

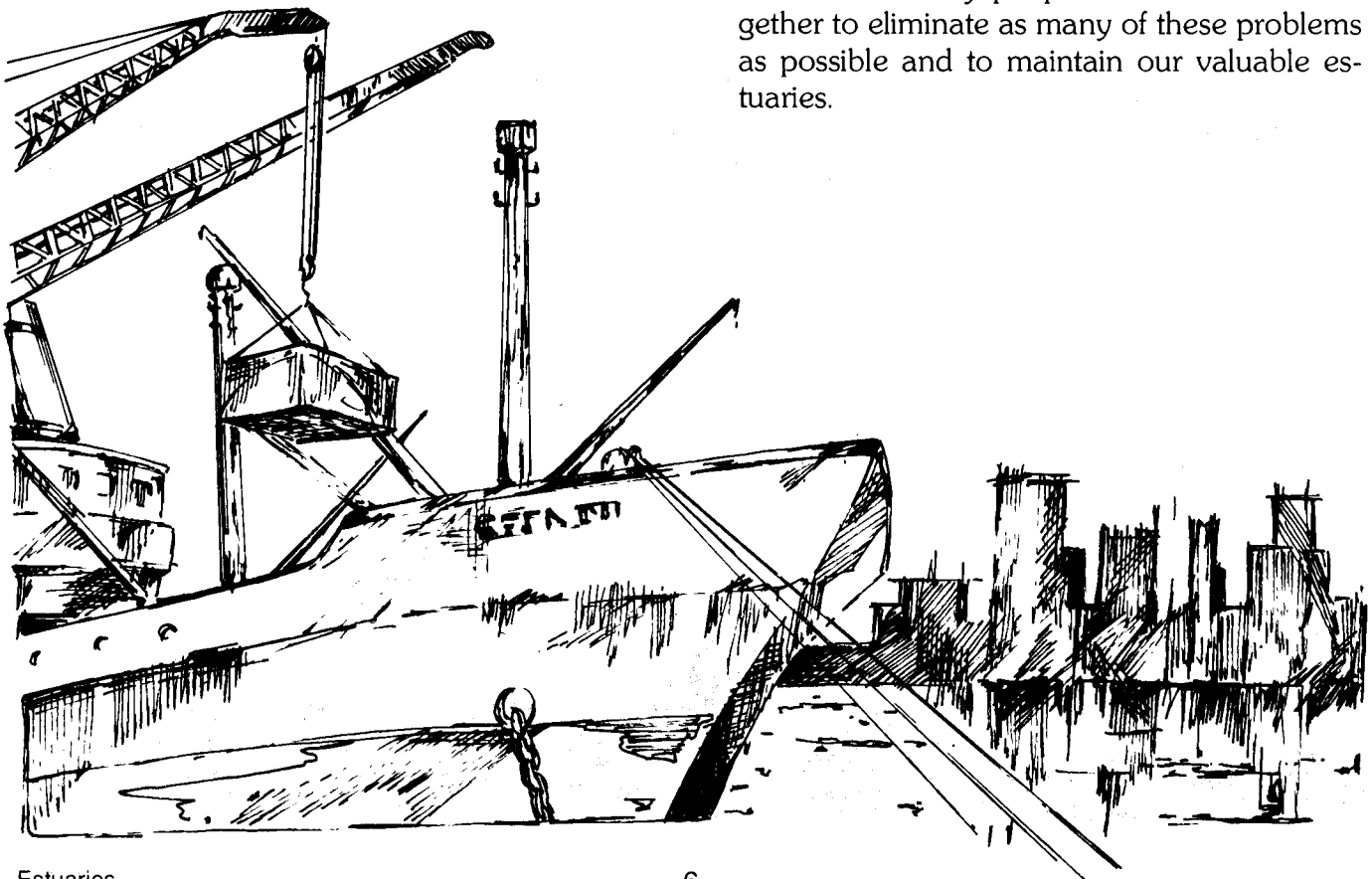
Why Are Estuaries Important?

Some estuaries have become sea ports. New Orleans, one of the world's largest ports, was built between Lake Pontchartrain and the Mississippi River. Industries develop near ports for ease in shipping and receiving goods and manufactured materials.

Estuaries are popular as hunting and fishing grounds because of the variety of fish and wildlife that live in and near them. Shrimp and fish use estuaries as their breeding and nursery grounds. Estuaries are also used for recreational activities like swimming, camping, and boating.

