

**SCG Meeting Summary**  
**July 18, 2007**  
**SFWMD WPB, FL**

**Attendance:** Art Roybal, Susan Markley, Joan Browder, Carrie Beeler, Dan Kimball, Greg May, Rock Salt, Ronnie Best, John Ogden, Deborah Shafer, Bill Reck, Dave Rudnick, Bob Doren

Call to order 10:10 am

Rock explained that the agenda was developed from topics requested at the last meeting. He asked the group to let us know of other topics for future agendas that would help the group.

**Whip Around**

Art Roybal explained that he was sitting in for Todd Hopkins from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and is the current co-chair of FIATT. Rock mentioned that the Avian Ecology Workshop is scheduled for August 13-15. He said that the Cape Sable Seaside sparrow has not improved in the western population and has decreased by about half. Art said that he would forward information on the workshop. Greg noted that information on the agenda and logistics would be posted on the sfrestore.org website.

Bob Doren informed the group that there would be an Everglades Summit the next week to discuss exotic species at FIU in the Wertheim Conservatory. Joan said that she heard that there were going to be cuts in the Monitoring and Assessment Program for RECOVER and wanted to discuss it today. Susan explained that there is also a move of project level monitoring to the monitoring program in RECOVER, making the funding cuts concerns even greater.

Dan Kimball explained that he had a set of meeting on seagrass and the adverse affects to them. His goal was that a science based planning process would come out of the meeting. He explained that more work needed to be done on propeller scaring and boating impacts. Dan gave an example of how social science could help. He explained that there was a belief that paddlers did not like motorized boats in areas of the park, but later it was discovered that paddlers saw motorists as people that could help them out when they are in trouble.

Ronnie Best told the group that the planning process has started for the 2008 GEER conference. He said that the conference will likely be held in July in the Naples area. He indicated that there was still a need for agency sponsorship, people to participate, funding, biogeochemistry and social science. Ronnie asked that the GAO report and the model topics be added to the agenda. He noted that DOI has played a role in trying to provide the interface between models and managers. Joan Browder said that she believed that 2 ecologic models have gone to the IMC. Ronnie said there are some problems with interfacing with species response and the 2x2, it is not appropriate.

John Ogden announced that there is a serious effort underway to provide another “Big Everglades” book. He explained that there would be a section that talks about how are we coordinating science, a section about what is expected in the future and a section on lessons learned and success. Deborah Schaffer from the USACE announced that she would be attending the SCG Meetings for the USACE.

Greg informed the group of the upcoming WG meeting and the location. He explained that the primary goal of the WG meeting was to refine recommendations for updating the subgoals and objectives in the Strategy document. He also announced that the Land Acquisition Task Team meeting and noted that mitigation banks would be added to the Land Acquisition Strategy. He told the group that the next SCG meeting is scheduled for August 29 and the next TF meeting dates moved to September 26 and 27. Bill Reck asked about the status for planning meetings for the next year and was told that dates have not been scheduled at this time. Finally Greg announced that Kameran Onley had assumed the responsibilities of the Assistant Secretary of Water and Science.

Rock said MAP, GEER and IAR should be discussed in this meeting. He explained that the WRDA language in the House Bill was dated in relation to the scope and cost for the Modified Water Deliveries Project and he was not sure how the differences in cost and scope would be resolved.

### **Plan to Coordinate Science**

Greg reviewed the status of the PCS. He said that the TF members generally thought the plan was a good plan, but had identified two areas for additional work: 1) improvements were needed in the list of gaps because they lacked a sense of prioritization, and 2) improvement on the description of the purpose and use of the plan. He stated that the two areas were being worked at the same time. John Ogden, for example, drafted edits to the current plan.

John explained that his edits addressed two concerns from Carol Wehle and Mike Sole. One was the impression that the science listed in the PCS is essential science and if it is not done it could jeopardize restoration. The next concern was that some of the language in the PCS applied pressure to agencies to implement the Plan. John explained that he had asked that he edit the Executive Summary first and then discuss the edits with SCG to see how to work the new language into the body of the Plan. He told the group that he also added language about the SCG endorsing adaptive management (AM).

Joan asked if there would be a need for changes to the language in body of the document. Greg said that it did seem that substantial edits would be necessary based on his review of the edits to date. Susan said she looked forward to seeing the edits. She noted that it is important for members to participate materially in the drafting of the document. She explained that she has concerns with editing after the fact.

