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South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Land Acquisition Strategy

December 2004
DRAFT

South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force
Land Acquisition Task Team

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This strategy document is for planning purposes only, is subject to modification, and is not legally binding on any of the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force (Task Force) members. Each Task Force member and the interest they represent retain all of their sovereign rights, authorities, and jurisdictions for implementation of the projects contained in this document.

Acceptance of the report by the Task Force does not imply that the Task Force or the individual Task Force members endorse each land acquisition project described in the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Land Acquisition Strategy (Strategy).

Moreover, the land cost estimates contained in the body of this report are preliminary planning estimates that are not intended as, and do not reflect, fair market valuations of any individual parcel of land. Acceptance of this report, therefore, does not constitute an endorsement by any Task Force member as to any parcel or land valuation.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ARC Acquisition and Restoration Council
ASR Aquifer Storage and Recovery
CARL Conservation and Recreation Lands
C&SF Project Central and Southern Florida Flood Control Project
CERP Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan
CREW Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed
DACS Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
DOI Department of the Interior
EAA Everglades Agricultural Area
EEL Environmentally Endangered Lands
FDEP Florida Department of Environmental Protection
FNAI Florida Natural Areas Inventory
FPP Farm and Ranch Land Protection Act
FWC Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
FY Fiscal Year
GAO Government Accountability Office (formerly the General Accounting Office)
IRL Indian River Lagoon
LAPS Land Acquisition Priority System
LATT Land Acquisition Task Team
LWCF Land and Water Conservation Fund
MERIT Multi-Species Ecosystem Recovery Implementation Team
MSRP Multi-Species Recovery Plan
NEPA National Environmental Protection Act
NPS National Park Service
NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service
NWR National Wildlife Refuge
OGT Office of Greenways and Trails
OPE Other Project Element
P-2000 Preservation 2000
PIR Project Implementation Report
PILT Payment in Lieu of Taxes
Restudy C&SF Project Comprehensive Review Study
SFWMMD South Florida Water Management District (District)
SHCA Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas
SOETF Save Our Everglades Trust Fund
SOR Save Our Rivers
STA Stormwater Treatment Area
USACE United States Army Corps of Engineers
USDA United States Department of Agriculture
USFWS United States Fish and Wildlife Service (Service)
WCA Water Conservation Area
WRDA Water Resources Development Act
WRP Wetlands Reserve Program
“Yellow Book” C&SF Comprehensive Review Study

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AC-FT acre-feet

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WMLTF Water Management Lands
Trust Fund

South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Land Acquisition Strategy

Executive Summary

Land acquisition is critical to South Florida ecosystem restoration efforts. Land is needed to preserve habitat for native plants and animals, to act as a buffer to existing natural areas, and provide opportunities for passive and active recreational pursuits. Land is also needed for water quality treatment areas, water storage reservoirs, and aquifer recharge areas that will help restore the natural hydrology.

The purpose of this South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Land Acquisition Strategy (Strategy) is to describe the strategy for land acquisition needed for ecosystem restoration projects that are either wholly federally funded or jointly funded by federal and non-federal agencies. The Strategy sets forth estimates of the lands needed for restoration and the cost of land acquisition for the restoration initiative. The Strategy also measures progress in acquiring lands for the restoration. With its appendices, the Strategy provides a broad picture of all land acquisition initiatives that contribute to ecosystem restoration.

During the past two years, considerable progress has been made on land acquisition to assist in South Florida ecosystem restoration efforts. Perhaps the most encouraging aspect is the continued strong partnerships at the federal, state, and local levels to achieve the restoration goals. It is difficult to point to the success of any one agency because the land acquisition accomplishments often are the result of funding and activities by multiple agencies.

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Innovative partnerships and creative approaches have accomplished several major acquisitions in FY 03-04 to increase the land available to implement the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Project (CERP). Some key acquisitions are: 1,220 acre Palm Beach Aggregates for the North Palm Beach County Project; 2,234 acres for the C-43 Reservoir; 2,930 acre Lakeside Ranch for the Lake Okeechobee Watershed Project; 2,730 acres for the Taylor Creek/Nubbin Slough component of the Lake Okeechobee Watershed Project and 1,127 acres for the Picayune Strand Restoration Project (formerly Southern Golden Gate Estates Ecosystem Restoration).

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Land acquisition for the Allapattah Ranch was completed in FY 03 with the purchase of 7,261 acres, which are part of the Indian River Lagoon-South Project. Notably, the nation's largest Wetlands Reserve Program project, the 15,370 acres of the Allapattah Ranch acquisition, was achieved using a conservation easement through the USDA. In FY 04 another 4,749 acres of land was acquired for this CERP project to be used for the C-23/C-24 South Reservoir and STA and the Allapattah complex.

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The Strategy addresses the land acquisition needed for the three goals of the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration: Goal 1: Get the Water Right; Goal 2: Restore, Preserve and Protect Habitats and Species; and, Goal 3: Foster Compatibility of the Built and Natural Systems. This edition of the Strategy reflects data through June 30, 2004, the cutoff date for agencies to report costs.

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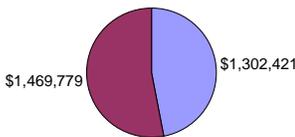
Goal 1: Get the Water Right

There are seventy-seven (77) projects with federal and joint federal/state land acquisition dollars identified for Goal 1: Get the Water Right. Land acquisition estimates for these projects total 483,805 acres with 271,853 acres (56%) acquired to date. The total estimated cost of these lands is \$2,772,201,000 with an estimated \$1,469,779,000 needed to complete acquisition of these parcels.

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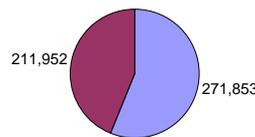
Summary of Goal 1 Progress - Costs

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Summary of Goal 1 Progress - Acres

■ Acres Acquired to Date
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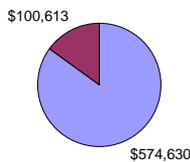
Goal 2: Restore, Preserve, and Protect Natural Habitats and Species

There are thirteen (13) projects with federal and joint federal/state land acquisition dollars identified for Goal 2: Restore Preserve and Protect Habitats and Species. To date, 1,702,831 acres have been identified with 1,686,844 acres (99%) acquired. The total estimated cost of these lands is approximately \$675,243,000 with an estimated \$100,613,000 needed to complete acquisition on these parcels.

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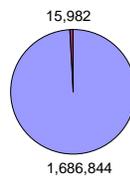
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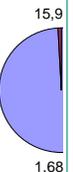
Summary of Goal 2 Progress - Acres

■ Acres Acquired to Date
 ■ Acres Remaining to be Acquired



Summary of Goal 2 Progress - Acres

■ Acres Acquired
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Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Project (CERP)

The schedule contained in the “Yellow Book” Implementation Plan was updated in July 2001, along with a reconfiguration of the sixty eight (68) CERP components into more implementable projects. There is now fifty five (55) CERP projects. This Strategy tracks the thirty one (31) projects with a land acquisition requirement. Geographically large CERP projects like the Indian River Lagoon-South, the Water Preserve Areas and the Lake Okeechobee Watershed for example, have several land acquisition components and therefore have more than one project profile in this Strategy.

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“Yellow Book” estimates have been adjusted from 1999 dollars and acres for those projects with either a final Feasibility Study or final Project Implementation Report. Land acquisition estimates for CERP projects now total 405,322 acres with 206,109 acres (51%) acquired to date. The total estimated cost of these lands is \$2,487,058,691 with an estimated \$1,369,334,470 needed to complete acquisition of these parcels.

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CERP Region

Everglades Agricultural Area Region
 Everglades, Florida Bay, and Keys Region
 Lake Okeechobee Watershed Region
 Lower West Coast Region
 Miami-Dade County Region
 Northern Palm Beach County Region
 Upper East Coast Region
 Water Preserve Area Region

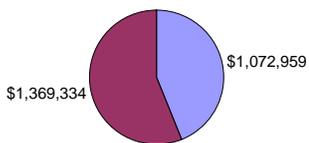
Percent of Land Acquired

73.0 %
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 79.8%
 20.8%
 64.9%
 28.1%
 64.9%

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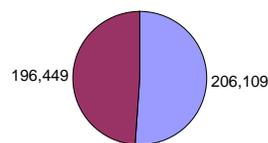
Summary of CERP Progress - Costs

Expended to Date (\$1000s)
 Estimated remaining cost (\$1000s)



Summary of CERP Progress - Acres

Acres Acquired to Date
 Acres Remaining to be Acquired



Goal 3: Foster Compatibility of the Built and Natural System

The 2002 Farm Bill authorized several programs to provide financial incentives to private landowners to restore or enhance wetlands and improve wildlife habitat while protecting working farms or retiring marginal land from agricultural production. Two (2) of the six (6) programs in the 2002 Farm Bill contribute towards the land acquisition goals through permanent conservation easements.

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Twenty eight thousand twenty one (28,021) acres have been acquired through the Wetlands Reserve and the Farm and Ranch Land Protection Programs at a cost of \$42.16 million.

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Land Acquisition Expenditures Summary, FY 2003-FY 2004 (1)

<u>Funding Source</u>	<u>Amount (\$ million)</u>	<u>Acres</u>
<u>Farm Bill 1996</u>	<u>\$00.00</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>Florida Forever</u>	<u>\$18.80</u>	<u>4,648</u>
<u>Save Our Everglades Trust Fund</u>	<u>\$55.20</u>	<u>7,864</u>
<u>State, Local & Other Funding (2)</u>	<u>\$ 4.80</u>	<u>1,090</u>
<u>Land & Water Conservation Fund (3)</u>	<u>\$ 1.54</u>	<u>736</u>
<u>Wetlands Reserve & Farmland Protection (4)</u>	<u>\$42.16</u>	<u>28,021</u>
<u>Totals</u>	<u>\$122.50</u>	<u>113,353</u>

(1) The fiscal year for FDEP is July 1 through June 30. The fiscal year for the SFWMD, the FWS, and the NPS is October 1 through September 30. Data are from October 1, 2003 through June 30, 2004.

(2) The following funding sources are captured in this category: SFWMD ad valorem, county, mitigation, special state appropriations, Preservation 2000, Land Acquisition Trust Fund, and Water Management Lands Trust Fund

(3) The Land & Water Conservation Fund is administered by the U.S. Department of the Interior

(4) The Wetlands Reserve & Farm and Ranch Lands Protection programs are administered by USDA. Data for these programs reflect activity since the passage of the 2002 Farm Bill through June 30, 2004

PROGRESS TOWARDS LAND ACQUISITION GOALS

Much progress has been made since the first Land Acquisition Strategy was accepted by the Task Force in February 2003. In September 2002, the LATT identified 5.8 million acres as needed for natural habitat protection with 4.9 million acres acquired by the state, federal and local governments. This estimate has been further refined to those lands within the boundary of the SFWMD and is now 5.8 million acres with 4.8 million acquired. Acquisition is now complete for twelve (12) habitat projects, totaling 76,166 acres. For water projects, 462,372 acres were identified in September 2002, with 234,790 acres acquired. The estimated land acquisition needs for water projects has been refined and is now 483,805 with 271,853 acres acquired.

The Land Acquisition Strategy describes the lands identified jointly by federal and state agencies for ecosystem restoration, and with its appendices, provides a broad picture of all land acquisition initiatives that contribute to the restoration. The following is a list of the Appendices:

- [Appendix A: South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Goals and Objectives](#) ← --- **Formatted:** Bullets and Numbering
- [Appendix B: South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Land Acquisition Strategy Federal Projects and Joint Federal/State Projects Map with the map key](#) ← --- **Formatted:** Bullets and Numbering
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- [Appendix C: Project Profile Sheets and Summary Table](#) ← --- **Formatted:** Bullets and Numbering
- [Appendix D: South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Land Acquisition Update Map with the State/Federal/Local Cost Share Table](#) ← --- **Formatted:** Bullets and Numbering
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- [Appendix E: County Land Acquisition and Florida's Greenways and Trails Programs](#) ← --- **Formatted:** Bullets and Numbering
- [Appendix F: SFWMD FY 04 Work Plan for Land Acquisitions](#) ← --- **Formatted:** Bullets and Numbering
- [Appendix G: Land Acquisition Task Team Directive](#) ← --- **Formatted:** Bullets and Numbering
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South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Land Acquisition Strategy

INTRODUCTION

The South Florida ecosystem is an 18,000 square mile region that includes all or part of sixteen (16) counties with more than six (6) million human inhabitants. The watershed stretches from the Kissimmee River Basin-Lake Okeechobee system to the coral reefs in the Atlantic Ocean and from the Caloosahatchee to the St. Lucie estuaries. This water-dominated system encompasses a myriad of interconnected freshwater rivers, lakes, marshes, prairies, forests, and estuaries, and includes the natural systems of the Kissimmee River Basin, Lake Okeechobee, the Everglades, Big Cypress Swamp, Florida Bay, Biscayne Bay, the Florida Keys reef tract, Charlotte Harbor, the Caloosahatchee River, [the Lake Worth Lagoon](#), [the Loxahatchee River](#) and the Indian River Lagoon.

