflation (it's molded on the sidewall).
6. Spin the wheels to be sure they pass unhindered through the brake blocks.
7. Pick up the bike and shake it to see what fails off. ■

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The Tammany Trace

by John Sevenair

This is a paved trail that can be used by cyclists, hikers, roller bladers, and horseback riders, but not by motor vehicles of any kind. The Tammany Trace follows a converted railroad right-of-way, crossing waterways on pavement laid over old but solid railroad trestles. The 200-foot-wide corridor of the right-of-way passes through second-growth pine woods for most of its length, though there are some roads and houses visible from time to time. There are also some wetlands along the trace.

When the Tammany Trace is finished it will run 31 miles from Covington to Slidell. At the time this is being written only the stretches from Abita Springs through Mandeville are open. More sections will be made available as paving continues.

If you start at Abita Springs, go east. (If you go west toward Covington you'll find that the pavement ends within a hundred yards.) The trail curves to the south and crosses LA 59 a few miles later at a crosswalk. Just before you reach I-12 (you'll see its bridges) look for a green caboose on your left. This is the Koop Drive information station and the first aid center for the trace. You'll find a water fountain and rest rooms here, and if it's raining you can wait it out here or at picnic tables under I-12. The section of the trace between Abita Springs and Koop Dr. is 4.5 miles long.

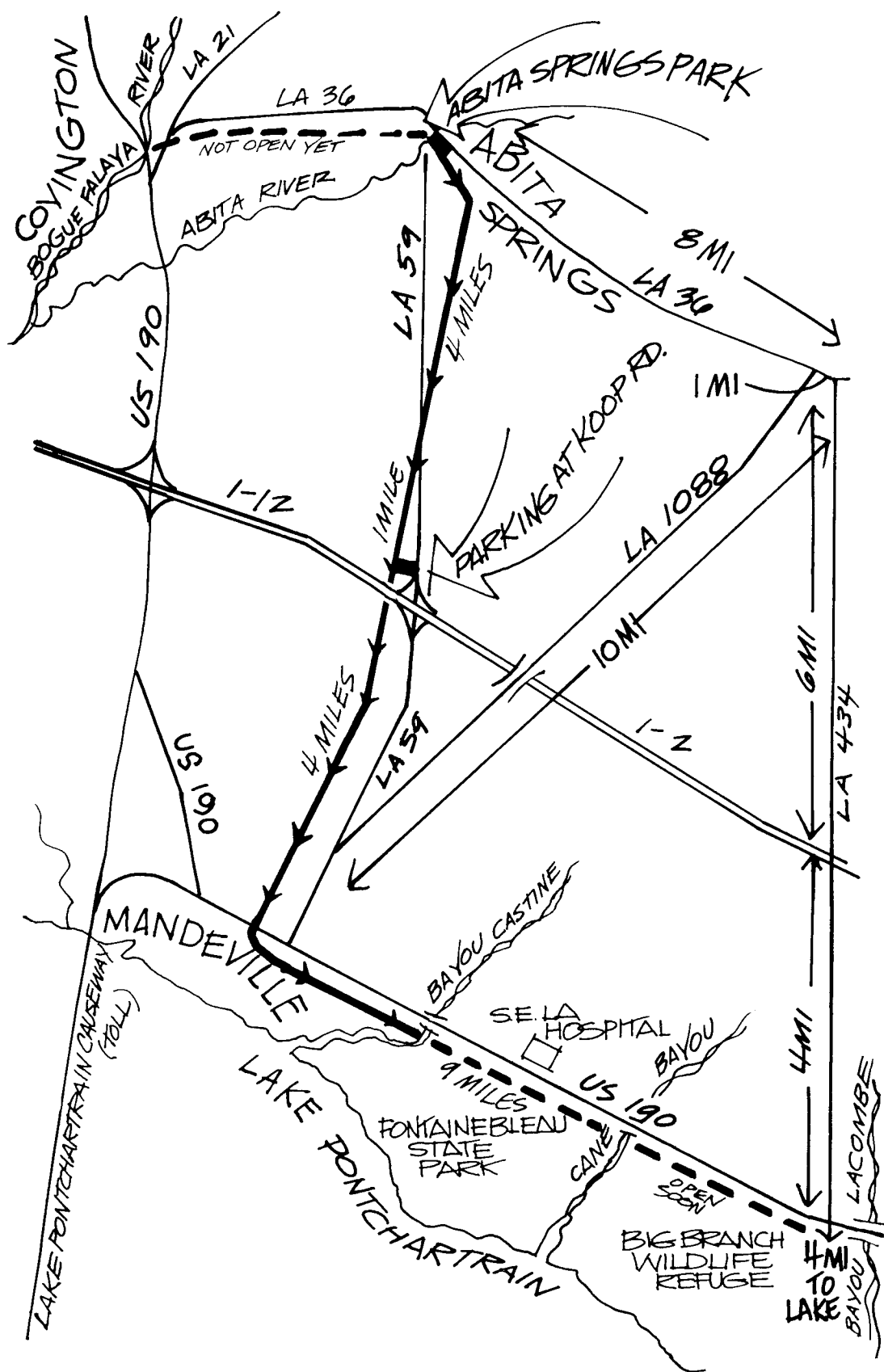
South of I-12 the trail crosses several side roads before reaching US 190 in Mandeville. The distance from Koop Dr. to US 190 is 3.8 miles long. There is no convenient parking in Mandeville for Trace users at this time. If you want to do a one-way trip, you might consider

leaving a car on the lakefront (lots of parking) and using the back roads of Old Mandeville to go between US 190 and your vehicle. But if you're cycling, why not just return to Abita Springs? The round-trip distance is not much over 16 miles, and you can enjoy the scenery and the absence of motor vehicles all over again.

The next section to open will run nine miles from Mandeville to Lacombe. The portion of the section that runs through Mandeville is complete, and the remainder should be finished reasonably soon. Most of the route for this section parallels US 190 and is a couple of hundred yards south of it. When the Trace is complete to Lacombe cyclists will be able to turn right and look over the new Big Branch Wildlife Refuge, or turn left and make a loop following some roads (see the map). Or you can always return on the Trace to your starting point—do you really want to get on the road with cars again?

A third section will carry the Trace from Lacombe to Slidell. For more information contact the Tammany Trace Foundation, the fundraising arm of the trace. Their address and phone number are in the Directory section of this book.

Getting there: Go north on LA 59 from Mandeville or I-12 (exit #63). A few hundred yards from the interstate, turn left on Koop Dr. and go to the end. You will find parking, Trace access, and rest rooms here. You can also continue north on LA 59 to Abita Springs. Turn left just past the old railroad signals (that's the Trace) and park there or down at the Abita Springs Tourist Park. If you reach the stop light you've gone a couple of hundred feet too far. ■



Hammond Ride

by Greg Reynolds and the Crescent City Cyclists

This is a good riding area for both the beginner and the more experienced rider. Experienced cyclists can take routes of 50 or 60 miles in length, and there are also rides of 20 and 36 miles. The two longest rides are scenic but hilly, while the shorter rides are ideal for the beginner because of the simple directions and relatively flat terrain. While the short rides are not as scenic as the longer ones, they are well worth taking.

Another plus is the abundance of connecting roads. It is possible to make up several more variations of the rides if you want to add or subtract mileage.

All of these rides begin at the railroad station in Hammond's historic downtown district. You start off keeping the railroad tracks on your right and turn onto North Oak. Here you will pass the campus of Southeastern Louisiana University. At the T junction at the end of North Oak, turn right onto LA 1064, and after a short distance you will see LA 1065. Turn left onto it and continue up to LA 442.

At this point those doing the short ride (20 miles) will turn right on 442. Soon you will cross the Tangipahoa River and turn right on 443. This highway eventually becomes Morris Road and ends at US 190. By taking a right here, the short-distance rider will return to Hammond. Be careful on this section of US 190. Sometimes it is heavily traveled.

Medium-distance riders also turn right on LA 442, but continue straight on past the intersection of LA 443. At this point LA 442 becomes LA 40. You will pass the entrance of Zemurray Gardens on your left in this stretch. When you reach LA 445, turn right toward Robert and follow the directions for long-distance riders (see below).

Long-distance riders continue across LA 442 without turning, following LA 1065 through several turns. After entering an area of speed limits, the outskirts of Independence, many cyclists turn left, continuing on LA 1065 to US 51, and turn right to an area of stores for refreshments. To skip this, just go a block onward where 1065 turns left, turn left at the T junction, and turn right at another T junction. It is only a short distance on either US 51 or the back

roads to LA 40, where these two variations rejoin. After you cross the Tangipahoa River you will climb a short but steep hill.

At this point riders who want even more challenge (the "long-plus" ride) can turn left on LA 1054. ("Long" riders continue on LA 40—see below.) Here you head north to LA 16, a road with fine broad paved shoulders, where you turn right. Continue to the community of Holton and turn right on LA 445.

This section of 445 brings you past several dairy farms to the small community of Husser. A small post office (over a hundred years old) on your left will be your notice that you are in Husser. Further down the road on your left is a store that can be a welcome stop after completing this hilly section of the ride.

A little past the store you come to an intersection with LA 1062. Turn left here, following LA 445 back towards Robert, your next destination.

Meanwhile the long (but not long-plus) riders stay on Highway 40 to Loranger. Turning left onto Highway 1062 brings you past the high school. Follow 1062 through several turns to an intersection with LA 445. Continue straight ahead onto 445, joining the "long-plus" route and heading towards Robert. At LA 40 a few miles later the medium-distance route also joins.

The medium, long and long-plus riders turn right onto US 190 in Robert and cross the Tangipahoa River again. Not long after the river crossing, turn left onto LA 1067 and go past the LSU Experimental Station. Just after a sweeping curve to the right, turn onto the first road on your right, Bennett Rd. The route here circles the Experimental Station and return to 190.

LA 1064 begins directly across 190. Take 1064 past Hammond High to Vineyard Road. This intersection is not always marked, but it's the first paved road on your left. Another landmark is a sign for a historical house on your right. The house is approximately 100 yards off the road and is partially hidden by trees. It dates from the early 19th century and is worth a look.

Turning left onto Vineyard, you pass scattered houses and the back of the Hammond Airport. When you come to a T junction, turn left. At this point you are on Highway 443, a.k.a. Morris Road, and have

Madisonville Ride

by Phyllis Baudoin Griffard and the Crescent City Cyclists

The Madisonville rides are a short drive across Lake Pontchartrain from New Orleans. Routes of 20, 45 or 60 miles are possible. The routes are generally in flat, piney country on good surfaces. Traffic in Madisonville and the immediate area is getting worse, as suburbanites trying to flee the suburbs bring the suburbs with them. Traffic on most of the roads on the routes here is still fairly light.

If you are not starting from Fairview Riverside State Park, you can park in the town of Madisonville just west of the Tchefuncte River bridge on any side street. As far as possible, take back streets to avoid busy LA 22 through town. Our route descriptions begin at the intersection of LA 22 and LA 21; start north on LA 21 from there.

From LA 21 take a left onto Johnson St. just past the Madisonville Super Market on the right. Watch for Galatas Rd. and take a right onto it. At the stop sign take a left onto Dummyline Rd. This curves around and dead-ends into Brewster Rd. Turn left.