Because estuaries are often sites for cities and industries, they are subject to special problems created by man. Sewage dumped into estuary waters adds so much fertilizer to the water that undesirable algae grow too rapidly, robbing some marine animals of their habitats. Pesticides and chemical wastes from industries are entering estuary waters and endangering marine life. Harmful chemicals interfere with reproduction, stunt animal growth, and sometimes kill marine animals. Dredging channels for boat traffic alters the flow of water into estuaries. This destroys the habitats for some marine animals by upsetting the delicate balance between fresh water and salt water.

These problems were created by people and can be solved by people. We must work together to eliminate as many of these problems as possible and to maintain our valuable estuaries.



Purpose—To understand the uses and importance of estuaries.

1. *Thought Question*

You are an environmentalist. A parish official has asked you for three reasons why a ship channel should not be dredged near an estuary. What three arguments could you give? Discuss these in class.

2. *The Multiple Uses of Estuaries*

Place the following symbols where they apply on the map of Louisiana estuaries. Your teacher will help you with this project.

Recreation (water skier)



Hunting (gun)



Residential area (house)



Industry (factory)



Shipping (ship)



Breeding grounds (shrimp)



Sport fishing (fish)



Bridges (bridge)



Bird habitat (bird)



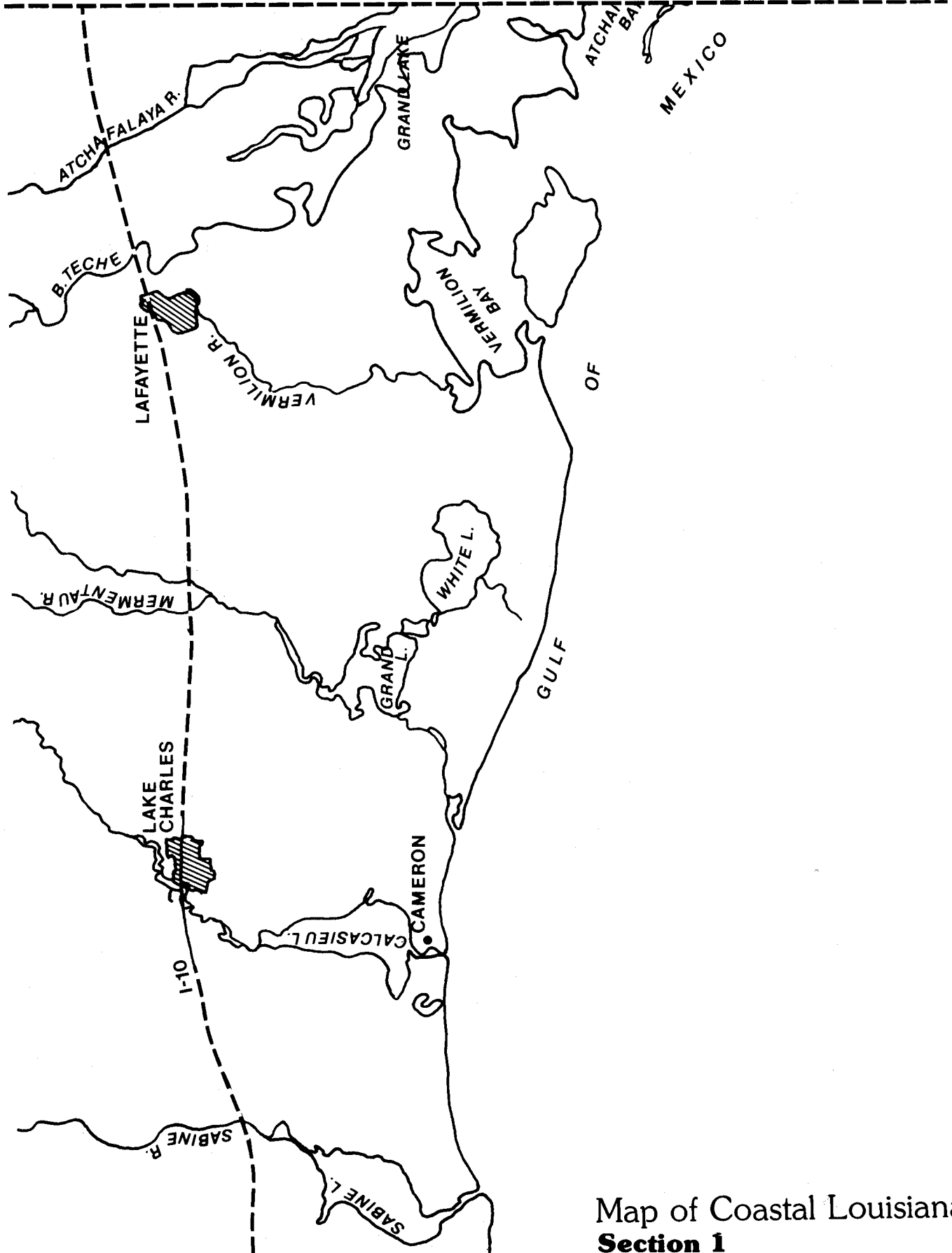
Oyster grounds (oyster)