In 1948, the ongoing efforts to drain the Everglades, protect the region from hurricanes, and make the region habitable culminated in the Congressional authorizations of the Central & Southern Florida (C&SF) Project, a flood control project jointly built and managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD). The primary project goal was to provide water and flood control for urban and agricultural lands. Other goals were to improve the habitat for fish and wildlife, ensure a water supply for Everglades National Park and provide for agricultural, industrial and recreational uses.

The C&SF Project significantly altered the region's hydrology (quantity, timing and distribution of water). Whereas historically most rainwater had soaked into the region's wetlands, the C&SF canal system, comprised of over 1,800 miles of canals and levees and 200 water control structures, drained an average of 1.7 billion gallons of water per day (5,217 acre-feet per day) into the ocean and the gulf. As a result, not enough water was available for the natural functioning of the Everglades or for the growing human communities in the region. Water quality was also degraded.

Today, the Everglades is only about half of its original size, and the natural and man-made water systems providing life to the Everglades that remain are inadequate for the survival of this international treasure. The desirability of South Florida's climate, geographic location, cultural and social setting and thriving economic opportunities have contributed to [significant population growth since the C&SF Project was built](#). [The current population in the region is predicted to double in the region by the year 2050](#). The sustainability of the South Florida ecosystem is in jeopardy. In response to this situation, the federal, state, regional, and local governments and two American Indian Tribes have committed to the restoration of the South Florida ecosystem, which includes the Everglades.

Deleted: Land Acquisition Expenditures Summary, FY 2003-FY 2004 (1)

Funding Source	Amount (\$ million)	Acres
Farm Bill 1996	\$ 0	0
Florida Forever	\$ 18.8	4,648
Save Our Everglades Trust Fund	\$ 55.2	7,864
State, Local & Other Funding (2)	\$ 4.8	1,090
Land & Water Conservation Fund (3)	\$ 1.54	736
Wetland Reserve & Farmland Protection (4)	\$ 28,021	
Totals	\$ 122.5	113,353

(1) The fiscal year for FDEP is July 1 through June 30. The fiscal year for the SFWMD, the FWS, and the NPS is October 1 through September 30. Data is from October 1, 2003 through June 30, 2004.

(2) The following funding sources are captured in this category: SFWMD ad valorem, county, mitigation, special state appropriations, Preservation 2000, Land Acquisition Trust Fund, and Water Management Lands Trust Fund.

(3) The Land & Water Conservation Fund is administered by the U.S. Department of the Interior.

(4) The Wetland Reserve & Farmland Protection program are administered by USDA. Data for these programs reflect activity since the passage of the 2002 Farm Bill through June 30, 2004.

The Land Acquisition Strategy describes the lands identified jointly by federal and state agencies for ecosystem restoration, and with its appendices, provides a broad picture of all land acquisition initiatives that contribute to the restoration.

The following is a list of the Appendices:
 <#>Appendix A: Task Force Goals and Objectives [1]

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Land acquisition is critical to South Florida ecosystem restoration efforts. Land is needed to preserve habitat for native plants and animals, to act as a buffer to existing natural areas and to provide opportunities for passive and active recreational pursuits. Land is also needed for water quality treatment areas, water storage reservoirs and aquifer recharge areas that will help restore the natural hydrology.

Purpose

The purpose of this Strategy is to describe the strategy for land acquisition needed for ecosystem restoration projects that are either wholly federally funded or jointly funded by federal and non-federal agencies. The Strategy sets forth estimates of the lands needed for restoration, estimates of the cost of land acquisition for the restoration initiative and measures progress in acquiring lands for the restoration.

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The Strategy builds on the information in the July 2000 Task Force Strategy for Ecosystem Restoration, the 1999 Everglades Ecosystem Land Acquisition State-Federal Cost Share map, the CERP, and the Florida Forever work plan. The initial strategy addressed two of the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration goals: Goal 1: Get the Water Right and Goal 2: Restore Preserve and Protect Habitats and Species, reflected data through September 30, 2002. This edition of the strategy reflects data through June 30, 2004 and includes Goal 3: Foster Compatibility of the Built and Natural Systems.

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As restoration proceeds, estimated land requirements are adjusted. For CERP, the land acquisition estimates for each component in the Comprehensive Review Study (the “Yellow Book” or the Restudy) are further refined through the Project Implementation Report and Environmental Impact Statement required under the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA).

Expectations Should Be Reasonable

The anticipated major ecological improvements will take many years to realize. The large-scale hydrological improvements that will be necessary to stimulate major ecological improvements will depend upon and follow the implementation of the CERP and other ecosystem restoration projects. The Strategy does not propose to acquire the amount of land necessary to restore or recreate the historic Everglades—some of the historic Everglades is irretrievably lost. The Everglades resulting from the CERP and other ecosystem restoration projects will be smaller and of a different configuration than the original Everglades, but will mimic the historic functions of the Everglades.

South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force

Six (6) federal departments (twelve (12) agencies), seven (7) Florida state agencies or commissions, two (2) American Indian Tribes, sixteen (16) counties, scores of municipal governments, and interested groups and businesses from throughout South Florida participate in the restoration effort. Four (4) sovereign entities (federal, state, and two tribes) are involved in the Everglades and South Florida restoration effort. Given the large geographic area, the diverse missions of these agencies, and the need to maximize the resources available for this effort, coordination among these entities is essential to the restoration effort.

The Task Force coordinates and tracks the work of the restoration. The Water Resources Development Act of 1996 (WRDA 96) authorized the operation of the Task Force and provided for specific membership and duties. WRDA 96 directed the Task Force to establish a Florida-based working group. The Task Force and its Working Group facilitate resolution of conflicts among participants; coordinate scientific or other research; provide assistance and support to member agencies in their restoration activities; coordinate the development of consistent policies, strategic plans, programs, projects, activities and priorities for addressing the restoration; exchange information among participants; prepare an integrated financial plan and recommendations for coordinated budget requests; and submit a biennial report to Congress summarizing restoration activities.

The Task Force does not have any oversight or project authority, and participating agencies are responsible for meeting their own targeted accomplishments. The Task Force serves as a forum in which ideas are shared and consensus is sought.

Task Force members share a vision of a healthy South Florida ecosystem that supports diverse and sustainable communities of plants, animals, and people. Three goals have been set to achieve this vision: Goal 1: Get the Water Right; Goal 2: Restore, Preserve, and Protect Natural Habitats and Species; and Goal 3: Foster Compatibility of the Built and Natural Systems. Land acquisition is an essential part of achieving these goals.

General Accounting Office Report (GAO)

In its April 2000 review of the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Initiative, the General Accounting Office, now the Governmental Accountability Office (GAO) recognized that the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Initiative is a complex, long-term effort that covers over 18,000 square miles, and that will take more than twenty (20) years and require the continuous effort and commitment of all agencies involved. The GAO report stated that the development of a land acquisition plan would be valuable in coordinating the member agencies' land acquisition activities. Such a plan would ensure that the lands needed to

accomplish the goals of the Task Force are identified and acquired. The GAO report asserted that without such a plan, the Task Force cannot: (1) determine how much land will be needed to accomplish its goals; (2) estimate the full cost of acquiring these lands; (3) measure progress in acquiring lands for the restoration; and (4) increase the chance that the lands acquired are those most needed.

While the federal, state, and local land acquisition programs prepare annual and multi-year plans and coordinate acquisition efforts on a day-to-day and annual basis to ensure effective use of staff time and fiscal resources, the GAO believes that the coordination needs of the Task Force would be better served if this information were assembled into one document.

The GAO recommended that the members of the Task Force develop a land acquisition plan for the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration that would include:

1. an assessment of the lands needed to accomplish each of the goals of the restoration;
2. a description of the purpose for which the lands will be acquired and how they will be managed;
3. an estimate of the cost of these lands;
4. an estimate of when the lands will be needed for related restoration projects; and,
5. the agencies responsible for acquiring the lands

The GAO stated that the land acquisition plan should supplement the Task Force's July 2000 Strategic Plan and build on the land acquisition information and assessments already compiled by the federal and state agencies. It was suggested that the document would be useful to funding entities, such as the U.S. Congress and the State of Florida. The GAO envisioned the land acquisition plan as a dynamic document updated to reflect changes and additions to the restoration initiative's land acquisition needs.

South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Initiative Requires Significant Land Acquisition

The Task Force member agencies have been engaged in the protection and restoration of the South Florida ecosystem for many years prior to the formation of the Task Force. The Task Force tracks these projects and builds on the progress made to date. Acquisition of land to provide water for South Florida's human population and to protect the remaining natural ecosystems has been an ongoing priority in ecosystem restoration.

State and federal agencies currently manage 4.9 million acres of land important for protection of natural habitat and species in South Florida [acquired](#) at a cost of approximately \$3 billion. The State of Florida (including the SFWMD) spent \$2.1 billion for these acquisitions. Local government provided \$191 million of this

funding, and the federal government contributed \$674 million to this total. Notwithstanding these significant efforts to acquire important natural areas, the condition of the natural system continues to deteriorate [due to past water management decisions and infrastructure, prompting several actions to address this issue.](#)

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By the mid-1980s, a consensus was developing that water management in the region needed to be improved for natural habitats to respond. In 1989 and 1992 respectively, Congress authorized Modified Water Deliveries to Everglades National Park and the Kissimmee River Restoration. These projects added new land acquisition requirements as part of the improved water management system.

In 1992, Congress also authorized the C&SF Comprehensive Review Study- commonly called the Restudy- to take a system-wide look at the water management system and recommend changes to benefit the remaining Everglades while meeting the other water related needs of the region.

WRDA 2000 authorized the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP). With an estimated cost of \$7.8 billion over 37 years, CERP is perhaps the most ambitious ecological restoration project ever undertaken. CERP provides a framework for modifications and operational changes that are needed to restore, preserve and protect the South Florida ecosystem while providing for other water- related needs of the region, including water supply and flood protection. The goal is that the right quantity of water, of the right quality, gets delivered to the right places at the right times. CERP builds on restoration projects already underway.

The authorization of CERP added new land acquisition requirements for [the restoration of the South Florida ecosystem.](#) The 1999 Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (also known as the “Yellow Book”) estimated that 402,479 acres would be required for the proposed projects. Of this estimate, 182,338 acres were already in public ownership. As of June 30, 2004, total land requirements for CERP have been further refined [through the draft PIR for the Picayune Strand Restoration Project \(formerly Southern Golden Gate Estates Ecosystem Restoration\) and the final PIR and EIS for the Indian River Lagoon – South as well as the Water Preserve Area Feasibility Study and are](#) now estimated to be 405,322 acres, with approximately 51% or 206,109 acres currently in SFWMD, State or local government ownership.

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South Florida Ecosystem Land Acquisition Strategy Development

Several planning efforts related to land acquisition [were](#) accomplished prior to the development of the first Land Acquisition Strategy. In December 1999, an ecosystem-wide acquisition map (the “Graham Map”) was developed. In April 2000, the U.S. GAO issued a report entitled, “South Florida Ecosystem

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Restoration: A Land Acquisition Plan Would Help Identify Land That Need To Be Acquired. Subsequently, the Task Force strategy document, “Coordinating Success: Strategy for Restoration of the South Florida Ecosystem,” was delivered to Congress. This strategy document provided information on numerous land acquisition projects undertaken for ecosystem restoration. In August 2002, the Task Force strategy document was updated and submitted to Congress.

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In February 2003, the Task Force accepted the first edition of the Land Acquisition Strategy prepared by the Working Group Land Acquisition Task Team. This strategy built on the information in “Coordinating Success” and the “Graham Map”, updating and adding information as necessary. The initial strategy reflected data as of September 30, 2002.

This initial Land Acquisition Strategy addressed the recommendations made by the GAO. As part of the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration effort, agencies identified lands needed to accomplish each of the goals of the restoration. A project profile was prepared for each project that involved federal funds. The profile of each project included a description of the lands and how they would be managed, an estimated cost of the lands, an estimate of when the lands would be needed for restoration projects, and identified the agencies responsible for acquiring the lands. A summary table of land acquisition projects involving federal funds was included. Strategy appendices provided information on state projects supporting the restoration that did not include federal funds, and also provided comprehensive maps of land acquisition projects and existing conservation lands.

