Approved Minutes
Joint WG and SCG Meeting
Coral Springs, Florida
September 21, 2011

Welcome, Introductions and Administrative Items

Dan Kimball called meeting to order at 10:00 AM. He noted that Susan Markley, Interim Chair of the SCG would serve as Vice Chair since Greg Knecht could not attend the meeting. Dan would chair the morning session and Susan would chair the afternoon session. He reminded everyone to use their microphones since the meeting was being webcast. No whip-around scheduled on the agenda (Encl. 1) but members could share anything pressing they needed to announce.

Members in Attendance:

In Attendance:	Sep 21	
Working Group (WG) Members		Alternates
Dan Kimball - Chair - NPS - ENP & Dry Tortugas	√	
Greg Knecht - Vice Chair - FL Dept of Environmental	-	
Ernie Barnett - South Florida Water Management	-	Paul Warner
Billy Causey – NOAA, FL Keys Nat'l Marine Sanctuary	-	Nancy Diersing
Chuck Collins – Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission	-	
Sheri Coven – Department of Community Affairs	-	
Roman Gastesi – Local Government	-	
Vacant - U.S. Dept of Transportation	-	
Veronica Harrell-James – U.S. Attorney's Office	√	
Eric Hughes – U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	√	
Vacant – Office of the Governor of Florida	-	
Keith Neves - Bureau of Indian Affairs	-	
Fred Noble - FL Dept. of Transportation	-	
COL Pantano - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	-	Howie Gonzales
Bonnie Ponwith – NOAA, National Marine Fisheries	-	
Bob Progulske – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	√	
Terry Rice - Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of FL	√	
Barry Rosen - United States Geological Survey	√	
W. Ray Scott - FL Dept of Agriculture and Consumer	√	
Craig Tepper – Seminole Tribe of Florida	√	
Vacant - Palm Beach County Water Resources	-	
Vacant - Broward County Department of Natural	-	
Vacant – U.S. Department of Agriculture	-	
Shannon Estenoz - Special Advisor	√	
Science Coordination Group (SCG) Members		
Susan Markley – Acting Chair – Miami Dade County	√	

Vacant – Vice Chair – Science Coordination Group	
Calvin Arnold - U.S. Department of Agriculture, ARS	√
John Baldwin – Florida Atlantic University	√
Lisa Beever – Charlotte Harbor National Estuary	√
Ronnie Best - United States Geological Survey	√
Joan Browder - NOAA, National Marine Fisheries	-
James Erskine - Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of FL	√
Susan Gray - South Florida Water Management	√
Todd Hopkins - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	-
Bob Johnson - National Park Service	√
Chris Kelble - NOAA, AOML	√
Chad Kennedy - FL Dept of Environmental Protection	√
Cherise Maples - Seminole Tribe of Florida	-
Gil McRae – Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation	-
Bill Reck - U.S. Department of Agriculture	√
Dan Scheidt – U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	-
David Tipple - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	√

Kim Taplin reminded the group that the Groundbreaking Ceremony for the C-44 project would be held on Friday, October 28th. Lisa Beever said she had copies of the Charlotte Harbor Seven County Watershed Report (Encl. 2) available on the back table as well as their recommendation for estuarine numeric nutrient criteria. Paul Warner announced that John Outland will be retiring after 35 years at DEP. Dan Kimball reminded everyone to review the minutes for the December 2010 (Encl. 3) and May 2011 (Encl. 4) meetings, approval scheduled for after lunch.

Shannon Estenoz reported the Task Force office is in the process of doing an extensive internal review of the work products they produce and one of the initiatives is to make them a lot more user friendly. Staff is working to overhaul the Task Force website and make the reports they produce such as the Strategic Plan interactive and web based. She encouraged everyone to look at the Strategic Plan which is the first one to become available with all of the hyperlinks. Shannon recognized Kevin Burger for 20 years of service. Dan Kimball noted that in addition to the regularly scheduled public comment periods they will provide for an opportunity for public comment, if time permits, after each of the presentations.

Consultation Workshop

Dan Kimball reminded everyone that WRDA 96, WRDA 2000 and the Pro Regs provides for consultation to occur with the Corps and the local sponsor with the Task Force. Kim Taplin provided a presentation (Encl. 5) reviewing the purpose of consultation and noted the 1st generation projects have been authorized and under construction. They are now working to get authorization for the 2nd generation projects (C-43, C-111 Spreader Canal, BBCW and Broward WPA).

C-111 Spreader Canal

Some of the project objectives include improving the flow patterns, hydroperiods and ecological connectivity of Southern Glades, Model Lands and adjacent natural areas. Project is adjacent to ENP on

the Eastern border and is designed to improve plant species, animal abundance and keep water in the system. The recommended plan Alternative 2DS is consistent with previous briefing. Project involves creating two detention areas to form a hydraulic ridge as well as some additional features that include plugging some canals. Estimated project cost is $162 million. She reviewed the project area and hydraulic ridge concept and the benefits to the system which include rehydrated sawgrass freshwater habitat and approximately 240,000 acres of benefited area. Report is expected to go to Congress in February 2012.

Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands

Project area borders Biscayne National Park and represents the first phase. Some of the project objectives include restoring quantity, quality, timing and distribution of freshwater and redistributing freshwater flows. Recommended plan Alternative O Phase 1 has three components: the Deering Estate; Cutler Wetlands; and the L-31E. The three components as well as the recreation features were reviewed. Total project cost is $191 million and construction for the remaining phases is expected to start in January 2015. The report will be submitted to Congress in August 2012 for authorization.

