

*Approved Meeting Minutes  
South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force  
Coral Springs, Florida  
December 11, 2008*

**Welcome and Introductions**

Ms. Kameran Onley, the Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:05 PM and recognized Ms. Susie Perez Quinn from Senator Nelson's office. She noted the Loxahatchee canoe trip had been cancelled and that Task Force members were invited to attend the announcement scheduled for the following day by Deputy Secretary Lynn Scarlett. She also noted that the draft DOI Vision document had been distributed and that later in the afternoon there would be an opportunity to collectively discuss the details and answer questions.

Mr. Michael Sole, the Vice Chair, welcomed everyone adding that he is a firm believer in the Task Force. He noted this would be the last meeting for the federal principals and he would have some remarks at the end of the meeting. Ms. Onley noted the importance of dialogue and feedback in the restoration program. She presented the draft minutes from the September 2008 meeting. Mr. Sole made a motion to approve the minutes which was seconded by Mr. George Dunlop. The minutes were approved without objection.

*Kameran Onley, Chair, U.S. Department of the Interior*

*Michael Sole, Vice Chair, Department of Environmental Protection*

*Billy Causey for Timothy Keeney, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere, U.S.*

*Department of Commerce*

*James Christian for Linda Lawson, U.S. Department of Transportation*

*George Dunlop for J.P. Woodley Assistant Secretary of the Army, U.S. Department of the Army*

*Dexter Lehtinen, Miccosukee Tribe of Indians*

*Patty Power for Jim Shore, Seminole Tribe of Florida*

*Keith Saxe for Ron Tenpas, Assistant Attorney General, U.S. Department of Justice*

*Carlos Suarez for Gary Mast, Deputy Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment, U.S.*

*Department of Agriculture*

*Tom Teets for Carol Wehle, Executive Director, South Florida Water Management District*

**Whiparound**

Mr. Keith Saxe noted that due to an urgent matter Mr. Ron Tenpas was unable to attend. Ms. Patty Power for Jim Shore wished all the federal members well on their new adventures. Mr. James Christian said he looked forward to working with the new team. Mr. Tom Teets sitting in for Ms. Carole Wehle reported that the River of Grass negotiations were still ongoing. He said the Governing Board had acted on the Picayune Strand reservation and they hope to sign the Partnership Agreement with the federal government soon. He said that they are in the process of developing a reservation for the Kissimmee River. Although it was not required by Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) 2000, the district thought it was the right thing to do. He said they were trying to sequence all the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) reservations sequenced to support the timelines for signing the Partnership Agreements. The district had recently been informed that Mr. Woodley cannot make a decision on the land valuation and crediting policy change that they had been working with the Corps. That decision was a major milestone needed in order to execute the Partnership Agreements. Failure to resolve the issue quickly

could cause a major slowdown in CERP implementation. Mr. George Dunlop added his sense of appreciation for the districts concerns. He clarified that there is no dispute about the policy but given the transition, there were questions about the appropriate decision maker. He hopes they will come to quick closure on this. He introduced Mr. Craig Schmauder, Deputy General Counsel to Mr. Woodley, who has been designated to be the Army's representative on the Task Force until relieved.

Mr. Sole commended the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) for their initiative on the River of Grass acquisition and he recognized the controversy surrounding this acquisition. He encouraged everyone to participate in the next Governing Board meeting and said it is a bold initiative that will provide significant results in a short period of time. He reported that Florida has moved forward with its rule making to adopt the California tail pipe emission rule. He said it is a significant greenhouse gas initiative and thanked Senator Nelson for his support. He announced that it will be a tight Legislative fiscal year due to the slowdown in the economy and everyone should be prepared for a difficult budget year.

