South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Land Acquisition Strategy

September 2003 Draft

South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force
Working Group Land Acquisition Task Team

This strategy document is for planning purposes only, is subject to modification, and is not legally binding on any of the 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 Strategy.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AC-FT acre-feet
ARC Acquisition and Restoration Council
BCNP Big Cypress National Preserve
BMPs Best Management Practices
CARL Conservation and Recreation Lands
C&SF Project Central and Southern Florida Flood Control Project
CERP Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan
~~**CWA** Clean Water Act~~
DACS Department of Agricultural Services
EAA Everglades Agricultural Area
ECP Everglades Construction Project-
ERP Environmental Resource Permit
FCD Central and Southern Florida Flood Control District
FDACS Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
FDEP Florida Department of Environmental Protection
FDOT Florida Department of Transportation
FFA Florida Forever Act
FF/ARC Florida Forever/Acquisition and Restoration Council
FF/DOF Florida Forever/Division of Forestry program
FF/DRP Florida Forever/Division of Recreations and Park program
FF/FWC Florida Forever/Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission program
FF/SFWMD Florida Forever/South Florida Water Management District program
FGFWFC Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission (*now known as FWC)*
F.S. Florida Statutes
FWC Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
FY Fiscal Year
MCLA
MONR
NPS National Park Service
NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service
NWR National Wildlife Refuge
P2000 Preservation 2000
Restudy Central and Southern Florida Flood Control Project Comprehensive Review Study
SFWMD South Florida Water Management District
SOE Save Our Everglades
SOR Save Our Rivers
STA Stormwater Treatment Area
SWCD Soil and Water Conservation District
SWIM Surface Water Improvement Management
USACE United States Army Corps of Engineers
USDA United States Department of Agriculture
USFWS United States Fish and Wildlife Service
WCA Water Conservation Area
WRDA Water Resources Development Act

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 16 counties with more than 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 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 a population explosion that 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.

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.

Purpose

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, estimates of the cost of land acquisition for the restoration initiative and measures progress in acquiring lands for the restoration. The South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force (Task Force) and Working Group (Working Group) member agencies responsible for land acquisition participated in the assessment of the lands needed to accomplish the ecosystem restoration goals of the Task Force.

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 Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) and the Florida Forever work plan. The initial strategy addressed~~s~~ two of the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration goals: Goal 1: Get the Water Right and Goal 2: Restore, Preserve and Protect Habitats and Species. This edition of the strategy reflects data through September 30, 2003 and includes Goal 3: Use and manage land in a manner that is compatible with ecosystem restoration.

The Task Force acknowledges that this document will continue to evolve. All lands needed for South Florida Ecosystem Restoration have not been identified and some lands currently identified may not be needed. Some lands conceptually identified for CERP projects may change as projects are further refined in the planning process. As the restoration proceeds and additional lands are identified, future editions of this plan will reflect these changes.

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 Land Acquisition 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 then the original Everglades, but will mimic the historic functions of the Everglades.

South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force

Six federal departments (twelve agencies), seven Florida state agencies or commissions, two American Indian Tribes, sixteen counties, scores of municipal governments, and interested groups and businesses from throughout South Florida participate in the restoration effort. Four 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 the 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; exchanges information among participants; prepare an integrated financial plan and recommendations for coordinated budget requests; and submit a biennial report to Congress summarizing restoration activities. However, the Task Force does not have oversight or project authority. Each member entity retains its authority, jurisdiction, and mission.

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. ~~This strategy document reflects land acquisition necessary for achievement of Goals 1 and 2. In August 2002, the Task Force established objectives needed to achieve Goal 3 and future editions of the Land Acquisition Strategy will incorporate the lands needed for this goal.~~

General Accounting Office Report (GAO)

In its April 2000 review of the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Initiative, the General Accounting 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 that will take more than 20 years and require the continuous effort and commitment of all the 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 intent is to aid the Task Force to: (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 was 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
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 the funding entities, such as 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 already manage 4.9 million acres of land important to ecosystem restoration in South Florida. Approximately 4.8 million acres are managed for habitat purposes and 105,000 acres are used for water storage. The State of Florida alone has acquired 3.5 million acres of habitat conservation land in South Florida at a cost of $1.5 billion. The table in Appendix D lists the land identified to meet Goal 2, Lands for Habitat and Species. However, the condition of the ecosystem continues to deteriorate. This continued deterioration has necessitated a more comprehensive approach to protection, preservation and restoration. What does the table say?????

