

SCIENCE COORDINATION GROUP
Meeting Notes

Date: May 4, 2007

Location: Florida International University, University Park Campus

In Attendance: Rock Salt, Greg May, John Ogden, Ronnie Best, Dan Kimball, Joan Browder, Chris Kelble, Bob Doren, Susan Markley, Terry Rice, Bryan Keller, Bill Reck, Michael Lusk, and Cherise Maples.

Whip Around

John Ogden and Ronnie Best gave an update on the National Conference on Ecosystem Restoration.

- Rock Salt requested that scientists from the Everglades ecosystem who attended the conference and presented papers give an update at the next SCG meeting.
- John Ogden will be putting together a paper describing lessons learned from four large restoration programs.
- Rock Salt would also like to see a GEER conference occur before the next National Ecosystem Restoration Conference (NCER) so that the results of the GEER conference can feed into the next NCER.
- Ronnie Best will try to get DOI to sponsor the next NCER so that there will be more participation from NPS and FWS.

Dan Kimball discussed the testimony he gave on climate change before Congress. In his testimony he noted that restoration of the Everglades ecosystem is more important now than ever so that the system will be resilient to climate change pressures.

Joan Browder of NOAA Fisheries is working on the 2006 System Status Reports for RECOVER.

Bryan Keller, acting Regional Science Coordinator of the NOAA Sanctuary Program, reports that the Florida Bay Synthesis Report is now available online. Bryan will send Bob Doren the .pdf so that he can have it posted it on sfrestore.org.

Based on the Whip Around discussion Rock Salt summarized potential topics for future meetings:

- Lessons learned from the National Conference on Ecosystem Restoration;
- The aspects of climate change that Everglades restoration efforts need to be attentive to;
- The state of architecture for the CERP monitoring system, i.e. RECOVER's work with MAP;
- Integration of the CISRERP report;
- The value of conferences and how to help support science conferences as a form of coordination.

Greg May reported the next Task Force Meeting will be May 16 – 17 in West Palm Beach. Day one day will include a tour of the Rick Ross Farm where they use best management practices for agriculture. Day two will include a presentation by Chip Merriam on the District's monitoring program in conjunction with the discussion of next steps for the Plan for Coordinating Science. Greg suggested that members think about how the SCG can best articulate the value and importance of system-wide monitoring to the restoration effort. He said the next SCG meeting will be on July 18 followed by a Working Group meeting on July 19 and 20.

Plan for Coordinating Science

Greg said that the Task Force members were interested in having an independent panel develop a means for further prioritizing the Gaps and Actions and then using that process to make recommendations to the Task Force. John Ogden said that by using CEMs the SCG had already prioritized the Gaps and if further prioritization was needed, then the SCG could do it. Greg agreed that the SCG could do it, but he said that there were some advantages to having an independent group. One advantage is adding additional expertise to the effort to help ease the workload of SCG members. Another advantage of independent analysis is removing the perception of vested interests. He also recalled that Ken Haddad had raised the issue of how to prioritize and present the issues in a way that would be useful to the managers and policy makers. Several members discussed the importance of having a discussion or conference call with the independent panel as part of the process. Bob Doren suggested that another part of the process should include a presentation by Jeff Jordan to the Task Force on the findings of the independent panel. Bob was asked to prepare a proposal. Susan Markley and Joan Browder volunteered to help Bob with the task.

Human Dimensions of Restoration Ecology

John Ogden announced that a sub-committee of the RECOVER Leadership Group recommended that, because no one in the group had formal training in human sciences, more expertise was needed to understand the implications of this issue to the restoration process. Dr. Mike Orbach, a professor of marine affairs and policy, agreed to make a presentation at FIU on June 21. The meeting will be a joint meeting of the RLG and SCG and will be open to the public. John will prepare and distribute an agenda for the meeting. Pamela Fletcher will be the POC for the meeting.

Ecological Indicators Communication Tool

Presentations on the current status of the periphyton, Florida Bay algal blooms and SAV, crocodilians, and wading birds were presented. Power Points for all four presentations have been placed on Bob Doren's ftp site and emails to all the indicator scientists and SCG indicator subteam with access instructions have been sent.

- Bob Doren suggested that the Indicator Communication Tool be presented during the June 21 meeting with the RLG to get feedback from Dr. Orbach.
- Joan Browder will give an update during the July 18 SCG meeting on the status of developing a contaminants indicator. USGS will comment on the early drafts of the development.

- There is currently no one working on the vegetation landscape pattern indicator. During the July 18 meeting John Ogden will give an update on the status of this indicator.
- There is a May 16 NEWTT and FIATT meeting and as part of their agenda will discuss an exotic animals indicator; probably will initially be a small group of vertebrates.
- A first draft of all the stoplights is due to Bob Doren by June 1. This includes metrics, performance curves and rationale for converting place on curves to RED, YELLOW, or GREEN.
- The next meeting of the indicator scientists is June 13.
- Email suggestions to Bob Doren for a new name to replace “communication tool.” John Ogden suggested “Restoration Report Card”.
- Bob Doren will call CRC press and find out if the indicators can be published as a book.
- The SCG agreed that those developing the indicators should proceed in the stoplight direction.

Next Meeting

The Next SCG meeting will be July 18. SCG meetings will be scheduled approximately every two months. Bob Doren will post the meeting schedules on the web. The Interim Goals and Targets have been signed, but are not on the web yet. They will be posted ASAP on the Task Force web site.