Ms. Onley announced that Mr. Rock Salt will be filling her role on the Task Force during the transition. She said that most of the federal members are meeting with President-elect Obama's team and they will be briefed on Everglades restoration. Mr. Greg May recognized the scientists in the audience and thanked them for attending the meeting. He said that they had hoped to have all of the indicator scientists attend the meeting to be recognized for their work, but there were conflicts with two separate science conferences. Mr. Billy Causey said that Mr. Tim Keeney sent his regrets for being unable to attend. He reported that the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary's Advisory Council unanimously passed a resolution on December 9, 2008 supporting the acquisition of lands within the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) sufficient to restore the Everglades and Florida Bay. The council, a stakeholder group that includes commercial fishermen, divers, citizens at large and scientists, held a successful workshop in November to get Keys' residents up to date on the status of Everglades restoration. He also reported that the Fish and Wildlife Service has provided funding to continue with the ongoing twelve-year Seagrass and Coral Reef monitoring.

Mr. Dexter Lehtinen stated the Miccosukee Tribe has continuing concerns with serious flaws in the planning process and the basic disregard of science in order to get a political outcome. He urged the incoming administration to inquire as to why the Everglades planning process can produce documents which a federal judge characterizes as 'not reflecting an honest analysis' and 'reflecting a possible environmental bridge to nowhere.' The tribe has concerns with the role of the Task Force and the press conference scheduled for the following day that appears to be a Task Force event. The Task Force is treated as a propaganda arm of the Department of the Interior and he does not want to be a cardboard cutout and will not endorse something he has never heard about. The sugar buyout appears to be a step forward but mere acquisition of land does not accomplish restoration and something must be done on the land. To purchase 187,000 acres more or less at \$1.37 billion will make it difficult for the SFWMD financially. It will cost \$5 billion for 105,000 acres of storage reservoirs and it cannot be done. The acquisition will make it financially impossible for future Governing Boards to carry out restoration. The SFWMD has stopped work on the EAA Storage Reservoir and the tribe's concern is that the real effect of this acquisition will be to stop and delay restoration.

Mr. Carlos Suarez on behalf of Mr. Gary Mast reported that USDA continues to work on the Farm Bill rules nationwide. There is a provision in the 2008 Farm Bill concerning the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) that does not allow USDA to enter into agreements with governmental entities for buying easements. However, this provision has been liberalized to allow a landowner who is eligible to enter into a WRP easement with NRCS to transfer that easement to a governmental entity provided that the landowner assumes their cost share for the restoration. He hopes the rulemaking process will be completed by the end of January.

### **Working Group (WG) and Science Coordination Group (SCG) Recommendations**

Mr. Dan Kimball reported the WG had a great joint meeting with the SCG in October. Consultation was held on the Melaleuca Eradication and Other Exotic Plants Draft PIR which focuses on mass rearing and release of biological control agents. Another important item on the agenda was the Project Implementation Report (PIR) Streamlining recommendations. They identified more detailed recommendations that are intended to coincide with the revisions of the Programmatic Regulations. They also had two excellent presentations from Dr. Wiley Kitchens and Dr. Phil Darby on the decline of the Snail Kite and Apple Snail. The Snail Kite's range is now throughout the Everglades ecosystem and the population has experienced a sharp decline as a result of a combination of droughts, high water levels in WCA 3A and a continuing decline in habitat conditions. Snail Kites are now relying heavily on the Chain of Lakes north of Lake Okeechobee for breeding. The Apple Snails, which are the primary food source for the kites, are also vulnerable to both high and low water levels. In addition, an invasive snail has been found in parts of the Apple Snails' range. Both Dr. Kitchens and Dr. Darby are working with the FWS to integrate the science and develop options that would benefit both species. The general scientific consensus is that Everglades restoration is needed to recover both the Snail Kite and Apple Snail.

The Collier Company and Defenders of Wildlife provided a presentation on an innovative way to protect the panthers and panther habitat in a large area of southwest Florida that uses the Rural Land Stewardship Program and involves private landowners and environmental groups. This is an on-the-ground example of Cooperative Conservation. The issue of high water levels in WCA 3A was discussed throughout the meeting. Since then they have had a number of productive meetings with key agencies and representatives of the Miccosukee Tribe and have collectively taken a number of actions that have reduced the water levels in WCA 3A by close to a foot. They are now looking at longer term solutions to the problem such as more gapping and removal of the old Tamiami Trail. He thanked Commissioner Bergeron who pulled everyone together.