Recognizing this need, Congress authorized the C&SF Comprehensive Review Study known as the Restudy in 1992 to determine "whether modifications to the existing project are advisable …with particular reference to modifying the project or its operation for improving the quality of the environment, improving protections of the aquifer, and …urban water supplies affected by the project or its operation." In 1996, the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) further instructed the Secretary of the Army to develop a Comprehensive Plan for the purpose of restoring, preserving, and protecting the South Florida ecosystem. The Task Force was also directed by WRDA 96 to provide recommendations to the Secretary of the Army and the non-Federal project sponsor on the Restudy.

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. Comprised of more than 60 projects, 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 cost share for CERP is 50% federal and 50% non-federal with the non-federal sponsor responsible for acquisition of all land, easements, right-of-way, and relocations necessary to implement the plan. According to the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (Yellow Book), ~~L~~land acquisition and related expenses are initially estimated to total 220,000 acres at a cost of $2.2 billion, ~~will~~ comprising~~e~~ about one-forth of the total cost of CERP. ~~Roughly 220,000 acres at an estimated cost of $2.2 billion in 1999 dollars will be needed for the CERP.~~ These estimates ~~will be~~ are modified as the CERP projects are further refined in the planning process~~s. For example, the Indian River Lagoon and Water Preserve Feasibility Studies are further refining projects in those study areas.~~ As of June 30, 2003, total land requirements for CERP are estimated to be 401,489 acres, with approximately 48% or 192,831 acres currently in District, State or local ownership.

In addition to lands needed for CERP and other restoration construction projects, lands needed for habitat restoration and protection are also included within the restoration mosaic for South Florida. As of September 2002, about 5.8 million acres have been identified as necessary for habitat protection. About 4.9 million acres have been acquired, with 925,684 acres remaining to be purchased (See Appendix D). Check the table.

South Florida Ecosystem Land Acquisition Strategy Development

~~The Task Force also recognized the value of having a single document describing land acquisitions planned by the member agencies and relating these acquisitions to the goals of the restoration. The Task Force directed the Working Group to produce a Land Acquisition Strategy. On February 7, 2001, the Land Acquisition Task Team was~~

~~chartered by the Working Group to develop the strategy. As defined in the guidance to the Task Team, "The purpose of the Task Team is to develop a strategy for land acquisition needed for [South Florida] ecosystem restoration projects, which are either federally or jointly funded by federal and non-federal agencies. When completed, this plan and its appendices should provide a broad picture of all current land acquisition initiatives that contribute to the restoration."~~

~~In developing this strategy, the Working Group identified federally or jointly funded land acquisition projects in one of two categories: the acquisition of additions and inholdings necessary for the ecological integrity of existing national parks, preserves, and wildlife refuges, and joint projects, such as CERP, that contribute to the overall environment and human habitability of South Florida.~~

~~The guidelines also focused the land acquisition planning efforts on Goal 1: Getting the Water Right, defined as restoring natural hydrologic functions and water quality in wetland, estuarine, marine, and groundwater systems, while also providing for the water resource needs of urban and agricultural landscapes and Goal 2: Restore, Preserve and Protect Natural Habitats and Species, defined as when the diversity, abundance, and behavior of native South Florida animals and plants in terrestrial and aquatic habitats are characteristic of predrainage conditions. These ecosystem restoration goals include significant land acquisition in their implementation plans and were clearly defined in the Task Force's July 2000 *Coordinating Success* Strategy Document.~~

~~–~~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". In August 2002, 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 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 2002. The Task Force decided to produce a second edition of the Land Acquisition Strategy, using information through September 2003, a provided direction on additional items to be addressed in the revised strategy.

The purpose of the Land Acquisition Strategy is to describe the lands identified by federal or 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 ecosystem restoration.

The Land Acquisition Task Team was instructed to include County level information in the updated strategy and include information on mitigation and Payment in lieu of taxes.

Related land acquisition projects without any federal funding are addressed in Aappendices D and E. The Working Group stated that the Strategy and its appendices should provide a broad picture of all current land acquisition initiatives that contribute to the restoration. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection 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, Appendix D. County level land acquisition programs that address the Goal 3: Use and manage land in a manner that is compatible with ecosystem restoration are in Appendix E.

Member agencies of the Working Group responsible for acquiring lands to implement the Strategy served on the Land Acquisition Task Team. Federal agency representatives from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and State of Florida agency representatives from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), the Executive Office of the Governor, the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD). , joined by local government representatives from Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade Counties produced this document. Representatives from all sixteen counties served by the South Florida Water Management District now serve on the Task Team Assistance was provided by the Florida Natural Areas Inventory and the Department of Community Affairs with staff support from Muller and Associates, Inc. and the Task Force's Office of the Executive Director.