Here's the 20-mile route. To remove 3 more miles from this, take a shortcut from Brewster across Perilloux Rd. to LA 1085. To complete the 20-mile route in full, go past Perilloux Rd. and turn right onto LA 1085 where Brewster Rd. ends. Both of these choices bring you to the foot of the LA 1085 bridge over I-12. Go over the bridge, cross LA 1077, and continue on to LA 21. The road gets a bit bumpy before the end. Take a right onto 21, cross I-12 again (there are stores here), and turn right onto Brewster Rd. You could shortcut back to town via either 21 or 1077, but both are busy in this area. From Brewster take a left onto Dummyline Rd. and retrace your steps to where you started.

Two longer rides of 45 and 60 miles (and several shortcuts) are also possible. Starting from Madisonville, begin by going to the western end of Brewster Rd. as on the shorter ride. At the stop sign here, turn left onto LA 1085 and go a short distance to LA 22, which can have quite a bit of traffic. Turn right, passing several side streets until you see a sign for the Midway Baptist Church. Turn right here onto Fire Tower Rd. and go on this paved but rough road to US 190. Turn right; you'll see the Lorraine Fire Tower on your left just after the turn.

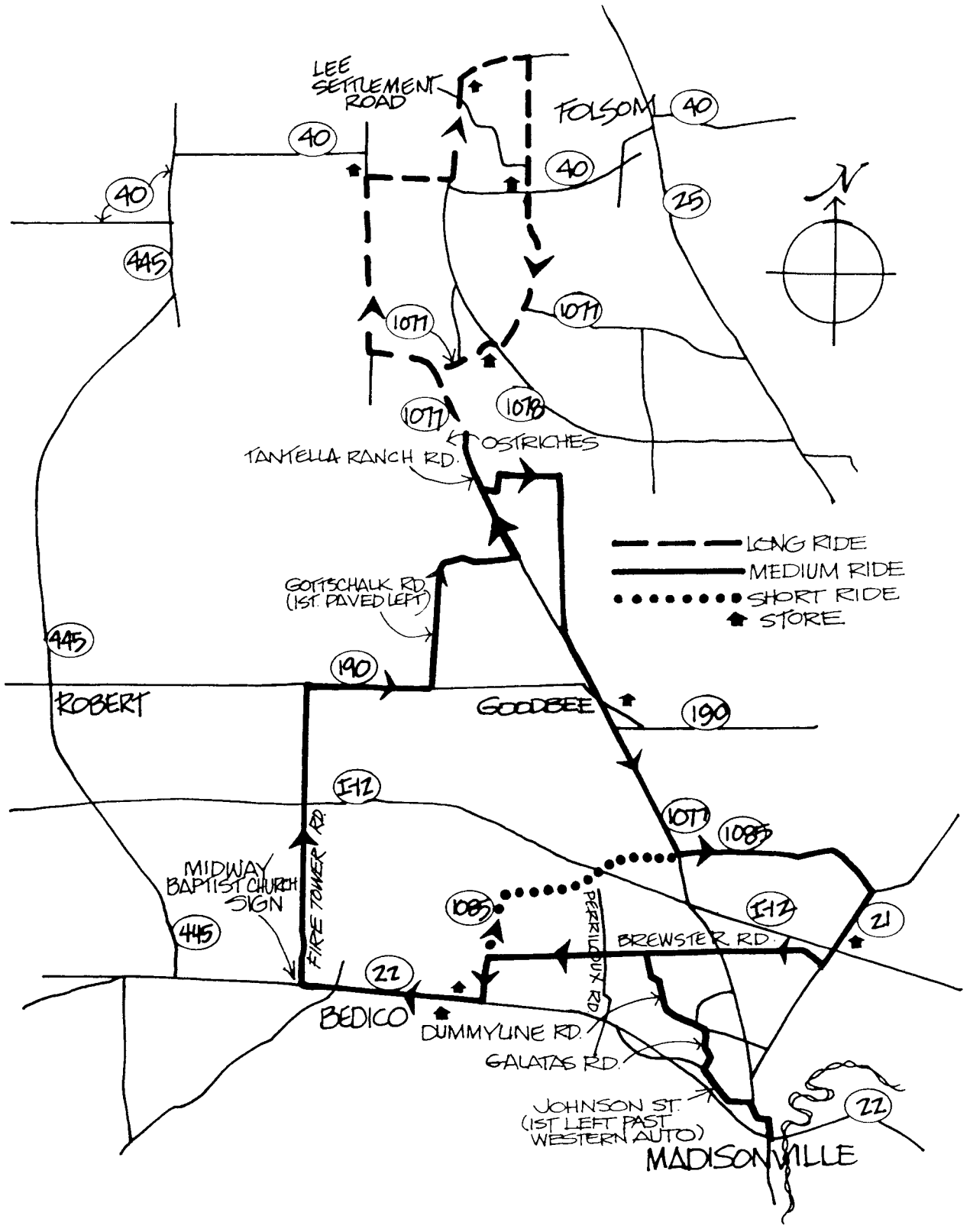
To follow the 45 or 60-mile routes, turn left onto Gottschalk Rd., which is just past the Florida Parishes Detention Center on the right. (If you want a shortcut of several miles continue down US 190 to Goodbee and return to Madisonville via LA 1077. Be careful; 1077 gets busy near town). Gottschalk Rd. will be the first paved road you come to from US 190. The road curves right and runs into LA 1077. Turn left onto 1077.

Medium-length riders should take a right onto Tantella Ranch Road. This road winds around and turns sharply to the right to rejoin LA 1077. Go left onto LA 1077 here and take it through Goodbee until it intersects LA 1085. (A shortcut back to Brewster Rd. is possible by staying on LA 1077.). For the full 45-mile route, take a left onto LA 1085. This puts you back on the shortest route (see above); pick up the description above to return to your starting point.

A 60-mile ride is possible by making an extra loop north of the 45 mile ride. After you join LA 1077 continue north past Tantella Ranch Road. Not far north of this point you will see an ostrich farm on your left. LA 1077 turns sharply to the right, but keep going straight past this turn. Follow the pavement about four miles to LA 40. There's a store, Eddie's, just beyond this intersection. Turn right on LA 40.

You can keep on LA 40 to N. Willie Rd. or extend the ride with a left turn onto Lee Settlement Rd. If you do this, turn right at Anthony Rd. This part of the parish is also part of the Folsom Ride. Anthony Rd. changes its name south of LA 40 to N. Willie Rd. Take this road south until it brings you back to LA 1077 (where one begins and the other ends is not obvious). Follow LA 1077 back past the ostrich farm and rejoin the route for the medium-length (45 mile) ride at Tantella Ranch Road.

Getting there: To reach Madisonville from I-12, take exit #59. This puts you on LA 21 northeast of town; this point is shown on the map. If you've come across the Causeway from New Orleans, take the exit labeled "To LA 22" within a mile of the north end of the bridge. Fairview Riverside State Park is about four miles from this exit, and Madisonville itself is about a mile beyond that. ■



Folsom Ride

by Phyllis Baudoin Griffard and the Crescent City Cyclists

The routes described here begin in Folsom and are 34, 52 and 63 miles long. The more northern parts of the Folsom rides have smooth rolling hills, while the area farther south is relatively flat. All three routes have good roads to offer, as well as opportunities to visit Zemurray Gardens and the Global Wildlife Center. Parts of the Folsom ride overlap with the Hammond, Blond, and Madisonville rides. Thus, with a little planning a gamut of ride distances and landscapes are possible.

To start any of the rides, park at the Folsom Elementary School, which is not far south of the junction of LA 25 and LA 40. For all of the routes, go a block or so north on LA 25 and turn left on LA 40

To take the short route, go west on 40 past the Global Wildlife Center. A non-profit foundation has recently established this center for viewing large animals from around the world. Cycling through the park's gravel paths is not allowed (nor is it desirable); transportation within the park is included in the cost of admission. Bring your binoculars; you can even see some of the animals from the road. The Center is open daily. See the Directory for their phone number if you need more information.

Continue on 40 to a T junction, where LA 445 joins from the north. Turn left here, and a mile later turn right again, remaining on 40. The Zemurray Gardens entrance is on your right not far ahead. Then take a right onto LA 443/40 toward Loranger, and keep going straight when the road becomes LA 1062. Follow 1062 through turns to its end at an intersection, and go straight through onto LA 445. Here you rejoin the two longer routes. Return to LA 40, turn left onto it, and backtrack to Folsom.

For either of the longer rides, avoid a part of busy LA 25 by going down LA 40 to Lee Settlement Rd. (You can take Anthony Rd. if you

want.) Follow Lee Settlement Rd. to Hay Hollow Rd. and turn right. Turn left on Hawk Rd a quarter of a mile later, and a quarter of a mile after that turn left again, this time on South Hay Hollow Rd. This brings you back to LA 25. You will be on 25 only briefly before you veer northwest on LA 450. This is a nice long straight road through rolling hills.

You can cut across on LA 16 to make another relatively short route. Traffic on 16 can be fairly heavy, but the road has recently been resurfaced, and it now has broad well-paved shoulders. Turn left on LA 445 to rejoin the longer routes.

When you reach LA 10 at Stoney Point you have another choice. You can either turn left to Wilmer on the mildly hilly LA 10 for a 52-mile loop, or continue ahead on LA 450 to LA 440 for a 63-mile loop. The longer ride follows quiet back roads. When you reach Boliver on 440, take a very sharp left onto LA 1061 to head back south. LA 1061 continues past Wilmer, where the medium and long routes rejoin.

LA 1061 soon curves to the west. After the curve be on the lookout for a left turn onto TP47 (Friendship Church Rd.). When you reach LA 16 turn right and then immediately turn left, putting you on LA 445. Follow 445 through its turns, pass through Husser, and watch for LA 40 on the left. When it does turn onto 40 and head back toward Folsom. Riders on the longer routes will pass the Global Wildlife Center for the first time on this stretch. Continue all the way to Folsom on LA 40, which gets busier as you approach town.

Getting there: To reach the Folsom Elementary School, follow US 190 north from either the Causeway or I-12 (exit #63). When 190 turns left (west) just past Covington, continue straight ahead on LA 25. The school is 15 miles north of I-12 and 10 miles north of the US 190 - LA 25 intersection. ■

Blond Ride

by Phyllis Baudoin Griffard and the Crescent City Cyclists

This set of rides offers views of farms and horse ranches all along the route, and is hillier to the north and shadier to the south. Here you can choose among routes of 25, 40 and 55 miles in length. These routes are situated between, and share some stretches with, the Abita Springs and Folsom rides. You can create a myriad of possible routes and lengths by mixing and matching the three rides.

Head out from the school by riding two blocks south on LA 437 to LA 1081 and turn left. You soon come to a curve in LA 1081 at Pat O'Brien Rd. Turn left onto the Pat O'Brien shortcut for the 40 mile route. If you're feeling slow you can shave about 9 miles from the shortest (25 mile) ride.

If you stay on LA 1081, you are in for a nice, quiet ride for a few miles. Cut across on Smith Rd. to LA 1082 and head north again. This area offers some of the nicest riding on the Abita Springs and Blond routes. The long stretch of LA 1082 goes past many horse farms on a nicely surfaced road. Where 1082 ends take a left onto LA 40. Follow the curve and continue past Albin's Community Grocery, looking for a right turn onto Fairhaven Rd.

You could return to the starting point by turning onto LA 1129 from Fairhaven Rd. but 1129 is often busy. After crossing 1129, Fairhaven Rd. becomes Section Rd. This soon curves to the south, passing a tempting peach orchard and fruit stand on your left. Going over the hills here brings you to LA 40/437.