Mr. Sole asked if Dr. Kitchens identified a key issue that needs to be resolved. Mr. Kimball replied that the key is to restore the ecosystem overall and get the water from WCA 3A into WCA 3B which is consistent with the findings of the Avian Ecology Workshop. Mr. Lehtinen added that both Dr. Kitchens and Dr. Darby have said that closing the S-12 structures for the Sparrow is one of many contributing causes and the tribe would like to see the S-12s opened and IOP eliminated. Mr. Rock Salt said the SCG appreciated being able to sit around the table with the agencies and managers and work on restoration problems and contribute and synthesize expertise from many scientific disciplines. The science being discussed was relevant to the management decisions and that makes it worthwhile to come to the meetings. He thanked the Task Force on behalf of the SCG for giving them the task of working on the

system-wide indicators which is another example of pulling together a wide range of disciplines for a policy question.

### **PIR Streamlining**

Mr. Eric Bush noted these recommendations are the result of a collaborative effort by the Corps with input from the SFWMD, DEP, DOI and others. He explained that the specific request was to identify why it takes so long to produce the decision documents they take to Congress for authorization and eventually funding. Because ecosystem health continues to decline there is a sense of urgency. The NAS Report recognizes that some areas in decline need immediate attention. Implementation of CERP has been much slower than originally anticipated. They have three authorized Project Implementation Reports (PIRs) - Indian River Lagoon South, Picayune Strand and Site 1 Impoundment - that are awaiting funding. They have two nearly complete PIRs - C-43 and Broward County Water Preserve Area (BCWPA) - as well as eight additional PIRs underway. He reviewed the initial streamlining recommendations that were presented at the September Task Force meeting. An in-depth review of the typical PIR process was provided as well as an explanation of the requirements that must be met. A case study on the C-111 Spreader Canal PIR development process was presented. It included the major challenges that added more time to the development of the decision document (looking at different alignments, changes in formulation, modeling problems, applying incremental Adaptive Restoration as a result of the NAS Report and a recent request to use fair market value to provide cost estimates for real estate instead of actual acquisition costs). This project is currently at nine to ten years away from initiation and the draft report is now scheduled to be completed in September 2009.

A recommendations matrix was reviewed. The recommendations would be implemented through a number of initiatives to include revisions to the Programmatic Regulations (Pro Regs) and Guidance Memoranda, Task Force recommendations, revisions to USACE planning policy requirements and internal management improvements. The tentative schedule for the revision to the Pro Regs was reviewed and briefings will be provided to the Task Force and Working Group throughout the year. The draft rule will be published in the federal register in early 2010 with the final rule to be published in June 2010.

They propose to simplify the plan formulation and selection procedures using the Integrated Delivery Schedule (IDS) and Master Implementation Sequencing Plan (MISP) as the implementation framework. The challenges of the next-added incremental justification analysis would be addressed by using the Yellow Book plan as starting point, developing an array of plans, comparing each to no-action (without CERP) plan, selecting plan based on cost-effectiveness and ecosystem effects and after best plan is selected, evaluating system-wide effects. They would simplify the project assurances analysis and use the same numeric modeling used in plan selection, have fewer baseline conditions to evaluate, fewer mandated evaluations and simplify the information to be displayed. They would improve CERP planning, review and approval process. One recommendation is to establish a Florida-based liaison to enhance communication between Washington and Florida who would be a technical expert able to coordinate Washington level review and expedite policy issue resolution.

The recommended revisions to the planning and policy requirements include the use of hydrologic surrogates as metrics for plan comparison instead of habitat units because they are simpler to generate.

Examples of hydrologic surrogates include: seasonal flow rates or ranges; acre-feet of water stored, delivered, retained; and acres of wetlands rehydrated. Other revisions include reducing the engineering and design level of detail in a PIR and sequencing and bundling of projects in the IDS to obtain more benefits faster. Internal management initiatives include being less dependent on model-generated output. The technical staff is not very comfortable with this option and if they rely on best scientific and engineering judgment, then it may not be enough to prevail in a court. They have already completed model streamlining and continue to pursue Interagency Modeling Center (IMC) initiatives. Improved issue resolution at both the high and low levels is needed. Project specific opportunities for PIR streamlining includes coming up with a simplified analysis approach for DECOMP PIRs 1, 2 and 3 and other candidate PIRs include Everglades National Park (ENP) Seepage Management, North Palm Beach County, Broward County Water Preserve Areas (reformulation), Caloosahatchee Watershed, Lake Okeechobee Watershed, C-111 Spreader Canal PIR 2 and Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands PIR 2. Next steps include seeking representatives for an inter-agency working team to prepare the Task Force recommendations for the Pro Regs. The Task Force should consider developing a Statement of Guiding Principles for CERP Execution as well as a letter on behalf of the Task Force to the Director of Civil Works with recommendations on CERP implementation.

