

Biscayne Bay Regional Restoration Coordination Team

**NOAA SE Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC)
Statistics Building Conference Room
75 Virginia Beach Drive, Miami, FL 33149**

November 20, 2013

Attendees

Pamela Sweeney
Phil Everingham
Sarah Bellmund
Jerrilyn Ashworth
Joan Browder
Jennifer Tisthammer
Cara Capp
Caroline McLaughlin
Susan Markley
Jeffrey Mullins
Dan Kipnis
Stephen Blair
Mark Bailey
Jennifer Tisthammer
Nancy Diersing
Inger Hanson
Natalie Garrett
Sarah de Fusco
Matthew Morrison
Rod Braun
Jorge Jaramillo
Bahram Charkman

1. Welcome and Introductions

Phil Everingham, Chairman of the BBRRCT, called the meeting to order and asked everyone to introduce themselves. The Team has a new member from NPCA – Caroline McLaughlin. Natalie S. Garrett, the USACE Tribal Liaison, attended on behalf of the USACE. Jerilyn introduced Inger Hansen as the FDEP Alternate. Sarah de Fusco attended on behalf of Clean Water Action.

2. South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force (SFERTF) Working Group (WG) and Science Coordination Group (SCG) Meeting

Joan Lawrence, USDO, gave a brief overview of the WG/SCG Meeting held on November 19th. Presentations given at the WG/SCG Meeting included:

- An Update of the Decompartmentalization Physical Model – An adaptive management assessment tool for CERP designed to address scientific uncertainties associated with hydrology, canal backfilling, sediment transport, and ridge and slough restoration. “Opening Day” was November 5th.
- Conserving Cape Sable Seaside Sparrows and Marl Prairies – underscored that this is about conserving the endangered species and its habitat. Getting water down through the system is exactly what we want to do, but a world class restoration should “keep all the pieces”. We need better ways to monitor and estimate populations and need aggressive habitat improvement and possibly augmentation of subpopulations
- Summary of the Large Constrictor Workshops held November 5-8. The Workshops, in part, developed information for the Python Executive Leadership Group comprised of Federal and State agencies which will meet in 2014. In South Florida, the Burmese Python has the greatest numbers and the widest range; they are difficult to detect, therefore, the counts are estimates only; they are basically found from Everglades National Park to Big Cypress National Preserve and are depleting the population of small mammals; there is no “silver bullet” to eradicate this invasive exotic species.
- Invasive Exotic Species Strategic Action Framework – Direction from the SFERTF to develop a Comprehensive Invasive Species Strategic Action Framework that provides coordination support for federal invasive species efforts and includes a cross cut budget. The Office of Everglades Restoration Initiatives (OERI) has held two high-level partnership workshops, developed a draft, and reached out to additional partners such as USFWS (Special Agents & Wildlife Inspectors), U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Miami Zoo, and UF/IFAS. The presentation depicted various means of bringing invasive exotic species into the US. Florida is the most vulnerable mainland state in the USA for invasive pest introduction and establishment.

(Note: The above presentations can be found on the Task Force website at http://www.sfrestore.org/wg_handouts.html)

3. Update: Biscayne Bay Phytoplankton Bloom

Tom Jackson, NOAA Alternate to the BBRRCT, updated the group on scientific hypotheses regarding ferrous dusts coming from Africa. A recent Science News contained an article regarding the fertilization of the Everglades by African dust. Some scientists are asking whether the iron in the ferrous dust could have catalyzed the bloom.

4. Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands

Matt Morrison, Everglades Policy and Coordination SFWMD, gave a presentation on **Future Opportunities for Incremental Implementation of the Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands (BBCW) Project**. Currently the BBCW Project is pending Congressional authorization; the Chief's Report was completed in May of 2012. All future incremental implementation opportunities must be achievable and consistent with the Final PIR. The SFWMD has reviewed a number of potential options for achievable incremental components and real estate for the Deering Estate, Cutler and L-31 East Flow-ways with \$2 Million in funding. The concepts presented were:

