

**Science Coordination Group  
DRAFT Meeting Summary – Meeting #10  
Florida International University  
Graham Center – Room 143  
Miami, Florida  
May 24, 2005**

**Attendance:**

**Members:**

Calvin Arnold  
Lisa Beever  
Ronnie Best  
Joan Browder

Gene Duncan (for Terry Rice)  
Dan Kimball  
Susan Markley  
Cherise Maples  
Peter Ortner

Barry Rosen  
Rock Salt  
John Volin

**Staff, Contractors, Public:**

Kevin Burger  
Peter Cousins

Bob Doren  
Kate Elliott

David Erne  
Rafaela Monchek

**Members not present:**

Ken Haddad  
Richard Harvey  
Greg Knecht

Loren Mason  
Greg May  
John Ogden

Jay Slack  
Ed Wright

**Administrative Items:**

The meeting summary was approved without objections.

**Whiparound:**

John Volin will be working on Lygodium in the South Pacific during July and August.

Calvin Arnold introduced Dr. Peter Cousins, a geneticist working on grapes. He works for ARS and is shadowing him as part of a leadership training program this week.

Dan Kimball announced Tom Van Lent has left Everglades National Park for the Everglades Foundation. Carol Mitchell will be the acting Deputy Director of the Research Center.

Rock announced DOI is interested in receiving feedback on the DOI Science Plan. Synthesis and monitoring are components of this 2006 report on the Science program. The document is designed to support the DOI priorities, but sometimes those overlap with other agencies requirements.

Gene Duncan announced Terry Rice had a scheduling conflict, and he is sitting in for him.

Peter Ortner announced that NOAA is reformulating their long term disciplinary network to keep the costs the same for the next five years, and meet both their objectives for marine protective areas and living resources, and supporting MAP and several CERP projects. They are evolving to real time instruments and an operational model structure for monitoring. The annual cost will be about \$1 million dollars. The goal is to be able to retrieve monitoring information from the internet in real time. The Plan for the transition has been approved by Congress, but it exceeds what was in the Presidential request. If NOAA only receives the amount in the Presidential budget, the sustained observation program will not be seen to fruition.

Joan Browder announced the NOAA technical workshop on the spatial view of contamination, nutrient inputs and biological effects in the system. The workshop will take place June 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> at the IFAS Fort Pierce Facility. She has received presentation offers and suggestions, and will distribute an updated agenda soon.

Lisa Beever announced the Southwest Florida Feasibility Study Team is meeting today with a presentation on environmental indicators. The SFWRRCT is supplying GIS information for the Study.

### **Task Force Update, Rock Salt:**

The Task Force met on May 10<sup>th</sup> in West Palm Beach. Rock's SCG briefing to the Task Force is available on the [www.sfrestore.org](http://www.sfrestore.org) website. A re-consultation on the PIRs and the Guidance Memoranda, specifically Gm #4, was also discussed as part of a requirement of Task Force participation in consultation with the USACE. The Guidance Memoranda are out for public comment until June 6<sup>th</sup>. The SCG discussed the lack of guidance on water quality in the Guidance Memoranda, and the importance of raising the profile of it. Water quality has already been identified by the SCG as a gap.

Ten PIRs were also presented to the Task Force, including the final consultation on Site 1. After comments are received, the PIR will be submitted to Washington. The Task Force will be consulted 3 times on the remaining nine PIRs, first at the scoping, then after alternatives are available, and finally at the completion of the PIR. The Working Group may handle the first two consultations with issues being elevated to the Task Force. The SCG will work with the Working Group to sort through technical issues when applicable. An example of this is a policy level discussion that took place on the scale at which a water-body becomes subject to the Clean Water Act. There is a technical issue that if a steep sided reservoir is created a potential nutrient and contaminant release problem could occur. SCG input could be incorporated into the Working Group report.

Congress in the DOI subcommittee appropriations report required the Task Force to create a summary of priority lands to be acquired and a strategy for acquiring them. The Task Force discussed the possibility of forming another team, or using the current land acquisition team in place to assist in this process.

The USACE and DOI have the responsibility to create a 5-year report, and together with the Office of the Governor they have the responsibility of promulgating an interim goals report. Both of these are in the drafting process. There are currently issues between the scientists in RECOVER that drafted the interim goals report, and with Rock Salt from DOI. A number of performance metrics were chosen to fit best with hydrology improvements, and predictions were made with data from original D13 runs. There is a concern over selecting a metric that is expected to decline before increasing. Based on this apprehension, the decision was made to leave out measures that would be reduced at the end of the project. Several members stressed that biology shouldn't control the handling of hydrology. CERP's goal is to restore the natural hydrology as a central starting point, although there may be situations necessitating a deviation consistent with our overall goals. The predictive mid-point must be reached to reach the end point or the science may have been wrong.

The Task Force also discussed the Growth Management legislation. By state law, future regional development would need concurrency for schools, roads and water.

### **Indicators Presentation and Discussion, Bob Doren:**

Bob provided a presentation on the Vital Signs for restoration based on the work of the SCG Indicators Sub-group.