Member agencies identified lands needed to meet Goal 1 and Goal 2 and prepared project sheets that describe the purpose of the land acquisition, and discuss funding and acquisition status. These project profile sheets are in Appendix C. County staff identified land needed to meet Goal 3. Information on the county programs is in Appendix E. The data on the project sheets are current as of September 30, 20032.

A Long History of Coordination on Land Acquisition Funding

In 1947, the federal government acquired the lands necessary to establish Everglades National Park with the substantial contribution of 908,031 acres of land by the State of Florida. Federal and state holdings now include three other national parks or preserves, 30 state parks, 2 state forests, 16 wildlife refuges, 14 state wildlife management areas, and 19 aquatic sanctuaries or preserves dedicated to protecting the South Florida Ecosystem. According to the April 2000 GAO report, the State of Florida has acquired 3.1 million acres—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.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection 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 the Everglades National Park Expansion.

The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and the Department of the Interior (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~~0~~, the SFMWD has received about $120.5 million in grant monies for land acquisition from the DOI through the Land and Water Conservation Fund in addition to the $154.4 million from the 1996 Farm Bill. FDEP has received over $38 million from the 1996 Farm Bill to acquire lands in Southern Golden Gate Estates.

This Strategy includes only those acquisitions that are completely funded by the federal government or funded through a joint state/federal effort. These acquisitions are summarized in Appendix C~~B~~.

The State of Florida is nationally recognized as a leader in state land acquisition funding. Preservation 2000 (P-2000) has been the most successful state land and water conservation program in the United States. Florida spent $3 billion in the ten years of P-2000 to protect natural and historical resources, and to provide areas for natural resource-based recreation. In 1999, the state enacted the Florida Forever Act, a new statewide environmental lands and resources protection funding program. Florida Forever replaces P-2000 and commits $300 million per year from 2001-2010 to continue acquiring lands for the same purposes as Preservation 2000, but it gives additional emphasis on environmental systems restoration, water resource development, public lands management, recreation and public access, and public-private partnerships via conservation easements.

The State of Florida's Conservation and Recreation Land (CARL) programs and the Save Our Rivers (SOR) program have a long history of shared acquisition projects. In the period from February 1995 through January 2001 alone, these two programs cooperatively acquired 41,868 acres at a cost of more than $84 million. Land acquisition projects may be on both the SOR and Florida Forever lists to maximize the opportunities to acquire these lands. State lands program managers coordinate funding

decisions for land purchases to avoid duplication of effort. Land acquisitions funded by the State of Florida are summarized in Appendix D.

This long history of cooperation and coordination between state 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.

With the inclusion of county staff on the Land Acquisition Team and a greater understanding of those land acquisition programs, it is expected that there will be opportunities for future partnerships with those entities.

Degree of Land Ownership (Fee Simple vs. Less-Than-Fee Purchase of Land)

The land cost estimates presented in the Land Acquisition Strategy Project Profile Sheets are based on a fee simple purchase, meaning 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.

In a less-than-fee transaction, only some of the land rights are purchased. For instance, a project may require water storage on a parcel of land for only part of the year, and has no need for the land during the rest of the year. In this case, agencies may wish to purchase only a flowage easement for the land, rather than buying the land outright. During certain times of the year, the landowner has full use of the land.

Less-than-fee purchases are flexible, and can be shaped to meet the needs of a specific project, assuming the landowner is willing to sell the rights that match a project's needs. A conservation easement is another type of less-than-fee acquisition. In this case, the purpose of the easement is to ensure that the land remains in its current condition. In effect, the development rights for a parcel of land are purchased from the owner. This provides protection of on-site natural resources such as wetlands and animal habitat. A conservation easement may be purchased for a cattle ranch. This would allow continued use of the land for ranching at specified grazing levels and with defined amounts of habitat manipulation, but would preclude development of the land.

The cost of less-than-fee acquisition falls in the range of about 25% to 95% of the fee simple cost. The price depends on many factors, such as the number of rights purchased, how much the landowner's use of the land is curtailed, and the location of the land in relation to developing areas. A conservation easement that restricts development of a piece of land will generally cost a higher percentage of the land's total value if the land is in a development corridor or close to an urban area, as compared to the same type of land in a rural setting with little development pressure.

In addition to the land cost savings, less-than-fee acquisition can also keep lands on the tax rolls, can allow those people working on the land to continue their traditional way of life, and can allow for continued agricultural or ranching use. Less-than-fee acquisition,

especially conservation easements, can also provide protection to lands that an owner is not willing to sell outright.