Barry Rosen asked what would be the acreage of restored wetlands in Biscayne Bay. Kim Taplin promised to look up the information and provide it. James Erskine asked why a lined channel was chosen. Kim replied that it was to keep the water in that area of the system is a very porous aquifer. James also asked whether the PIR gave any consideration to degradation of water quality or oxygen demand of the stagnant water. Kim added that they did not expect the water to stay long. When there is water available they will be pumping into the wetlands.

Public Comment

Julie Hill-Gabriel (Audubon) said she was encouraged they are finally getting to these projects adding that they need to start looking at operations and the issue with the agricultural land. Hope to have the most benefits possible when these projects are finally in the ground.

Khalil Kettering (NPCA) said he is really excited to see this moving forward. For the C-111 they need to make sure they do see increased water levels at S-18C, incrementally. Also excited the SFWMD will be completing some of these components by the end of the year. They are interested in the report on the south Dade canal seasonal drawdown and how that impacts some aspects of the BBCW project. Hope to see Phase 2 planning next time this project is presented.

Ronnie Best asked for a snapshot of the monitoring program associated with both of these projects. Kim Taplin said there is a whole monitoring plan and both PIRs have an entire appendix associated with those monitoring plans.

Ray Scott reiterated the concerns they have had with C-111 all along with regards to impacts on private lands. The PIR indicates there will be adverse impacts and a reduction of level of service for flood control. They appreciate that there is some effort to monitor those impacts but they continue to be concerned that private lands are placed at risk and there is no budget for land acquisition.

Dan Kimball noted he will report to the Task Force that there is support for these two projects and will note the comments about the potential risks to private lands as well as the challenges to the budget. Dan noted that the science communication staff at ENP working with partners (Miami Dade County, SFWMD, Corps as well as FDOT) put geo cache sites at these two locations. There are quite a few people that go to Deering and to the sites to get the information sheets. This is a new communication mechanism being used which is like a scavenger hunt using GPS type coordinates with the end game to learn about the projects.

Ronnie Best asked whether either of these two projects were dependent on the system-wide monitoring program of MAP. Kim Taplin said they have coordinated what MAP is doing with project level monitoring so they don't duplicate it. Howie Gonzales added they have had detailed discussions with how they set up the monitoring and BBCW and C-111 will have stand alone monitoring. Ronnie Best explained the reason he was asking was that for Biscayne Bay there is significant reduction in monitoring and they have to feel comfortable that the monitoring program is adequate because if it is dependent on MAP then it is inadequate. Susan Markley said they would have an opportunity to talk later, however not everyone has the same view that the level of monitoring that is project specific or associated with MAP is going to be adequate to assess these projects or make distinctions of the possible effects of these projects and other non CERP related things. It is a serious issue and there may be consequences as a result of unavoidable cuts.

Restoration Budget Briefings

Karen Tippett provided a presentation (Encl. 6) on the Corps' reorganization at the Jacksonville District to make them more efficient and effective. The Everglades Division has been done away with and they now have the Programs and Project Management Division headed by Dave Hobbie and the Planning and Policy Division headed by Stu Appelbaum. She provided an overview of the President's Budget for FYs 09, 10 11 and 12. ARRA funds were a nice boost that allowed them to expedite some of their work on several projects. FY12 could be reduced by $30 million and something will have to come off the plate and decisions will have to be made. HQ provided policy in FY 11 that allowed them to reallocate funds among SFER projects without having to ask for a reprogramming action and giving them flexibility to execute. She reviewed the contracts that were awarded in FY11 and what is scheduled for award in FY12.

Paul Warner provided a presentation (Encl. 7) on the budget and organizational changes. He reviewed the guidance from DEP to develop a budget that focuses on core mission and debt service requirements. Ad valorem tax is now $280 million less than it was during the peak years (2007-2008) and puts them to where they were 10 years ago in terms of ad valorem revenue. Ad valorem revenue is almost 50% of their revenue stream. He reviewed the FY12 budget revenues and expenditures and noted that almost 70% goes towards restoration and O&M. Expenditure for modeling and scientific support is almost $11.9 million and represents 2% of the budget. A total of $181.8 million has been budgeted for operations and maintenance and $217.9 million for Everglades restoration for FY12. The money for Everglades restoration includes continuation of some ongoing projects with the Corps, completion of Compartment B and C build-out and starting some new initiatives. He reviewed the organizational changes noting they are now similar to state agencies with Divisions, Bureaus and Sections. They had a

major staff reduction in order to meet the budget and went from 1933 employees in FY11 to 1647 full time positions. The management team went from 129 to 51. O&M still has the majority of the staff.

Chad Kennedy clarified that they are constrained as to what some of the budget sources could be used for such as the ag priv tax. Paul agreed and said some are tied to specific activities and the ag priv tax is set aside for implementation of the long term plan. Shannon Estenoz said it is important to point out that of all the sources the ad valorem tax is the most flexible. She asked about the expenditures pie chart and whether that included the water quality stuff. Paul replied that yes the water quality, long term plan, CERP, Kissimmee, C-111, Mod Waters would be included.