If you are opting for the shortest trip, you could return as shown on the map by turning left on the relatively busy LA 40/437. It is much more pleasant to avoid the traffic by heading south on Fitzgerald Church Rd. and then east on LA 1081 back to LA 437 and the starting point. This will add about a mile to the distance you travel.

If you are taking one of the longer routes, turn right onto LA 40/437 from the end of Section Rd. There is a small ostrich farm on the right just before

LA 40 splits off from LA 437. Watch for the split and go left onto LA 40. The surface of LA 40 is rough for a couple of miles. Your route goes over hills and eventually takes you into Folsom at LA 25.

You can take a left onto LA 25 for a few hundred feet before cutting right onto LA 40, or miss the heavy LA 25 traffic altogether by going straight across it and curving around to LA 40. This part of the ride overlaps with the Folsom ride. LA 40 can be quite busy in this area. Once you're on 40, follow it to an intersection with N. Willie Rd. (on the left) and Anthony Rd. (on the right).

For the 40-mile loop, take a left onto N. Willie Rd.. This has a nice surface and is very quiet. Turn left when you reach 1078, rejoining the longer route.

For the longer route, turn right onto Anthony Rd., left onto Settlement Rd., and right again onto LA 40. Just before you reach the gas station and store at Eddie's, where LA 40 curves sharply to the right, turn left onto Turnpike Rd. (LA 1077). Pay attention to the inconspicuous turn onto LA 1078 in a curve in LA 1077. The names of the roads can be confusing, but you will soon be reassured as you travel along LA 1078. This busy, flat road will bring you back to the LA 25 that you crossed at Folsom.

When 1078 reaches LA 25, take a quick right and then a left onto Million Dollar Rd., which is well adorned with signs to the Land-O-Pines campground and waterslide. Follow the signs across the Bogue Falaya to Land-O-Pines, around curves and through intersections. This stretch is shady, flat, and nicely surfaced. Continue past the campground as the road curves right again, and enjoy the last leg of the ride. At the intersection with LA 437, turn left to return to Lee Road Junior High.

Getting there: From LA 190 not far north of I-12, head toward Abita Springs on LA 21. Go north on LA 437 to Lee Road Junior High and park. The hills are more forgiving if you take them in the direction of the arrows on the map. ■

Abita Springs Ride

by Greg Reynolds and the Crescent City Cyclists

Many cyclist consider this to be one of the best areas for rides in the New Orleans area. It is scenic, with rolling hills in the northern section, but relatively flat for the beginner closer to Abita Springs. There are two main rides in this area, a shorter one of approximately 30 miles and the longer one of about 50 miles. As usual, there are short cuts and divergences; rides of almost any length are possible.

The routes begin at the Abita Springs Tourist Park. As you leave the park entrance, turn left (away from the Tammany Trace) off the gravel and onto the pavement. Go a block or two; you'll see the St. Jane de Chantal Catholic Church across a main road on your right. This is the beginning of LA 435. Go straight ahead on 435.

If you're taking the shorter route, follow 435 a few miles to Downs Ave., which is on your left. There was no street sign here when we checked this, but look for a Crawford's Greenhouse sign. Turn left on Downs Ave., go to its end, and follow the pavement around the corner onto Sanders Road. After a short distance on Sanders turn right onto Fauntleroy Rd. At the end of Fauntleroy turn left on Cleland Rd. and go to another T junction, this one with LA 1083. Turn right on 1083 and go to LA 21. Take another right here, being careful of the heavy traffic. At least LA 21 has wide, paved shoulders. There is a store across the road at the intersection if you need a break.

Fortunately you are not on LA 21 for long. Turn left, again onto LA 1083. Follow it north to Bob Baxter Road, which you will see on your left. Then follow Bob Baxter to LA 40 and turn left. Look for St. Tammany 58 (Heintz Jenkins Rd.) on your left. Turn here and follow the pavement as it turns into Thornhill. At the T junction with LA 1082 turn left.

Follow 1082 south pass Dorignac's Farm and over some nice rolling hills. For those riders who want to add a few miles I suggest taking Pat O'Brien Road to LA 1081 and then taking Smith Road back to 1082. Both O'Brien and Smith Roads are very scenic with little traffic.

If you don't want the extra miles you simply stay on 1082. When you come to Highway 21 (again, be careful of the heavy traffic), turn left and go for a few hundred yards before turning right on LA 59. At this point you are about 3 miles from Abita Springs. Continue on 59 as it brings you back into town.

If you want to go long, ignore Downs Ave. and stay on LA 435 until you reach the small community of Talisheek. A small store/post office is located where Spur 435 joins 435. Turn left on Spur 435, which quickly intersects with LA 41. Turn left again; this puts you on 41 heading north towards Bush. This is a busy highway, but the wide shoulder more than make up for it.

After several miles you will see Watts-Thomas Road on your left. This is a well-marked and smooth road that takes you off the main highway. Turn on to Watts-Thomas and follow it until it ends near the intersection of LA 41 and LA 40.

Turn left onto 41. After going about 300 yards you will see a store on your right where 41 turns north. Ignore this turn and continue straight ahead on 40 until you reach LA 21. At 21 there is another store. Turn left on 21, still a relatively busy highway with broad shoulders this far northeast, and go a few hundred yards before turning right onto the continuation of 40. This stretch of LA 40 will take you several miles to the west. There is a store on your left not far before the Fair Haven Road turnoff. Turn at the sign you will see on your right marking the beginning of Fair Haven Rd.

Both Fair Haven and its continuation Section Road are lots of fun, with a series of short but steep hills. Section Rd. makes a left turn and finally ends at LA 437. Turn left here, go a few dozen yards, and turn right on Fitzgerald Church Road. This is a nice scenic road with little traffic. It ends at a T junction; turn left here. Follow the road across LA 1129. There are some stores near here if you need one.

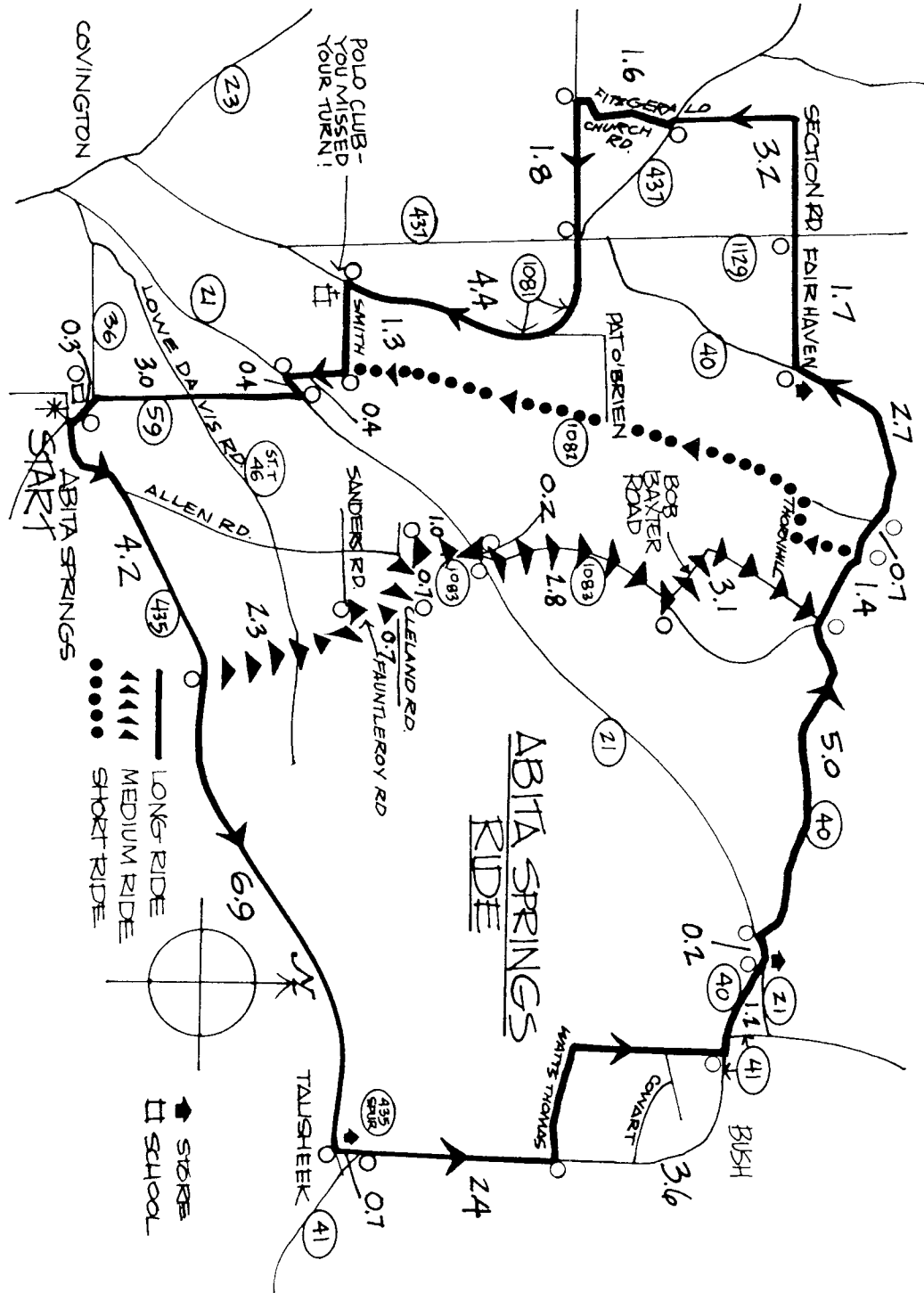
The road you're on becomes LA 1081 at LA 1129. As this highway turns south it has several good hills in the vicinity of Pat O'Brien Road. After this the land starts to level off and there are few hills on the remainder of the ride. Look for Smith Road on your left. This is a well-marked smooth road with a Catholic church on its corner. If you miss it there is a polo club sign just past the turn, which is your reminder to turn around. Smith is the last good country road on this ride.

Smith Rd. ends at LA 1082; turn right here. You will be on this road for about 400 yards before you cross a bridge and come to another intersection with LA 21. Turn left on 21 (again, be careful-heavy traf-

fic here) and go a few hundred yards. Turn right onto LA 59, go on for three more miles, and you'll be back in Abita Springs.

Getting there: Take LA 59 north from Mandeville or I-12 (the exit number is 65) to Abita

Springs. Turn left just past the old railroad signals (that's the Tammany Trace) and go a couple of hundred yards down to the Abita Springs Tourist Park. If you reach the stop light at the intersection of LA 59 with LA 36 you've gone a couple of hundred feet too far. ■



Kentwood Ride

by Greg Reynolds and the Crescent City Cyclists

This is an excellent ride for the experienced rider with a ten-speed or better bike. It contains some remarkably hilly and scenic sections (for this part of the country). To begin all versions of this ride, return from Camp Moore (see *Getting there* below) to the junction of US 51 and LA 440, turn left, cross the railroad tracks and the Tangipahoa River, and continue on 440 until it intersects with LA 1054. At this point take a left on 1054 heading north.