Agencies participating in the ecosystem of South Florida want to acquire only that interest in land needed to complete a project and make it successful. They are employing real estate acquisition strategies that fulfill the restoration needs on a least cost basis. For some ecosystem restoration projects, less-than-fee acquisition may provide enough control over the land to achieve project objectives.

Many factors are considered in deciding which method to use. While less-than-fee simple acquisition provides monetary savings, the amount saved may be negligible if the original landowner's use of the land is severely curtailed or the land is in an area of high development pressure. It also provides less control over a piece of land. In projects like the Everglades restoration, it is important to stay attuned to evolving needs and changing circumstances. A parcel bought by less-than-fee may later have to be purchased in fee simple, resulting in higher overall costs. Public access to less-than-fee lands is generally restricted or prohibited, so this is an additional consideration. While not suitable for every ecosystem restoration project, less-than-fee acquisition is an important technique worthy of consideration where restoration objectives can be fully achieved at a reduced overall cost for necessary land acquisition projects.

Conservation Easements and Mitigation Lands

Mitigation is the protection or enhancement of some lands as a means of offsetting damage to or destruction of other lands. Mitigation can include preservation, restoration, creation or enhancement of wetlands sufficient to offset the impacts of a project. Mitigation may be conducted on site or off site by the applicant, or may be conducted through purchasing credits from a private or public mitigation bank whose service area includes the project. The two mitigation banks for the SFWMD are the Corkscrew Regional Mitigation Bank and the Loxahatchee Mitigation Bank. Off-site mitigation projects in the SFWMD include the CREW Regional Mitigation Area; the Pennsuco Regional Mitigation Area; Cell 17 & 18 mitigation Project and Shingle Creek Mitigation Area. There are also county-level mitigation banks, as well as private mitigation banks.

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. It is a way to provide permanent protections to conserve some natural aspect of the land. Conservation easements are attached to the deed and run with the ownership of the land. The SFWMD began requiring conservation easements as part of its permitting process in the early 90's. The District has now established an Automated Staff Report (ASR) to monitor deliverables due to the District by permittees, including the status of conservation easements. Approximately 2,000 conservation easements covering 31,332 acres have been received and digitized for the GIS database. Florida DEP and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission also have conservation

easements in South Florida. FNAI is beginning to track state and water management district owned mitigation and conservation easements. It is anticipated that with the involvement of the counties and the sharing of these data among agencies and governments that better protection will result for these areas.

SOUTH FLORIDA ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION LAND ACQUISITION STRATEGY

Project Profile Sheets

The team prepared project profile sheets for each acquisition. The following information is on each project profile sheet:

- Project Name
- ~~Overlapping Projects~~
- Project Name Synonym
- Project ID (Map Label)
- Overlapping Projects
- Primary SFER-related Goal
- 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
- Project Acreage/Progress
- ~~Project Cost~~
- Estimated Project Requirments
- Land Cost Estimation Method
- Degree of Ownership Desired
- Comments
- Hyperlink
- Contact
- Update

The goals and objectives of the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force are listed in Appendix A. The following is a discussion of the land acquisitions necessary to accomplish the water and habitat goals of the Task Force that are either federally funded or jointly funded by federal and non-federal agencies.

Goal 1: Get the Water Right

Goal 1 for the Task Force is to "Get the Water Right" with the subgoals of "Get the Hydrology Right" and "Get the Water Quality Right". The Task Force will achieve Goal 1 through the implementation of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (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 SFWMD's Everglades Construction Project (ECP). With the exception of STA1-E, the ECP is wholly state funded and is included in Appendix D.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the South Florida Water Management District prepared the project sheets for Goal 1.

Identification of Lands Needed

Member agencies engaged in acquiring lands for restoration activities utilized comprehensive processes to identify those lands needed for restoration. The estimates on the project profile sheets in this strategy reflect the best available information developed through each agency's analysis. The processes may vary from agency to agency.

The following is an example of the processes used by the USACE and SFWMD for CERP projects. During the Central and Southern Florida Comprehensive Review Study (Restudy), initial acreage needs were estimated, and in some cases, conceptual footprints were developed for CERP projects based on preliminary designs. Identification of CERP lands needed for Goal 1 will be further refined through the Project Implementation Report, other more detailed design documents and the Feasibility Study. 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. Lands within the basin that conceptually meet the established criteria are identified for each alternative, and a gross appraisal is conducted for a selected alternative. A Real Estate Plan for the selected alternative is then completed. This Real Estate Plan provides updated land acquisition and associated cost estimates. Acquisition cost estimates were completed in 2001 for the Water Preserve Areas and Indian River Lagoon projects through the feasibility studyies for thatese areas.

Land Acquisition Funding

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 project profile sheets list the potential funding sources for each project. The following is a discussion of the variety of prospective funding sources for Goal 1 lands.