Ronnie Best said that everyone knows about the belt tightening, however, there are disproportionate cuts to the science initiative for both the feds and state. He urged managers need to ask if science was no longer needed. Paul Warner said they are continuing to look for ways to streamline and improve the efficiency of the monitoring. The goal of the SFWMD and the Corps is to put more money into constructing projects. They are not downplaying the need of science. Monitoring and science represents 5-6% of the total budget.

Susan Markley added the same thing is happening in Miami Dade County. There was a recall election for the previous mayor in the spring and an overwhelming voice from voters for lowering taxes, rolling back decisions made by previous administrations and downsizing county government. The new mayor is moving forward with that and the final budget hearings are this week. A number of departments in the county will be reduced and DERM will be consolidated with Building and Neighborhood Compliance effective October 1st. Details are still under discussion and they are trying to identify their core services and functions. Chris Kelbe said they all understand the need to get projects in the ground and he voiced his concern with using the language that they are streamlining and optimizing science when it is already streamlined and optimized.

Bob Johnson noted that most of the $11.9 million for science, monitoring and modeling is at the project level. They have to keep in mind that there is the system-wide monitoring and the project monitoring. The MAP process was focused on the system-wide monitoring. It is easier to justify projects when they can see a project being built and measure the direct benefit than it is a project that goes across the system.

Calvin Arnold asked what for clarification on what is included in mission support expenditures. Paul Warner explained that it includes administrative support, finance, intergovernmental programs, public outreach and the office of counsel. It is down significantly from previous years. Shannon Estenoz asked if SAP is included. Paul said yes. Shannon explained SAP is a business management software, state of the art and there was a conscious decision that it would pay big dividends. The dollar accountability has gone through the roof. SAP is a costly infrastructure but the consensus is that it is worth it. Paul Warner agreed it has paid off. Paul Warner clarified that the SFWMD and the Corps are not walking away from science they are trying to find a way to meet the budget restrictions and put projects in ground but he understands the frustration.

Restoration Project Briefings

Paul Warner provided a presentation (Encl. 8) focusing on the projects where the SFWMD is performing the construction. He clarified Karen Tippett would focus on those projects that are cost shared and the Corps is doing the construction. For the BBCW, the Cutler flow-way design is complete but they do not have the money in their budget to move forward and he is currently not sure if and when they will move forward. Because of the 50/50 cost share balance they are looking for the opportunity to possibly do some construction and get credit for it. It will cost about $16 - $20 million to construct those features. The Deering Estate feature is nearing completion and should be completed in November. Costs are approximately $5.4 million. Overall the SFMWD has spent $77 million for land acquisition, expedited design and expedited construction for the entire project. They are hoping to get a Project Partnership Agreement (PPA) so they can get the credit on the books. The expedited portion of the L-31E has been completed. C-111 SC Western Project, the S-199 and S-200 pump stations are 85% complete, Frog Pond is 100% complete and the aerojet canal modifications are 90% complete and should be done in November. Lakeside Ranch STA, hope to have it included some day in the PIR for the Lake Okeechobee Watershed Project, finishing up Phase 1 in May. Pump station is 65% complete and STA is 90% complete. Compartments B and C will both be flow through operational on or before July 2012.

Shannon Estenoz asked if there were any concerns that drought conditions could delay that and whether they needed a specific set of conditions across the spring in order to meet the July date. Paul Warner explained they have committed to the court that it would be flow through capable by July. Dan Kimball asked if there were any actions taken with the historic fish farm in the area. Paul replied that there is ongoing dredging of the sediments. Shannon said she saw a video of a panther visiting a structure and asked which structure it was. James Erskine clarified it was on the eastern border at Everglades National Park. Kim Taplin added it was the C-111 in south Dade. Ronnie Best said the plan looks very good and asked if the total fuel costs to operate these as well as the carbon footprint could be included in future briefings.

Karen Tippett provided a presentation (Encl. 9) noting the Tamiami Trail construction is 34% complete with the completion date scheduled for December 2013. She reviewed ongoing work which included the roadwork which will start in November 2011. Picayune Strand construction continues to be on schedule with two construction contracts (Merritt Pump Station and Faka Union Pump Station). The Miller Pump Station is scheduled for award in FY13 provided they get sufficient funding. They also hope to award one of the protection features in FY13. Howie Gonzales added the protection features are required ultimately for operations of the project. There are areas of development in the southern portion of the project area and they are doing hydrologic analysis to confirm what the impacts will be and ultimately ensure that when they operate the project it will not negatively affect those developed areas. The C-44 Reservoir/STA project has three contracts to be solicited and constructed over a seven year period. The first contract was awarded in July 2011, the second was planned for 2013 but has now slipped to 2014 and the third is planned for 2016. On the Kissimmee River they continue to work on the general re-evaluation report which is scheduled for approval in FY13. They need the post operation change because of the Section 902 limit due to increased land costs. They are scheduled to award two

contracts in FY12 and the last construction contract in FY13. Construction will be physically complete in December 2014.

Chad Kennedy noted that on the C-44 there were some agriculture chemical issues that the Corps and the SFWMD worked through and he complimented them on reaching an agreement that makes fiscal sense for both agencies. On the Nubbin Slough STA near Lakeside Ranch STA the Corps has been diligently trying to overcome some technical problems. James Erskine, on the Tamiami Trail project, asked if the December 2013 completion date was completion of the bridge or does it anticipate some modifications to the existing trail and canal system to the north. Howie Gonzales replied that it is completion of the one-mile bridge and associated roadwork. The scope of the project has them constructing the elevated bridge and being in a position to remove the roadway for that one mile segment.