Mr. Dunlop noted this presentation was excellent and worthy of further analysis. He noted the Pro Regs timetable was a very tight and he urged everyone to make it a priority to keep to this schedule. He noted that they already have a CERP liaison in place and it could be interpreted as an unmet need. If it is currently not functioning properly then he asked to be informed. Mr. Dunlop noted his concern with bundling projects and the resultant billion dollars price tags that Congress will be asked to fund. The National Academy of Sciences has recommend that things be ‘unbundled’ using an incremental approach. The recommendation to do things more programmatically with less engineering and design detail may be something Congress and OMB have a problem with, although he said it is a good idea. He thanked Ms. Onley for her leadership in ensuring that this Task Force is not an entity to simply receive reports but to challenge the members with policy decisions that need to be made.

Mr. Lehtinen, referring to the C-111 Spreader Canal C PIR case study, asked Mr. Bush for clarification concerning who asked to do different alignments and what leadership said to do something. Mr. Bush clarified that through the PDTs which are composed of representatives from all of the agencies, technical issues, formulation issues and preferences get brought to the table. For that particular project, they went from focusing on a spreader canal to seepage management in ENP. The direction came more formally from the COL and the SFWMD Executive Director at Quality Review Board (QRB) meetings. Mr. Lehtinen questioned all the changes in direction. Mr. Sole said the reality is that if they are going to see progress they have to find ways to expedite the decision making point. Mr. Dunlop said they have \$3.7 billion worth of projects where all of the key decisions have been made and \$700 million worth of restoration projects already authorized by Congress. This represents decades worth of appropriation expectations and the central front for ecosystem restoration is the decision making process in Congress and the Executive Branch. Mr. Sole said that although these documents are important, the expedited work on the EAA Reservoir was stopped because the PIR was not completed and they are now caught up in court. He applauded the Corps for looking for ways to improve the process and encouraged the Task Force, as a body, to provide recommendations particularly in the Pro Regs review process.

Ms. Power said that they may need to address the issue of Next Added Increment (NAI) in the Principles & Guidelines (P&G). She said that the revisions to the P&G may be something for the Task Force to weigh in on. Congress will also be considering a new WRDA Bill and there have been promises made that they will get to it in 2009. Mr. Lehtinen asked about the status of the PIR on the EAA Reservoir. Mr. Bush replied that work has been suspended and that the future without project condition is changing. They have completed the Alternative Formulation Briefing (AFB) and are on the third version of the draft report to better model the performance of the reservoir. He added that it was a collective decision to suspend the work.

Mr. Lehtinen asked how much work will be ready for Congressional funding in January for a big public works project. Mr. Appelbaum replied that it will depend on the rules, obviously projects need to be authorized and they have a lot of projects that are ready to construct. The question is are they eligible, and at this time it is a bit speculative because they do not know what the rules are. Since this is part of the economic stimulus to put people back to work then they will need projects that can go to construction fairly quickly. He estimated at least \$1 billion dollars including the foundation projects.