Commercial fishing (shrimp boat)

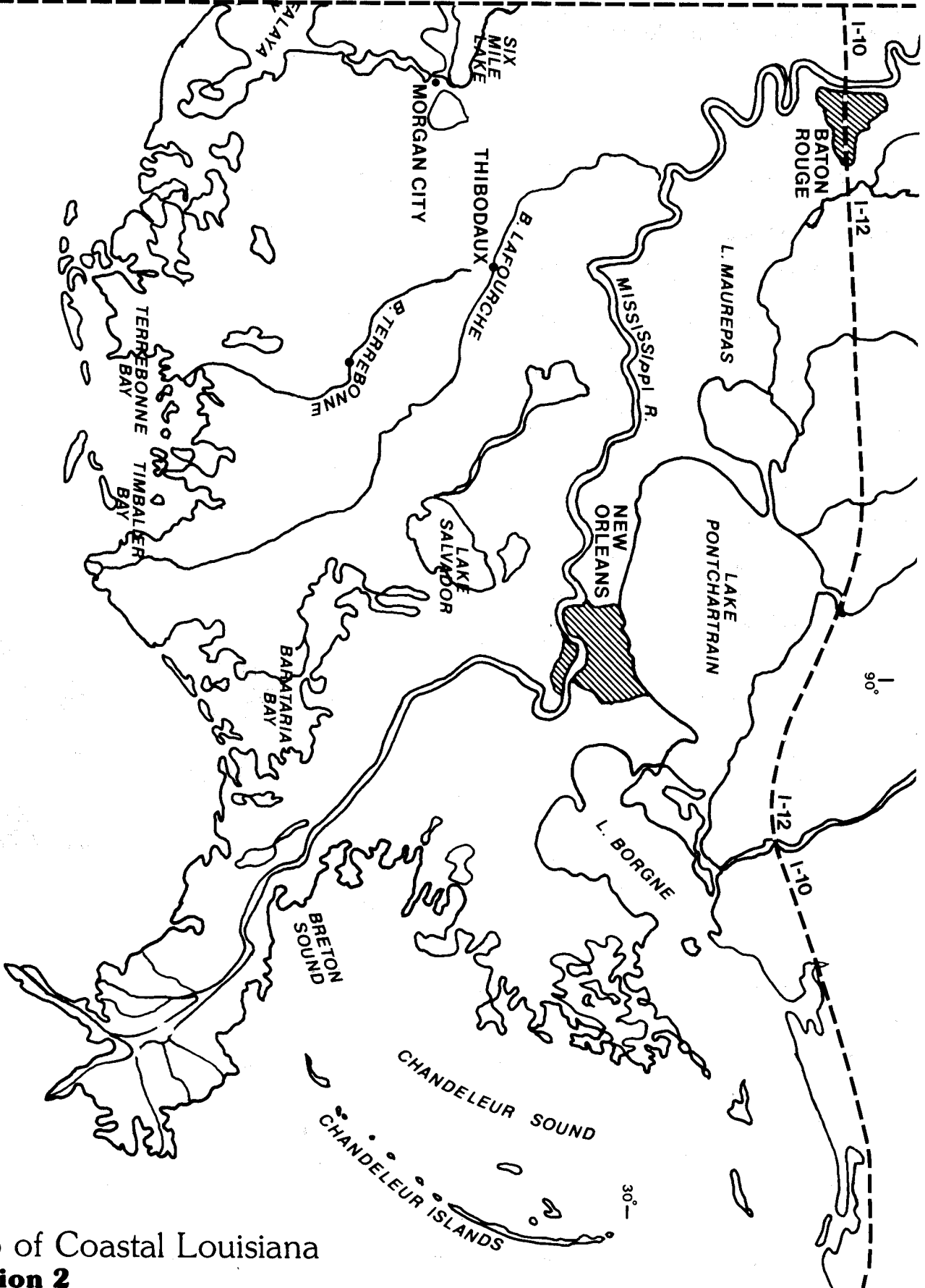


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Map of Coastal Louisiana Section 1

Cut along dotted line and match with other half of map, tape together.



Map of Coastal Louisiana
Section 2

OCEAN COMMOTION - LA Sea Grant