The Task Force decided to produce this second edition of the Land Acquisition Strategy, using information through June 30, 2004, and provided direction on additional items to be addressed in the revised Strategy. The Land Acquisition Task Team was instructed to include county level information in the updated Strategy as well as information on less than fee acquisitions, mitigation and payment in lieu of taxes.

The Land Acquisition Task Team Directive requires that the Land Acquisition Strategy describe the lands identified jointly by federal and state agencies for ecosystem restoration, and with its appendices, provide a broad picture of all land acquisition initiatives that contribute to the restoration. Appendix B is the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Land Acquisition Strategy Federal Projects and Joint Federal/State Projects map. This map graphically illustrates the data in the Project Profiles in Appendix C. The Project ID on the Project Profile is the Map Label. It is important to note that some CERP projects do not have a boundary labeled on the map because the boundary is not yet defined through the NEPA process.

Appendix D is the [Florida Department of Environmental Protection \(FDEP\) Division of State Lands Natural Habitat and Species Land Acquisition Update](#) table. Also in Appendix D is the Florida Natural Areas Inventory [update of the 1999 Everglades Ecosystem Land Acquisition State-Federal Cost Share map known as the “Graham Map”](#). This map reflects all the habitat lands acquired or are planned to be acquired that [contribute](#) to Goal 2, including those lands with no federal funding. The map also illustrates CERP project conceptual boundaries to provide a full picture of all the lands presently identified for ecosystem restoration. The Florida Greenways and Trails program and County level land acquisition programs that address Goal 3 are discussed in Appendix E.

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A Long History of Coordination on Land Acquisition Funding

There is an [extensive](#) history of coordination between the federal and state restoration partners on land acquisition projects. In 1947, the federal government acquired the lands necessary to establish Everglades National Park with the substantial contribution of 908,931 acres of land by the State of Florida. According to the April 2000 GAO report, the State of Florida [had already](#) acquired 3.1 million acres [of habitat lands](#)—many of which were conveyed between 1947 and 1995 to the federal government to be managed as national parks and preserves. The federal government acquired another 1 million acres during the same period. Now, federal and state [holdings include](#) three [\(3\)](#) [additional](#) national parks or preserves, [thirty six \(36\)](#) state parks, [three \(3\)](#) state forests, [thirteen \(13\)](#) wildlife refuges, [eleven \(11\)](#) state wildlife management areas, [six \(6\)](#) wildlife and environmental areas, [one \(1\)](#) fish management area, [fifteen \(15\)](#) aquatic preserves [and one \(1\)](#) marine sanctuary dedicated to protecting the South Florida ecosystem.

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The FDEP Division of State Lands continues to coordinate park and refuge land acquisitions with the federal government. Seventy percent (70%) of the acres remaining to be acquired for the National Key Deer Refuge are also on the state’s Florida Forever acquisition list. The Division of State Lands is also cooperating with the National Park Service on the Big Cypress National Preserve Addition and recently completed the donation of over 43,000 acres for the Everglades National Park Expansion.

The SFWMD, the FDEP and the DOI have a history of funding partnerships for land acquisition. Substantial federal funding for land acquisition is dependent on specific congressional action. The Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act (Farm Bill) of 1996 in Section 390 provided \$200,000,000 to the Secretary of the Interior to fund or conduct restoration activities in the Everglades ecosystem. To carry out the aforementioned activities, these Farm Bill monies, along with state monies, were utilized to purchase lands in the East Coast Buffer/Water Preserve Area, the Everglades Agricultural Area/Talisman property and Southern Golden Gate Estates. Through Fiscal Year 2003-2004, the SFMWD has

received about \$113.9 million in grant monies for land acquisition from the DOI through the Land and Water Conservation Fund in addition to the 1996 Farm Bill funds. FDEP has received over \$38 million from the 1996 Farm Bill to acquire lands in Southern Golden Gate Estates.

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Florida's strong commitment to funding acquisition of environmental lands is the foundation of these partnerships. Florida is recognized as the national leader in conservation land acquisition. With the passage of the landmark Preservation 2000 and Florida Forever Acts, the State of Florida has one of the most aggressive conservation and recreation land acquisition program in the United States. Florida spent \$3 billion during the ten (10) years of Preservation 2000 and renewed that commitment by the passage of Florida Forever, an additional \$3 billion investment through 2010. In the past thirty years, Florida has spent over \$3.7 billion to conserve approximately 3.8 million acres of land for environmental, recreational and related purposes. This has been accomplished through several programs, including Environmentally Endangered Lands, Outdoor Recreation, Save Our Coasts, Save Our Rivers (SOR), Conservation and Recreation Lands (CARL), and Preservation 2000.

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Partnerships with local governments have increased in recent years. Eleven (11) of the sixteen (16) counties involved in the South Florida restoration effort have passed bond referenda or sales tax initiatives programs to fund the acquisition of environmentally sensitive lands. Two (2) other counties fund these acquisitions through the county planning office. Local governments have contributed more than \$600 million for ecosystem restoration land acquisitions in support of all three restoration goals. With the inclusion of county staff on the Land Acquisition Task Team and a greater understanding of county land acquisition programs, it is expected that there will be increased opportunities for future partnerships with these entities.

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This long history of cooperation and coordination between state, local and federal partners in restoration has maximized the resources available for land acquisition. The Task Force will build on these partnerships for future land purchases.

Alternative Tools to Meet Restoration Land Use Needs

As more people move to South Florida—the region's population is expected to double by 2050—land prices throughout the Everglades watershed are skyrocketing. The 13,186-acre Allapattah Ranch land purchase three years ago cost the SFWMD about \$2,500 per acre. Today, some of the adjacent land is being advertised for sale at a price of almost at \$20,000 an acre. There are not sufficient financial resources to secure all the estimated restoration land requirements through the purchase of fee-simple estate, nor is it always desirable. The Task Force supports the use of creative approaches and the

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partnerships with private landowners needed to achieve restoration through less than fee acquisitions or the use of other tools.

Easements are one approach for securing lands for restoration. For some ecosystem restoration projects, an easement may provide enough control over the land to achieve project objectives. Conservation easements involve purchasing a portion of the rights associated with the land to provide some degree of protection to natural resources on the land. There are several advantages of this approach as the land stays on the tax rolls and the private landowner maintains responsibility for managing the property while still allowing some level of continued use. Although the cost could be reduced to 25% of the cost of fee simple, the price depends on many factors, such as the number of rights purchased, how much the landowners use of the land is curtailed, and the development pressure on the land. The SFWMD, NRCS and DEP all use this tool to protect lands. Currently, conservation easements are contributing to the protection of an additional 86,688 acres for ecosystem restoration in South Florida.

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The 2002 Farm Bill provides two permanent conservation easement programs which promise to play an increasingly important role in securing lands for restoration. The nation's largest Wetlands Reserve Program project, the Allapattah Ranch, protected 15,370 acres of agricultural lands that will be part of the Indian River Lagoon-South CERP project. Coupled with the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program, these new tools have protected 28,021 acres in the south Florida ecosystem.

For restoration projects that require only temporary water storage, the SFWMD has developed temporary lease agreements with private landowners to allow water storage on their lands. In FY 2004, the SFWMD used these agreements to store water released from the Upper Chain of Lakes to allow the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) to lower lake levels and conduct an environmental restoration project on Lake Tohopokeliga, commonly known as Lake Toho. To reduce the impacts on Lake Okeechobee and the coastal estuaries, the District successfully diverted approximately 55,000 acre-feet of water and stored this water on alternative storage sites surrounding Lake Okeechobee on private/agricultural, Seminole Tribe and public land during the lake level drawdown process.

Another alternative to the traditional straight forward purchase contract is the Multi-Year Option Agreements used by the SFWMD. These agreements allow properties to be secured today and taken off of the development market. At the same time, these options provide ample due diligence review time for the District, and allow purchase of property over multiple years, which provides cash flow advantages and often provide tax advantages for the seller as well. In the past year, this tool was used to achieve the 2,930-acre Lakeside Ranch acquisition for the Lake Okeechobee Watershed CERP Project.

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The strategic use of mitigation banks also contributes to the environmental restoration effort in South Florida. If a proposed project will result in negative impacts to wetlands, those impacts must be mitigated by the creation or enhancement of wetlands either on-site or off-site. Mitigation can be required as a condition of a federal, state or local permit. The SFWMD has two mitigation banks where developers can buy credits to restore wetlands. The District also accepts mitigation funds from developers and has acquired over 3,000 acres for four key acquisition projects that contribute to CERP or Save Our River habitat protection projects.

Another tool being considered by the SFWMD is the acquisition of lands through Public Private Partnerships, a contractual agreement between the SFWMD and a private landowner under which the landowner agrees to supply the land and design, construct, operate and finance a restoration project (e.g. reservoir or STA) in accordance with specifications approved by the SFWMD. The SFWMD would agree to compensate the private entity through a series of service payments over a period of 15 to 20 years. This creative approach would allow the District to leverage its available cash for CERP.

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Creative approaches to the land use planning process by local governments can also contribute to the land acquisition needed for ecosystem restoration and further rural sustainability. In 2001, Florida created the Rural Land Stewardship Program. First created as a pilot program, legislation in 2004 expanded the program to all counties statewide. Local governments designate Stewardship areas through comprehensive plan amendments. The intent is to direct development in rural lands to the right places to preserve agriculture and protect the environment. Once designated, credits are allocated to individual parcels based on environmental and other values of the property. The credits are recorded as a covenant or restrictive easement in favor of the county and the DEP, DACS, or statewide land trust. To date, 5,300 acres of Priority One panther habitat and adjacent lands in Collier County have been protected at an average cost of \$150 an acre through the Florida Rural Land Stewardship Program.

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Partnering with local governments in innovative land development programs may also lead to benefits. It has been well documented in urban and urbanizing communities that lands in preserve effectively transfer value to adjacent developable lands. Lands with permanent scenic vistas, particularly natural views, command much higher prices. It is possible that with technical assistance provided by regional partners such as Regional Planning Councils, land owners may willingly set aside the lands of most concern to Everglades restoration or protection, in return for assistance in developing appropriate density site plans and approvals for the remaining lands.

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Mitigating the Loss of Tax Revenue

Land acquisition for ecosystem restoration removes those lands from the tax rolls. Both the federal and state governments make payments in lieu of taxes (PILT) to offset the loss of tax revenues to counties that contain federal or state tax-exempt lands.

In South Florida, DOI compensates jurisdictions with tax-exempt federal lands administered by the National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In FY 2003, DOI paid \$2,041,602 to eight (8) counties to compensate for the loss of tax revenue for 455,452 acres of federal holdings through its payment in lieu of taxes program.

Florida's payment in lieu of taxes (PILT) is limited to counties with a population of 150,000 or less with conservation lands removed from the tax rolls through the Preservation 2000 and Florida Forever acquisition programs. Once eligibility has been established, the governmental entity shall receive ten (10) consecutive annual payments for each tax loss. For FY 2003, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection paid \$392,081 to school boards, counties and other units of government in three (3) counties to compensate for the loss of tax revenue on 78,825 acres. During the same period, the SFWMD is scheduled to make the sixth (6th) payment of \$6,786.92 in PILT to Hendry County for 21,702 acres the District purchased for the Okaloacoochee Slough Project.

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In a separate program, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service helps offset the loss to the local tax base through its Refuge Revenue Sharing program. Annual payments are made to counties or other units of local government for lands administered by the Service, primarily National Wildlife Refuges. The payments are calculated based on a percentage of fair market value of the holdings, 25% of the net receipts or 75 cents per acre. The Service re-appraises the market value of their lands every 5 years and makes payments for those lands owned in fee title. In FY 2003, the FWS paid \$303,645 to compensate for the loss of tax revenue on 91,421 acres that the Service administers.

The South Florida Land Acquisition Strategy

The goals and objectives of the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration are listed in Appendix A. The following is a discussion of the land acquisitions necessary to accomplish the water, habitat, and compatibility of the built and natural environment goals.

Goal 1: Get the Water Right

Goal 1 is to “Get the Water Right” with the subgoals of “Get the Hydrology Right” and “Get the Water Quality Right”. Goal 1 projects include implementation of the CERP and other authorized modifications to the C&SF System including the Kissimmee River Restoration and Headwaters Revitalization Project, the C-111 Project, the Critical Projects authorized in WRDA 96 and Modified Water Deliveries to Everglades National Park as well as other water quality improvement projects such as the federally funded STA 1-E component of the SFWMD’s Everglades Construction Project (ECP).