Public Comment

Dawn Shirreffs (NPCA) said that over the course of the next year the WG should take a strong look at how they resolve some of the challenges particularly moving water through WCA 3B. NPCA would love the expertise in this room to further study that issue and make recommendations to the Task Force. Secondly, FPL is evaluating a transmission corridor on land within ENP. NPCA is adamantly opposed to that corridor. There are also a number of permitting concerns that are being raised and for an alternative corridor to be evaluated by FPL. The good news is that an alternative is being looked at right now in an informal way. NPCA would like to see the WG make strong recommendations to the TF. Dan Kimball said those are some great ideas for when they discuss the workplan. He added that the Park Service is evaluating an exchange for lands on the eastern boundary of the park.

A video clip of a panther at S332B was shown. Susan Markley reminded the members that the minutes needed to be approved. Barry Rosen made a motion which was seconded by Ray Scott. The minutes were approved without objection.

Biscayne Bay Regional Restoration Coordination Team (BBRRCT)

Dick Frost noted that he really enjoys being chair of this team. The team is made up of energized, dedicated people from agencies and stakeholder interest groups. The members along with Theresa Woody, who provides staff support, have tackled a lot of difficult issues. He reviewed the team membership which is diverse and presented the Annual Report (Encl. 10) which condenses a year of their work into ten topics which in one way or another are related to the quantity, quality, timing and distribution (QQTD) of freshwater flows into Biscayne Bay.

Regarding water quality, nutrients and sedimentation are a concern and lately they have been talking about the dredging of the Port of Miami channel. Salinity levels are a major challenge to restoring the estuary conditions in the bay. Regarding quantity, it is strongly felt by many that the current quantity of freshwater entering Biscayne Bay is not adequate for restoration and is barely adequate for life support. Any significant restoration effort will require more fresh water than the bay receives now. Restoration requires that water flow timing mimic historic natural cycles and many on the team believe that there are opportunities to improve the timing and freshwater input. Distribution, spreading out surface water

flows into Biscayne Bay can help undo the harmful impacts of freshwater pulses that now come from the canal mouths adjoining the bay. There has been some progress in this area and there are two CERP projects (BBCW and C-111 SC) that have potential to significantly improve the distribution of freshwater. However, each project is planned in two phases and team members are concerned over both projects being fully completed. Other concerns include the Turkey Point expansion, annual drawdown of canal water levels and land use planning around the bay. Success stories include the record of wetland restoration that Miami Dade County has. There is also an impressive history of resource monitoring by government agencies and universities and a substantial body of resource monitoring data that will serve the agencies well in the future, if the resource data continues to be collected.

For the Everglades there has been a tremendous effort over the years to get the water right and progress has been made. This is not yet true for Biscayne Bay and such efforts are just beginning. The BBRRCT wants to make sure this group has the best possible understanding of the challenges and opportunities as well as the tools that are now available. He asked the group to let him know if there were any issues they would like the team to look into. Shannon Estenoz thanked Dick Frost for his long legacy adding that it was great to see him again. Susan Markley noted that a lot of the members are volunteers.

RECOVER Monitoring and Assessment Plan (MAP)

Susan Gray provided a Power Point (Encl. 11) clarifying that it is not her presentation but the result of an interagency group taking a look at the monitoring that is being conducted primarily under the RECOVER portion of CERP, the Monitoring and Assessment Plan (MAP) in light of a difficult financial situation. They were asked to look at optimizing and prioritizing the work they are doing. This is the third and possibly the fourth time they optimize the program so there isn't any fluff to play with and they have continually optimized and done process improvements. This is true not only for the MAP but the partner agencies and their programs.

She gave kudos Gretchen Ellinger from the Corps and Patty Gorman from SFWMD who did a lot of work conducting the workshops. Phase 1 was the CERP-wide Monitoring Optimization effort where they got together with each of the regions that are covered in the MAP and got all the principal investigators along with the contract managers and looked at all the work that was being done and looked for opportunities to optimize the monitoring work that was underway. She thanked everyone who participated. They used two scenarios (50% and 65% reductions). Phase 2 was prioritization and they held three regional prioritization meetings and a system-wide prioritization meeting in September to develop the RECOVER workplan. They took a holistic view to see what could be sustained. There was a significant cut to the program and they ended up with a 59% reduction for MAP. The cuts that were made were based on science. They were not based on the contract amounts or on who was doing the work and based on what the science requirements were at the time. She reviewed the prioritization guidelines used and the recommendations for each of the regions (Northern Estuaries, Southern Coastal Systems, Greater Everglades and Lake Okeechobee). They recognized they are not working in a vacuum and that some of the monitoring they reduced or eliminated cut out some of the stoplight indicators the TF and WG have used in the past. There was a need to stay within the funds available to them. There is a lot of science that is still remaining and she reviewed what MAP science remains as well as the science

being done by partner agencies. She noted that when a program is reduced by 60% there are impacts. Susan also reviewed some of the real outcomes of the cuts which included having a reduced view of what is happening system-wide. They will also be losing some of the "cause and effects" science which is critical to understanding how the system operates. Unfortunately they recognize that no one else has the ability to pick up these monitoring components.