Greg thanked several members for their efforts in drafting the Plan on behalf of the Task Force. He explained that one of the things the drafting group struggled with was the tone of the document. He noted that he was glad with the overall level of satisfaction with the draft document. He said that he was currently waiting to get comments on the edits from the Task Force members. He told the group that the prioritization piece was being done by an independent panel coordinated by Dr. Jeff Jorden. He said that Jeff was specifically asked to look at gaps and action and to develop a recommended process for further prioritizing the list. He said that once the edits to the executive summary were finished and the independent review was completed, then the final edits would be made to the current draft and a separate report from Dr Jordan would be prepared under and executive summary.

Greg reiterated the group's previous discussions about the limitation of models and the importance of small scale project or pilot projects as learning tools. Susan explained that it was very important to maintain funding for the physical project due to the limitations of the models.

John Marshall said he carries the PCS in his briefcase and feels it is a good document.

### **Climate Change**

Rock explained that he has been trying to understand what was important about climate change as it relates to ecosystem restoration. Dan explained that there was a meeting in Washington DC with the Secretary and with people from USGS, FWS, and NPS that included a session on climate change. He referenced the handout and explained that they spent a lot of time on the hurricanes because there is still debate on this subject as it relates to climate change. He told the group that one of the major findings was that it is even more important to do restoration so that there is a more resilient ecosystem to stave off climate change effects. He asked the group for feedback. He noted that the rate of change was still a big question. Dan also discussed the Climate Change committee that Miami Dade County has and noted that there are 300 hybrid vehicles in the county fleet. He also discussed the climate change summit that Gov Christ pulled together to look at ways to reduce the State's carbon footprint. He informed the group that an action plan team was established to look at reducing the carbon footprint and was being headed by Mike Sole.

Ronnie explained that the USGS topics list now includes climate change. He told the group that efforts were being made to bring projection for climate change into restoration by the Corps facility in Vicksburg. He also informed the group that there would likely be climate change topics at the GEER.

Rock asked what people should be concerned about related to climate change and possible effects to things like, estuaries and fishing. John explained that efforts to identify what matters to restoration efforts were underway. Ronnie informed the group that a slight change in transpiration rates make a big change in water volume and therefore it is

one example of climate change effects that will be importance to consider related to restoration.

Ronnie Best said that he would set a time for Tom Armstrong to interact with the SCG and explain his findings about climate change with a focus on s Florida. Ronnie and Dan said they would write up a one page document about climate change and why do we care about it related to restoration.

### **Coffee House Session on AM**

John asked that pass on coffee house until a later time since they are putting together a summary now. He asked that it be put on the agenda for the August meeting.

### **Human Ecology**

John explained to the team that there was a question about what RECOVER should be thinking about in relation to Human Ecology. He explained that there were specific recommendations, including;

- Developing socio-economic indicators
- Identifying metrics that could be used to develop a report card
- Developing mechanisms in Recover for human ecology in the CEMs, the AM strategy and include a human dimension module in Monitoring and Assessment Plan.

He reported that there was a 2 day session Michael Orbach talking about human ecology. He told the group that he would make the notes available from the session. He noted that it was thought that there would be problems with incorporating human ecology concepts into Everglades restoration for several reasons including; a lack of resources, a lack of understanding for the need, and finally there are no facilities to translate information gathered into something useable for restoration. Ronnie asked for more discussion on this including a workshop at the GEER conference.

Bob thought that there might be danger in putting what people want up against the biologic problem/performance needs. Bill Reck noted that there were pieces of the “core” process missing such as, population and recreation that are needed to tie into the big picture of restoration. Ronnie explained that we don’t really know, “how effectively we are managing people to our goals”. He said there is a need to have an effective model to ensure that the human system model is compatible with the natural system.

### **Public Comment**

John Marshall recalled that the last time the concept of social science was discussed related to restoration; OMB did not provide funds for it. He noted that he also thought about carbon emissions and climate change and thought that was a need to be conscious of emissions on all CERP projects and also cost. He gave an example of ASR and that the cost of and possible emission reductions should be factored into consideration for the State agency’s initiatives to reduce emissions by 40 percent by the year 2025. He said that there was no up-to-date cost data for a reservoirs and STAs and that it might not be

the best way to proceed for the area around the Lake any longer. He urged consideration of a flowway. He explained concerns with toxic algae in reservoirs.

John asked about the TF strategy and was confused about the number of projects. Greg explained that CERP components are just the 68 projects and the total 211 projects.

Scott Holtz told the group that he has an undergraduate degree in social science and he was encouraged by last conversation on social science. He told the group that he thought it was important to remember the goal of a healthy ecosystem in south Florida should included being beneficial to human populations, good for fishing, hunting and tourism. He thought education to south Florida children about the Everglades was also important.