The short and medium-length routes turn left on LA 38 and head back toward Kentwood. This road has good shoulders to Kentwood, is busy in town, and is narrower (and quieter) to the west. The short route turns left at LA 1051 just west of US 51 and rejoins the longer routes just before they end. The medium route continues past Kentwood to rejoin the longer routes at the sign for the Bethel Baptist Church.

Riders on the longer routes continue past LA 38 on 1054. This road makes a sharp left turn at its intersection with LA 1055 and returns you to US 51. Here you turn right and head for Osyka, Mississippi. Osyka offers stores and several route options.

In Osyka take a right at the intersection of US 51 and MS 584. Cross the railroad tracks and follow the pavement left onto the Osyka-Progress Road. Take a left fork onto Pike 93 South, and take another left fork onto Old 51 S soon after that.

This is a nice scenic section with little traffic and nice shade. Along the way you pass a small plantation, a 19th century graveyard, and a Catholic convent. As you pass the convent look for a St. Mary of the Pines sign on your right. Turn left here, and follow a beautiful stretch of curving road steeply downhill through a forest to the Tangipahoa River and some railroad tracks. After you cross the track there is a nice spring of cool water flowing from a pipe just past a large oak. This is a good spot for a break.

Leaving the spring you climb a steep hill before the road returns you to US 51. At 51 take a left toward Osyka. Back at Osyka you have more options. You can return straight south to Camp Moore, go back to the state line on 51 and turn right on quiet and scenic Stateline Road, or turn right and take MS 584 west past I-55 toward the town of Gillsburg.

MS 584 takes you past dairy farms and over rolling hills. A good bailout point is MS 584 south. The long (but not very long) route turns left on this highway, passes the western end of Stateline Road, and returns to Kentwood and Camp Moore. Another option for turning back is MS 571 south (see map), but this does not cut off very much mileage.

The small town of Gillsburg is a welcome stop for a break for the very long riders. There is a small store on MS 568 not far beyond the turn. After crossing back into Louisiana 568 becomes LA 43. Turn left where it intersects with LA 38; this takes you back toward Kentwood. After several miles on 38 look for the Bethel Baptist Church sign on your right.

At this sign the very long route rejoins the medium route. All riders, turn south on this narrow, quiet, scenic road and head south toward LA 440. At 440 make a left turn (east). You will cross I-55, rejoin the short route at LA 1050, and return to the junction of LA 440 and US 51. A left on 51 returns you to Camp Moore.

Getting there: The best place to start is the Camp Moore Confederate Cemetery just south of Kentwood off US 51. To get there take I-55 and get off at the Arcola/Fluker exit. Go east on LA 440 to US 51, turn left, and go 0.7 mi. to the historical marker indicating the entrance to Camp Moore. The grounds make a good place for a picnic or simply a place to rest after the ride, and the museum is open from Tuesday through Saturday. ■

Enon Ride

by Greg Reynolds

Enon is a small community with little more than a church, school, and one store. Four scenic rides start from the school, each with a different level of difficulty. The same map can be used to make up two relatively short rides that begin in Franklinton (turn the page and you'll find it).

The 30-mile ride is over relatively easy, mostly flat terrain. There are some hills on the 45-mile route, but more on the segments farther north on the 55 and 70 mile routes. In the past some southern parts of the routes were in need of resurfacing. Nearly all of the marked routes have good surfaces at the time of this writing.

This map shows the distances between intersections, which allows you to plan a ride of the appropriate length for your ability. The longer rides should be attempted only by experienced riders, but the hills on the northern segments are easy enough for the less experienced so long as the trip length is reasonable.

All of the routes start at the parking lot at the school in Enon. Leaving the schoolyard, pedal down LA 16 for 3.8 miles, passing 437 and 60 en route. The bridge on 16 is open now. Be watching for a left turn onto LA 1073. You will see the Mizell cemetery on your left. Go a couple of miles to meet LA 60 again after the stop sign. Not far after the Plainview sign you'll take a left on Sie Jenkins Rd. (LA 73). At the end of this segment is a hill you should plan to descend carefully, since it is riddled with asphalt patches. Turn left onto LA 439.

If you are taking the short (30-mile) trip, be on the lookout for a left turn onto Lee Rd. (Parish Rd. 45); otherwise stay on 439. There is a small sign for the Mt. Zion Pentecostal Church here as well. At the intersection with LA 1072 there is a store that is not open on Sunday. Take a right. After 3 miles be on the lookout for Tullos Rd., onto which you will make a sharp left turn. There is rusting machinery here, as well as a sign to mark the intersection. This surface is the roughest on the route, but the stretch is short and the area is nice and shady. This road joins Parish Rd. 45 at the Volunteer Fire Dept. and brings you back to Enon.

For the medium and long rides stay on 439 until it ends at Sheridan. Take a right, go about a mile,

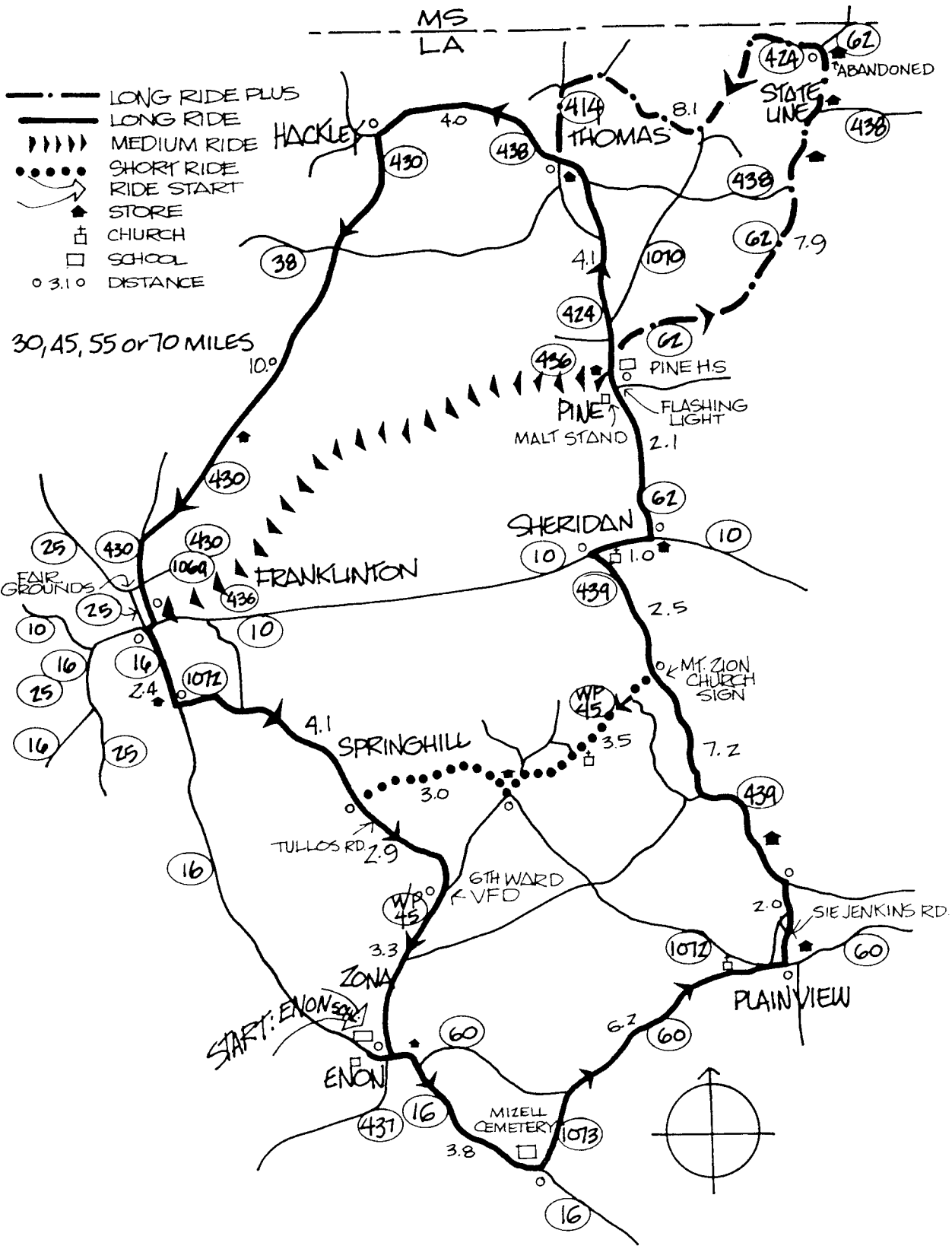
and look for the sign for LA 62. Take a left there. You'll pass a seafood restaurant or two on this leg. This brings you into the town of Pine. A stop at the store might be a nice break, or you can go to the Malt Stand about a half a mile up on LA 62 (medium-length riders will have to retrace this).

For the medium ride take a left out of Pine onto LA 436, a slightly busier road that brings you into Franklinton. As you reach the outskirts of town, watch for your turn onto LA 1069. A left turn here brings you to LA 10. A few lights down you'll take another left, this one onto LA 16. Take this left and go 2.4 miles. Take yet another left onto LA 1072; there is a sign for the Franklinton Country Club here. You'll pass some interesting Quonset hut apartments on your way to Tullos Rd. This patched road will bring you back into Enon.

Experienced riders wanting more of a challenge can add 10 or 25 miles to their trip by heading north out of Pine on LA 62. At the Malt Stand you can go straight onto LA 424 for a 55-mile ride or turn right with 62 for a 70-mile ride. The eastern extension of the long ride plus brings you past dairy farms and the town of State Line, LA. The turn you need to watch for on this segment is a left onto LA 424, which is about a mile past the store in town. An abandoned, graffiti-covered store will help you spot it. There is an animal crossing at the top of one of the hills. Be careful passing over the gravel strewn across the road.

LA 424 brings you into Thomas. The two long routes rejoin in Thomas at the intersection of 424 with 438. The store here is closed on Sunday. Take LA 438 west into Hackley. From here turn left onto LA 430 heading south. Near Franklinton, LA 430 leads you to 1069. At this point you rejoin the medium route. Take a right onto LA 10 and finish the ride as described above.

Getting there: Enon is located in Washington Parish at the junction of LA 437 and LA 16, about a dozen miles southeast of Franklinton. You can reach it via LA 437 going north from Covington, or by way of LA 16 coming east from I-55 at Amite. LA 16 also provides access to Enon from Sun, which is north of I-59 at Pearl River via LA 41 and 21. ■



Franklinton Ride

by Phyllis Baudoin Griffard and the Crescent City Cyclists

This ride takes you near the Louisiana-Mississippi state line on pleasant roads over low hills. If you begin at the town of Franklinton, rides of 28 or 40 miles are possible. Because of the rolling hills, these miles will feel more challenging than routes of similarly length further south. Nearly all of the segments have nice surfaces, not much traffic, and enough shade. This route overlaps with the "long ride" routes of the Enon ride on the previous page.