Susan Markley stated that her agency is part of the partnership working on these activities and tries to assist RECOVER. Everyone understands the reality that all the agencies are facing and the unavoidability of cuts. It is important for policy makers to understand the consequences. Sometimes there was a perception that there was duplication and excessive costs. From the outset CERP MAP and other programs have always been optimized and decisions were made early on using conceptual models to pick the most critical priority types of information that would be important for the decision making process. These are significant cuts that will make it impossible in the short term for the SCG and others to update the documents they have been using to help show how the science is being incorporated into decision making such as the Stoplight Indicators and the System Status Report (SSR). When the spatial and temporal scales are reduced in these complex monitoring programs they lose sensitivity and the ability to detect anything except for the biggest changes that may happen. Susan stressed her goal is to talk about it so they all understand what the likely consequences of all these cuts mean.

Shannon Estenoz asked whether they folded in the project level monitoring that exists when they went through the prioritization process. Susan Gray said they did look at it to the extent to make sure the projects were not specifically relying on a key piece of information coming out of the RECOVER MAP. Shannon also asked if they looked at the opportunities for project level monitoring to provide information they might otherwise lose in MAP. Susan Gray said they did suggest that some of the project level monitoring should be given back to the projects since they were project specific. Shannon also asked about the percentage cuts shown in red and whether they were just the RECOVER cuts or do they incorporate what might be lost in matching dollars. Susan Gray replied it is only the MAP reductions. There are no dollar amounts and these are guidelines in terms of what they think they can do with the projects based on their conversations with the principal investigators. All the scopes are being negotiated and if for some reason the principal investigator can't do the work for what they are proposing and there is no way to bridge the gap then they may end up not doing the project.

Ronnie Best pointed to the coastal gradients as an example with a 57% cut. USGS is putting a significant amount of funding for that effort and if they have already eliminated a significant part of it then they have to step back and ask whether it is sufficiently funded to provide meaningful information or do they drop it altogether and invest those dollars someplace else. Chris Kelble said it is important for them to make the Task Force aware that they have lost a significant amount of scientific information that is used to make decisions and they are not going to have the system-wide picture. Susan Markley also added that the project level monitoring has a shorter term and smaller spatial scale.

Ronnie Best asked about the total number of dollars invested in monitoring and assessment. Dave Tipple said they were approaching $8 million for the Corps and the SFWMD and they are now at $3.6 or $3.7 million total. Ronnie added that when they look at the total cost of Everglades restoration activities

such as building bridges and buying land this amount of money is devastating to science. Within the context of the overall budget – no one will argue that they need to build things, they all agree. But this is an enormous impact on the science component and minimal impact on overall savings. The process was done on a compressed schedule and they did the best that they could within the time they had. He noted that Assistant Secretary Darcy gave a presentation at the National Conference on Ecosystem Restoration (NCER) and said that there are five ecosystems nationwide that are high priority within the Corps and the Everglades is one. She also said they are moving away from the old way of looking at project by project and going to the system-wide approach and here they are cutting the system-wide information. New science and new information just went out the window. As an example he noted that they have nothing of any significance addressing sea level rise or climate change. He said he thinks every one of these projects needs to be revisited and they need to ask whether they have an adequate monitoring program for both upstream and downstream impacts. A lot of work went into developing the 11 stoplight indicators that would give them information and now 8 remain.

Chris Kelble said the unintended consequences of a project will now not be captured with this approach. They were doing ecosystem based management and with these cuts they can't come anywhere close to being able to say they are doing that anymore. Chad Kennedy said it is important to manage expectations and the process needs the science to justify the projects.

Public Comment

Julie Hill Gabriel (Audubon) said she was reflecting on this conversation and described this as a reality check conversation, which is extremely important. It may take five years to see an impact and it's a shame that those smaller factors won't be seen. The solution is building back the capacity and Audubon will help try to do that. Until that happens they need to continue having these conversations until they see what the outcomes are and these things come to fruition.

Martha Musgrove (Arthur R Marshall Foundation) said she deeply regrets having to listen to this because when CERP was established it was the first of what they hoped would be many approaches to serious environmental issues this country faces. CERP was a comprehensive plan and they are removing the base data seemingly entirely. This is a path to very ill conceived projects. Not sure how they are going to manage expectations and what they can expect if they make these kinds of cuts in monitoring. She said she hoped the next discussion they have will be on how to manage expectations.

Shannon Estenoz noted that in listening to the conversation, scientists are telling them they are concerned. The way they communicate this to the TF matters a lot. Policy makers in this fiscal climate are faced with some real choices and specific realities and general statements tend to be caught up in the noise. They can communicate this concern by using examples such as Biscayne Bay. There seems to be consensus, although they have only heard from a few folks, that there is concern with their ability to move forward with the same level of certainty in the implementation phase. This has to be communicated to the decision makers and they can't just wait for decision makers to ask the right questions. She is looking to the scientists to help communicate what they could be facing five and ten years from now.