### **Public Comment**

Ms. Susie Perez-Quinn (Senator Nelson's office) said she liked the timeline that was presented and said they could get support from the delegation to keep on that 2010 schedule towards making changes in the Pro Regs. She asked if the C-44 component in the IRL-South project is a bundled project. Mr. Bush replied that the IRL South project included three components within the CERP, so yes. She asked about the total cost for the C-43 and BCWPA. Mr. Bush said it was over \$1 billion. Ms. Perez-Quinn said that the Florida delegation, specifically Sen. Nelson and Sen. Martinez, Congressman Diaz-Balart, Congresswoman Wasserman-Schultz and Congressman Hastings asked the Corps to fund the IRL and Picayune Strand out of the FY09 Continuing Resolution bill and that the Corps' decided not to fund those projects. They are hopeful to see funds go to those projects when the FY09 bills are completed. She noted the delegation is ready to help with WRDA and asked them to transmit to Congress those changes needed beyond the Pro Regs that are statutory in nature. She also asked for a list of projects that are shovel ready adding that this will be an opportunity to get some of the projects, particularly the foundation projects, going.

Mr. Dunlop said the Florida delegation has been very meticulous and has carried a heavy load in light of the enormous amount of competition for resources from other regions in the country. He thanked Ms. Perez-Quinn on behalf of the Army for her coordination with the entire delegation.

Mr. Tom Van Lent (Everglades Foundation) thanked Mr. Bush for his succinct and realistic assessment of the PIR process. He encouraged everyone to see what is working with the state's Expedited C-111 Spreader Canal process adding they were able to make real progress at a faster pace. He pointed to the intense focus on information, dispute resolution and keeping stakeholders at the table among the things that has contributed to their success.

Ms. Sara Fain (National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA)) said these were some really good discussions adding that this is an opportunity to fix some of these things. She provided a letter (Enclosure 2) and highlighted some of the comments it contained. It is important to re-think system formulation and

reminded them that this is the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan and they must think comprehensively. NPCA recommends the Corps move away from single project formulation and move towards adopting a conceptual framework for project formulation that embraces the planning and modeling of suites of interrelated projects. They also recommend moving away from using habitat units. The NPCA believes NAI does contradict the ecosystem-wide restoration goals of CERP and is often a roadblock to important projects.

## **Consultation**

### *Tentative Consultation Schedule for 2009*

Mr. Brian Files reviewed the Pro Regs requirement to provide the Task Force and Working Group with opportunities to review and provide recommendations on Interim Goals and Interim Targets, Project Implementation Reports (PIRs), Pilot Project Design Reports, Pilot Project Technical Data Reports, the Pre-CERP Baseline, Assessment Reports, Guidance Memoranda, Master Implementation and Sequencing Plans, Comprehensive Plan Modification Reports, Periodic CERP Updates, Reports to Congress and other reports as requested. He reviewed the proposed schedule for 2009.

### *Melaleuca Eradication and other Exotic Plants*

Ms. Shauna Allen noted that Mr. John Morgan was unable to attend and Ms. Yvette Williams was substituting him at this meeting. She reviewed the recommended plan, which includes constructing a mass-rearing lab annex for the USDA Quarantine Facility in Davie, FL and implementing an Adaptive Management strategy with variable bio-control production and release. The study area includes the entire south Florida ecosystem including the Kissimmee basin and lands that are subject to invasion are currently in conservation and include privately owned lands that are undeveloped. The potential release sites will only include public lands. USDA works with private landowners to inform them of the laws for exotic pest plants as well as on how to protect their plants once the bugs are released. The Yellow Book features included renovation of the existing facility, which has been completed and the mass rearing, field release, establishment, and field monitoring of approved biological control agents for Melaleuca and other invasive exotic species which is the subject of this PIR. There are no new purposes or changes in scope. However, they did conclude that in order for this project purpose to be realized, the existing facility in Davie needed to be expanded for the mass-rearing annex. The problems to be solved include long-term impacts to ecosystem function, reduction of biodiversity, habitat and native wildlife and plant species and increased costs for land management, navigation and flood control were reviewed. There will be opportunities to improve ecosystem stability and resilience, increase control and prevent re-invasion in ecologically sensitive areas and reduce long-term maintenance costs and dependence on herbicides.

