

South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force
Working Group

Implementation Coordination

Working Group Update October 2000

The mission of the Task Force and its Florida based Working Group was and remains to, "coordinate the development of consistent policies, strategies, plans, programs and priorities for addressing the environmental concerns of South Florida."

From the outset federal and state agencies working on south Florida ecosystem restoration recognized that a comprehensive, coordinated approach was needed. A multi-disciplinary team developed a coordinating strategy that synthesized information provided from all levels of government and non-government organizations. This document identifies a common vision and goals that provides a framework for stakeholders in South Florida to move toward achievement of that vision.

Coordinating Success: Strategy for Restoration of the South Florida Ecosystem, Volumes I & II was completed in July of 2000. This plan outlines how the restoration effort will occur; identifies resources needed to achieve the restoration; assigns accountability for accomplishing actions; and links the strategic goals established by the Task Force to outcome oriented annual goals.

The adaptive management process incorporates outcomes of current scientific activities along with responses to changing information and conditions. With specific goals providing focus and direction, the next step for the task force and its partners is to refine and develop implementation strategies for the coordination required to maintain and monitor progress toward achieving the approved goals.

Update and revision of Goals One, Two, and Three
Coordinating Success: Strategy for Ecosystem Restoration - 2002

GOAL 1: GET THE WATER RIGHT

Natural hydrologic functions in wetlands, estuarine, marine and groundwater systems are restored, while providing for the water resource needs of urban and agricultural landscapes

SUB-GOAL 1 -A: Get the hydrology right (Water Quantity, Timing and Distribution)

- Objective 1.A.1:** Provide 1.6 million acre-feet of surface water storage by 2037.
- Objective 1.A.2:** Develop aquifer storage and recovery systems capable of storing 1.7 billion GPD by 2020.
- Objective 1.A.3:** Modify 279 miles of impediments to flow by 2019.

SUB-GOAL 1- B: Get the water quality right means "In no case shall nutrient concentrations of a body of water be altered so as to cause an imbalance in natural populations of aquatic flora or fauna."

- Objective 1.B.1:** Construct 122,000 acres of stormwater treatment areas by 2036.
- Objective 1.B.2:** Prepare plans, with strategies and schedule for implementation, to comply with Total Daily Maximum Loads (TMDLs) for 100 percent of impaired water bodies by 2011.

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Coordination Status:

The USACE and SFWMD have approved the Master program Management Plan (MP²) for the comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan. The MP² will provide a framework for managing and monitoring design and implementation of the CERP and will document schedule and cost estimates for upcoming program level and project level activities for the current and two upcoming fiscal years.

A South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Program Management Team has been created to address program-wide restoration issues. Examples of program-wide issues may include overall plan implementation, funding and legislation required, schedule changes, project changes resulting from adaptive management, project timing and coordination and other issues affecting South Florida ecosystem restoration. The Program Management Team (PMT) will be made up of a Program Manager from the USACE and a Program Manager from each of the local sponsors for the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan. Meetings of the PMT will be held in conjunction with the Working Group meetings on the morning of the Working Group meeting and will be open to interested parties.

A number of ongoing activities are under way throughout the South Florida Ecosystem to assess and improve water quality. Some of these include, the Everglades Construction Projects, Lake Okeechobee Protection Plan, Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) for South Florida and the Comprehensive Integrated Water Quality Plan. The implementation of these plans will result in water quality standards being met for the identified impaired water bodies.

Goal 1 Next Steps:

- Develop and implement the oversight procedures to track, monitor and coordinate the CERP project implementation between the USACE, the SFWMD, and other agencies.
- Develop and implement procedures to monitor and coordinate the development of ongoing activities throughout the South Florida Ecosystem to assess and improve water quality.
- Develop and implement procedures to monitor and coordinate the implementation of the CERP pilot projects, specifically the Aquifer Storage and Recovery Pilot project.
- Refine the task force project reporting procedures that annually capture the status of implementation of projects that accomplish the objectives for goal 1.

GOAL 2: RESTORE, PRESERVE, AND PROTECT NATURAL HABITATS AND SPECIES Natural habitats and species will be restored when the diversity, abundance, and behavior of native South Florida animals and plants in terrestrial and aquatic environs are characteristic of pre-drainage conditions.