Susan Markley stated that her biggest concern has been that there is a perception that science wouldn't suffer from these cuts and things would still be adequate. There is a growing voice that that is not the case. It may be that the cuts are unavoidable but that needs to be aired. Susan Gray said that one of the things that struck her during this process was that they need to be able to explain in plain English what these cuts mean and she suggested the SCG could help with that. On a technical end they need to investigate whether there are any other mechanisms to help bridge the gaps. The final one is communicating the importance of science and why they need this information and is something this group could also help with. Ronnie Best said they are talking about $4.4 million which is a lot of money to the science but not the overall budget and construction program. There comes a time when they must choose what is right and what is easy. Cutting money is easy but not right. Barry Rosen reminded everyone that when they shut down a scientist/science program they are shutting down years' worth of development of that staff. The knowledge base goes away and is not as simple as contract work. All that information is used for the SSR and is an important product. Susan Markley said the same thing is true about the agency itself and they are losing the institutional knowledge that got us to where they are now.

Shannon Estenoz said she did not want them just talking to each other and asked whether this constitutes a consensus that gets reported up to the TF or do they form a sub-committee. Dan Kimball replied that historically when they have had issues like this they did a report out at the TF meeting. Susan Markley added they have also done a formal presentation and this needs to be specifically on their agenda. Nick Aumen suggested that to make this message stronger they need to hear from the users of this science as well. Make sure the people who need the science for their resource management decisions have a voice as well. Shannon Estenoz asked whether it would be reasonable, as a member of the WG, to suggest that members of the SCG volunteer to come together between now and the Oct TF meeting to craft a presentation or a report that takes Nick Aumen's recommendation into account and have this on the TF agenda. The TF deserves to know what is going on and the science community deserves to have the opportunity to communicate their concerns. Paul Warner asked if the report would be from the SCG or WG. Susan Markley clarified the SCG would have the lead.

Calvin Arnold said it was important to remember that the report to the TF seems self serving if they are just speaking as scientists and they need to incorporate a component showing the user that is anticipating the data. Chris Kelble said he would like to see some of the people who are using the science participate on the team. Craig Tepper said it is difficult to say one side is more important than the other, projects versus system-wide. It is our human thought process that is watching the environment and trying to project what it is saying to us. From the tribal perspective, if you are still crawling then you are still alive. So even if you are taking this big budget cut you are still alive and you have to move on and make rational decisions. Optimization, prioritization and figuring out where the FTEs need to go and where the contract money needs to be is the right process to get there. Craig ended by saying that they are doing an important job and they need to keep going even if they are cut off at the knees. Susan Markley thanked everyone and said they would finish this assignment offline.

Status of the L-31N Seepage Management Project

Tom MacVicar noted his presentation (Encl. 12) was on behalf of the Miami Dade Limestone Products

Association. It is a business association in Miami Dade County that includes rock miners, processors and users of limestone products. The Lake Belt is in northwest Miami Dade and is the center of the largest limestone deposit suitable for aggregate material in the state of Florida. Four of the top aggregate quarries in the country are located in the Le Belt. There are three rail lines that go into the Lakebelt to serve the rest of the state of Florida with limestone products. It is an important commercial enterprise both for Miami Dade and for Florida. They spent a number of years in the 1990s developing the Lake Belt Plan which had to do with how they regulate mining in the Lakebelt. One of the features was what to do about mitigation. Obviously all wetland impacts have to be mitigated as part of the law and the plan gave them guidance on how they would do that. One of the things the Lakebelt Plan did, which was enacted by the Florida Legislature in 1999, was that it placed a fee per ton on all limestone products that are sold out of the Lakebelt. The Department of Revenue collects it and distributes it back to a trust fund that is held at the SFWMD and funds are managed by the Lakebelt Mitigation Committee. That is the funding source for this project.

There are two seepage control projects within the Lakebelt EIS. One is the seepage project along the Dade-Broward levee and that is purely mitigation for seepage project. There is no wetland benefit associated with that and is a requirement as mining expands to mitigate for any impacts and changes to groundwater flows that may happen as a result of the mining. The other project is the L-31N at Northeast Shark River Slough within ENP and that is actually a wetlands enhancement project. It is a way to provide offsite wetland mitigation for wetland impacts associated with mining. In March 2009 the Lakebelt Mitigation Committee approved construction of a seepage management field test along the L-31N canal to test the viability of the concept. They approved a 1,000 foot test wall one mile south of Tamiami Trail which was built in August 2009. They know the canal sucks a lot of water out of the park and ships it south and the concept is to keep the water in the park and out of the L-31N canal to some extent. He reviewed how the wall was built, the technology used to build it and the field test analyses that were conducted. Analyses showed the barrier leaked and they conducted forensics on the wall last March. At most of their sites they found they had uniform slurry down to a depth of about 12 feet and the wall leaked right where they needed it not to leak. They have gone back to the contractor to correct this and he is convinced this is a solvable problem. The goal is to bring the seepage control project on line concurrent with the completion of the Tamiami Trail Bridge so that more water can be put into NE Shark River Slough. The goal is to build the wall all the way down to C-1 or the G-211 structure from Tamiami Trail and this will be a little over seven miles. They are recommending going 30 feet deep instead of 18 feet deep. This project will induce significant wetland benefit inside the park and the data was reviewed with the group. Next steps include the Lake Belt Mitigation Committee meeting on September 30th to consider approval for the 2-mile, 30 ft deep barrier as the next phase of this project. They have already had several meetings with the contractor. They have also heard from the Corps that if they build a 2-mile wall they have to collect every bit of data to prove that it works and how well it works so that when they build a 7-mile wall they will have total confidence in the range of changes they will see.