Identification of Lands to be Acquired

The acreage estimates on the project profile sheets in this Strategy reflect the best available information as of June 30, 2004. Non-CERP project land requirements are determined through the USACE General Design Memorandum. CERP land requirements evolve from estimates in the Central and Southern Florida Project Comprehensive Review Study (commonly called the “Yellow Book” or Restudy). The estimates contained in the Restudy are based on preliminary conceptual project designs and are further refined through the Integrated Project Implementation Reports (PIR) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The following is an example of the processes used by the USACE and SFWMD to determine lands needed for Goal 1 CERP projects. General characteristics of the needs are considered, such as the basin in which the project needs to be located and acre-feet of water storage capacity needed. The lands within the basin that conceptually meet the established criteria are identified for each alternative design identified in the PIR, and a gross appraisal is conducted for the alternatives. A real estate plan for the selected alternative is then completed. This real estate plan provides updated land acquisition requirements and associated cost estimates.

The updated estimated land requirements were completed in 2001 for the Water Preserve Areas and the Indian River Lagoon-South projects through the feasibility studies for those areas. The land acquisition requirements for Indian River Lagoon-South were further refined through the March 2004 final Integrated Project Implementation Report and Programmatic Environmental Impact

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Statement (PEIS). The draft real estate estimate for the Picayune Strand Restoration Project (formerly Southern Golden Gate Estates Ecosystem Restoration) was completed in April 2004.

The 1999 "Yellow Book" analysis for each CERP project reflected not only total project land needs but included calculations of any lands that were already in public ownership. Using this analysis, the 1999 estimation of the land needed for CERP was 402,479 acres with 182,338 acres already owned by a unit of government, leaving 220,141 acres to be acquired. The acres required and the costs have been updated only for the projects that have been through the NEPA process. CERP projects that do not have a PIR or a Feasibility Study must use "Yellow Book" (1999) estimates of both acres and costs until better data is available and updated estimates have been approved through a document that has gone through the NEPA process. The current estimated CERP acreage needed for CERP is now 405,322 acres, with 196,449 acres remaining to be acquired.

Strategic Acquisitions

The timing of land acquisition is critical, as project construction cannot begin until key project lands are acquired. Failure to obtain critical parcels in a timely manner can result in delays and reconfiguration not just for one project, but for other related projects as well. The GAO report noted that much of the undeveloped land in South Florida is under development pressure, and that a land acquisition plan increases the likelihood of the restoration's success. Delays in acquiring project lands lessen the possibility that the necessary lands will be acquired and may also increase the cost of land.

The success of many of the CERP projects depends on the successful implementation of other parts of the restoration plan, such as the C-111 Canal and Modified Water Deliveries to Everglades National Park projects. In fact, WRDA 2000 conditions that no appropriations shall be made to construct the WCA 3 Decompartmentalization and Sheetflow Enhancement Project, North New River Improvements for the Central Lakebelt Storage CERP Projects until the completion of the Modified Waters Project. The Corps has embarked on an aggressive land acquisition schedule to have all lands available for the Modified Waters Project by June 1, 2005.

In addition, SFWMD has pursued a strategy of early land acquisition in support of future CERP projects where there is development pressure to acquire property; when the real estate is part of other acquisition programs; or, when there is a cost effective "opportunity purchase" with sellers that the SFWMD may wish to pursue. The USACE and SFWMD are working closely with each other through these types of acquisitions in anticipation of lands being suitable for future CERP projects. The land acquisition dates contained in the Project Profiles in Appendix C are those contained in the tentative 2004 CERP Master Implementation

Sequencing Plan and do not contain the actual acquisition dates for already acquired property.

Further, the SFWMD has identified strategic land acquisition needed to keep the CERP and other restoration projects on schedule. The SFWMD FY 2004 Priority Work Plan is Appendix F.

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Cost Estimates of Real Estate

Land cost estimates are based on preliminary planning estimates of land acquisition costs for the project acreage as a whole. These cost estimates are not intended to, and do not, reflect an estimate for the value of any individual tract of land.

Cost estimates for CERP lands as contained on the Project Profile Sheets are the estimated value in 1999 dollars as described in the C&SF Restudy Appendix F. Corps policy is to report costs in constant dollars until a project is authorized. Estimates are based on the conceptual footprint and are subject to refinement through the PIR process and subsequent congressional authorization of the CERP Project. The estimated land acquisition costs include all other associated costs, including but not limited to condemnation costs, legal fees, appraisal fees and administrative fees, and also include a significant contingency factor for conservative budget planning. If some land has been acquired for a project, actual costs are known and are reflected on the project sheets.

Real estate plans with updated cost estimates have been completed for three CERP projects. The cost estimates for projects within the Draft Water Preserve Area Feasibility Study reflect land cost estimates in October 2001dollars. For projects within the Indian River Lagoon-South project, land cost were originally defined in the August 2002 Feasibility Study and were further refined through the March 2004 final Integrated Project Implementation Report and Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS). The draft real estate plan for the Picayune Strand Restoration Project (formerly Southern Golden Gate Estates Ecosystem Restoration Project) was completed in April 2004.

Real estate cost estimates for USACE/SFWMD non-CERP projects such as the C-111 Canal Project and Kissimmee River Restoration are based on actual costs and estimated land acquisition costs. The estimated land acquisition costs include all other associated acquisition costs, including but not limited to condemnation costs, legal fees, appraisal fees and administrative fees, and also include a significant contingency factor for conservative budget planning.

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The USACE land cost estimates include the cost of the land plus other costs incurred in the land acquisition process. This includes staff time for land acquisition, federal review of the acquisition process, relocation costs, etc. USACE land cost estimates are contained in various real estate plans developed

as part of the overall project planning process. As such, USACE real estate plans are tentative in nature for planning purposes only and both the final real property acquisition lines and the real estate cost estimates provided in these plans are subject to change even after approval of project reports and feasibility studies.

The land cost estimates presented in the Project Profile Sheets are based on a fee simple purchase, meaning the purchase of the project lands and all rights associated with the land. Another type of land acquisition, less-than-fee, may be more cost-effective for some projects. The land acquisition agencies are committed to acquiring only that interest in land needed to complete a project and make it successful and will utilize less-than-fee purchases where appropriate. The Allapattah Ranch conservation easement is an example where a less than full fee estate acquisition was sufficient to achieve the goals of a CERP project.

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Available Funding Sources

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USACE projects require a 50/50 cost share, with the local sponsor responsible for land acquisition. CERP has significantly increased the land acquisition requirements for ecosystem restoration and creative approaches to funding land acquisitions are required. As discussed earlier in the section on the history of coordination on land acquisition funding, there are several land acquisition funding mechanisms available to secure Goal 1 lands. The following is a discussion of the variety of prospective funding sources for Goal 1 lands.

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The State of Florida is a full partner in CERP implementation, having adopted the Everglades Restoration Investment Act in 2000 that provides \$100 million per year for ten (10) years. In 2003 the Florida Legislature adopted legislation that bonds the Save Our Everglades Trust Fund (SOETF). This reaffirms the state's commitment to funding Everglades restoration and ensures a dedicated source of funding for the state's cost share of CERP implementation. The amount will be matched with local sponsor funds (which may include SFWMD *ad valorem* tax revenue) and credits for a total of \$200 million of non-federal funds per year for ten (10) years.

Pursuant to The Everglades Restoration Bond Act passed by the 2002 Florida Legislature, \$25 million of the annual Florida Forever allocation to the SFWMD is to be used exclusively for the acquisition of land needed to implement the CERP. Land acquired with these monies must be included in the SFWMD's five-year work plan. The SFWMD receives 35% of the annual Florida Forever funding that goes to Florida's five water management districts; this amounts to \$36.75 million per year.

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The P-2000 land acquisition program was replaced by the Florida Forever program, which allocates 35% of bond proceeds to the Division of State Lands to

acquire lands for the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund and another 35% to the water management districts for acquiring and improving lands. Lands acquired through Florida Forever and the state's previous land acquisition programs must provide for natural resource-based conservation and other outdoor recreation on any part of any site if the activity is compatible with conservation purposes.

It is the general policy of the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund to acquire property from willing sellers at or below appraised value. The state does not acquire improvements unless they are a minor component of a large acquisition or meet an identified need for the management agency. Any change to these requirements must be approved by the Board of Trustees.

Special state legislative appropriations may also be available to fund specified CERP projects. In the 2001 Legislative Session, the Miami-Dade delegation sponsored a state legislative appropriation for funds to be used by the SFWMD in support of the Biscayne Bay initiatives. Six (6) million dollars were appropriated, of which \$3.5 million was to be used to acquire approximately 188 acres of CERP land in the Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands Project. The SFWMD and its partners will actively seek future opportunities for similar special legislative appropriations.

Local governments have contributed to the purchase of lands anticipated to be necessary for CERP Projects. Broward County, through its Land Preservation Bond Program, has contributed funds to acquire lands located within a Water Preserve Area Basin Project. Martin County has contributed money through its one percent (1%) Sales Tax Referendum Fund toward the purchase of lands within the Indian River Lagoon (IRL)-South Project component and is anticipated to partner on land acquisition for other IRL Project components. Palm Beach County has contributed toward the purchase of property in the Palm Beach County Agricultural Reserve Reservoir. Miami-Dade County, through its Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) Trust, has purchased lands in the C-111 North Spreader Canal and Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands Project. St. Lucie County has contributed funds toward the purchase of lands in an Indian River Lagoon-South Project component. Both Lee and St. Lucie Counties have contributed funds for Critical Project lands. As of June 30, 2004, local governments have contributed over \$61 million for land acquisition for CERP and other related [Goal 1](#) projects. These partnerships are anticipated to continue.

As discussed earlier, the U.S. Department of the Interior has a history of grants to the SFWMD and the state for land acquisition. These monies were earmarked specifically for land acquisition in the State of Florida under the DOI's Annual Appropriations Bill and through the USDA Farm Bill. The Department of the Interior also manages the Land and Water Conservation Fund with the ability to transfer funds to the SFWMD or state for land purchases. To date, the Department of Interior has provided \$268.3 million to acquire 83,949 acres for

Goal 1 projects. These partnerships are expected to continue through the implementation of CERP with varying amounts available to leverage state funds.

Other federal partnerships will continue to be used as funding sources, including those programs authorized by the “Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002” (Farm Bill) and administered by USDA, such as the Wetlands Reserve Program and the Farm and Ranch Land Protection Land Protection Program. A more detailed discussion of the 2002 Farm Bill programs is in the Goal 3 section of this report.

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Summary of Goal 1 lands

There are forty seven (47) projects with federal and joint federal/state land acquisition dollars identified for Goal 1. Land acquisition required for these projects totals 483,805 acres with 271,853 acres (56%) acquired to date. The total estimated cost of these lands is approximately \$2,772,201,000 with an estimated \$1,469,779,000 needed to complete acquisition of these parcels. The project profile sheets and the summary table for Goal 1 lands are in Appendix C.

Goal 2: Restore, Preserve, and Protect Natural Habitats and Species

The second goal is “Restore, Preserve, and Protect Natural Habitats and Species” with the subgoals of “Restore, Preserve, and Protect Natural Habitats” and “Control Invasive Exotic Plants.” The acquisition of lands that provide habitat for native plants and animals and act as a buffer for existing natural areas is an important component of the Task Force’s strategy to achieve Goal 2.

Some Goal 1 projects that provide water quality treatment areas, water storage reservoirs, and aquifer recharge with a primary goal of restoring the natural hydrology will also provide habitat for native flora and fauna. In order to maximize the habitat contribution of CERP projects, the USFWS has created a team for the dual purposes of evaluating the wildlife values of the lands where CERP will be constructed and recommending site plans that minimize the loss of habitat.

In order to provide a full picture of the lands acquired for habitat and species, all the lands that contribute to this goal, regardless of funding source, are in Appendix D: South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Land Acquisition Update.

Identification of Lands to be Acquired

The habitat and species protection goals are met primarily through large public holdings such as parks and wildlife refuges. The federal government has been a major landowner in South Florida through its National Parks and National Wildlife Refuges since 1947 with the establishment of Everglades National Park. There are three national parks or preserves and 16 wildlife refuges within the

boundaries of the South Florida ecosystem. In addition, the CERP wetland restoration projects of Southern Golden Gate Estates (Picayune Strand) and Strazulla Wetlands Water Preserve Area contribute to this goal.