The initial array of alternatives was reviewed. All alternatives that were not ecologically sound were screened out and cost effectiveness was reviewed. Alternatives 3 and 9 gave the best performance. She reviewed the number of biological control agents that are either approved or already in the pipeline. Alternative 3 was chosen as the recommended plan for Melaleuca and Australian Pine and Alternative 9 was chosen for Lygodium and Brazilian Pepper. Melaleuca is fairly well under control, however, Lygodium and Brazilian Pepper are still rapidly spreading and control methods are not working well. The implementation schedule includes having the draft PIR out for public review in December 2008 or January 2009. The final PIR will be completed by July 2009. Design will begin in January 2010 and construction will begin in September 2011 with full implementation starting in June 2012. Total project

cost is \$16,671,000 compared to the Yellow Book cost in October 1999 of \$10,800,000 representing a 4% annual increase. Ms. Patty Power noted that Melaleuca was the big issue 10-12 years ago and it is now a big success story.

### **Proposed Initial Recommended Tasks for 2009**

Mr. May reviewed the major actions in 2008 and proposed initial tasks for 2009 to maintain momentum until the incoming administration had an opportunity to establish its priorities. Proposed tasks include updating the IDS as necessary, continuing to refine and implement the PIR streamlining recommendations, revising the Pro Regs, the 2009 Land Acquisition Strategy and 2009 Integrated Financial Plan. The WG and SCG believe there are some high payoff opportunities for early 2009 regarding PIR streamlining. There are also other players external to the Task Force and south Florida that they need to be provided with targeted presentations. The proposed meeting schedule for 2009 was reviewed. The SCG will meet as necessary for specific science tasks. Ms. Power said it would be good to be briefed on what the P&G guidelines are and how they are used currently. Ms. Onley suggested they could schedule that for the February meeting.

Mr. Salt provided a copy of the draft DOI Vision document (Enclosure 3) and explained the intent is to lay out a vision for what they believe is important for Everglades restoration. While CERP has served us very well there are three strategic emerging issues: 1) accelerating damage in the Everglades (the NAS and others are pointing out that things are deteriorating more quickly; 2) new science (the historic system was a lot wetter, and the importance of more flow); 3) climate change (the NAS has a good summary of the implications of climate change with respect to the Everglades). The paper attempts to lay a foundation of ecological endpoints and it tries to do that based on landscape or community level parameters. This is different from performance measures which are more narrowly focused. They identify three centers of gravity: 1) the importance of completing projects like Tamiami Trail and the Spreader Canal; 2) completing DECOMP and Seepage Management, and 3) storage and treatment in the EAA. The vision document provides a series of messages and recommendations and it is their hope that the TF would consider asking the WG and SCG to discuss it. The draft document is not offered as DOI's position, but DOI's reflections as to where they are. It should complement what's going on with IDS, etc. Ms. Onley noted that it's a working document and they are hoping to get feedback necessary to finalize it.

### **Public Comment**

Ms. Jackie Weisblum (Florida Audubon) thanked Ms. Onley for her leadership and wished her the very best. She stated that Audubon supports the DOI Vision and looks forward to having further discussions. As Mr. Salt has stated the health of Everglades is in decline and requires bold action. This ecological urgency requires that they prioritize projects to address the environmental needs. Florida Audubon believes that bundling projects and the centers of gravity within the DOI paper are complementary and there are opportunities for them to take a fresh look at restoration and save one of our national treasures.

Ms. Sara Fain (NPCA) thanked Mr. Salt and DOI for bringing the vision forward. NPCA is supportive of the centers of gravity and those projects that will be the most beneficial. By getting those key projects such as Tamiami Trail, DECOMP and C-111 they will alleviate some of the pressure on the estuaries. NPCA looks forward to working with the Task Force and DOI on figuring out how to incorporate the vision into CERP and Everglades restoration. NPCA is also looking forward to the DOI announcement

the following day adding that although the current effort is a step in the right direction, more is needed. She invited everyone to attend the Everglades Coalition 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference from January 8-11, 2009 in Miami.

Mr. John Marshall (Arthur R. Marshall Foundation) thanked the DOI Vision drafters for involving the NGOs. He stated that he concurred with the other two speakers. He reported that he just returned from the Ecosystem Services Conference, which was handled similar to a GEER Conference, and he suggested it would be good way to justify all they are doing.