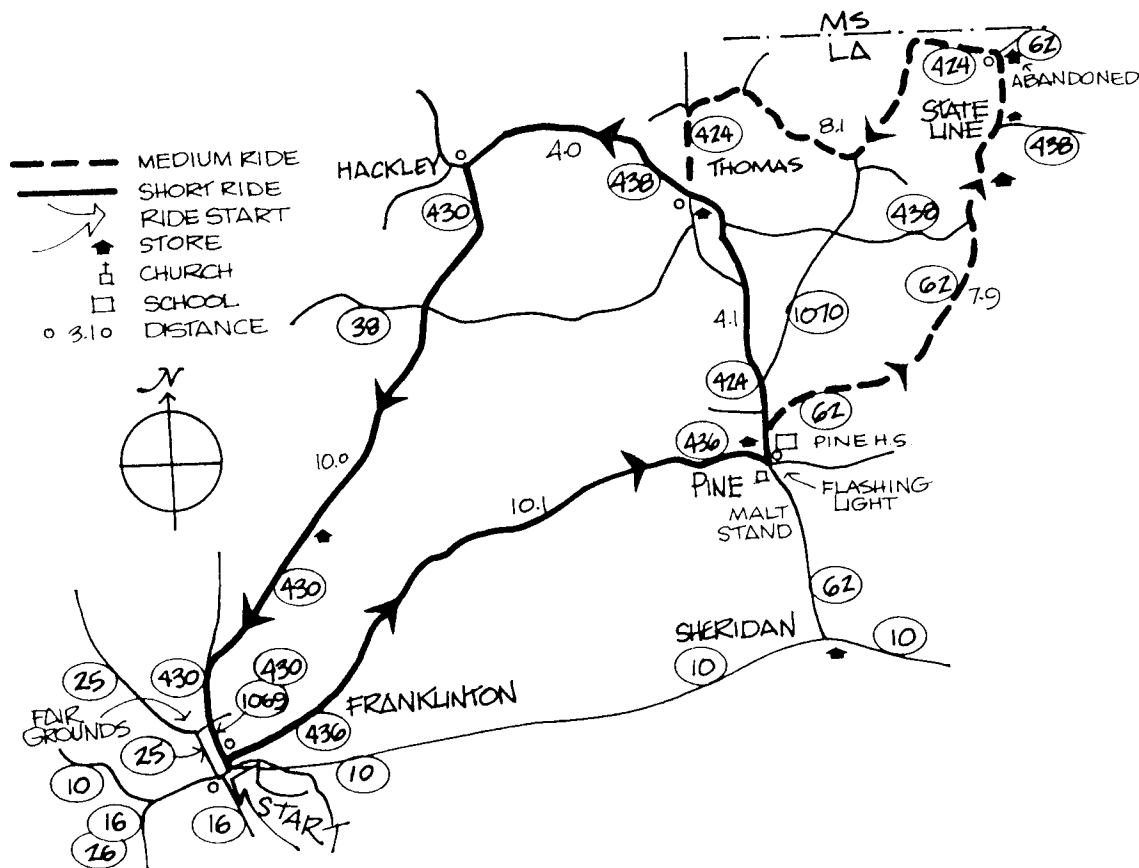
Franklinton has a couple of supermarkets where LA 25 enters town. From here get onto LA 10 briefly until you reach LA 436. This road brings you northeast of town to the town of Pine. Take a left and head north out of Pine on LA 62. At the Malt Stand you can go straight onto LA 424 for the 28-mile ride or turn right with 62 for the 40-mile ride.

The eastern extension of the longer ride plus

brings you past dairy farms to the town of State Line, LA. The turn you need to watch on this segment is your left onto LA 424, which is about a mile past the store in town. An abandoned, graffiti covered store will help you spot it. There is an animal crossing at the top of one of the hills. Be careful passing over the gravel on the road here.

LA 424 brings you into Thomas, where the routes rejoin at the intersection of 424 and LA 438. The store here is closed on Sunday. Take LA 438 west into Hackley. From here turn left onto LA 430 heading south. Near Franklinton, LA 430 leads you to 1069. Take a right onto LA 10 from 1069 to return you to your starting place.

Getting there: Franklinton can be reached by LA 25 north of Covington. It's also on LA 10, between Arcola (on I-55) and Bogalusa. ■



Dairy Delight

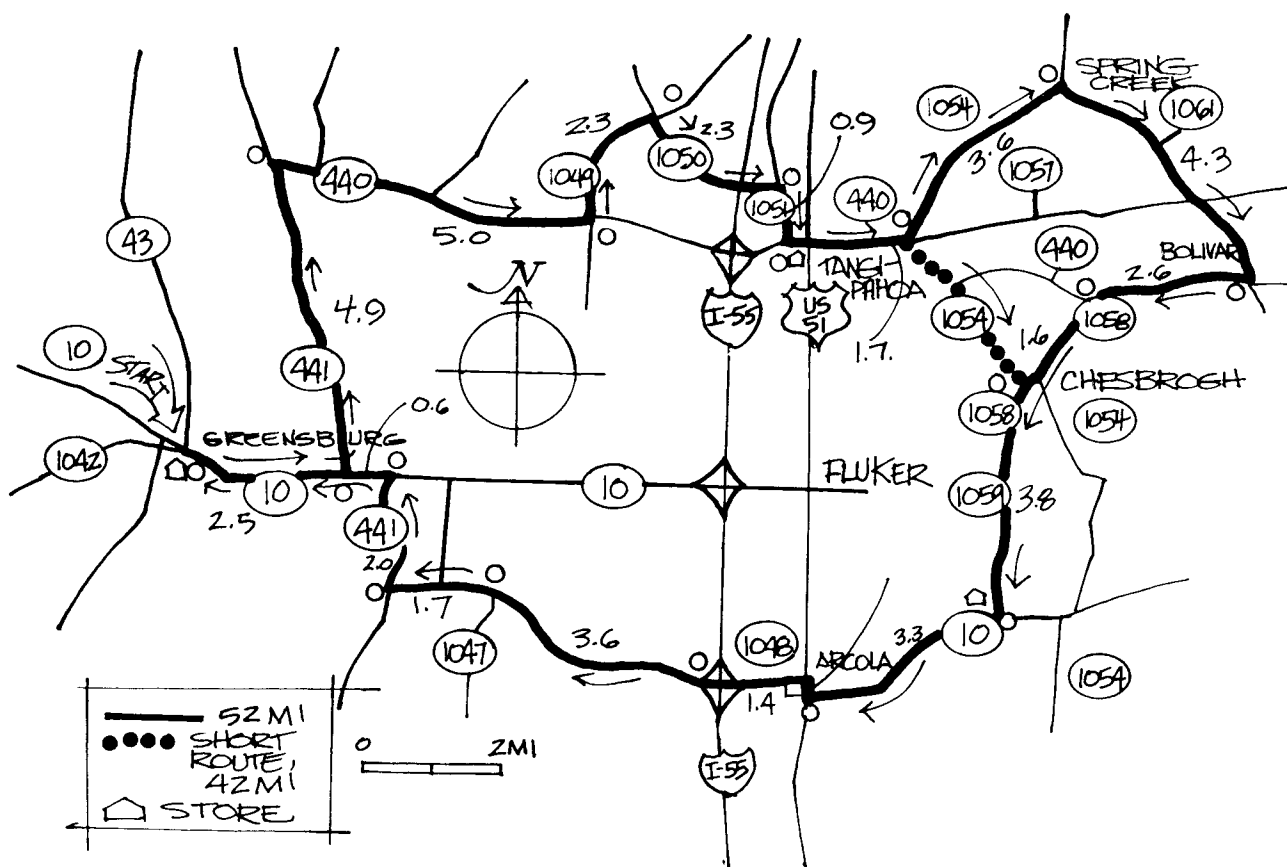
Mitchell Lopez, Baton Rouge Bicycle Club

Both of the rides on this map follow state highways that almost always have light traffic. Stores are located along the routes, but only the ones in Arcola and Greensburg are reliably open on Sundays; the others may close. Riders are advised to carry both snacks and water for these rides.

This is really a delightful ride in all but the summer months. If you try it in the summer you should start early, because there is little shade.

Although the terrain is only slightly rolling by non-Louisiana standards, there are enough hills to make this ride inadvisable for beginners.

Getting there: This ride starts on LA 10 in Greensburg, approximately 35 miles northeast of Baton Rouge, and traverses the rolling dairy country of northern St. Helena and Tangipahoa Parishes. New Orleans-based riders might prefer to park at the Camp Moore Confederate Cemetery (see the Kentwood Ride for directions). ■



Jackson Jaunt

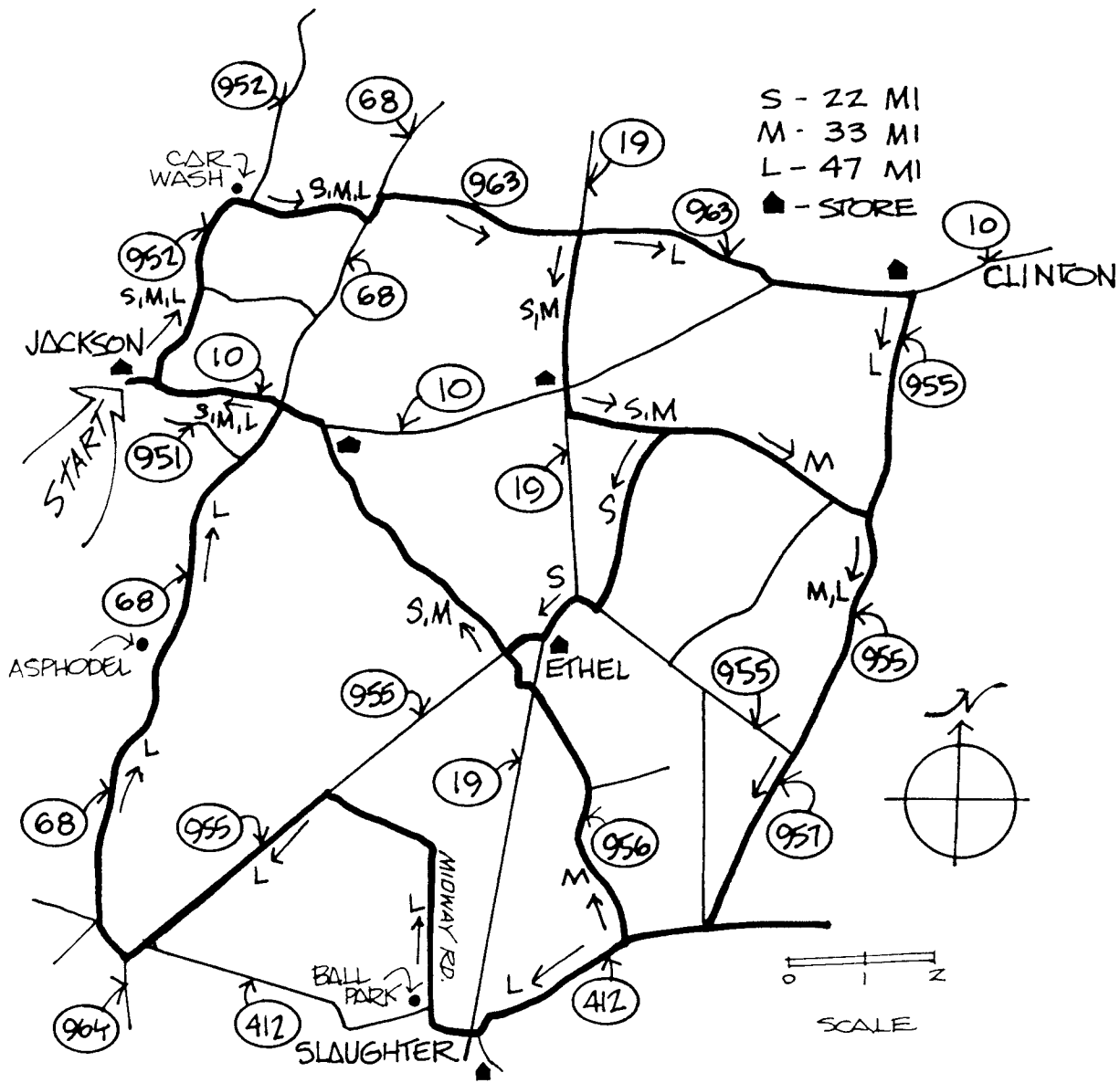
Mitchell Lopez, Baton Rouge Bicycle Club

This ride starts north of Baton Rouge in Jackson, Louisiana. It traverses the lovely rolling hills of East Feliciana Parish.