Shannon Estenoz said this has a tremendous amount of promise adding that seepage management is something they are struggling with. Tom MacVicar noted that when they built their model they had to

have boundary conditions as well as topo and EDEN provided them with the information they needed. Ronnie Best noted that EDEN is a map based program with significant funding from USGS that will see significant cuts. Tom added that they have been asked about impacts in the Bird Drive basin. The canal dominates the hydrology on both sides and the fact that they are only changing how much is exported, the Bird Drive basin sees no impact from the wall and the modelling shows that. Dan Kimball noted the Park has been part of the technical committee working with Tom and here they are piloting something but they are getting benefits along the way which is incremental adaptive restoration, which is what the NAS was referring to in their report. This is being approached with a real scientific discipline. He noted that with the one mile they ended up with a rubble zone and now they are going deeper. He asked if the technology was there and whether the construction problem was solved. Tom replied that they have to prove it or they are not going to do that. Bob Progulske asked how long it would take to prove success. Tom said they want to build this in this dry season and look at the impacts the next wet season.

Bob Johnson added they will know the hydrologic benefits relatively quickly but they are not going to know the ecological benefits up front and whether they give the right mitigation credit. Bob Johnson said it is important to look at the flow restoration projects to the west and the CERP features to the east as well as other features now that the Bird Drive recharge area will not go forward. Ideally it would be to put them all into a model and evaluate the effects of all these different projects and then they can tweak out what the seepage barrier does by itself but again they are not going to have that work done before the decision on moving this forward and there is a leap that they are going to have to take with the pilot. They have to feel comfortable enough to move forward.

Shannon Estenoz said they do cumulative impact analysis all the time and asked if there is a corresponding way to do a cumulative benefit analysis. Bob Johnson there are CERP features that they did the analysis on that are not moving forward so they have to figure out what the new features are and combine them into a model but that is going to take a long time and they want to move this pilot forward so they can match it up to the flow restoration piece. Eric Hughes said the Lakebelt Committee has been in place for well over 10 years and has worked closely with the mining industry to try to implement cost effective compensatory wetland mitigation. Until recently almost all that mitigation has occurred in the Pennsuco region and most has involved willing sellers and Melaleuca removal. Those actions have been quite successful and there has been biological monitoring and follow-up. Another major effort the Mitigation Committee has been working on in conjunction with ENP is trying to remove exotics and fill material around the western periphery of the 8.5 SMA. The miners are looking for mitigation to help offset their impacts and he is thinking that there are well past 80% in the amount of mitigation credits. One of the issues with the agencies that sit on the committee is the challenge of trying to apply good science and try to come up with the best professional analysis of cost benefits. Tom MacVicar said there is a limit to what they will pay and they have to find something that works for cost.

Public Comment

Dawn Shirreffs (NPCA) said they are cautiously optimistic and think there is a lot of potential. At this point it is hard to have a hard position when they realize there will be some short term and long term benefits to ENP. She encouraged them to keep the idea of long term accountability in mind as pieces of the wall go in.

Drew Martin (Sierra Club) said they are glad to see the mitigation, however, they are an opponent to the rock mining and they don't want to lose sight of the damage that the rock mining has done to the water quality in the area. He said he wondered if the long term benefits will be to keep sea water out of the Everglades and whether they are thinking about how that might work. He asked if they were talking to the communities out there about their elevation levels adding that all the seepage in the world is not going to stop Mother Nature.

Martha Musgrove asked whether ENP has money to monitor results over the long term. Bob Johnson said there are ongoing hydrologic monitoring networks through their internal funds, MAP and project specific. Again, how to come up with the specifics for this project is difficult as they build the project then the full project then MWDs, so the difficulty comes with the layering on of all these associated projects. Bob clarified it wouldn't be the Park that pays for the cost of monitoring. Susan Markley added it is attached to the project. To understand the system-wide situation they have relied on information that has come out of EDEN, for example.

Martha Musgrove clarified that her point is that if it works or even if it doesn't work, it is going to be there and there will be some long term implications of it being there. It is a mitigation project not a CERP project – good idea to have some long term monitoring taking place and that needs to be built in. Tom MacVicar said this is one of the most heavily monitored places in the country with the exception of the farms in the EAA.

Developing the WG/SCG 2012 Work Plan

Susan Markley said there is no presentation for this agenda item and it is envisioned as a shared discussion for both groups on things they have heard today as well as other things they know need to be specifically included. This will be passed on to the Task Force for their feedback. The SCG has been working on a few projects that are still out there and they may need to identify those as continuing efforts. One was the conceptual model for climate change with Barry Rosen leading the discussion. More recently, a sub team has been working on coming up with a more site specific case study focusing on the DECOMP Physical Model as a way of facilitating discussion about how they use science in decision making.

Bob Johnson added that the Critical Ecosystems Studies Initiative (CESI) will probably have some reductions and they should look at the range of monitoring they are doing. There may be some opportunities where one project is losing the ability to do monitoring but there is another project nearby where they may be able to pick up some of the stations that may have been lost. For the hydrologic monitoring network there is an effort to look at the whole network and identify where there is duplication of sites. He would like to see some follow-up on this and they aren't just talking about MAP to see how the reductions affect the bigger picture. Shannon Estenoz echoed Bob's comments adding that the MAP issue needs to be discussed at the October Task Force. She noted Dawn Shirreff's two suggestions (WCA 3B and the alternative corridor) and suggested it could be a brainstorming session on the suite of challenges such as tree island health with WCA 3B. There is room there for continued engagement for the Working Group. There is openness from the current TF leadership to

have information flow both ways. Rachel Jacobsen is the Acting Chair and there is an opportunity for them to raise issues to the Task Force.