The expansions of the national park system in South Florida have undergone a rigorous review process and Congress has deemed that the authorized expansion areas possess nationally significant natural, cultural, or recreational resources; are suitable and feasible additions to the system; and requires direct National Park Service (NPS) management instead of protection by some other government agency or by the private sector. Any major boundary revisions to existing units of the national park system must be established by an act of Congress and land acquisition expenditures must be consistent with the existing congressional authorization. The NPS projects in the Strategy are nearly complete, with 5% or less of the land remaining to be acquired.

The NPS primarily acquires lands from willing sellers for the South Florida units. However, the U.S. Congress has authorized condemnation authority for the East Everglades Addition to Everglades National Park. In addition, the authorizing legislation for the Big Cypress Preserve and Addition provides condemnation authority to acquire lands except for properties improved prior to November 23, 1971 and January 1, 1986 respectively. The Secretary of the Interior is authorized to acquire these properties if they fail to comply with applicable laws and ordinances or are detrimental to purposes for which the Preserve/Addition was established.

For the National Wildlife Refuge system, numerous federal laws, including refuge-specific legislation, give the USFWS authority for acquisition of land and water to conserve fish, plant, and wildlife habitat. Land acquisition expenditures must be consistent with the existing Congressional authorization. All land acquisition projects in the Service's Southeast Region are developed from a total landscape perspective.

The USFWS reports its projects not as expansions of existing refuges, but as acres of land within refuge boundaries remaining to be acquired. When national wildlife refuges are expanded, the USFWS acquires only those lands that lie within the approved acquisition boundaries of the refuge. Like the NPS, the USFWS primarily acquires lands from willing sellers only. Less than ten percent (10%) of refuge acres remain to be acquired when compared to currently authorized refuge boundaries for the USFWS projects in the Strategy.

During FY 2004, the USFWS will be working toward acquiring various parcels at national wildlife refuges within the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration boundaries. Existing LWCF resources remaining in the FY 2003 budget will be used for the majority of the acquisitions, while other projects may be acquired with future funding. The Service uses the Land Acquisition Priority System (LAPS) to rank projects for budget requests nationwide. LAPS has prioritized land acquisitions for the following South Florida refuges: Key West, Key Deer,

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¶ The timing of land acquisition is critical, as project construction cannot begin until key project lands are acquired. Failure to obtain critical parcels in a timely manner can result in delays and reconfiguration not just for one project, but for other related projects as well. The GAO report noted that much of the undeveloped land in South Florida is under development pressure, and that a land acquisition plan increases the likelihood of the restoration's success. Delay reduces the possibility that the necessary lands will be acquired and can also increase the cost of land.¶

¶ The success of many of the CERP projects depends on the successful implementation of other parts of the restoration plan, such as the C-111 Canal and Modified Water Deliveries to Everglades National Park projects. In fact, WRDA 2000 conditions that no appropriations shall be made to construct the WCA 3 Decentralization and Sheetflow Enhancement Project, North New River Improvements for the Central Lakebelt Storage CERP Projects until the completion of the Modified Waters Project. In 2003, the U.S. Congress authorized the USACE to restart construction of this project and the Corps has embarked on an aggressive land acquisition schedule to have all lands available for the Modified Waters Project by June 1, 2005. ¶

¶ In addition, SFWMD has pursued a strategy of early land acquisition in support of future CERP projects where there is development pressure to acquire property; when the real estate is part of other acquisition programs; or, when there is a cost effective "opportunity purchase" with sellers that the SFWMD may wish to pursue. The USACE and SFWMD are working closely with each other through these types of acquisitions in anticipation of lands being suitable for future CERP projects. The land acquisition dates contained in the Project Profiles in Appendix C are those contained in the tentative 2004 CERP Master Implementation Sequencing Plan and do not contain the actual acquisition dates for already acquired property. ¶

¶ Further, the SFWMD has identified strategic land acquisition needed to keep the CERP and other restoration projects on schedule. The SFWMD FY 2004 Priority Workplan is Appendix F. ¶

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Great White Heron, Loxahatchee, Florida Panther, Matlacha Pass and J.N. Ding Darling.

Land acquisitions needed for the other Goal 2 projects are defined through several USACE reports. Building on over twenty (20) years of non-Corps reports on the restoration of Golden Gate Estates, the land acquisition requirements for Southern Golden Gate Estates were initially defined through the Golden Gates Estates Final Feasibility Study, completed in 1986. Real estate requirements were further refined through the 1998 Critical Project Letter Report. The April 2004 Draft Integrated Project Implementation Report and Environmental Impact Statement still identifies the 55,247 acres originally listed in 1985 on the state of Florida's Conservation and Land Acquisition Land (CARL) list. Ninety-eight percent (98%) of the land identified for acquisition for the Southern Golden Gate Estates CERP project (now the Picayune Strand Restoration Project) has been acquired as of June 30, 2004.

The lands needed for the Strazulla Wetlands component evolved from estimates in the "Yellow Book" with the project authorized to proceed as an Other Project Element (OPE) in WRDA 2000. This land acquisition project is part of the Water Preserve Area. Eighty-two percent (82%) of the lands identified in the October 2001 Water Preserve Area Feasibility Study for the Strazulla Wetlands Water Preserve Area CERP project has been acquired.

The "Yellow Book" also identified Henderson Creek/Belle Meade as an Other Project Element (OPE) with an initial land acquisition estimate of 125 acres. The USACE and the DEP are working to execute a Design Agreement on this project.

Strategic Acquisitions

Land acquisition to complete park and refuge boundaries is a multi-year process and can span decades. The goal is to acquire the lands before the on-site resources are destroyed. For Goal 2 purchases, the funding may be timed to specific appropriations, or as a project is positioned on an acquisition funding list.

While there is no immediate development pressure on either the Southern Golden Gate Estates (Picayune Strand) or the Strazulla Wetlands properties as is the case for many other CERP projects, these acquisitions are strategic due to their juxtaposition to important publicly held habitat lands. The Southern Golden Gate Estates (Picayune Strand) is centrally located among several nature preserves, wildlife refuges and other wildlife areas in Collier County, one of the fastest growing counties in the nation. The Southern Golden Gate Estates Project Area, with the surrounding affected public uplands make up the largest restoration opportunity in southwest Florida. The acquisition of this last piece of the regional connectivity puzzle will protect over 2.3 million contiguous acres of wildlife habitat.

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The acquisition of the Strazulla Wetlands, immediately adjacent to the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, will increase the spatial extent of wetlands and will provide vital habitat connectivity for species that require large unfragmented tracts of land for survival. This unique and endangered habitat contains the only remaining cypress habitat in the Eastern Everglades and one of the few remaining sawgrass marshes adjacent to the coastal ridge.

Cost of Real Estate

Different processes are used to estimate the cost of real estate by the federal, state or regional governmental unit. The NPS and FWS cost estimates for land acquisitions for national parks and national wildlife refuges are based on fair market value and appraisals that meet state and federal standards. The DEP, as the acquisition agent for Southern Golden Gate Estates and the Henderson Creek/Belle Meade projects, uses tax assessed value to estimate costs of lands for this project.

The SFWMD's Strazulla Wetlands land cost estimate was refined from the original "Yellow Book" estimate through the October 2001 Draft Water Preserve Area Feasibility Study. The land cost estimate is based on preliminary planning estimates of land acquisition costs for the project acreage as a whole. The cost estimate is not intended to, and does not, reflect an estimate for the fair market value of any individual tract of land. The estimated land acquisition cost includes all other associated acquisition costs, including but not limited to condemnation costs, legal fees, appraisal fees, and also includes a significant contingency factor for conservative budget planning.

The land cost estimates presented in the Project Profile Sheets are based on a fee simple purchase, meaning the purchase of the project lands and all rights associated with the land. Another type of land acquisition, less-than-fee, may be more cost-effective for some projects. The land acquisition agencies are committed to acquiring only that interest in land needed to complete a project and make it successful and will utilize less-than-fee purchases where appropriate.

Available Funding Sources

Appropriations of funds for the acquisition of lands for an addition to the National Park and Wildlife Refuge System may be provided in the authorizing act and may be supplemented or provide directly through passage of a subsequent law. The funds are typically generated and drawn from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, a congressionally established funding mechanism earmarked for certain activities including land acquisition by federal agencies. The authorizing act may also require contributions for the acquisition of lands from the state, local government or other entities.

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Partnerships to leverage land acquisition funding are an important tool to acquire the lands identified for Goal 2. For Biscayne National Park and Everglades National Park, the State (including the SFWMD) is a land acquisition partner for at least part of the project. The state is also a partner in some of the USFWS projects as well, such as Florida Panther NWR and National Key Deer Refuge.

As stated earlier, DEP coordinates park and refuge acquisitions with the federal government. Seventy percent (70%) of the acres remaining to be acquired for the National Key Deer Refuges are also on the state's Florida Forever acquisition list. The DEP Division of State Lands is cooperating with the NPS on the Big Cypress National Preserve Addition and recently completed the donation of over 43,000 acres for the Everglades National Park Expansion.

In 1998, the State of Florida and the DOI partnered to cost share acquisition of Southern Golden Gate Estates. Through an agreement with DOI, DEP was provided \$38,000,000 through the 1996 Farm Bill to accelerate acquisition for this project.

Summary of Goal 2 lands

There are thirteen (13) projects with federal and joint federal/state land acquisition dollars identified for Goal 2. To date, 1,702,826 acres have been identified with 1,686,844 acres (99%) acquired. The total estimated cost of these lands is \$675,243,000 with an estimated \$100,613,000 needed to complete acquisition on these parcels.

Goal 3: Foster Compatibility of the Built and Natural Systems

The third goal is "Foster Compatibility of the Built and Natural Systems, with subgoal 3-A.1 "Use and manage land in a manner that is compatible with ecosystem restoration." A discussion of the three objectives of this subgoal that require land acquisition follows.

Objective 3-A.1 is "Designate an additional 480,000 acres as part of the Florida Greenways and Trails System by 2008". Objective 3-A.2 is "Increase participation in the Voluntary Farm Bill conservation programs by 230,000 acres by 2014" and Objective 3-A.3 is "Acquire an additional 2,500 acres of park, recreation and open space lands by 2014" in south Florida.

While the Task Force tracks progress towards achieving all three objectives of subgoal 3-A.1, only a subset of the federal Farm Bill programs tracked in Objective 3.A-2 falls within the purpose of the Land Acquisition Strategy, the Wetlands Reserve Program and the Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program, and are discussed below. The other two objectives are discussed in Appendix E as directed by the Land Acquisition Task Team Charter (the Task Team Charter is Appendix G).

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¶ Strategic Acquisitions¶

¶ Land acquisition to complete park and refuge boundaries is a multi-year process and can span decades. The goal is to acquire the lands before the on-site resources are destroyed. For Goal 2 purchases, the funding may be timed to specific appropriations, or as a project is positioned on an acquisition funding list. ¶

¶ While there is no immediate development pressure on either the Southern Golden Gate Estates (Picayune Strand) or the Strazulla Wetlands properties as is the case for many other CERP projects, these acquisitions are strategic due to their juxtaposition to important publicly held habitat lands. The Southern Golden Gate Estates (Picayune Strand) is centrally located among several nature preserves, wildlife refuges and other wildlife areas in Collier County, one of the fastest growing counties in the nation. The SGGE Project Areas, with the surrounding affected public uplands make up the largest restoration... [3]

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The Farm Bill conservation programs are administered by the USDA. Agriculture is Florida's second leading industry, producing \$18 billion in economic value each year. A large portion of agricultural land can be viewed as open space that benefits the natural system through buffering, augmentation of natural habitats, water storage and filtration, and aquifer recharge. It is of great concern that Florida is losing its farms and ranches. Statewide, almost 150,000 acres of productive agricultural lands are converted to other land uses each year. The federal Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (2002 Farm Bill) included several programs to protect farmland.

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The Task Force tracks the progress of six (6) 2002 Farm Bill programs. The Land Acquisition Strategy will track the two programs in the 2002 Farm Bill that contribute towards land acquisition goals through permanent conservation easements.

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The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) is a voluntary program to assist landowners to restore wetlands that have had wetlands functions reduced or eliminated by agricultural production practices. Priority is given to those lands that will maximize wildlife habitat. Landowners receive financial incentives to enhance wetlands in exchange for retiring marginal lands from agriculture.

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Since 2002, \$41.4 million have been obligated to protect south Florida wetlands through the purchase of wetland conservation easements and to provide financial assistance to restore those wetlands. Recently enrolled, the Allapattah Ranch is one of the largest WRP projects in the nation. Part of the Indian River Lagoon South CERP project, the Allapattah Ranch Project will restore and preserve approximately 15,370 acres of agriculturally impacted wetlands and associated upland buffer habitat. This property provides natural storage and treatment benefits for the CERP project; however the purpose of the WRP and the reason for choosing this site is for the wildlife habitat restoration potential.