SUB-GOAL 2 -A: Restore, Preserve, and Protect Natural Habitats

- Objective 2.A.1:** Acquire 1.95 million acres of land for habitat protection.
- Objective 2.A.2:** Protect 20 percent of the coral reefs by 2020.

SUB-GOAL 2 - B: Control Invasive Exotic Plants

- Objective 2.B.1:** Prepare management plans for the top twenty South Florida invasive exotic plant species by 2010.

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- Objective 2.B.2:** Achieve maintenance control status for Brazilian pepper, melaleuca, Australian pine and Old World climbing fern in all natural areas statewide by 2020.
- Objective 2.B.3:** Complete an invasive exotic plant prevention, early detection and eradication plan by 2005.

Coordination Status:

Several activities are currently proposed or underway in regards to coordination of Goal 2 activities:

Noxious Exotic Weed Task Team (NEWTT): This team identified strategies to achieve “maintenance control” and/or eradication of invasive exotic plants. NEWTT is currently completing its assessment and strategy document which is expected to be finalized by the Working Group in Fall 2000.

Land Acquisition Task Team: Land acquisition efforts which support Goal 2 are currently underway at all levels of government in South Florida. A task team will be considered as a way to meet the Task Force request regarding GAO’s call for an ecosystem-wide land acquisition strategy.

Tortugas 2000: This Dry Tortugas planning initiative identifies areas of coral reef which should be protected. Establishment of an ecological reserve in the Keys would help accomplish Goal 2.

The Multi-species/Ecosystem Recovery Implementation Team (MERIT): The Multi-Species Recovery Plan addresses the recovery needs of South Florida’s 69 federally listed threatened and endangered species. The focus of MERIT will be on prioritizing recovery actions from an ecosystem perspective, and on recommending and funding on-the-ground recovery and restoration activities at the species and community level. This implementation effort is currently underway.

Goal 2 Next Steps:

- Develop and implement land acquisition strategy by September 2001.
- Develop and implement procedures to monitor and coordinate the development of programs protecting coral reefs.
- Work with USFWS as they develop and implement procedures to monitor and coordinate the implementation of the Multi-Species Recovery Plan.
- The Noxious Exotic Weed Task Team (NEWTT) will continue to coordinate the implementation of the task force strategy for managing invasive exotic plants.
- Refine the task force project reporting procedures that annually capture the status of implementation of projects that accomplish the objectives for goal 2.

GOAL 3: FOSTER COMPATIBILITY OF THE BUILT AND NATURAL SYSTEMS

The built environment is compatible with ecosystem restoration and preservation goals.

The State of Florida, the Tribes of Florida, regional, county and city governments make the decisions that guide and regulate the built environment. The Governor’s Growth Management and Everglades Commissions are currently reviewing the regulations and policies that guide these decisions. Changes to existing policies, programs, and regulations are expected as a result of this review. The working group is scheduled to complete it’s strategy for sustainable agriculture in the fall of 2000 and the CERP implementation will provide improved flood control and water supply benefits to the region.

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Refinement of this goal, and development of its sub goals and objectives will be completed for the updated version of the strategy document in 2002. The planning team is currently monitoring all of these efforts including the state's progress in revising its guiding regulations and will update the strategy to reflect the outcomes.

Goal 3 Next Steps:

- Return to all the participants from the 16 counties (counties, RPC's, and other stakeholders) December 2001
- Monitor Local planning efforts linked to changes in built environment, December 2001
- Task Force will continue to meet a standing requirement to incorporate environmental justice issues into the restoration implementation coordination.
- CERP monitoring will track flood control and water supply benefits region wide
- Continue working with agriculture representatives to incorporate developing sustainable agriculture strategies into the restoration efforts.
- Attend the Growth Management Study Commission and link planning effort, February 2001
- Monitor progress of the Everglades Commission and link its efforts into revision of Goal 3
- Create a goal 3 team of the Working Group, October 2000
- Identify links to goals 1 and 2, ongoing
- Integrate goal 3 development with goal 1 and 2 process, ongoing