The ride heads north out of Jackson on LA 952. After three miles on 952 you will see a combination car wash and store on your left. Immediately turn right onto a paved road. This road is approximately 1.7 miles long and ends at LA 68. Turn left and fol-

low the map; the other turns should be easy to spot. Riders on the short and intermediate routes should use extreme caution when traveling LA 19, as should riders on the LA 10 section of the long route.

There are ample stores on all of the routes. This ride is suitable during all seasons. If you attempt it in the summer it is suggested that you start early, as the last half of all the rides have little shade. ■



Audubon Rambles

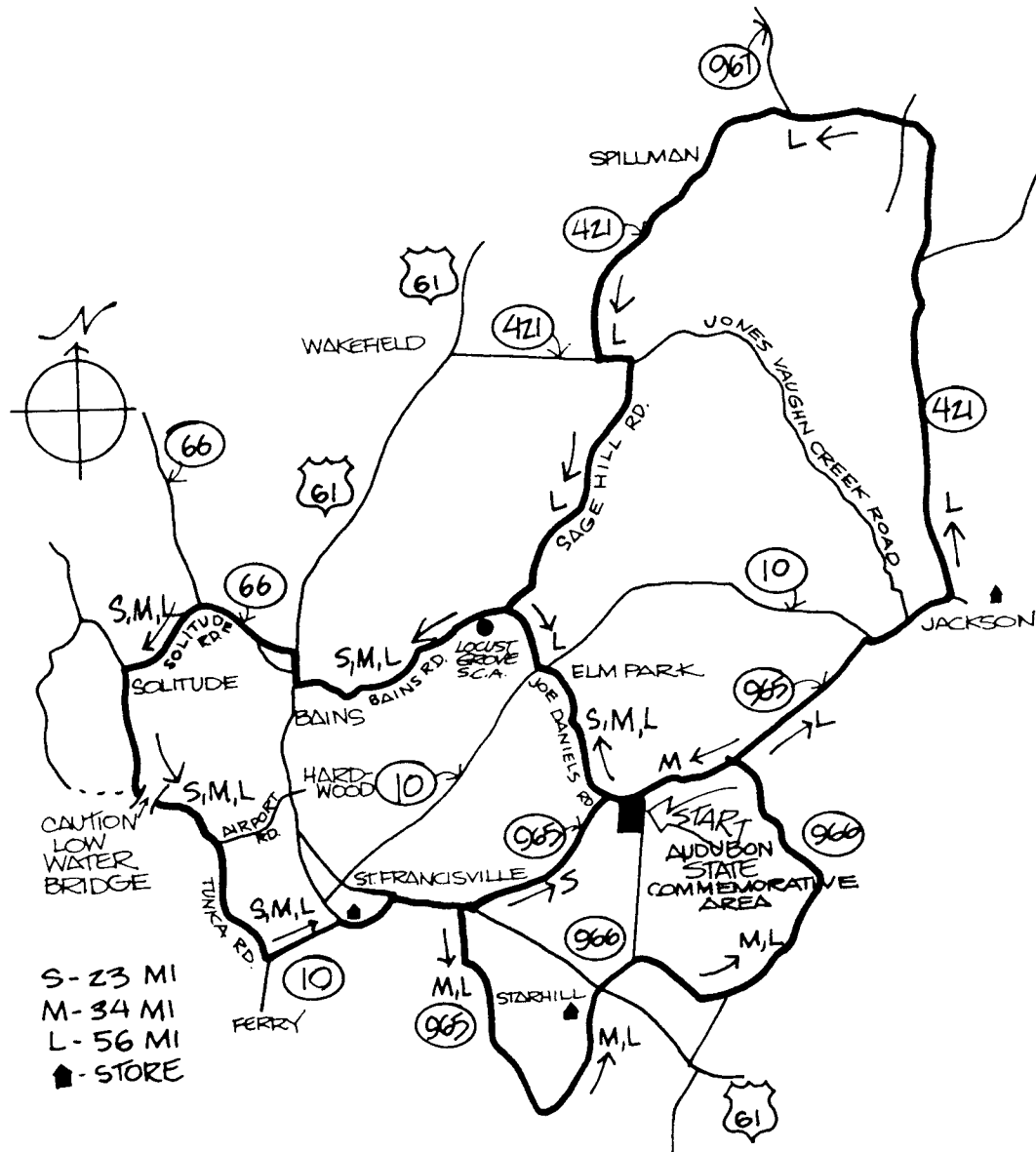
Mitchell Lopez, Baton Rouge Bicycle Club

This ride starts at the Audubon State Commemorative Area near St. Francisville; there is a small fee to enter the park. It traverses rolling hills over lightly traveled roads.

As you leave the park, turn left onto LA 965, and then turn right immediately onto Joe Daniels Road. From here continue on to Bains and then onto LA 66. Following a nice downhill run of one mile you'll cross Bayou Sara and immediately turn left onto Solitude Road. After 1.5 more miles turn left onto Tunica Road. Two miles further on there is a low water bridge. Be careful

crossing here. If the water is high, backtrack to US 61 and ride on the shoulder of the road to Hardwood, and then turn onto Airport Road to return to Tunica Road. From this point the rides are straightforward (see the map).

This ride can be done at any time of the year, since there is adequate shade. Stores are found in St. Francisville and at Stephill, but riders should bring sufficient water. Novices may wish to attempt only the short ride. Riders are advised to use caution when riding on any portions of US 61 due to the high speed traffic. ■



Hooper Road Park and Comite River Park

by Mark Clark, Baton Rouge Sierra Club

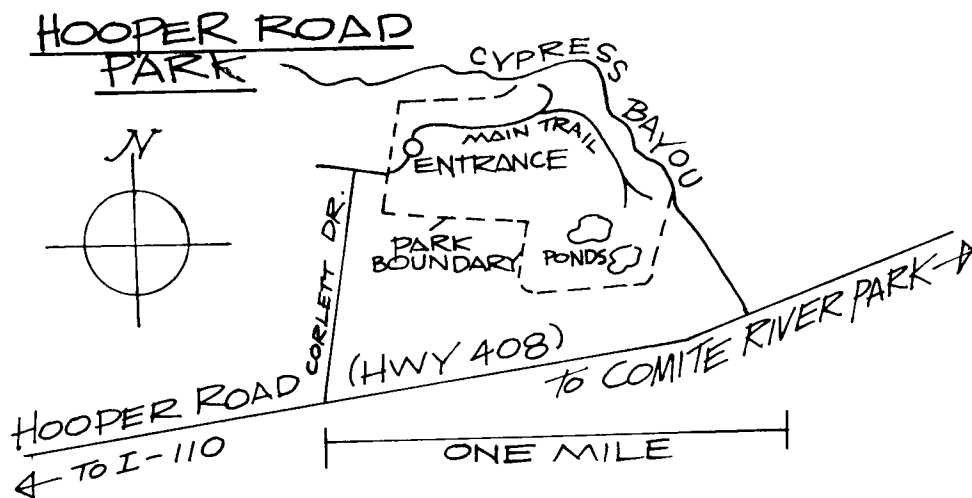
These two parks in north Baton Rouge, near the airport, are part of the city's park system. They offer exciting mountain biking, as well as day hiking, birding, and fishing. They are at the beginning of a geological zone that ends the flat Mississippi Delta country and starts the hills of the Felicianas. Cut by old oxbows from Cypress Bayou, heavily forested, and containing several different ecological zones, the two parks are a haven for nature observation as well as the best mountain biking south of the Clear Creek area in southern Mississippi.

Some precautions need to be taken to enjoy this area. First, the parks are only open during daylight hours. A helmet for biking and bright colored clothing are needed on the trails at all times. Bugs are a problem in the summer months. The trails are muddy after the slightest rainfall and visibility is poor because of the thick underbrush. Mountain bikers often ride fast and the trails can be crowded on weekends or when the local mountain biking club is holding an event.

Be wary of the trail in front of you and of others on the trail at all times. For small children, consider a bell or other noisemaker so others can hear them. For bikers, sharp turns, hills, ditches, rickety bridges, changing trails, holes, cliffs, stumps, briars, logs, and trees everywhere make it exciting for experienced mountain bikers (and a little frightening for beginners).

There are approximately 7 miles of trails in each park. The trails change frequently and are more or less a spider web of interconnecting paths. Since both parks are small and bordered by easily recognized landmarks, you simply need to remember where you are in relation to the borders of the park and your car. You will be lost after a few minutes in either park, but they are small and the borders are easily recognized. Maps of both parks are included here.

Getting there, Hooper Road Park: Directions: Take I-10 through Baton Rouge to I-110 (don't go over the bridge to Lafayette). Stay on I-110 for 8 miles to the Scotlandville/Metro Air-



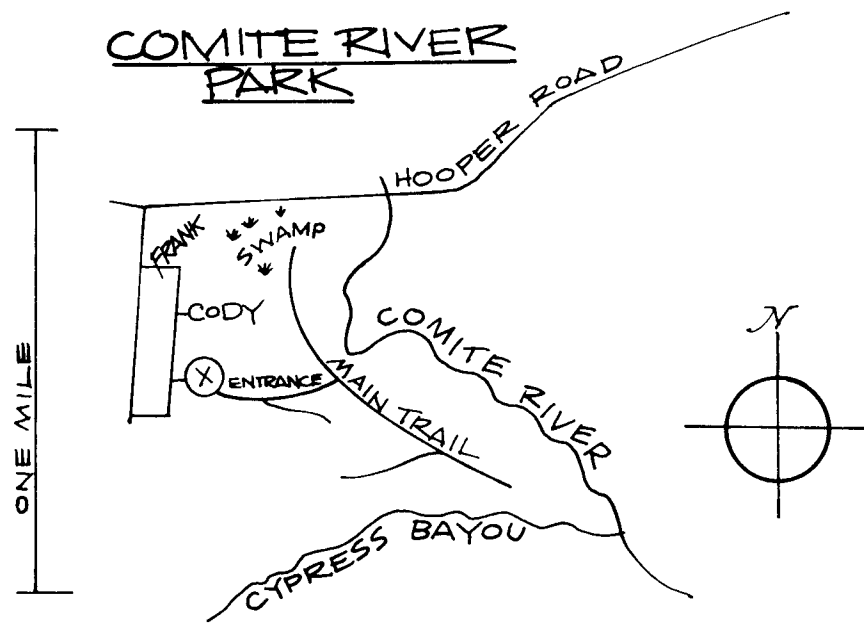
port exit, Exit #6. Go right onto Harding Blvd. (Hwy. 408). Pass the first light; the name changes to Hooper Rd., but just keep going straight past the second red light. Take the first left turn after the second light onto Corlett Drive. At the end of Corlett, take a right into the park. Take a left in the parking lot and go to the trail head near a small white sign.