The following changes were made based on the discussion:

- Changing the name of the Geographic Coverage from CERP and Non-CERP (One suggestion was RECOVER and Non-RECOVER, additional suggestions should be sent to Bob)
- Additional regions not covered in the list of Bio-Geographic Regions will be added based on information provided by team members
- Southwest areas not included on the Vital Sign Geographic Coverage map will be provided by Lisa Beever and included in the map
- "Common language" in Vital Sign Selection Guideline number four was defined as readily understandable terms

Bob Doren reviewed the RECOVER interim indicators and goals for each of the bio-geographic regions. Periphyton and spoonbills were determined indicators by the SCG, and Fish and Macroinvertebrates were added by the Sub-group for the regions covered thus far. One of the tasks is that the suite of indicators and vital signs undergo peer review, which has already happened with the RECOVER list. Comments were solicited from SCG members to bring back to the subgroup.

Bob Doren provided a list of recommended Vital Signs, and their respective area/feature. The Lake Okeechobee area was changed to the Lake Okeechobee/Littoral Zone, with the measure being water level. Additional monitoring will occur for items that are part of other projects even if not listed as an indicator. Ronnie Best will provide the metrics on the alligator and the crocodile.

Two indicator gaps were presented, Vegetation Mosaic/Exotic Plants and Contaminants (except mercury). Within Vegetation Mosaic/Exotic Plants, the fourth listed study, Hammock Surveys for Exotics was changed to the Tree Islands survey for exotics. A concern was raised over time and intensity of effort in accomplishing the tasks to get the information on this potential indicator completed in time. As additional information is acquired, the goal will be adapted. Bob will continue to be the lead, working with a team John Volin has established and RECOVER. The USGS is hosting a two-day workshop on remote sensing the second week of August which may help in this process, in addition to an effort by the Southwest Florida Feasibility Study on Inland Indicators by Dr. Perleberg.

Bob reviewed the contaminant indicator information. Joan Browder will lead a workshop on potential contaminants to be developed into indicators. Concern was expressed over the accuracy of contaminant monitoring. A suggestion was made that this indicator be connected to the built environment indicators.

Concern was expressed over the EPA ReMAP study. Last month the EPA was denied admittance to tribal lands, and sampling on Conservation Areas 3A and 3B because of their failure to fund the tribe's water quality sampling. The tribe was willing to summarize the data, but refused to provide the EPA with the exact results.

The Vital Sign Selection Guidelines were unanimously adopted. (Motion: Barry; Second: Calvin)

The final conclusion was that there will be 11 indicators, 10 are essentially from the Interim Goals/RECOVER, Vegetation Mosaic/Exotics, and then an indicator gap – Contaminants.

### **Independent Scientific Review:**

Bob Doren explained the processes for the independent scientific review of Phases I and II of the Plan for Coordinating Science (PCS), and the indicators. Garth Redfield will be coordinating the review of the PCS with an agency panel looking at the entire package of indicators instead of each one individually. Panel member recommendations should be provided to Bob. The proposed panel will be presented at the July 6<sup>th</sup> meeting. Feedback on the indicator questions must be submitted to Bob Doren by Tuesday, May 31<sup>st</sup>. Bob Doren and Garth Redfield will create a new draft of questions, with separate sets for the indicators and Phase I. The questions provided by Barry will be incorporated as well. The SFWMD will fund the independent scientific review process.

Gene Duncan expressed concern that the scientists are from the agencies, and therefore not independent. By recognizing that they are not independent, the Tribe's scientists can also participate in the process.

A standing independent panel to continue on into the future was suggested, with each task fostering a further expanded knowledge base. Issues that can be elevated to a national scale, potentially to the national conference on ecosystem restoration will also be identified.

## **Phase II Needs and Gaps, Information Sharing, Quality Assurance and Project Tracking, Built System Indicators Presentation:**

### **Built System Indicators:**

The team discussed using the interim targets to create the built system indicators. Booz Allen Hamilton will be the lead on the built system, with help from Lisa Beever. RECOVER and Southwest Florida interim target information will be used.

### **Phase II Needs and Gaps:**

This team will be chaired by Bob Doren and David Erne. To date, the following people have been asked to participate from the SCG and the RECOVER process:

Steve Davis, Bruce Sharfstein, Jack Gentile, John Volin, Susan Markley, John Ogden, Peter Ortner, Rock Salt, Ronnie Best, Carol Mitchell and Mike Duever

Meetings will take place over the course of several days during the next several months. Bob added Barry Rosen, Dan Kimball, Joan Browder and Lisa Beever to the distribution list for these meetings. Meetings will be handled in clusters, making sure that the experts on the particular areas of discussion are there. Jack Gentile will be approached about facilitating these workshops.

### **Information Sharing:**

The several main issues in information sharing that must be addressed including information gathering tasks and data requests in addition to informing others of its availability, handling data that is not yet published, and the importance of holding conferences. Scientists face a challenge in having data released by the respective agencies, and agencies may repetitiously collect data.

RECOVER's IAT will attempt to make progress on data sharing throughout the domain. Potential issues emerging from the Federal Data Sharing Act applying to projects above a certain dollar amount preventing agencies from releasing their data may need to be explored in this process. Issues with this Act could be vetted through the Task Force.

BAH will produce a list of experts for SCG approval to develop the Information Sharing section, including Susan Markley. Drafts from the development of Phase I will be distributed to the team.

### **Quality Assurance and Project Tracking:**

The term "Progress Tracking" will be changed. BAH will produce a list of experts for SCG approval to develop this section.

### **Next Meeting:**

The next sub-group meeting is June 8<sup>th</sup> at Florida International University.

The next SCG meeting is July 6<sup>th</sup> at the Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Building.