He explained that he believed that there were problems with ASR and reservoirs and thought that the EAA should be included in restoration initiatives. He thought that social science might be useful in addressing the issues surround the EAA by looking at small family farms.

Tina Richards explained to the group some of the impacts expected to be caused by climate change including increases in hurricane intensity, desertification in dryer areas, salt intrusion into aquifers, effects on biologic clocks related to reproduction in animals and plants. She noted that coral reefs are greatly affected and we could expect more mangrove recession, changes in rain patterns, reduced availability of drinking water. She noted that there would be added concerns with ASR related to salt water intrusion. She felt that a flowway would be beneficial and would not have the same concerns as the ASR.

Bill Reck noted that proper water management in the EAA could help. He said that there were more initiatives on the way including water tolerant sugar cane and ways to get the area to accrete rather than subside.

### **Ecologic Indicators**

Bob gave a status on the ecologic indicators. He stated that a CERP team is developing a PM on Wading Birds and there is a need to ensure consistency. He said that the Compatibility Indicators needed to be added to the “stoplight” Report. He informed the group that there have been 11 stoplights for ecologic indicators developed to date. He noted that the Exotic Plant indicator is complete and that they were preparing work for an article for the following month that might be published early 2008.

He explained that there is still work to be done on Oysters for 2008. Joan said she would assist Bob in pulling it together. Deborah explained that there are some folks in the Corps that might be helpful. Bob thought the indicator could be ready for the 2008 report.

### Fl Bay Algal Bloom Indicator

Dave Rudnick told the group that seagrass funding had been eliminated. Rock asked if this indicator was part of the RECOVER. Greg asked about the sampling and he was told that it costs about \$250,000 per year. Dave explained that seagrass is a good indicator for the southern estuaries because it is sensitive to flow and water management changes. He stated that there is consensus on what success looks like for seagrass, that it included broad coverage and species diversity. There was a question about the red, yellow and green dots and the meaning of them. Rock noted that timelines would be helpful in presenting the information, in particular inter-annual.

Dan wanted clarification that the status report was measuring current state not a projected model output. Bob said yes.

### Pink Shrimp

Joan Browder explained that there was a little progress. She told the group about a new project call FIAN that would be measuring density. She noted some histograms and that the Western Florida Bay had the most productive nursery in the fall. She explained the relationship between density and concurrent salinity. She explained that there is a parabolic relationship when salinity levels fall below 30 PSU. She said that the target is based on the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of the historic record. She told the group that the time series in many cases are too short.

### Crocodilians

Ronnie explained that the crocodilians are not quick to respond. He gave an example of the 3 red, yellow, and green components. Rock discussed the meaning of the slope. Bob explained that at some point in time there could be flat lines that are green.

Bob said that he is going to have a hard time finding a harmonious way to report status between indicators. Greg reminded the group that information on indicator status would be included in the TF Strategy and Biennial Report.

### Publication of Indicators

Bob explained that there is a plan to publish the indicator reports.

Next steps Bob believed that all report cards may be complete by February 2008 and an Independent Review could be done in March. He thought the information could be ready for the Sept 08 Report Card to TF.

### Contaminants indicator

Bob discussed sediments contaminants including copper. It was reported that there were concentration levels in the St. Lucie estuary that had bio-effect. He said that Martin and St Lucie had the highest risk for Cu contaminants. It was noted that the effects of mixing

contaminants have not been studied or addressed. Joan Browder explained that the frequency of external abnormalities on fauna in the area is in the top 25% of the nation. The contaminants can effect brain development, pituitary glands and gonads. Joan explained that Fipronil was not on the list for mammals but was on the list for aquatic and organisms at the base of food chain.

Susan explained that there have been some measures of waste water in and then measures of the treated water that come out. She noted that sediment is not regulated like water. There are also no measures for cumulative impacts.

It was noted that since the group was not talking about regulating the system, but just identifying items that threaten restoration, the group was looking at possible indicators.

Susan explained that there are some performance measures for some contaminants and Joan suggested an idea for endocrine measures as a class.

### **Incremental Adaptive Restoration (IAR)**

Rock explained that he believed that the concept of IAR was to move forward with portion of project and identify goals and uncertainties and the use first part of that project to reduce uncertainty. John said that IAR has 2 benefits, learning and restoration. He used the Decomp Physical Model as an example (DMP) for an example. He thought that IAR could help move the C-111 spreader project forward. Some members believed that the objective and scale still needed to be worked through.

Meeting adjourned.