Deleted: The WRP recently enrolled one of the largest projects in the nation, the Allapattah Ranch Project.

The Farm and Ranch Lands Protection (FPP) Program is a voluntary program that helps farmers and ranchers keep their land in agriculture. The program provides matching funds to the state, tribal, or local governments and non-profit organizations with existing farm and ranch land protection programs to purchase conservation easements. Since 2002, \$0.63 million have been obligated within this program on 1,385 acres of land in the south Florida ecosystem.

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The USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service administers these programs and reports that there are 28,021 acres are enrolled in these two programs in the sixteen-county South Florida Ecosystem Restoration region as of June 30, 2004. The FWC has contracted with the NRCS through a contribution agreement to assist NRCS with administration of the fish and wildlife aspects of these programs.

PROGRESS TOWARDS LAND ACQUISITION GOALS

Much progress has been made since the first Land Acquisition Strategy was accepted by the Task Force in February 2003. In September 2002, the LATT identified 5.8 million acres as needed for natural habitat protection with 4.9 million acres acquired by the state, federal and local governments. This estimate has been further refined to those lands within the boundary of the SFWMD and is now 5.8 million acres with 4.8 million acquired. Acquisition is now complete for twelve (12) habitat projects, totaling 76,166 acres. For water projects, 462,372 acres were identified in September 2002, with 234,790 acres acquired. The estimated land acquisition needs for water projects has been refined and is now 483,805 with 271,853 acres acquired.

FUTURE EFFORTS

The Strategy will be updated on an annual basis. Updates will reflect the increased certainty of which lands are needed for the ecosystem restoration, and will report on the progress made in acquiring those lands. Some project lands will likely be lost to development, making it necessary for alternative lands to be identified. During the next year, the SFWMD and other agencies will continue to acquire identified lands and refine the boundaries of those lands still needed based on this new information. In addition, the Land Acquisition Task Team is actively researching how the strategic conveyance of surplus lands might contribute to land acquisition for ecosystem restoration.

In order to better target the limited resources of the land acquisition agencies and avoid duplication, the Land Acquisition Task Team will continue to communicate and coordinate acquisitions. There are several tools in development that will be used to identify strategic land acquisitions. The following is a discussion of some of those tools.

The Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI) has produced maps for the entire state of Florida that illustrate what lands are needed to meet the some of the desired conservation measures in the Florida Forever conservation land acquisition program. Overlaying this information with other land acquisition agencies programs and boundaries will reveal natural partnerships and opportunities.

The SFWMD has now established an Automated Staff Report to monitor deliverables due to the District by permittees, including the status of conservation easements. Approximately 2,500 conservation easements covering 36,205 acres have been received and digitized for the GIS data base. This information, along with the information on mitigation and conservation easements tracked by FNAI, will be made available to the agencies involved in land acquisition so that

lands protected through this tool are not inadvertently permitted for some other use.

The DEP's Office of Greenways and Trails and Greenways and Trails Council have updated the Trail Network Opportunity Maps, known as the Recreational Prioritization Maps. These Recreational Prioritization Maps will assist local governments in identifying opportunities to partner with the state to establish more trails and greenways in south Florida.

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In order to better target the limited resources of the land acquisition agencies and avoid duplication, the Land Acquisition Task Team will continue to communicate and coordinate acquisitions. There are several tools in development that will be used to identify strategic land acquisitions. ¶

In December 2002, the Panther Subteam of the Multi-Species Ecosystem Recovery Implementation Team (MERIT) completed the "Landscape Conservation Strategy for Florida Panther in South Florida" and provided it to the Service. This document provides updated information on panther habitat use and population viability, as well as providing recommendations related to Florida panther conservation. The USFWS's draft Multi Species Recovery Plan (MSRP) implementation schedule was completed in Spring 2004. Public comment has been received and the implementation schedule is expected to be published in the Federal Register in 2005.

Deleted: In December 2002, the Panther Subteam of the Multi-Species Ecosystem Recovery Implementation Team (MERIT) completed the "Landscape Conservation Strategy for Florida Panther in South Florida" and provided it to the Service. This document provides updated information on panther habitat use and population viability, as well as providing recommendations related to Florida panther conservation. ¶

In its 1994 report, Closing the Gaps in Florida's Wildlife Habitat Conservation System, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) identified Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas (SHCA) needed to meet the minimum conservation goals for 40 declining wildlife species, four (4) rare plant and animal communities, and 105 globally rare plants throughout the state of Florida. The FWC document Habitat Conservation Needs of Rare and Imperiled Wildlife in Florida (2000 edition) evaluated the ability of the SHCA identified in the 1994 report to meet the conservation needs of a much larger suite of focal species (124 species).

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In 2006, FWC expects to release an update to its 1994 Closing the Gaps report. FWC plans for this edition to be more comprehensive in its recommendations for conserving biodiversity than the previous two reports. The 2006 report will revisit the conservation needs for fifty-six (56) of the species studied in the 2000 report. In addition to including new species conservation models for the fifty-six (56) species mentioned here, the new report will recommend inclusion of several plant communities that are under-represented by the state's conservation land system. The species models will be based on vegetative maps updated through 2003 to detect changes in land cover and will be used to recommend additional SHCA needed for biodiversity conservation. The land cover change detection analysis was completed in early 2004, and new panther and black bear species models are anticipated to be available by early 2005. The updated panther model will be based on (1) the USFWS MERIT subteam's modeling of primary and dispersal zone habitats south of the Caloosahatchee River (2) an identification of travel corridors south of the river, and (3) mapping of large areas of relatively undeveloped land in areas north of the river.

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The FWC is also in the process of developing a Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy in collaboration with conservation partners from across the State of Florida. The Strategy is designed to encompass of Florida's wildlife and promote cooperation among local, state, and federal governments, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders for actions to conserve those species. This document will provide a habitat-based approach to focus actions for conservation. The Strategy will be available shortly after October 2005 on the FWC web page.

Deleted: The SFWMD has now established an Automated Staff Report to monitor deliverables due to the District by permittees, including the status of conservation easements. Approximately 2,500 conservation easements covering 36,205 acres have been received and digitized for the GIS data base. This information, along with the information on mitigation and conservation easements tracked by Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI), will be made available to the agencies involved in land acquisition. ¶

¶ FNAI has produced ARC maps for the entire state of Florida which illustrate what lands are needed to meet the desired conservation measures in the Florida Forever conservation land acquisition program. Overlaying this information with other land acquisition agencies programs and boundaries will reveal natural partnerships and opportunities. ¶

¶ In addition, the Land Acquisition Task Team is actively researching how the strategic conveyance of surplus lands might contribute to the land acquisition for ecosystem restoration.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Task Force Goals and Objectives

Appendix B: South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Land Acquisition Strategy
Federal Projects and Joint Federal/State Projects Map

Appendix C: Project Profile Sheets and Summary Table

Appendix D: South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Land Acquisition Update
Map and Natural Habitat and Species Land Acquisition Update
with State/Federal Cost Share Table

Appendix E: County Land Acquisition and Florida's Greenways and Trails
Programs

Appendix F: SFWMD FY 04 [Work Plan](#) for Land Acquisitions

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Appendix G: Land Acquisition Task Team Directive

Appendix A

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Appendix A. South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Goals

Goal 1: Get the Water Right

Subgoal 1-A: Get the hydrology right

- Objective 1-A.1: Provide 1.3 million acre-feet of surface water storage by 2036
- Objective 1-A.2: Develop aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) systems capable of storing 1.6 billion gallons per day by 2028
- Objective 1-A.3: Modify 335 miles of impediments to flow by 2019

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Subgoal 1-B: Get the water quality right

- Objective 1-B.1: Construct 69,000 acres of stormwater treatment areas by 2036
- Objective 1-B.2: Prepare plans, with strategies and schedules for implementation, to comply with total maximum daily loads for 100 percent of impaired water bodies by 2011
- Objective 1-B.3: Other Related Water Quality Projects

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Goal 2: Restore, Preserve, and Protect Natural Habitats and Species

Subgoal 2-A: Restore, preserve, and protect natural habitats

- Objective 2-A.1: Complete acquisition of 5.8 million acres of land identified for habitat protection by 2015
- Objective 2-A.2: Protect 20 percent of the coral reefs by 2010
- Objective 2-A.3: Improve habitat quality for 2.4 million acres of natural areas in South Florida

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Subgoal 2-B: Control invasive exotic plants

- Objective 2-B.1: Coordinate the development of management plans for the top twenty South Florida invasive exotic plant species by 2011
- 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

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Goal 3: Foster Compatibility of the Built and Natural Systems

Subgoal 3-A: Use and manage land in a manner that is compatible with ecosystem restoration

- Objective 3-A.1: Designate or acquire an additional 480,000 acres as part of the Florida Greenways and Trails System by 2008
- Objective 3-A.2: Increase participation in the Voluntary Farm Bill conservation program by 230,000 acres by 2014
- Objective 3-A.3: Acquire an additional 2,500 acres of park, recreation, and open space lands by 2005
- Objective 3-A.4: Complete five brownfield rehabilitation and redevelopment projects by 2006
- Objective 3-A.5: Increase community understanding of ecosystem restoration

Subgoal 3-B: Maintain or improve existing levels of flood protection in a manner compatible with ecosystem restoration

- Objective 3-B.1: Maintain or improve existing levels of flood protection

Subgoal 3-C: Provide sufficient water resources for the built and natural systems

- Objective 3-C.1: Increase the water available by target of 478.5 million gallons per day by 2008
- Objective 3-C.2: Increase volumes of reuse on a regional basis
- Objective 3-C.3: Achieve annual targets for water made available through the SFWMD alternative water supply program

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Appendix B

Appendix B: Map of the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Land Acquisition Strategy Federal Projects and Joint/Federal State Projects

The Land Acquisition Strategy Project Profiles in Appendix B are represented on the map. For this map, as for the Land Acquisition Strategy in general, the term “State” includes the State of Florida, the South Florida Water Management District, and participating local governments. Each of the projects on the map is labeled with a circled number or a name. Four types of projects are illustrated: Comprehensive Everglades Restoration (CERP) projects, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Park Service projects, other Federal Acquisition Projects, and Joint State/Federal Acquisition Projects.

Existing conservation lands throughout the South Florida ecosystem restoration area (as of June 30, 2004), regardless of funding source, are shown in light gray to provide context for the federal and joint federal/state projects. Some of these lands were acquired less-than-fee simple.

Project data layers (CERP, USFWS or NPS), Other Federal, and Joint State/Federal Acquisition Projects) depict the full extent of the acquisition project boundaries, including any lands that have already been purchased (acquired lands are colored gray within the project boundaries). Some projects are greater than 90% complete; in many of these cases, the remaining inholdings within the project boundaries are too small to be shown on this map.

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The CERP project boundaries are general boundaries and will be refined after further analysis. The majority of the CERP projects are indicated by a circled number on the map; the rest are labeled by name. The accompanying Map Key to CERP Projects lists all CERP projects by map label, CERP project component name, CERP project ID number and CERP project name.

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The Joint State/Federal Acquisition Projects data layer (pink cross-hatching) is composed of Florida Forever Board of Trustees projects and Save Our Rivers projects that have federal involvement.

Deleted: Project data layers (CERP, USFWS or NPS), Other Federal, and Joint State/Federal Acquisition Projects) depict the full extent of the acquisition project boundaries, including any lands that have already been purchased (acquired lands are colored gray within the project boundaries). Some projects are greater than 90% complete; in many of these cases, the remaining inholdings within the project boundaries are too small to be shown on this map.¶

The South Florida Water Management District provided digital data for CERP projects and the Save Our Rivers projects with the disclaimer that any information, including but not limited to software and data, received from the SFWMD in fulfillment of a request is provided “AS IS” without warranty, including but not limited to merchantability and fitness for a particular purpose. For SFWMD projects, this map is a conceptual tool utilized for project development only. This map is not self-extracting or binding on the SFWMD.

The Conservation Lands data layer was compiled by the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI) using data received from many different sources including federal, state, and local managing agencies and private conservation organizations.