Notes: A hose for washing bikes is provided near the baseball field in the corner of the parking lot. Fishing is permitted in the two ponds. Several ecological zones make this a great place for nature observation.

Comite River Park: Follow the Hooper Road Park directions except instead of turning

on Corlett St. continue down Hooper Road 1 mile to the Comite Estates subdivision and turn right on Hickcock Dr. Take the first left on Frank St. and follow it as it turns into Cody St. The entrance is the first street on the left off Cody. Currently, the street just dead ends into the park and you just park on the street, but a parking lot is planned here soon. Caution: do not try to enter this park by parking on Hooper Road itself. Police have ticketed vehicles for parking on the side of Hooper Road.

Notes: The same dangers apply here as Hooper Road Park but it's easier to stay found in this one. Swimming in the shallow Comite River is allowed and fishing is allowed in the swamp lake near Hooper Road. ■



Mountain Biking on the Clear Springs Trail

The Hooper Road and Comite River park section just above mentions the Clear Springs Trail as a superior place for mountain biking, and

it is. Only the odd notions of your editor-in-chief place this trail in the Hiking section. You will find the description and map there. ■

Tunica Hills Turnaround

by Al Troy, Baton Rouge Sierra Club

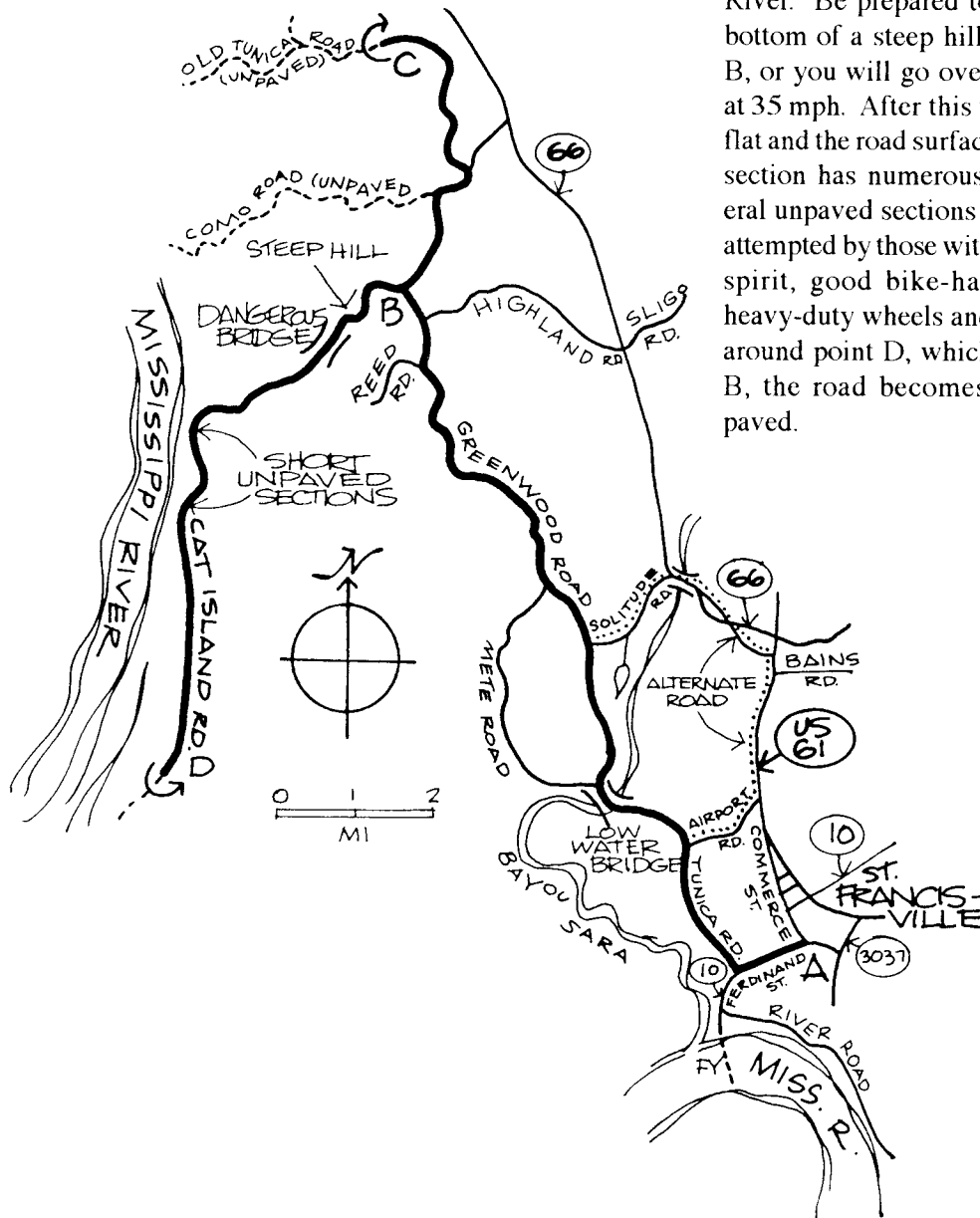
Beautiful scenery, challenging hills, and almost no traffic make this secluded out-and-back tour a favorite of cyclists with a spirit of adventure. There are no stores on the route, so carry ample provisions.

Shortly after entering Tunica Road you'll climb the first of the many hills typical of the area. Be careful on the Bayou Sara low water bridge, as it is uneven and contains gaps. If water is flowing over it, backtrack to Airport Road to the alternate route. When you reach point B you can tour Greenwood Plantation,

used in the filming of the TV miniseries "North and South."

Route segment BC meanders northward 5.5 miles through hilly forestlands and pastures. The road gets narrow and there are some sharp turns at the hill bottoms. At the turnaround point C the pavement ends.

Route segment BD offers drastic changes in terrain, including swamps and two striking views of the Mississippi River. Be prepared to slow down at the bottom of a steep hill about a mile from B, or you will go over a potholed bridge at 35 mph. After this the terrain becomes flat and the road surface deteriorates. This section has numerous potholes and several unpaved sections that should only be attempted by those with an adventuresome spirit, good bike-handling skills, and heavy-duty wheels and tires. At the turnaround point D, which is 8.4 miles from B, the road becomes permanently unpaved. ■



Two Bayou Ride

Mitchell Lopez, Baton Rouge Bicycle Club

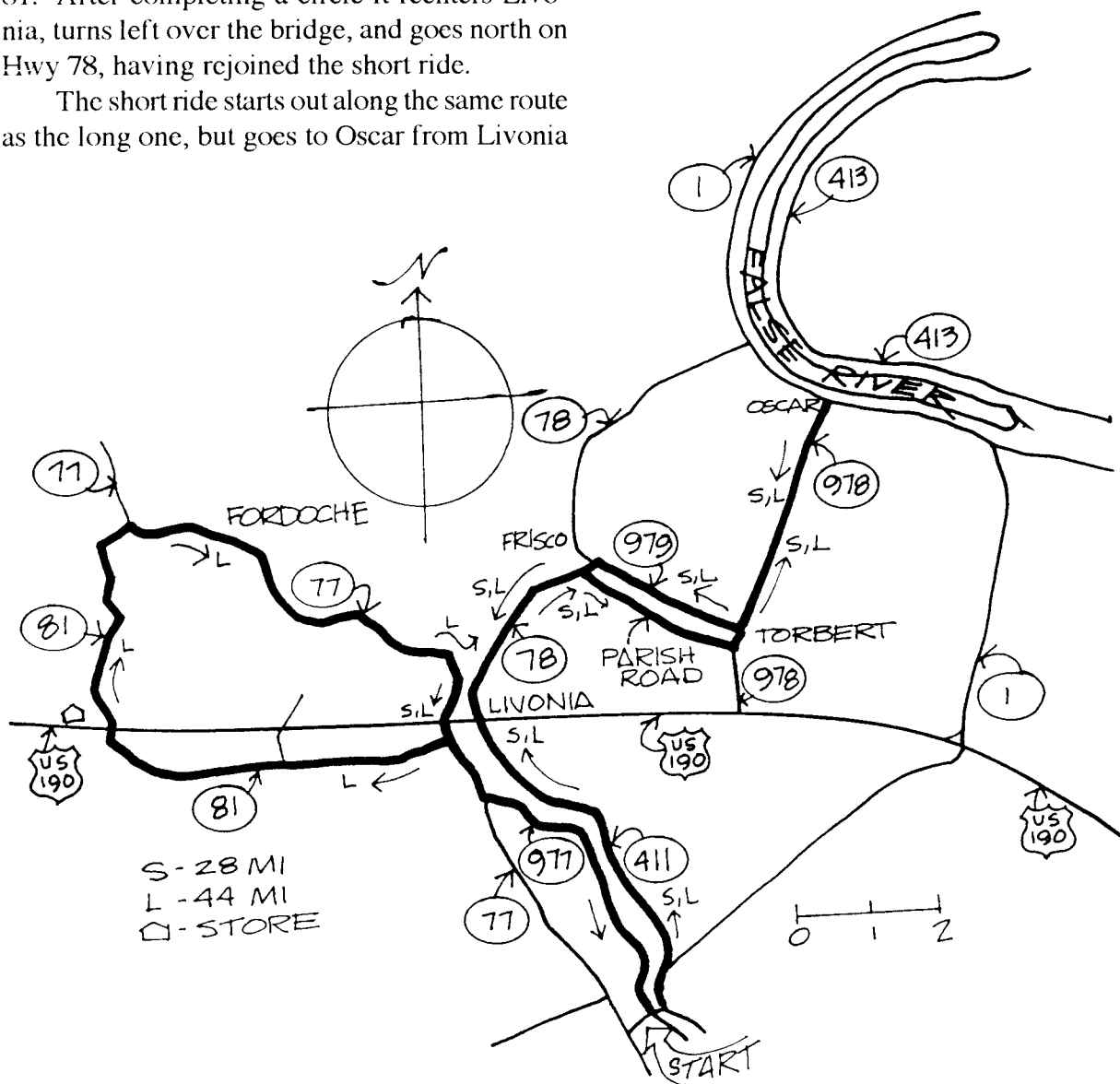
The rides may easily be accomplished by beginners, since it is absolutely flat in this area. Anyone attempting these rides in the summer is advised to start early, since some portions of the ride have no shade.

Start by crossing the bridge in Maringouin and heading north on Hwy 41. The long ride turns left at the first bridge after crossing U.S. 190 in Livonia, proceeds south on Hwy 77 (again crossing U.S. 190), and then turns right onto Hwy 81. After completing a circle it reenters Livonia, turns left over the bridge, and goes north on Hwy 78, having rejoined the short ride.

The short ride starts out along the same route as the long one, but goes to Oscar from Livonia

without making the western circle. On the return from Oscar both routes cross the bayou, the long route for the third time. Then they head south on Hwy 77 to Hwy 977 for the return to Maringouin.

Getting there: The starting point for these rides is in Maringouin, 25 miles west of Baton Rouge. ■



New Orleans to Waveland, Mississippi, and return

by Joey Donnelly

All you need for this trip is a two-day weekend, a favorable weather forecast, a bicycle, and the desire to pedal fifty miles each day to visit the piney woods and sandy beaches of Mississippi. The night can be spent either at a campground or in a motel.

