



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

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July 23, 2003

Ms. Ann Klee, Chair
 South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force
 U.S. Department of the Interior
 1849 C Street, NW, Room 6130
 Washington, DC 20240

Dear Chairwoman Klee, *Ann*

In anticipation of the upcoming Task Force meeting where we will be discussing the role of the Working Group and the Science Coordination Team (SCT), I would like to share some of my thoughts and concerns.

Implementation of the CERP requires extensive interagency and public participation. It is imperative that the Task Force be responsive to public input and be a productive, leading force in the coordination and development of the many activities necessary to make the CERP successful. As the Executive Director of one of the lead agencies responsible for implementing the CERP, I am concerned that current Task Force, Working Group and SCT efforts are not effectively contributing toward this implementation. Thus, the public's perception is that these committees are not productive or beneficial to ecosystem restoration. The Working Group and SCT have spent the last several months discussing and developing recommendations on their priorities and structure, but they still have no definitive work plan. To ensure a constructive outcome when new options are presented at our next Task Force meeting, we need to be prepared to provide them with definite direction.

I am committed to SFWMD participation on these committees if we can develop a work plan that includes constructive activities with well defined products and timelines. Thus, I would like to propose the following structure for discussion and also offer some specific work items/topics:

The Working Group

I feel we would be much more productive if we merged the Working Group and Task Force meetings. Before doing this, we should review the make-up of the Working Group and lower the membership from 29 (some agencies have more than one representative). Meetings would then be attended by both groups. When major issues come to the attention of the Task Force (either through a Working Group member or other means), and the Task Force determines that resolution of the issue requires additional input or advice from stakeholders, the Task Force would charge the Working Group with a specific task along with a definite timeline. The Working Group would then meet as needed to accomplish this task (incorporating public input) and bring a product back to the Task Force.

It is my belief that this approach would result in fewer but more productive Working Group meetings, aimed at resolving specific tasks on a concise timeframe.

Science Coordination

I suggest we dissolve the SCT. We can rely on RECOVER for support in resolving science based issues and any necessary science updates and presentations. If a specific product is needed that is outside the scope of RECOVER, we could assign a subgroup of Working Group agency science experts to develop this product or an independent science advisory group.

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Finally, I would like to list a few items that are either required by law, or that I feel are priorities that we could start to immediately address.

- Strategic Plan (next Plan due by July 31, 2004).
- Integrated Financial Plan (annually) and Coordinated Budget Request – Develop a format that would result in an easier to read and more user friendly document.
- Science – Identify and prioritize key management issues that need to be addressed (the importance of the issue, the immediacy of the issue and current resources available).
- Water Quality – Identify what processes are in place and identify issues, if any, that are not currently being handled in another forum... and if there are any issues, identify the appropriate forum.
- Public Outreach – Hold meetings in the area of greatest public interest for the issues being discussed.
- C-111/Mod Waters – Frame the outstanding issues (what are we trying to solve, which group will fill the role of advisory group, etc.).
- CERP implementation – Tracking of appropriations, identifying unspent dollars, stakeholder education on guidance memorandums and identifying obstacles.

In closing, it is important that we are, and are perceived to be, a contributor to ecosystem restoration, not an obstacle or mechanism for delay. In order to do this we need to combine and reduce the number of advisory groups, clearly identify the issues, and get to work. Thank you for your time. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at 561-682-6136.

Sincerely,



Henry Dean
Executive Director
South Florida Water Management District

HD/fb

c: Terrence "Rock" Salt