

Draft SCG Meeting Summary

Jan 28, 09

Coral Springs, FL

Attendance:

John Baldwin

Florida Atlantic University

Bill Reck

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Garth Redfield

South Florida Water Management District

Rock Salt

U.S. Department of the Interior

Greg May

South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force

Carrie Beeler

South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force

Chad Kennedy

Fl. Department of Environmental Protection

Bob Doren

South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force

Ronnie Best

U.S. Geological Survey

Dan Kimball

National Park Service

Libby Johns

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Call to order 10:07

Rock Salt welcomed the group.

Whip Around

Garth Redfield said that the bond validation hearing was coming up Feb 6, 2009 to validate the bonds, which will be used to finance the EAA lands. He said that Frank Bartolone is the attorney. He noted that the TOC would be meeting in the next several days. He explained that they had not had a meeting in quite a while so there would be a lot of compliance data to go through. He said that the SFWMD document *South Florida Environmental Report* is at the printer and is due to the Governor and Legislature March 1. He thanked those who participated in Hydrologic Targets Workshop hosted by DEP and the SFWMD.

Bill Reck introduced himself and said that he is an environmental engineer. He said that USDA was waiting to learn who would be the Secretary of Agriculture in the new administration. He noted that kickoff date for the South Florida listening sessions would be March 2009. These sessions help USDA to better understand what agriculture producers would like to see in the next Farm Bill.

Ronnie Best announced that the new DOI Secretary was Ken Salazar. He added that Suzette Kimball was the acting director for USGS. Ronnie commented that the Hydrologic Targets

Workshop was really good. Rock Salt added that the technical presentations were really good. Ronnie Best said that he noticed how all the presentations came together to converge on common set of numbers for flows. He announced that there would be a Sulfate Workshop at the University of Florida's Hurricane House.

John Baldwin noted that the groundbreaking for a new Environmental Science and Biologic Science Department for FAU was held in Davie the week before.

Susan Markley discussed the budget challenges her department was facing and said it would result in a reduction of participation by DERM in CERP level project teams. She added that the webcasts were a good way to keep DERM involved. On a positive note she said that the Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) program had just approved the acquisition of 1,000 acres in South Dade in model lands. She added that the EEL program had plenty of opportunities for partnership.

Chad Kennedy announced that the Governor vetoed the proposed Florida Forever legislation and said that those funds would not be raided.

Dan Kimball summarized the park's sea grass scarring report. He added that historically there was a lot of anecdotal information but now there was scientific information available. He noted that there are over 12,000 scars in Florida Bay and that alternatives to prevent scarring - from education to boating management - were being reviewed.

Greg May reviewed the joint Working Group and Science Coordination Group meeting agenda for the second half of the day.

Rock Salt summarized the purpose and content of the draft DOI vision document. He said that although the document was largely a policy-level summary of key priorities, it was based on a foundation of science. He noted that the document was not designed to be a final answer and added that the hydrologic targets workshop was a lot more robust. He believed that the insights from the workshop would help with the vision document. He thought that the key thing was that markers were put down for the ecological attributes of a restored ecosystem. He explained that the 5 landscapes listed avoided the trap of defining the ecosystem based on a period in time (for example the Everglades in 1850 vs. 1940). He said that it was important to avoid the time period concept, given changes to the micro-topography and the landscape. He believed that the Everglades today is not compatible with any past Everglades and the document attempted to paint a future everglades. He noted that the water budget in the draft document is higher than what is in CERP and that it made some people nervous. Rock Salt reiterated that this draft document builds on CERP planning and analysis. He explained that on page 3 there are a series of priorities some of which are shovel ready. He told the group that DOI is open to comments and to improving the document.

Review of Current Tasks

Bob Doren announced that the Ecological Indicators Journal was ready to send to the publishers and he noted that all 11 ecological indicators had been peer reviewed in literature and the 2008 assessment itself had two independent reviews. He said that he is working on an exotics indicator and a modeling indicator. Someone asked if we could purchase and distribute the

journal? Bob Doren explained that they are discussing various options for distribution. He asked how many hard copies the group thought would be needed.

Bob Doren reviewed the three directed tasks for the SCG: 1. Develop ecological indicators; 2. Review the interfaces between hydrological & ecological models; and 3. Update the Plan for Coordinating Science in 2010. He explained that the spotlight format developed for the System-wide Ecological Indicators is being incorporated into a harmonious format for the System Status Report in coordination with RECOVER. He announced that a group of scientists are considering a book to look at the status of the restoration through the eyes of these indicators tentatively scheduled to be complete December 2010. Bob Doren said that after the initial indicators are incorporated into the System Status Report (SSR), a workshop for the additional indicators will be set in November 2009. Rock Salt reminded the group that 5 years ago the tribe said that the indicators in the strategic plan were not up to snuff and that they have been working to improve them.

Greg May discussed the 2007 GAO report that identified the need to better link hydrological & ecological models. He said that GAO had recommended that DOI as head of TF coordinate with the agencies to accomplish this recommendation. He added that the National Academy of Science also mentioned modeling in the latest CISRERP report. He said that the SCG would conduct a workshop to address this coordination with the agencies. Rock reiterated that the TF asked the SCG to address this issue. Greg May said that the OED would provide the staff support and added that the SCG could help get the right people on an organizing committee and that committee could help frame the questions for the Workshop. Bill Reck thought that linking hydrologic models to produce ecologic outcomes could be very expensive. Bill thought the effort might not be worth the money.

Ronnie Best explained that there are the “little” models, big conceptual models and computer models. He said a model is something that is reviewable and quantifiable. He added that RECOVER just completed a Band 1 2015 update and that it did not include one word on ecosystem responses.

Susan Markley said that these are not new ideas; we already know a lot of what is needed. Greg May agreed that a lot of people are doing things in this area, but that it would be helpful to provide a common understanding of everything being done. He added this could help determine how to synthesize and integrate all the information.

Garth Redfield said it would be good to get a common understanding adding that we could discover any technical issues and in the next 5 years we could move forward. He said sulfur was an example and thought that there has not been enough attention paid even on the raw data.

Rock Salt reviewed the status of the PCS. Garth Redfield said that for 2010 a general brief update and clarification would be good. No one objected.

Other Possible Tasks

Ronnie Best reviewed the international conference on ecological services and explained that every continent was represented but Antarctica. He announced that there would be a workshop dealing with climate change. He thought the TF or the SCG may want to participate. Rock Salt thought that could be covered under the TF role related to sharing information. He asked if there

was something that the group could bring into focus in their coordination role. Ronnie Best thought that one approach could be briefing the SCG and WG as originally planned.

Public Comment

John Marshall gave high marks to the Hydrologic Targets Workshop and said he liked the take home message. He added that there has been a lot of talk regarding surge capacity and the need for storage. He said that the draft DOI vision stated, and others believe, that the Everglades was much wetter than originally thought. He announced that the Everglades Coalition is about to come up with a resolution to endorse the draft DOI vision. He reemphasized the importance of AM noting that there is a “whole new ball game” with EAA purchase. He thought the draft DOI vision is a big step toward using AM to adjust to the new opportunity. He noted that there still is not a CEM for EAA. He said he would like to know what used to be in the area and how much could be put back. He said that his group plants trees which can help restore areas and uptake carbon.

Wrap up

Rock Salt asked if there were other tasks to discuss or if there were any final comments before the group adjourned.

Garth Redfield said that he had just received a report from the Florida Energy and Climate Change Commission. He said the report is readable and good. Rock Salt added that CISRERP had 4 pages on climate change.