

DRAFT Meeting Minutes
 Joint Working Group (WG) and Science Coordination Group (SCG)
 West Palm Beach, Florida
 June 25, 2013

Welcome and Introductions

Ernie Marks called the meeting to order at 10:00AM. The agenda (Encl. 1) was provided to the members. Ronnie Best said he is still with USGS but will soon be retiring and playing a lot more golf in Hiawassee, Georgia. Nick Aumen announced he is now with U.S.G.S. and will be planning a GEER Conference for 2014 if they are able to due to budget realities. He asked everyone to provide input as they look for ways to maximize participation. Draft minutes (Encl. 2) from the January 2013 meeting were distributed and approval was scheduled for later in the meeting.

In Attendance:

June 25

Working Group (WG) Members

Alternates

Ernie Marks – Chair – FL Dept. of Environmental Protection	√	
Barry Rosen – Vice Chair - United States Geological Survey	√	
Ernie Barnett - South Florida Water Management District	√	
Billy Causey – NOAA, FL Keys Nat’l Marine Sanctuary	-	
Chuck Collins – Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission	√	
COL Alan Dodd - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	-	Lt. Col Tom Greco
Rory Feeney - Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of FL	√	
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	√	
Dan Kimball – NPS, ENP & Dry Tortugas National Parks	√	
Vacant – Office of the Governor of Florida	-	
Keith Neves - Bureau of Indian Affairs	-	
Fred Noble - FL Dept. of Transportation	-	
Bonnie Ponwith – NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Service	-	
W. Ray Scott - FL Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services	√	
Craig Tepper – Seminole Tribe of Florida	-	
Larry Williams – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	√	
Vacant - Palm Beach County	-	
Vacant - Broward County	-	
Vacant – U.S. Department of Agriculture	-	Jeff Schmidt
Shannon Estenoz - Special Advisor	√	
Science Coordination Group (SCG) Members	-	
Susan Markley – Chair – Miami Dade County	√	
Nick Aumen – Vice Chair – United States Geological Survey	√	
Calvin Arnold - U.S. Department of Agriculture, ARS	√	

John Baldwin – Florida Atlantic University	-
Lisa Beever – Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program	-
Ronnie Best - United States Geological Survey	√
Joan Browder - NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Service	√
Amy Casteneda - Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of FL	√
Susan Gray - South Florida Water Management District	√
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 Comm.	-
Bob Progulskes – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	√
Gina Ralph - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	√
Bill Reck - U.S. Department of Agriculture – NRCS	-
Dan Scheidt – U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	-

Biscayne Bay Regional Restoration Coordination Team (BBRRCT) Update

Pamela Sweeney noted the team, which tries to do things by consensus, sent a letter (Encl. 3) to the WG on central Everglades planning. Team is made up of a diverse body of members from different user groups, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, public, etc. Biscayne Bay is home to several CERP projects such as the Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands (BBCW) project. Biscayne Bay requires additional freshwater for restoration purposes. The SFWMD Governing Board (GB) approved a water reservation and also approved the use of funds that have recently become available. BBRRCT is still concerned about some of the projected impacts from some of the modeling results coming out of CEPP such as the reduction of freshwater flows to Biscayne Bay. By and large the team supports the idea of Biscayne Bay being included in the CEPP Adaptive Management (AM) plan and beyond that the team would like to see that the flow, water quality and salinity monitoring is maintained and continuously monitored going forward. CEPP and other water management processes should improve, or at a minimum maintain existing quantity, quality, timing and distribution of freshwater flow to all of Biscayne Bay. BBRRCT supports a mechanism for scientists and others most familiar with Biscayne Bay’s natural systems to communicate with decision makers, planners and managers involved in CEPP planning. Team also supports that those individuals have a place at the table and the ability to provide input. Pamela reminded everyone that this is largely within the team’s advisory role to the WG on matters related to Biscayne Bay.

Chad Kennedy said it was his understanding that the BBRRCT is a “work horse” for the WG and takes tasks from the WG. The SFWMD has to do a review of all of its state lands and he wondered if it would be a good idea to task the BBRRCT to engage with the SFWMD in some of the land assessment activities in the Dade County and Biscayne Bay area. The SFWMD may postpone looking at Bird Drive and that would give the BBRRCT time to see what the SFWMD is doing and provide some local support to the SFWMD in their assessment of lands in that region. Ernie Marks noted there was SFWMD staff present and they could bring this suggestion back for further discussion.