- Project A
 - Rehydration of wetlands east of the L-31E Canal:
 - Divert freshwater from C-103 Canal to L-31E Canal south of C-103 through two (2) new 30-inch CMP culverts
 - Components:
 - Installation of a permanent 40 cfs pump with concrete housing and SCADA telemetry
 - Water Control Structures: L-31E Canal at C-103 and North Canals
 - Construction of two (2) 30-inch culverts between North Canal and C-103
- Project B
 - Rehydration of wetlands east of L-31E Canal:
 - Divert freshwater from C-103 Canal to L-31E Canal north of C-103 through four (4) existing flap-gated culverts
 - Components:
 - Installation of a permanent 40 cfs pump with concrete housing and SCADA telemetry
 - Water Control Structure: L-31E Canal, north of S-23C
 - Water Control Structure: L-31E Canal at C-103
- Project C
 - Rehydration of wetlands east of L-31E Canal:
 - Divert freshwater from C-102 Canal through a 40 cfs pump and then through existing culverts to saltwater wetlands east of L-31E
 - Components:
 - Installation of a permanent 40 cfs pump with concrete housing and SCADA telemetry
 - Water Control Structures: L-31E Canal at C-102 and one plug south of C-102 at Waldrin Drive
- Miami-Dade County Concept
 - To increase flow through the L-31E culverts through diversions from the C-102 Canal while providing increased hydro-period to the wetlands immediately west of the L-31 in the area around Military Canal; by reducing the influence of the dry season agricultural drawdown in an area that no longer supports seasonal agriculture and is largely publicly owned.

- Concept Components are numerous and can be found in the presentation on the BBRRCT web.

The estimated costs for the projects, along with estimated annual operation costs, are included in the presentation. The various options were discussed. The SFWMD is interested in prioritizing the expenditure of funds. Which reach do we want to focus on? They will be able to one reach or part of a reach with the funds. Estimates are now a “rough order of magnitude”. It was noted that focusing on the stretch from C-102 to C-103 may be the “best bang for the buck”.

Next steps are to further investigate potential incremental project components. Matt suggested an ad hoc expert group be formed consisting of the SFWMD, BISC and M-D Co. The SFWMD will set an appointment for the group meeting. After the group forms a recommendation, the SFWMD will come back and brief the BBRRCT. District staff will then present findings and recommendations for implementation of incremental project components to a future SFWMD Project & Lands Committee meeting.

(Note: this presentation is posted on the BBRRCT website)

5. Update: CEPP

Matthew Morrison also gave an update on CEPP. The Draft Report was published in the Federal Register on August 30, 2013. The public comment period on the Draft PIR/EIS closed on November 1, 2013. Other required reviews have been initiated. Over 100 comments expressing support for CEPP and continued expedited schedule came out of the 5 public workshops. There were 30 formal comment letters and 214 emailed comments. The next steps include preparing responses to public & agency review comments, preparing response to SAD/HQ reviews and coordinate with vertical tea, revise PIR based on reviews, and incorporate USFWS and NMFS Biological Opinions and costs. There will be internal reviews of the Final PIR followed by a 30 day Public & Agency review of the Final PIR. Comments on the Final PIR will be addressed and a Chief of Engineers Report prepared.

(Note: This presentation is posted on the BBRRCT website)

6. Future Meeting Topics:

- An Invasive Exotics Presentation at a future meeting, in particular highlighting those efforts, including inspections by the US Customs & Border Patrol and the USFWS, to prevent invasive exotics from illegally entering South Florida through its airports and sea ports,
- Brian Carlstrom, Superintendent of BISC, address the Team on BISC’s Supplemental Draft General management Plan in January as the Plan is now out for public review and comment,
- The dredging project at the Port of Miami,
- An update on FPL Units 3 & 4 at Turkey Point, and
- A presentation on Sea Level Rise

7. **Field Trips:** It was suggested that the Team take field trip to areas such as the Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands Project and the Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserve.

8. **December 18th:**

The Team decided that there would be no BBRRCT Meeting on December 18th. However, a planning meeting will be held at the Deering Estate hosted by Jennifer Tisthammer. The Team will focus on “what do we want to accomplish and how do we accomplish it”. Attendance at the planning meeting will be voluntary for interested Team members. A BBCW Project field trip to be organized by Team members was also discussed to follow the planning meeting.

9. **Wrap-up**

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 2:30pm.