Chad Kennedy, on the MAP process, said it is a good time to look at what monitoring they are doing and perhaps do lessons learned. Ronnie Best said the SCG historically had a standing item on the agenda with it sometime being just an update and other times being longer. He recommended the WG and SCG have a standing agenda item every time, even if it is just an update of what is going on and MAP should be on the next agenda. Reducing MAP excludes those emerging challenges of which they are getting no information such as sea level rise and climate change.

Craig Tepper they have been living with the C&SF system for 50 - 60 years and the maintenance of this system is not clear. He asked when they were going to address the age of these large pump systems that are protecting people from floods and supplying the water. He asked when was the last time they had a comprehensive look at all of the maintenance. Some of the flood gates are crumbling and asked what the real priority was for the maintenance. Shannon Estenoz said the SFWMD does have a 50-year O&M Plan and perhaps they could come and talk to this group about it. They have an aging infrastructure and there is a long term investment that needs to be made in refurbishing it as they re-design it. CERP is the reconfiguration of the C&SF project and they are starting to incorporate sea level rise into the O&M Plan. Craig Tepper pointed to the S65-E which has a hole that should have been addressed earlier. Paul Warner said they do have a 50-year plan and there is a cycle for refurbishments but there are always going to be things that come up that weren't planned. They are working on a five year O&M coordinated plan with the Corps.

Chris Kelble suggested it may be time to re-examine the indicators and potential new ones. There has been a lot of good data collected in MAP and if they are losing some then maybe they should be picking some up. Susan Markley said this is something the SCG could do.

Dan Kimball, on the alternative corridor comment, said that FPL owns a 330 ft wide and 7.5 mile long wide east-west strip in ENP. Back in 2009 they were given the authority to look at an exchange for land currently within the park, roughly 260 acre strip. They are in the process of doing an EIS. They would likely build the three transmission lines on the exchange lands or somewhere else between Krome Ave and the UDB if they buy it out. The NRC is also doing an EIS and the Corps is looking at the 404 implications. There are ecosystem related impacts affecting woodstorks, as an example. The approximately 70 fill pads would affect the hydrology. The Corps has asked FPL for some alternative corridors. This issue needs to be resolved and the WG and SCG could potentially be involved. Susan Gray added the final sufficiency analysis is going to the Governing Board in October and it would be difficult for her to participate separate from her agency. Chad Kennedy said it seemed outside the scope of what they do, seems more regulatory. Barry Rosen said another topic they could deal with is the potential of a drought which would affect fish and wildlife, agriculture and the entire system. Susan Markley said that could be something the SCG works on. Barry Rosen explained they could collectively think about how it will affect all the different resources and perhaps do a white paper. Shannon Estenoz agreed adding that they talk about drought at the height of the drought. Shannon added other topics such as the IDS, projects that are coming down the pike, foundational projects, 1st and 2nd generation

projects and the state's credit balances. Ronnie Best said it's not just CERP but all restoration activities such as the bridge that needs to be added to the list. Shannon suggested they could present this to the Task Force for their input and guidance. She reminded everyone that the next Task Force meeting is on October 27, 2011 at the SFWMD with a Groundbreaking Ceremony on the IRL the following day.

Public Comment

Drew Martin (Sierra Club) noted his concern with what is going on at the Governor's office and the violation of the UDB. DCA which was charged with protecting to an extent the integrity of the Everglades ecosystem will be abolished. Gov Christ had the ROG that the SFWMD was working on and now the SFWMD wants to surplus land. They are concerned with the Bird Drive Basin which they believe needs to be held. This group needs to weigh in on what is going on at the state level such as the reduction in funds, nutrients and water quality. On the issue of the power lines he did not think it was just regulatory and the Task Force should look at how it will affect ENP and Everglades restoration. Collier County is looking at putting in 9 or 10 new towns which will affect the woodstork, development is not something they can ignore.

Next Steps

Shannon Estenoz said she would ask Jim Murley to report to this group on some activities with new federal dollars to do some of the goal 3 stuff. Shannon reminded everyone that everyone who wanted to participate on the MAP discussion could. The goal is to present something to the Task Force at the October 27th meeting. Dan Kimball noted the good discussion and welcomed feedback on the agenda for future meetings. He thanked everyone for coming and noted the challenging times and the uncertainty of what would happen with the committee of 12. The Park Service got direction from OMB to put together a budget with 10% and 5% cuts. He thanked the Task Force staff.

Meeting adjourned at 4:17 PM.

Enclosures:

1. Agenda
2. Charlotte Harbor Seven County Watershed Report
3. Draft meeting minutes, Dec 2010
4. Draft meeting minutes, May 2011
5. Corps Consultation presentation
6. Corps Reorganization presentation
7. SFWMD Budget presentation
8. SFWMD Projects presentation
9. Corps Projects presentation
10. BBRRCT Annual Report
11. RECOVER MAP presentation
12. Status of the L-31N Seepage Management Project presentation