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 10 years. 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 10 years. These monies are deposited in the Save Our Everglades Trust Fund.

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 on the SFWMD's five-year work plan. Florida Forever is the successor to the state's Preservation ~~ 2~~2000 (P2000)land acquisition program.

~~From 1980 until July 2001~~Prior to P2000~~,~~ the Land Acquisition Trust Fund, which funded the Save Our Coasts program, the Conservation and Recreation Lands Trust Fund (CARL) and the Water Management Land Trust Fund (WMLTF), a.k.a. Save Our Rivers (SOR) was the primary source of funds ~~was used primarily~~ to acquire lands to conserve and protect unique natural areas, endangered species habitat, ~~unusual geologic features~~, wetlands, water resources and significant archeological and historical sites. Land acquired under these programs, and their successors-P2000 and Florida Forever ~~CARL funded acquisitions also~~ provide for natural resource-based conservation and other outdoor recreation on any part of any site if the activity is compatible with conservation purposes. Lands acquired under CARL by the state are generally managed as state parks, ~~recreation areas,~~ wildlife management areas, wilderness areas, forests and greenways. The CARL and SOR land acquisition functions have largely been replaced by the new Florida Forever program, which allocate~~d~~sd 35% of bond proceeds to the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund ~~f~~and another 35% to the water management districts for acquiring and improving lands. SFWMD receives 35% of the districts share, or the equivalent of 12.25% of Florida Forever funds, which amounts to approximately $36.75 million per year. As noted above, $25 million of this is now set aside for CERP implementation.

~~These~~ L~~l~~ands ~~are~~ on ~~a~~ the state's acquisition list ~~developed~~ are identified by the Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC), while the land on the SFWMD's list are identified by the Governing Board.~~.~~ Acquisitions under the Florida Forever program must meet at least two of the Florida Forever goals and measures. These goals and measures capture all of the old CARL 'criteria' but refocuses and expands them to include more ecosystem restoration and water resource protection and development goals. Projects developed by the ARC for the Board of Trustee's Florida Forever list may include only the lands of willing sellers. The Board has the authority to add the lands of unwilling sellers back into a project and can authorize the use of eminent domain to acquire them. The Board's general policy is 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 ~~made~~ 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 d~~D~~elegation sponsored a State Legislative Appropriation for funds to be used by the SFWMD in support of the Biscayne Bay initiatives. Six million dollars were appropriated, of which $3.5 million was ~~will~~ be used ~~for CERP~~ to acquire approximately 188 acres of CERP land acquisition 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 1% Sales Tax Referendum Fund toward the purchase of lands within the Indian River Lagoon (IRL) 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 Project component. Both Collier and St. Lucie County have contributed funds for Critical Project lands. 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 ~~from this fund~~ to the SFWMD or state for land purchases. These partnerships are expected to continue through the implementation of CERP with varying amounts available to leverage state funds. Other federal partnerships will be explored 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, Grassland Reserve Program and the Farm and Ranchland Protection Land Protection program.

Timing of Acquisitions

The timing of land acquisition is critical, as project construction cannot begin until key project lands are acquired. The timelines for CERP projects are those contained in the July 2001 Master Project Implementation Schedule agreed to by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the SFWMD. The Detailed Design memoranda for the Modified Water Deliveries to Everglades National Park and the Supplemental General Reevaluation Report for the C-111 Canal Project describe the deadline for acquisitions for those projects.

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 mentioned above. 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.

In addition, strategies are being developed for 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 developing Standard Operating Procedures and working closely with each other through these types of acquisitions in anticipation of lands being suitable for future CERP projects.

The project schedules and the projections of outputs included in this report span multiple decades and depend upon certain planning assumptions about state and federal budget requests and funding levels, optimized construction schedules, willing sellers, and other contingencies. These assumptions are likely to change as the project progresses, and appropriate revisions to this strategy document will be necessary. Therefore, this document does not represent a commitment by the federal, state or local governments or the tribes to seek appropriations for specific projects and activities at the funding levels laid out in this document.

Strategic Land Acquisitions Identified

The South Florida Water Management District has prioritized land acquisitions for FY 04 needed to keep the CERP and other restoration projects on schedule. That priority list is Appendix F.

Cost of Real Estate

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. These estimates include the probable costs of real estate, associated costs, and contingency. Projects contained within the Indian River Lagoon Feasibility Study and the Water Preserve Area Feasibility Study reflect land cost estimates in October 2000 dollars. 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, the best appraisals, and the implication of condemnation proceedings, if applicable.

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.

Degree of Land Ownership (Fee Simple vs. Less-Than-Fee Purchase of Land)

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.

Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT)

Enacted by the 1992 Florida Legislature as an amendment to Section 373.59, Florida Statutes, the payment in lieu of taxes program (PILT) allows water management districts and the state to make PILT payments to qualifying counties for actual ad valorem tax losses from lands taken off the tax rolls as a result of acquisition by the district or the state under the P2000 and the Florida Forever Programs such as CARL, Save Our Rivers Program and Florida Forever/Board of Trustees programs. Qualifying counties must have a population not exceeding 150,000, and local governments within the qualifying county are also eligible for PILT. The payment to a unit of local government is calculated based on the average amount of actual taxes paid on the subject property for the three years preceding acquisition. Once qualified, a county or local government shall receive 10 consecutive annual payments for each tax loss.

Since inception of the legislation, the South Florida Water Management District has processed only one application, from Hendry County, that became eligible for an annual PILT of $6,787. In 2003, the District remitted to Hendry County their 5th of 10 payments. Hendry and Glades Counties have submitted applications for PILT relative to other lands that have been acquired by the District. These lands would have been eligible for payment, except for the fact that they are under lease and remain on the tax role. If and when these lands cease to be under lease, then the counties would potentially become eleigible for ten annual payments commencing the year the land was removed from the tax role.

In upcoming fiscal year 2004, the District does not anticipate a significant increase in its PILT obligations. While significant land holdings are scheduled for purchase in counties that may qualify for PILT based on population, namely Hendry and Glades, these lands will be acquired pursuant to the CERP Program, and likely funded with revenues from the Save Our Everglades Trust Fund (SOETF). Currently, the legislation does not contain any allowance for PILT payments relative to lands acquired with SOETF monies.

The Florida Division of State Forests makes payments in lieu of taxes to local governments in the Picayune State Forest.

Summary of Goal 1 lands

There are 454 projects with federal and joint federal/state land acquisition dollars identified for Goal 1. Land acquisition required for these projects totals 476,079 462,372 acres with 253,079 234,790 acres (50%) acquired to date. The total estimated cost of these lands is $2,495,094,000 $2,592,787,000 with an estimated $1,726,075,000 $1,714,690,000 needed to complete acquisition of these parcels. The project profile sheets and the summary table for Goal 1 lands are in Appendix C.

~~G~~oal 2: Restore, Preserve, and Protect Natural Habitats and Species

Goal 2 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.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection prepared the project profile sheets for Goal 2. Some of the project profiles represent multiple conservation areas, such as the Florida Keys National Wildlife Refuge Complex (which includes the National Key Deer, Great White Heron, and Key West refuges) and the Ding Darling NWR Complex (which includes Caloosahatchee, Island Bay, Matlacha Pass, and Pine Island refuges).

Other lands that contribute to this strategy and which have no federal funding are in Appendix D: South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Land Acquisition Update.

Identification of Lands Needed

Any major boundary revisions to existing units of the National Park system must be established by an act of Congress. All land acquisition expenditures must be consistent with the existing Congressional authorization. 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. The National Park Service 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 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. The NPS projects in the Strategy are nearly complete, with 5% or less of the land remaining to be acquired.

Numerous federal laws, including refuge-specific legislation, give the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) 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 FWS reports its projects not as expansions of existing refuges, but as acres of land within refuge boundaries remaining to be acquired. Like the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service primarily acquires lands from willing sellers only. Less than 2% of refuge acres remain to be acquired when compared to currently authorized refuge boundaries for the FWS projects in the Strategy.

Land Acquisition Funding

Appropriations of funds for the acquisition of lands for an addition to the National Park and Wildlife Refuge System may be provided in the act authorizing the addition and may be supplemented or provided directly through subsequent passage of the 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.

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 FWS projects as well, such as Florida Panther NWR and National Key Deer Refuge. Florida's land acquisition funding programs are discussed in the Goal 1 section of the Strategy.

Refuge Revenue Sharing and Payment In Lieu of Taxes

When the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service acquires property in fee, the lands are removed from the tax roll. Refuge Revenue Sharing helps offset the loss to the local tax base. The Service makes revenue sharing payments for all land that they administer. The original 1935 Act provided that in lieu of property taxes, 25% of net receipts generated on a refuge be paid to the county where the refuge is located. The Act was amended in 1978 and payments are now based on ¾ of 1% of the market value, or 25% of net receipts or 75 cents per acres. The Service pays 25% of net receipts on all public domain lands that were never on tax rolls. The Service re-appraises the market value of their lands every 5 years. The payments are usually made during the first quarter of each calendar year. Payments are made to the unit of local government that levies and collects real property taxes. The income for the program comes from products or privileges collected on refuges, such as timber sales, grazing, right-of-way, and concession fees. These monies are deposited in the National Wildlife Refuge Fund to pay for revenue sharing.