Appendix B: Map Key to CERP Projects

MAP LABEL	PROJECT COMPONENT NAME	CERP ID NO.	PROJECT NAME
1B	Taylor Creek/Nubbin Slough	01B	LAKE OKEECHOBEE WATERSHED
3	Lake Okeechobee ASR (no boundary)	03	LAKE OKEECHOBEE ASR
4	C-43 Basin Storage Reservoir Part 1 & C-43 Basin ASR Part 2	04	C-43 BASIN STORAGE RESERVOIR
7A1-3	IRL-C-44 Reservoir & STA	07A1-3	INDIAN RIVER LAGOON- SOUTH
7A4	IRL - PALMAR Complex Natural Storage and Water Quality Area	07A04	INDIAN RIVER LAGOON - SOUTH
7B	IRL - C-44 Reservoir	07B	INDIAN RIVER LAGOON - SOUTH
7B5	IRL - C-23/24 North Reservoir	07B05	INDIAN RIVER LAGOON - SOUTH
7B6	IRL - C-23/24 South Reservoir	07B06	INDIAN RIVER LAGOON - SOUTH
7B7	IRL - C-23/24 STA	07B07	INDIAN RIVER LAGOON - SOUTH
7B8	IRL - C-23/C-44 STA	07B08	INDIAN RIVER LAGOON - SOUTH
7B9	IRL - Allapattah Complex Natural Storage and Water Quality Area	07B09	INDIAN RIVER LAGOON - SOUTH
7B10	IRL - Cypress Creek/Trail Ridge Complex Natural Storage and Water Quality Area	07B10	INDIAN RIVER LAGOON - SOUTH
7B11	IRL - C-25 Reservoir	07B11	INDIAN RIVER LAGOON - SOUTH
7B12	IRL - C-25 STA	07B12	INDIAN RIVER LAGOON - SOUTH
7B13	IRL - Southfork Natural Storage & Water Quality Area	07B13	INDIAN RIVER LAGOON - SOUTH
7C14	IRL - Northfork Floodplain Restoration	07C14	INDIAN RIVER LAGOON - SOUTH
8	Everglades Agricultural Area Storage Reservoir - Phase 1	08	EVERGLADES AGRICULTURAL AREA STORAGE RESERVOIR-PHASE 1
11	Flow to NW & Central WCA 3	11	FLOW TO NW & CENTRAL WCA 3
12	WCA 3 Decomp & Sheetflow Enhancement - Part 1 (S-351)	12	WCA 3 DECOMP & SHEETFLOW ENHANCEMENT - PART 1
14	Loxahatchee NWR Internal Canal Structures	14	LOXAHATCHEE NWR INTERNAL CANAL STRUCTURES
15	Modify Holey Land Wildlife Management Area Operation Plan	15	MODIFY HOLEY LAND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA OPERATION PLAN
16	Modify Rotenberger Wildlife Management Area Operation Plan	16	MODIFY ROTENBERGER WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA OPERATION PLAN
17A	Pal-Mar and J.W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area Hydropattern Restoration	17A	NORTH PALM BEACH COUNTY - PART 1
17C	L-8 Reservoir & ASR	17C	NORTH PALM BEACH COUNTY - PART 1
17D	Lake Worth Lagoon Restoration (no boundary)	17D	NORTH PALM BEACH COUNTY- PART 1
17E	C-17 Backpumping and Treatment	17E	NORTH PALM BEACH COUNTY - PART 1
17F	C-51 Backpumping and Treatment	17F	NORTH PALM BEACH COUNTY - PART 1
18A	C-51 Regional Groundwater ASR (no boundary)	18A	NORTH PALM BEACH COUNTY- PART 2
20/21	PBC Agricultural Reserve Reservoir & ASR	20 & 21	PBC AGRICULTURAL RESERVE RESERVOIR - PART 1
22/40	Site 1 Impoundment & Hillsboro ASR Pilot	22 & 40	HILLSBORO SITE 1 IMPOUNDMENT & ASR
24	Broward County Secondary Canal System	24	BROWARD COUNTY SECONDARY CANAL SYSTEM

Appendix B: Map Key to CERP Projects

MAP LABEL	PROJECT COMPONENT NAME	CERP ID NO.	PROJECT NAME
25	North Lakebelt Storage Area	25	NORTH LAKEBELT STORAGE AREA
26	Central Lakebelt Storage Area	26	CENTRAL LAKEBELT STORAGE
27A/36	L31N Seepage Management Pilot	27A & 36	EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK SEEPAGE MANAGEMENT
27B	S-356 Structures	27B	EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK SEEPAGE MANAGEMENT
27C/43	Bird Drive Recharge Area	27C & 43	EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK SEEPAGE MANAGEMENT
28	Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands	28	BISCAYNE BAY COASTAL WETLANDS
29	C-111 Spreader Canal	29	C-111 SPREADER CANAL
30	Southern Golden Gate Estates Hydrologic Restoration	30	SOUTHERN GOLDEN GATE ESTATES HYDROLOGIC RESTORATION
31	Florida Keys Tidal Restoration (no boundary)	31	FLORIDA KEYS TIDAL RESTORATION
32	Lake Okeechobee ASR Pilot	32	LAKE OKEECHOBEE ASR PILOT
33	Caloosahatchee (C-43) River ASR Pilot	33	CALOOSAHATCHEE (C-43) RIVER ASR PILOT
38	Acme Basin B Discharge	38	ACME BASIN B DISCHARGE
39	Strazzulla Wetlands	39	STRAZZULLA WETLANDS
45A	3A/3B Seepage Management	45A	BROWARD COUNTY WPA
45B	C-11 Impoundment	45B	BROWARD COUNTY WPA
45C	C-9 Impoundment	45C	BROWARD COUNTY WPA
48	L-30 Canal Upgrade	48	WCA 2B FLOWS TO EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK
49	Dade-Broward Levee & Canal	49	WPA CONVEYANCE
90	Miccosukee Water Management Plan	90	MICCOSUKEE WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN
91	Winsberg Farm Wetland Restoration	91	WINSBERG FARM WETLAND RESTORATION
92	Restoration Of Pineland & Hardwood Hammocks In C-111 Basin	92	RESTORATION OF PINELAND & HARDWOOD HAMMOCKS IN C-111 BASIN
93	Henderson Creek / Belle Meade Restoration	93	HENDERSON CREEK / BELLE MEADE RESTORATION
94	Lakes Park Restoration	94	LAKES PARK RESTORATION
96	Seminole Tribe Big Cypress Reservation Water Conservation Plan	96	SEMINOLE TRIBE BIG CYPRESS RESERVATION WATER CONSERVATION PLAN
97	West Miami-Dade Reuse	97	WEST MIAMI-DADE REUSE
98	South Miami-Dade Reuse & Wastewater Reuse Technology Pilot	98	SOUTH MIAMI-DADE REUSE

Appendix C

Appendix C: South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Land Acquisition Strategy Project Profiles

The project profile sheet lists the following information for the projects on the map in Appendix B:

- Project Name
- Project Name Synonym
- Project ID (Map Label): CERP projects numbers are on the table in Appendix B
- Overlapping project
- Primary SFER-related Objective: The Goals and Objectives of the Task Force are listed in Appendix A
- Project Synopsis
- Project Sponsorship
- Land Acquisition Funding Type
- Land Acquisition Funds Source
- Agency Responsible for Acquiring the Land
- Land Acquisition Program
- Land Managing Agency
- Funding Partners (if applicable)
- Land Acquisition Schedule with the date acquisition was initiated, the date acquisition will be concluded, and the date the project is needed for restoration
- Project Acreage/Progress includes the total size of the project, the acres acquired in the previous year, the acres acquired all years, and the acres remaining to be acquired
- Estimated Project Requirements includes the estimated cost of the project, the cost of land closed through June 30, 2004, the estimated cost of remaining acres, and the cost of real estate and associated costs
- Land Cost Estimation Method
- Degree of Ownership desired
- Comments, Hyperlink, Contact and Update

Appendix D

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Appendix D: South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Land Acquisition Update Map and Natural Habitat and Species Land Acquisition Update with State/Federal Cost Share Table

To illustrate all the planned and accomplished land acquisitions identified for ecosystem restoration regardless of funding source, the Strategy includes Appendix D: The South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Land Acquisition Update map with a table listing all the projects and the federal/state/local cost share of those land acquisitions that contribute to Natural Habitat and Species protection.

The DEP Division of State Lands and the Florida Natural Areas Inventory collaborated to update the 1999 Everglades Ecosystem Land Acquisition State-Federal Cost Share map, known as the “Graham Map”, to produce the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Land Acquisition Update.

Data layers depicting acquired conservation lands were compiled by the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI) using data received from many different sources including federal, state, and local managing agencies and private conservation organizations. Lands acquired through June 30, 2004 are depicted on the map. Symbols represent funding splits; in some cases, interest acquired is less-than-fee simple.

Planned acquisitions are also indicated on the map. Project boundaries indicate areas that are desired for acquisition (includes intended less-than-fee acquisitions). Some areas within these boundaries have been acquired; these acquired areas are denoted with the various “Acquired” shadings (see map legend).

The Florida Forever Board of Trustees (BOT) project data layer represents projects on the Florida Forever BOT Acquisition List as of June 30, 2004. Boundaries were digitized by FNAI staff using paper maps provided by the DEP Office of Environmental Services.

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The SFWMD provided digital data for the CERP projects and the Save Our Rivers projects with the disclaimer that any information, including but not limited to software and data, received from the SFWMD in fulfillment of a request is provided “AS IS” without warranty, including but not limited to merchantability and fitness for a particular purpose. For the SFWMD projects, this map is a conceptual tool utilized for project development only. This map is not self-extracting or binding on the SFWMD.

“Acquired - 100% State Funds” and “Acquired-Predominately State Funds” include all lands purchased by either the State of Florida or the SFWMD. Predominately means greater than 50%. Some local funds may have been used as well. County land acquisitions are reflected on this map; in many cases, project boundaries are too small to be shown on this map. For information on local projects, see Appendix E.

Appendix E

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Appendix E: County Land Acquisitions and Florida’s Greenways and Trails Program

Objective 3-A.1 [of the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration](#) is “Designate an additional 480,000 acres as part of the Florida Greenways and Trails System by 2008”. The DEP of Greenways & Trails (OGT) is working to establish a statewide system of greenways and trails, a “green infrastructure” that connects Florida’s communities with the nature that surrounds them. To meet this goal, OGT administers the annual \$4.5 million Florida Greenways and Trails Land Acquisition Program under the Florida Forever Act. OGT also provides technical assistance and grants for the development of both motorized and non-motorized recreational trail projects through the federally funded Recreational Trail Program.

Currently, over 4,000 miles of trails on Florida’s public lands provide a variety of recreation opportunities, including hiking, biking, inline skating, [horseback riding](#), paddling, [and](#) wildlife viewing. Some trails meander through state and local parks and conservation areas, while others provides convenient access to playground and urban shopping areas. In addition to providing fitness and recreation opportunities, greenways provide a glimpse into [natural Florida](#).

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Local counties partner with the state for designation and funding for greenways and trails. The DEP reports that 298,774 acres plus and [an](#) additional 147 linear miles of greenways and trails lands in the sixteen county area are part of the state’s system of Greenways and Trails.

Objective 3-A.3 is “Acquire an additional 2,500 acres of park, recreation and open space by 2005.”

Those counties with a conservation land acquisition program have provided a summary of their programs. Broward, Charlotte, Highlands, Lee, Martin, Miami-Dade, Monroe, Orange, Osceola, Palm Beach, Polk, and St. Lucie counties have provided this information. The smaller rural counties of Hendry, Glades, and Okeechobee do not have conservation land acquisition programs. Conservation lands in those counties are acquired through the state or the SFWMD. For this edition of the Strategy, the Land Acquisition Task Team collected county-wide information, although parts of Orange, Osceola, Highlands, Polk and Charlotte counties are outside the boundary of the SFWMD.

Comment [M2]: Charlotte County acres, but not costs, reported here.