Mr. Sole said that while he applauds DOI for taking the initiative, if the vision paper is just a DOI or DEP or any single organization vision, then it would fail. He said that our power comes from a unified vision. He said he hoped that in 2009 they would work to turn this into a collective viewpoint adding that the Task Force is a great place to start. Ms. Power suggested that it would be helpful if everyone did their vision statement adding that it is long overdue for this group to find out where everyone is right now. She also said it is important to step back and see what they have done well. They need to make it a top priority to finish the foundation projects and show that they are constructed, operated and performing. Mr. Dunlop said the IDS is a robust, dynamic way to look at all the moving parts of restoration. But he noted that they already have a vision and \$3.7 billion worth of projects between now and 2020. He cautioned them against conveying the message that they don't have a vision and haven't made progress. He challenged the new Task Force to figure out the best way to articulate the degree to which the IDS should convey their vision and priorities. He noted that South Florida is far ahead of the rest of the nation and they need to communicate that they are ready to engage in restoration construction. Ms. Onley said she sees the IDS, and the other projects, as the tasks necessary to achieve an articulated vision. The paper is about moving restoration forward and getting the water flowing. She acknowledged that maybe they are not articulating their message or end state well enough.

Mr. Sole said that while they have spent quite a bit of time on the IDS, it does not convey the purpose or end state and if they are careful the two can co-exist and be complementary. Mr. Lehtinen referring to Mr. Dunlop's comments, stated that the history of Everglades restoration has been interest groups and others sitting in a room and reaching a deal; and after the deal is reached, going outside the room and attempting to torpedo it to get their special interests further favored. He said the environmental groups who want their own plan are the enemy of restoration. He questioned why the IDS or the Yellow Book are not the plan. Mr. Sole said the intent is to re-affirm that they all agree and articulate what they plan to achieve. He added that they have made a lot of progress and he did not want to go backwards. Mr. Lehtinen said that they can't expect people who live in the Everglades to make a deal and be double-crossed by the environmentalists. He questioned why the tribe should not use every mechanism possible to make the US government to do what it said it was going to do. The special interest groups who push the government around are the bad guys. Mr. Salt said that when they wrote the DOI vision they tried to state what the joint vision would be.

Mr. Causey agreed it has to be a joint vision and said the timing is critical as they enter the transition. He said he was reminded recently that they are losing 1 species every 20 minutes on the planet. In Florida they have so many species that are dependent on getting the water right and they cannot lose focus on

what they are trying to do and the projects need to move along simultaneously and reenergize the public's confidence in what they are going to do.

### **Task Force Recognition**

Ms. Onley recognized and presented plaques to the 44 four scientists who worked for 2 ½ years to develop the system-wide ecological indicators and the 2008 Assessment Report.

### **Public Comment**

John Marshall (Arthur R. Marshall Foundation) said he just returned from a conference discussing Ecosystem Services, which are those services that benefit people in an economic way. He noted there were 350 attendees and two buzz words 'monetizing' and 'bundling' continually came up. He has not seen a cost-benefit study and said it would be good way to show the value of this effort. The Arthur R. Marshall Foundation has had one vision for the past 10 years and it has been to take the Art Marshall Plan forward, consistent with the DOI Vision document.

Ms. Onley recognized the federal members for their service on the Task Force. Mr. Dunlop said it had been a privilege to work on this effort noting its significance. Mr. Sole thanked Ms. Onley for the tremendous job she has done in leading the Task Force and he read a letter from Governor Christ. Ms. Onley recognized the OED staff for their support. She thanked Mr. Sole for his partnership on the Task Force. She stated that she will continue to use her experiences gained from the Task Force.

Meeting adjourned at 5:27 PM.

### Enclosures:

1. Briefing Binder
  - a. Agenda
  - b. Draft Meeting Minutes, September 2008
  - c. Evaluation Summaries
  - d. Project Implementation Report (PIR) Streamlining
  - e. Consultation Workshop
  - f. Tentative Consultation Schedule for 2009
  - g. Melaleuca Eradication and Other Exotic Plants Draft Project Implementation Report
  - h. Proposed Initial Recommended Tasks for 2009
  - i. 2009 Meeting Schedule
2. National Parks Conservation Association letter (dated Dec. 11, 2008)
3. Draft DOI Vision document