The National Park Service's Payment in Lieu of Taxes are federal payments to local governments which have certain Federal lands within their boundaries. The program is

administered by the Department of the Interior through the Bureau of Land Management. BLM's responsibility is to calculated the payments according to the formulas established by law and to distribute the funds appropriated by Congress. NEED A COUPLE OF SENTENCES ON ENTITLEMENT LANDS AND FORMULA CALCULATION.

Timing of 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. A land acquisition schedule is included for each of these projects.

Cost of Real Estate

The cost estimates for land acquisitions for national parks and national wildlife refuges are based on fair market value and the best appraisals. The Division of State Lands approved using fair market value for lands purchases in Southern Golden Gate Estates. The Strazzulla wetlands cost estimate is estimated fair market value in the October 2001 Water Preserve Area Feasibility Study.

Degree of Land Ownership (Fee Simple vs. Less-Than-Fee Purchase of Land)

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.

Summary of Goal 2 lands

There are twelve (12) projects with federal and joint federal/state land acquisition dollars identified for Goal 2. To date, 1,517,182 acres have been identified with 1,495,026 acres (98%) acquired. The total estimated cost of these lands is ~~$655,810,000~~ $662,422,000 with an estimated $149,741,000 ~~$163,011,000~~ needed to complete acquisition on these parcels. Goal 2 lands in the project sheets and summary table are ~~summarized~~ in Appendix C.

Goal 3: Foster Compatibility of the Built and Natural Systems

Goal 3 for the Task Force 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 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". This is a statewide goal; a regional breakout was not available from the reporting agency. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Office 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 provide convenient access to playground and urban shopping areas. In addition to providing fitness and recreation opportunities and alternative transportation routes, greenways provide a glimpse into Florida's history. Vast expanses of land showcase farms and groves. Local counties partner with the state for designation and funding for greenways and trails. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection reports that XXXX acres in the sixteen county area have received this designation.

Objective 3-A.2 is "Increase participation in the Voluntary Farm Bill conservation program by 230,000 acres by 2014". The Farm Bill conservation program is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This is a statewide goal; a regional breakout was not available from the reporting agency. 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 acquifer 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 includes several programs to protect farmland.

The Wetland Reserve Program 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. The Farm and Ranch Land Protection 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. The Grassland Reserve Program is a voluntary program that helps landowners and operators restore and protect grassland, including rangeland and pasture land, while maintaining the areas as grazing lands. The program emphasizes support for grazing operations, plant and animal diversity, and grassland and land containing shrubs and forbs under the greatest threat of conversion. The USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service administers these program and reports that there are 25,575 acres participating in these programs in the sixteen county South Florida Ecosystem Restoration region as of September 30, 2003.

Objective 3-A.3 "Acquire an additional 2,500 acres of park, recreation and open space lands by 2005". Park, recreation, and other open space lands protect natural systems and/or serve as buffers between natural and built environments. They often improve water quality and help attenuate flood waters after significant storm events. Public access to these areas fosters an appreciation for the natural system. When residents of urban areas have access to natural areas and a variety of resource-based recreational opportunities, it increases the potential that they will appreciate the importance of protecting a healthy natural system.

The Florida Communities Trust program provides grants to local governments in the state to help implement the natural resource, conservation, coastal, and recreation elements of the statutorily mandated Local Government Comprehensive Plan. These grant funds are primarily used for the acquisition of green and open space, and park and recreation lands at the local level. In additional, many localities use grant funds appropriated by the Florida Legislature to acquire and develop local park and recreation area under the Florida Recreational Development and Assistance Program. County land acquisitions that contribute to this objective are listed as Appendix E. To date, XXXXX acres have been acquired.

South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Land Acquisition Strategy Maps

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 Project Profiles in Appendix C. The Project ID on the Project Profile is the Map Label. Some CERP projects do not have a boundary labeled on the map because the project footprint is not yet defined. The identification process for CERP and other SFER projects is ongoing.

To illustrate all the 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 cost share of those land acquisitions. County level land acquisition is reflected on the map, but due to the size of some projects and the scale of the map, not all acquisitions are easily visible. Detailed county maps are included in Appendix E.

FUTURE EFFORTS

The Land Acquisition Strategy discusses in concept how the restoration goals will be accomplished through the use of land acquisition strategies designed to ensure that only those private property rights necessary to accomplish the restoration goals will be acquired. It also measures and reports on the acquisition of identified lands. The Strategy presents an overall picture for those responsible for funding land acquisition, and also provides cooperating agencies and programs with a perspective on how their current and potential land acquisition projects relate and contribute to the vision of the Task Force.