It is important to note that county conservation land acquisitions can contribute to more than one objective of the Task Force. The counties were asked to list those land acquisitions that the county holds title to on a summary table and provide a map illustrating those projects. The counties determined which objective a particular land acquisition projects addressed. [Currently, counties hold title to 131,226 acres of lands that contribute towards this goal. County progress towards meeting this goal will be tracked by the Land Acquisition Task Team.](#)

Deleted: County land acquisition projects that contribute to Natural Habitat and Species Protection (Goal 2) with the state or the SFWMD as a funding partner are reflected on the Table in Appendix D. To date, 44,040 acres have been acquired. Cost figures were not available for some acquisitions at this time. ¶

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Appendix F

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**South Florida Water Management District
FY04 Land Acquisition**

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(June 2004, revised)

<i>Project Sorted by Fund</i>	<i>CERP or Master Project Name</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>County</i>	<i>Fund Source</i>
412 Save Our Everglades Trust Fund EAA, Part 1	Everglades Agricultural Area	600	Palm Beach Hendry	SOE
C-11 Impoundment	Broward County WPA	6	Broward	SOE
WCA 3A&3B Seepage Management	Broward County WPA	120	Broward	SOE
North of the Lake Okeechobee Storage Reservoir	Lake Okeechobee Watershed	20,000	Miami-Dade Glades Highlands	SOE
C-43 Reservoir	Caloosahatchee Reservoir/ASR	2,335	Hendry	SOE
Cypress Creek Complex, Natural Area STA	Indian River Lagoon (IRL)	1,280	St. Lucie	SOE
C-23/24 South Reservoir	Indian River Lagoon (IRL)	2,270	St. Lucie	SOE
C-23/24 STA	Indian River Lagoon (IRL)	235	St. Lucie	SOE
C-23/24 North Reservoir	Indian River Lagoon (IRL)	897	St. Lucie	SOE
414 Florida Forever CERP C-111 Spreader Canal	C-111 Spreader Canal	9,000	Miami-Dade	Florida Forever
Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands	Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands	2,500	Miami-Dade	Florida Forever
413 Federal DOI Grant CREW		172	Lee	Developer Mitigation
404 Save Our Rivers/Florida Forever Henscratch Ranch Kissimmee River Restoration (a/k/a Kissimmee River & Chain of Lakes)		2,880 19,000*	Highlands Highlands Okeechobee Polk Osceola	P2000/FF P2000/FF
C-111 Canal Project (a/k/a Southern Glades/L31-N)		726	Miami-Dade	State/Federal
211 Regional Offsite Developer's Mitigation Lake Marion Creek Shingle Creek Phase II Shingle Creek	Munger Property	396 155 75	Polk Osceola Orange	DOT Beltwa
219 Lake Belt Pennsuco		133	Miami-Dade	Miner's Mitigation
403 Capital Projects Big Cypress Big Cypress Basin C-1	Capital Projects Big Cypress (CPBC)	13	Collier	CPBC

*Majority to be acquired in easement

Revised June 2004

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Appendix G

Land Acquisition Expenditures Summary, FY 2003-FY 2004 (1)

Funding Source	Amount (\$ million)	Acres
Farm Bill 1996	\$ 0	0
Florida Forever	\$ 18.8	4,648
Save Our Everglades Trust Fund	\$ 55.2	7,864
State, Local & Other Funding (2)	\$ 4.8	1,090
Land & Water Conservation Fund (3)	\$ 1.54	736
Wetland Reserve & Farmland Protection (4)	\$ 42.16	28,021
Totals	\$ 122.5	113,353

(1)The fiscal year for FDEP is July 1 through June 30. The fiscal year for the SFWMD, the FWS, and the NPS is October 1 through September 30. Data is from October 1, 2003 through June 30, 2004.

(2) The following funding sources are captured in this category: SFWMD ad valorem, county, mitigation, special state appropriations, Preservation 2000, Land Acquisition Trust Fund, and Water Management Lands Trust Fund

(3) The Land & Water Conservation Fund is administered by the U.S. Department of the Interior

(4) The Wetland Reserve & Farmland Protection program are administered by USDA. Data for these programs reflect activity since the passage of the 2002 Farm Bill through June 30, 2004

The Land Acquisition Strategy describes the lands identified jointly by federal and state agencies for ecosystem restoration, and with its appendices, provides a broad picture of all land acquisition initiatives that contribute to the restoration.

The following is a list of the Appendices:

Appendix A: Task Force Goals and Objective

Appendix B: South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Land Acquisition

Appendix C: Project Profile Sheets and Summary Table

Appendix D: South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Land Acquisition

Appendix E: County Land Acquisition and Florida's Greenways and Trails Programs

Appendix F: SFWMD FY 04 Workplan for Land Acquisitions

Appendix G: Land Acquisition Task Team Directive

Strategic Acquisitions

The timing of land acquisition is critical, as project construction cannot begin until key project lands are acquired. Failure to obtain critical parcels in a timely manner can result in delays and reconfiguration not just for one project, but for other related projects as well. The GAO report noted that much of the undeveloped land in South Florida is under development pressure, and that a land acquisition plan increases the likelihood of the restoration's success. Delay reduces the possibility that the necessary lands will be acquired and can also increase the cost of land.

The success of many of the CERP projects depends on the successful implementation of other parts of the restoration plan, such as the C-111 Canal and Modified Water Deliveries to Everglades National Park projects. In fact, WRDA 2000 conditions that no appropriations shall be made to construct the WCA 3 Decpartmentalizataion and Sheetflow Enhancement Project, North New River Improvements for the Central Lakebelt Storage CERP Projects until the completion of the Modified Waters Project. In 2003, the U.S. Congress authorized the USACE to restart construction of this project and the Corps has embarked on an aggressive land acquisition schedule to have all lands available for the Modified Waters Project by June 1, 2005.

In addition, SFWMD has pursued a strategy of early land acquisition in support of future CERP projects where there is development pressure to acquire property; when the real estate is part of other acquisition programs; or, when there is a cost effective "opportunity purchase" with sellers that the SFWMD may wish to pursue. The USACE and SFWMD are working closely with each other through these types of acquisitions in anticipation of lands being suitable for future CERP projects. The land acquisition dates contained in the Project Profiles in Appendix C are those contained in the tentative 2004 CERP Master Implementation Sequencing Plan and do not contain the actual acquisition dates for already acquired property.

Further, the SFWMD has identified strategic land acquisition needed to keep the CERP and other restoration projects on schedule. The SFWMD FY 2004 Priority Workplan is Appendix F.

Cost Estimates of Real Estate

Land cost estimates are based on preliminary planning estimates of land acquisition costs for the project acreage as a whole. These cost estimates are not intended to, and do not, reflect an estimate for the fair market value of any individual tract of land.

Cost estimates for CERP lands as contained on the Project Profile Sheets are the estimated fair market value in 1999 dollars as described in the C&SF

Restudy Appendix F. Estimates are based on the conceptual footprint and are subject to refinement through the PIR process and subsequent congressional authorization of the CERP Project. The cost estimates for projects within the Draft Water Preserve Area Feasibility Study area reflect land cost estimates in October 2001 dollars. For projects within the Indian River Lagoon project, estimates are in 2003 dollars. The estimated land acquisition costs include all other associated costs, including but not limited to condemnation costs, legal fees, appraisal fees and administrative fees, and also include a significant contingency factor for conservative budget planning. If some land has been acquired for a project, actual costs are known and are reflected on the project sheets.

Real estate cost estimates for USACE/SFWMD non-CERP projects such as the C-111 Canal Project and Kissimmee River Restoration are based on actual costs and estimated land acquisition costs. The estimated land acquisition costs include all other associated acquisition costs, including but not limited to condemnation costs, legal fees, appraisal fees and administrative fees, and also include a significant contingency factor for conservative budget planning. Land cost estimates are based on preliminary planning estimates of land acquisition costs for the project acreage as a whole. These cost estimates are not intended to, and do not, reflect an estimate for the fair market value of any individual tract of land.

The USACE land cost estimates include the cost of the land plus other costs incurred in the land acquisition process. This includes staff time for land acquisition, federal review of the acquisition process, relocation costs, etc. USACE land cost estimates are contained in various real estate plans developed as part of the overall project planning process. As such, USACE real estate plans are tentative in nature for planning purposes only and both the final real property acquisition lines and the real estate cost estimates provided in these plans are subject to change even after approval of project reports and feasibility studies.

The land cost estimates presented in the Project Profile Sheets are based on a fee simple purchase, meaning the purchase of the project lands and all rights associated with the land. Another type of land acquisition, less-than-fee, may be more cost-effective for some projects. The land acquisition agencies are committed to acquiring only that interest in land needed to complete a project and make it successful and will utilize less-than-fee purchases where appropriate. The Allapattah Ranch conservation easement is an example where a less than full fee estate acquisition was sufficient to achieve the goals of a CERP project.

Summary of Goal 1 lands

There are 45 projects with federal and joint federal/state land acquisition dollars identified for Goal 1. Land acquisition required for these projects totals 476,203 acres with 254,633 acres (53%) acquired to date. The total estimated cost of these lands is \$2,668,623,000 with an estimated \$1,591,822,000 needed to complete acquisition of these parcels. The project profile sheets and the summary table for Goal 1 lands are in Appendix C.

Goal 2: Restore, Preserve, and Protect Natural Habitats and Species

The second goal for the Task Force is “Restore, Preserve and Protect Natural Habitats and Species” with the subgoals of “Restore, Preserve, and Protect Natural Habitats” and “Control Invasive Exotic Plants.” The acquisition of lands that provide habitat for native plants and animals and act as a buffer for existing natural areas is an important component of the Task Force’s strategy to achieve Goal 2.

Some Goal 1 projects that provide water quality treatment areas, water storage reservoirs, and aquifer recharge with a primary goal of restoring the natural hydrology will also provide habitat for native flora and fauna. In order to maximize the habitat contribution of CERP projects, the USFWS has created a team to evaluate the wildlife values of the lands where CERP will be constructed and recommending site plans that minimize the loss of habitat.

In order to provide a full picture of the lands acquired for habitat and species, all the lands that contribute to this goal, regardless of funding source, are in Appendix D: South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Land Acquisition Update.

Identification of Lands to be Acquired

The habitat and species protection goals are met primarily through large public holdings such as parks and wildlife refuges. The federal government has been a major landowner in South Florida through its National Parks and National Wildlife Refuges since 1947 with the establishment of Everglades National Park. There are three national parks or preserves and 16 wildlife refuges within the boundaries of the South Florida ecosystem. In addition, the CERP wetland restoration projects of Southern Golden Gate Estates (Picayune Strand) and Strazulla Wetlands Water Preserve Area contribute to this goal.

The expansions of the national park system in South Florida have undergone a rigorous review process and Congress has deemed that the authorized expansion areas possess nationally significant natural, cultural, or recreational resources; are suitable and feasible additions to the system; and requires direct National Park Service (NPS) management instead of protection by some other government agency or by the private sector. Any major boundary revisions to existing units of the national park system must be established by an act of Congress and land acquisition expenditures must be consistent with the existing

congressional authorization. The NPS projects in the Strategy are nearly complete, with 5% or less of the land remaining to be acquired.

Strategic Acquisitions

Land acquisition to complete park and refuge boundaries is a multi-year process and can span decades. The goal is to acquire the lands before the on-site resources are destroyed. For Goal 2 purchases, the funding may be timed to specific appropriations, or as a project is positioned on an acquisition funding list.

While there is no immediate development pressure on either the Southern Golden Gate Estates (Picayune Strand) or the Strazulla Wetlands properties as is the case for many other CERP projects, these acquisitions are strategic due to their juxtaposition to important publicly held habitat lands. The Southern Golden Gate Estates (Picayune Strand) is centrally located among several nature preserves, wildlife refuges and other wildlife areas in Collier County, one of the fastest growing counties in the nation. The SGGE Project Areas, with the surrounding affected public uplands make up the largest restoration opportunity in southwest Florida. The acquisition of this last piece of the regional connectivity puzzle will protect over 2.3 million contiguous acres of wildlife habitat.

The acquisition of the Strazulla Wetlands, immediately adjacent to the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge increase the spatial extent of wetlands and provide vital habitat connectivity for species that require large unfragmented tracts of land for survival. This unique and endangered habitat contains the only remaining cypress habitat in the Eastern Everglades and one of the few remaining sawgrass marshes adjacent to the coastal ridge.

Cost of Real Estate

Different processes are used to estimate the cost of real estate by the federal, state or regional governmental unit. The NPS and FWS cost estimates for land acquisitions for national parks and national wildlife refuges are based on fair market value and appraisals that meet state and federal standards. The DEP, as the acquisition agent for Southern Golden Gate Estates, uses tax assessed value to estimate costs of lands for this project.

The SFWMD's Strazulla Wetlands land cost estimate was refined from the original Yellow Book Estimate through the October 2001 Draft Water Preserve Area Feasibility Study. The land cost estimate is based on preliminary planning estimates of land acquisition costs for the project acreage as a whole. The cost estimate is not intended to, and does not, reflect an estimate for the fair market

value of any individual tract of land. The estimated land acquisition cost includes all other associated acquisition costs, including but not limited to condemnation costs, legal fees, appraisal fees, and also includes a significant contingency factor for conservative budget planning.

The land cost estimates presented in the Project Profile Sheets are based on a fee simple purchase, meaning the purchase of the project lands and all rights associated with the land. Another type of land acquisition, less-than-fee, may be more cost-effective for some projects. The land acquisition agencies are committed to acquiring only that interest in land needed to complete a project and make it successful and will utilize less-than-fee purchases where appropriate.