Land Acquisition Strategy --- *Task Team Directive*

BACKGROUND: Land acquisition is critical to South Florida ecosystem restoration efforts. Land is needed to preserve habitat for native plants and animals and to act as a buffer to existing natural areas. Land is also needed for water quality treatment areas, water storage reservoirs, and aquifer recharge areas that will help restore natural hydrology. Land acquisition efforts are often complemented by less-than-fee acquisition and other conservation programs that provide permanent and long-term easements such as provided in USDA's Wetland Reserve Program and the Conservation Reserve Program.

Several planning efforts related to land acquisition have recently been accomplished. In December 1999, an ecosystem-wide acquisition map (the "Graham Map") was developed. In April 2000, The U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) issued a report entitled, "South Florida Ecosystem Restoration: A Land Acquisition Plan Would Help Identify Lands 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 February 2003, the Task Force accepted the South Florida Ecosystem Land acquisition Strategy prepared by the Land Acquisition Task Team. This Strategy built on the information in "Coordinating Success" and the "Graham Map," updating and adding information as necessary. The Task Force decided to produce a second edition of the Land Acquisition Strategy, using information through September 2003, and provided direction on additional items to be addressed in the revised Strategy.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the Task Team is to develop the annual updates to the land acquisition strategy originally accepted by the Task Force in March 2003. It 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.

MEMBERS:

John Outland (FDEP) – Co-Chair
Mark Musaus (Loxahatchee NWR) - Co-Chair
Gary Cochran (FWC)
David Burr (SWFRPC)
Elaine Hall (NPS)
Susan Trokey (Ding Darling NWR)
Wanda Caffie-Simpson (SFWMD)
Don Nelson (USACE)
Ron Smola (USDA)
Rich Walesky (Palm Beach County)
Emilie Young (Miami-Dade County)
Don Burgess (Broward County)
Theresa Woody (OED)
Andy Stevens (Charlotte County)
Mariah Hutchins (Highlands County)
Mark Rosch (Monroe County)
Joe Walsh (WRAC/FWC)
Thaddeus Hamilton (NRCS)
Barbara Lenczewski (DCA)
Lynda Riley (Lee County)
Diana Waite (St. Lucie County)
Jim Sherman (Martin County)
Alexandra Sulecki (Collier County)
Lester Baird (Hendry County)
Darrell Enfinger (Okeechobee County)
Gaye Sharpe (Polk County)
Beth Jackson (Orange County)
Rob Schultz (Osceola County)
Marsha Bansee (OED)
Alan Shatto (Glades County)

GUIDANCE:

1. The strategy will focus on acquisition efforts for lands where there is a federal or joint interest, including:

   a) an assessment of the lands with both joint state and federal interest needed to accomplish each of the goals of the restoration,
   b) a description of the purpose for which the lands will be acquired and how they will be managed,
   c) an estimate of the cost of these lands,
   d) an estimate of when the lands will be needed for related restoration projects, and
   e) the agencies responsible for acquiring the lands.

2. The strategy will focus on those federal or joint requirements supportive of the three goals of the Task Force: Goal 1 (Get the Water Right), Goal 2 (habitat protection),Goal 3 (Foster Compatibility of the Built and Natural Systems).
3. The strategy will be limited to those lands that will be acquired with federal funds or as part of a federally cost shared project.
4. The strategy will be updated to reflect changes and additions to the restoration initiative's land acquisition needs.
5. The strategy will not infringe on existing missions, authorities or jurisdictions of the participating agencies.
6. The strategy should include other related state, district, local government, or non-governmental organization land acquisition projects in an appendix as appropriate.

DELIVERABLES:

The team shall produce the following interim and final deliverables for review and approval of the Working Group:

1. Revised Land Acquisition Task Team Directive for Working Group endorsement (March 2003)
2. First draft for Working Group review (September 2003)
3. Public comment workshops (October 2003)
4. Second draft for Working Group review (November 2003)
5. Final draft for Working Group approval (December 2003)
6. Task Force approval of Land Acquisition Strategy update (January 2004)

ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTIONS:

1. All team meetings will be open to the public, and if appropriate, time will be included in the agenda for public comment. Meetings will be advertised in accordance with the Pilot Public Affairs Procedures developed by the Working Group.

2. The representative from the OED will serve as the Public Affairs representative for the team and will be responsible for providing public notice of meetings, facilitating public comment, and providing a brief meeting summary for each meeting that is suitable for publication on the Task Force Web Site.

3. The OED will provide contract staff support, as needed, to assist the team in drafting and producing its proposed plan.

SIGNED BY,

CHAIR, WORKING GROUP