Many of the CERP projects have only conceptually estimated land requirements. Additional land requirements for the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration have not been determined. Therefore, lands needed for restoration and their costs as identified in the Strategy and its appendices are subject to change over time.

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. Additional projects may be identified through ongoing studies like the CERP Southwest Florida Feasibility Study.

~~The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Multi-Species Recovery Plan (MSRP) will be further refined to include a map to assist in identifying critical habitat for threatened and endangered species. The initial draft of the MSRP implementation strategy is due early 2003.~~

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's draft Multi Species Recovery Plan (MSRP) implementation schedule was completed Spring 2003 and is undergoing review at the Service's Southeast Regional Office. Upon approval, the draft schedule will be announced. The Service continues to implement the MSRP with the assistance of partners and stakeholders. In December 2002, the Panther Subteam of the Multi-speices 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 Plan is available on CD and will be circulated to county land acquisition managers for their use.

In 1994 report, Closing the Gaps in Florida's Wildlife Habitat Conservation System, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWCC) identified Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas (SHCA) needed to meet the minimum conservation goals for 40 declining wildlife species, four 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. In 2005, FWC expects to release an update to its 1994 "Closing the Gaps" report.

The 2005 edition of the FWC "Closing the Gaps" report will include new species conservation models for the 56 species identified in the 1994 and 2000 reports. The report will indicate that the identified species cannot be adequately protected by the current system of public lands. The species models will be based on vegetative maps updated through 2003 to detect changes in land cover and used to evaluate additional SHCA needed for biodiversity conservation. The land cover change detection analysis is expected to be complete by 2004, and new panther and black bear species models are anticipated to be available shortly thereafter. 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, (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 Caloosahatchee Riverclassified all of Florida into various land cover categories. FWC is currently reclassifying the entire state, and will compare the results to earlier classification efforts to show the changes that have occurred in the state. The statewide project will be done by 2004, but the area south of Lake Okeechobee (excluding the Florida Keys) will be completed before then. The FWC is also modeling Florida panther and black bear needs in southwest Florida. The FWCC document "Habitat Conservation Needs of Rare and Imperiled Wildlife in Florida, 2000 edition" identifies lands of concern to the state for conservation.

The Task Force has now developed Subgoals and Objectives for Goal 3: Foster Compatibility of the Built and Natural Systems. Land acquisition will be a component of achieving this goal. Local, county and regional government acquisitions will be an important part of the mosaic of lands needed for Goal 3. Future editions of the Land Acquisition Strategy will include Goal 3 lands and reflect local, county and regional government contributions towards meeting all the goals of the Task Force.

This strategy document is for planning purposes only, is subject to modification, and is not legally binding on any of the 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 within this document.

Appendices

Appendix A: Task Force Goals and Objectives

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

Appendix C: Project Profile Sheets and Summary Table

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

Appendix E: County Land Acquisition Programs

Appendix F: SFWMD FY 04 Priority Land Acquisitions

Appendix G: Land Acquisition Task Team Directive

Appendix A

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 1.4 million acre-feet of surface water storage by 2036
- Objective 1-A.2: Develop aquifer storage and recovery systems capable of storing 1.6 billion gallons per day by 2026
- Objective 1-A.3: Modify 335 miles of impediments to flow by 2019

Subgoal 1-B: Get the water quality right
- Objective 1-B.1: Construct 70,000 acres of stormwater treatment areas by 2036
- Objective 1-B.2: Prepare plans, with strategies and schedules for implementation, to comply with TMDLs (total maximum daily loads) for 100 percent of impaired water bodies by 2011
- Objective 1-B.3: Other Related Water Quality Projects

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 5.6 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

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 2010
- 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

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 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 improving 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 regional water supply by 397 million gallons per day by 2005
- 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
- Objective 3-C.4: Reduce water consumption for irrigation 13,800 acre feet by 2004

*These numbers are statewide goals; regional breakout not available from the reporting agency

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 BC are represented on the map. For this map, as for the Land Acquisition Strategy in general, the term "State" includesd 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 September 30, 20031), regardless of funding source, are shown in light gray to provide context for the federal and joint federal/state projects. The project outlines depict the full extent of the acquisition project boundaries. Acquired lands within project boundaries are shown in the same light gray color as other conservation holdings. Some projects are more than 90% complete; in many of these cases, the remaining inholdings within the project boundaries are too small to be shown on this map and the entire project will appear to be shaded gray.

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 and CERP project name.

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.

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.