This ride follows U.S. Highway 90 for most of the route. Once the main automobile route to the Gulf Coast from New Orleans, Hwy. 90 is now one of the most-used bicycle freeways in Louisiana and Mississippi. Tourist and recreational riders enjoy the ride through Louisiana's marshes and Mississippi's forests. With the development of the interstate system, many highways such as this have been left high and dry by long-distance travelers. This makes them good choices for cycling, and fairly wonderful on weekends when even local traffic is light.

As with any cycling activities, spring and early summer are the best times to ride. Insects, winds, and weather are usually modest and nights are cool. This ride can be done at any time of the year if you are prepared. Late summer is hot and sticky, so plan on a reduced pace. Fall and winter typically produce roaring winds, especially between Chef Menteur Pass and the Rigolets.

Some tips to remember:

Bring a minimum of two water bottles.

Bring insect repellent for mosquitoes and gnats.

Bring sunscreen-SPF 15 or more.

In hot months, start pedaling at daybreak to beat some of the heat. There is virtually no shade on this route.

Watch the weather for approaching fronts that can produce incredible storm conditions along the coast.

Know how to prevent heat exhaustion and hypothermia.

Bring along a rain jacket. Summer showers are usually a blessing, but some thunderstorms can produce ice cold rain even during hot months.

Be prepared to outrun a dog or two along the way.

And, of course, bring materials for fixing flat tires.

Trip Description and Mileage Log

- 0.0 mi Intersection of Read Rd. and Hwy. 90 (Chef Menteur Hwy). Head south on Read Rd.
- 0.3 Turn left on Gentilly Rd. (4 lanes, no shoulder).
- 3.7 N.A.S.A. Michoud Facility and Saturn rocket display on right.
- 5.0 Turn right onto Chef Menteur Hwy. (Hwy. 90; 4 lanes, no shoulder).
- 9.0 Intersection of Hwy. 90 and Hwy. 11 at Powers Junction. No facilities. Take the right fork to remain on Hwy. 90.
- 12.5 Pass the Venitian Isles development on the left and a food store on the right. There are also some bars here, and one of them has a public restroom. Cross the drawbridge over Chef Menteur Pass. If traffic permits, look to the right from the bridge to see Fort McComb. Continue on Hwy. 90 past the many fishing camps on both sides of the road. A nice shoulder appears on this stretch and continues to the Rigolets bridge. Keep an eye out for dogs in this area.
- 19.0 Lake Pontchartrain (left) and Lake Catherine (right) are visible for a short time as Hwy. 90 proceeds down a thin strip of land less than one quarter mile wide.
- 21.5 Fort Pike State Commemorative Area. Shaded picnic tables are available and sometimes the restrooms are open. The Rigolets drawbridge is just past Fort Pike. If traffic permits, glance to the right for a view of Fort Pike as you cycle across the bridge.
- Caution! - This bridge is narrow and 0.6 miles long. It seems to take forever to cross, and traffic always appears at the worst times. Watch for uneven expansion joints and debris from passing vehicles near the railing. Cross this bridge as rapidly as possible.
- 22.2 Intersection of Hwy. 90 and Hwy. 433. Continue straight on Hwy. 90 as it heads northeast (two lanes, no shoulder).

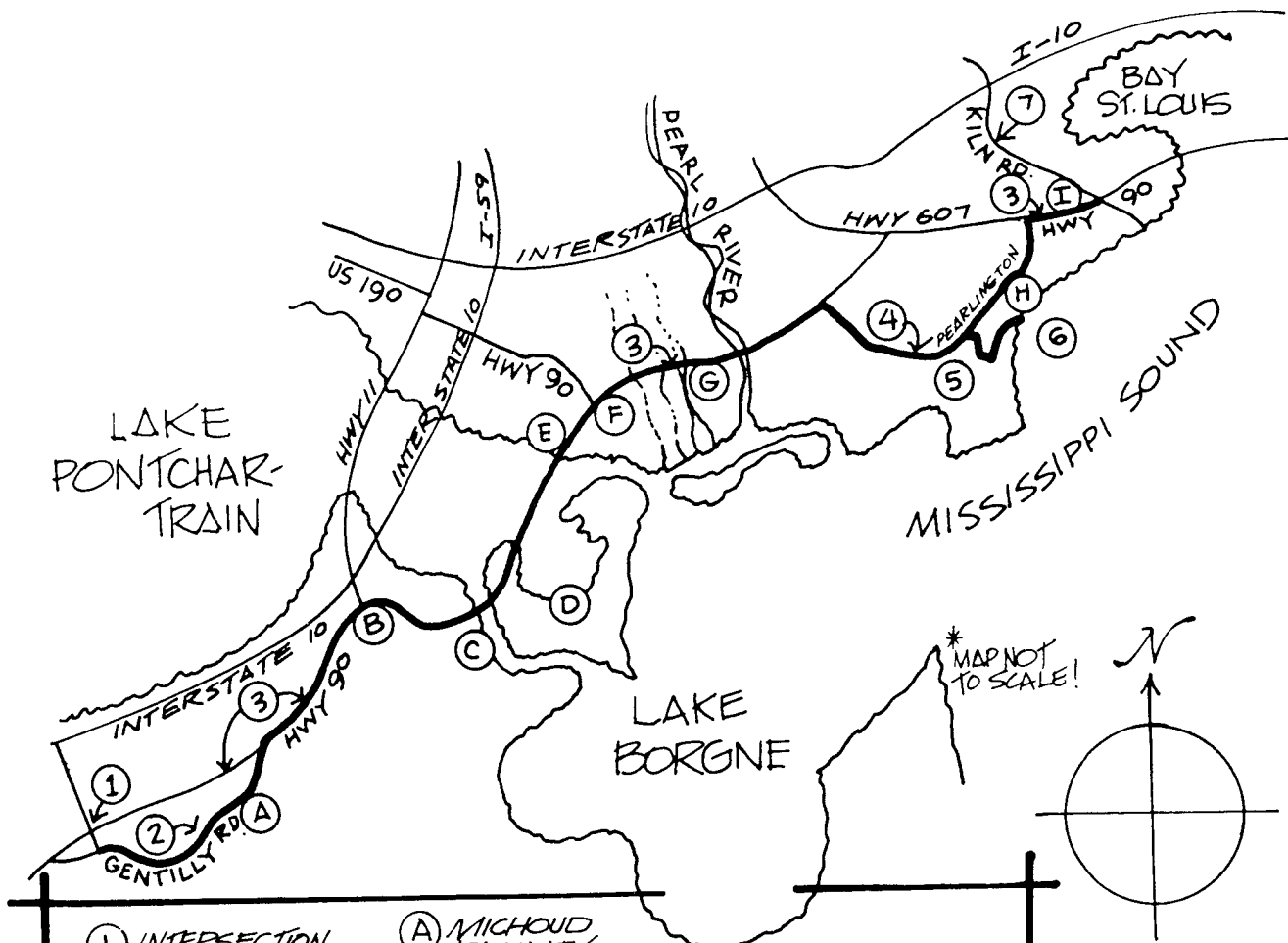
- 23.7 Notice the pine forest on either side of the road. You are on Prevost Island and enjoying a preview of the Mississippi forests to come. Watch for a drawbridge-delayed surge of traffic approaching from behind. Also keep an eye out for turtles and snakes crossing the highway.
- 27.0 Hwys. 90 and 190 intersect here. There is a rest area with benches and shade trees straight ahead which is on a part of Apple Pie Ridge. Turn right (east) to stay on Hwy. 90 (2 lanes, wide shoulder).
- 27.6 West Pearl River Bridge
- 28.8 West Middle River Bridge
- 29.3 Old Pearl River Bridge. Many red-winged blackbirds can be observed along this stretch most of the year, and cliff and barn swallows nest under the bridges.
- 31.0 Food store with public restrooms on right.
- 31.1 Pearl River Bridge and state line.
- 31.2 Food store on left in Pearlington, Miss. No public restrooms. Continue down Hwy. 90 as it bends to the northeast. Two lanes, narrow shoulder.
- 32.9 Cowen Bayou Bridge - narrow
- 33.8 White's Bayou Bridge - narrow
- 34.7 Turn right on Pearlington Rd. There is a street sign and a large billboard advertising the Port Bienville Industrial Park to mark the turn. If you pass the old truck scales on Hwy. 90, you missed it! Pearlington Rd. is two lanes with no shoulder but is lightly traveled, especially on weekends. It meanders through pine and hardwood forest, past farms and old churches. Except for the occasional dog-induced sprint, this road is very relaxing and is most cyclists' favorite section. Slow down a bit and enjoy it!
- 42.3 Turn right at the first (and only) stop sign onto Lakeshore Rd. There is a school and a store on the northeast corner of this intersection. Ride southeast on Lakeshore Rd. until it crosses the train tracks. It then turns due south for about half a mile, and then due west. You will soon notice the trees ending ahead near the coast.
- 44.5 Turn left onto Beach Blvd. Mississippi Sound is on your right. Continue down Beach Blvd., hugging the coastline.
- 45.9 Entrance to Buccaneer State Park. Campsites, showers, laundry facilities, a swimming pool, a nature trail, tennis courts, and a small store are contained within the park. There is also a wave pool, open from Memorial Day to Labor Day. The beaches are just a little further down Beach Blvd.
- For those of you who prefer a bed and a climate-controlled environment after a long ride, here are the directions to the local motel in Waveland, Miss.
- 42.3 At the intersection of Pearlington Rd. and Lakeshore Rd., continue straight on Pearlington Rd. (instead of turning right to get to Buccaneer State Park). Traffic usually picks up here (two lanes, no shoulder).
- 46.6 Intersection of Pearlington Rd. and Hwy. 90 near Waveland, Miss. Turn right onto Hwy. 90 and use caution as you pedal down a short stretch of four-lane highway with no shoulder and high traffic volume.
- 46.7 Waveland, Miss. A shoulder appears as you bike past shopping centers and restaurants.
- 48.1 Turn left onto Kiln Rd. and into the motel parking lot. Note: Kiln Rd. becomes Nicholson Ave. on the south side of Hwy. 90.
- To get back to New Orleans, simply backtrack the route all the way to Read Rd. ■

Some Routes in New Orleans

Most of the hiking routes in this book don't allow bicycles. The routes of the Public Transit and Levee Hikes given in the Hiking and Backpacking section are an exception—these are as much for bicycle riders as they are for walkers. The Ridge Trail in Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge is another trail that allows bicycles. For maps and direc-

tions please see the hiking section of this book.

There are plans to connect the Tammany Trace, the Public Transit and Levee hikes in this section, and other routes to make a long network around Lake Pontchartrain and the New Orleans metropolitan area. Eventually bicycle commuters may be isolated from cars. This will save energy and cyclists' lives. ■



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| ① INTERSECTION READ RD & HWY 90 | ④ PEARLINGTON RD. | ⑧ BUCCANEER STATE PARK |
| ② GENTILLY RD. | ⑤ LAKESHORE RD. | ⑨ WAVELAND MOTEL |
| ③ HWY 90 | ⑥ BEACH BLVD. | |
| ⑦ KILN ROAD | ⑩ INTERSECTION HWY 90 & 190 | |
| ⑪ MICHLOUD FACILITY | ⑫ PEARL RIVER, MS. STATE LINE | |
| ⑬ WHITE KITCHEN | | |
| ⑭ CHEF MENTEUR PASS, FT. MACOMB | | |
| ⑮ LAKE CATHERINE | | |
| ⑯ RIGOLETS | | |