Pamela Sweeney stated that as sad as they are to see Dick Frost resign as Chair of the BBRRCT due to some health issues, team unanimously supports the nomination of Phil Everingham as Chair. Shannon Estenoz reminded the members that it is the purview of the WG to appoint the Chair of the BBRRCT. Susan Markley, by way of introduction, stated that Phil is a founding member of the BBRRCT since its inception and has one of the most consistent attendance records. For as long as she can remember Phil has been actively involved in issues related to Biscayne Bay and Miami Dade. He has also been a long standing member of the Miami River Commission and has done this type of interagency, public-private partnership and collaboration sort of work for a long time. He has long been an advocate of water dependent access to the important resources they have in Miami Dade County. Phil Everingham said he was involved with the Biscayne Bay Partnership Initiative (BBPI) which led to the formation of the BBRRCT as well as the River Commission. He has been in the Marine Industry in south Florida for over 40 years and was happy to take on the challenge of leading the BBRRCT.

Ernie Barnett noted that at the last meeting, the GB recognized the importance of redistributing flows and the issues associated with the hyper saline conditions in Biscayne Bay during certain times of the year. They are trying to put forward a budget item to use some reserves they have at their disposal and move forward with some small but meaningful incremental improvements for implementing certain portions of the Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands (BBCW) CERP project as they have already done with Deering Estates and L-31 East. There are some additional improvements they can do for about \$2 million worth of work so they look forward to continuing that work and staying in close coordination with the BBRRCT as well as other stakeholders. He echoed the concerns about the flows to the Bay and agreed that they are important issues. They as an agency will push forward those project elements that they can.

Kim Taplin said that Biscayne Bay is included in the AM Plan and are they looking at things to address the uncertainty with the seepage barrier that is proposed in the plan. They will be doing some modeling and collecting information on the seepage barrier that the rock miners have done as they move into looking at the design for the seepage barrier. Also included in the plan is monitoring fish and wildlife aspects in Biscayne Bay. The AM has a suite of things included in it that will need to go through a prioritization at some point down the road once CEPP is authorized.

Larry Williams made a motion to appoint Phil Everingham as Chair of the BBRRCT which was seconded by Barry Rosen, none were opposed and motion passed.

Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP)

Kim Taplin provided a presentation (Encl. 4) on what has occurred since the last WG briefing. There are some key policy issues that are yet to be resolved before they put out the draft report. Issues include water quality, cost, cost sharing the O&M, savings clause and project assurances/water supply performance and implementation/construction phasing. They are still working on generating the cost which is a concern to a lot of people since CEPP is proposing to implement multiple components of what CERP envisioned and will have a larger than usual price tag for a single CERP component. The GB asked that they take a look at the plan to see if they can improve water supply performance. CERP envisioned that as they implement restoration of the natural system there would also be opportunities for

additional water to be available for other needs. They have taken the Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP) and are currently doing some modeling to see if they can do that. They are also working on implementation and construction phasing.

On the project assurances/water supply analysis they were asked to determine if water supply cutbacks on the Lake Okeechobee Service Area (LOSA) could be reduced and whether they could increase water availability to the Lower East Coast Service Areas (LECSA) and in doing that evaluate the natural system water supply and flood protection performance. If they are successful, they would identify that additional water being made available for other water uses including the identification of water made available for the natural system and complete the savings clause analysis that is required by WRDA 2000. They took a three step approach and refined their initial operating regime baseline which is what they expect to be in the system at the time when they implement CEPP. They found some terms in the model that had not been adequately evaluated so they have done some additional optimization of the modeling to reflect the system. They updated the Alternative 4R model to refine the LOSA water supply performance and looked at optimizing Lake Okeechobee operations in combination with operation of the IRL South and the C-44 Reservoir to see what they could do about increasing water made available for the LOSA water users as part of this lake optimization. They are now taking those refinements and increasing the water demands in the LECSA to see what effect that has on natural system performance. They realized there are effects on Biscayne Bay which were noted so the last thing is to optimize those operations to make sure they are not having adverse effects to Biscayne Bay.

On implementation/phasing legal mandates, they know that CEPP will involve a number of incremental phases over a number of years. Project elements cannot proceed until it is determined that construction and/or operation of the feature:

- 1) Will not cause or contribute to a violation of water quality standards; and
- 2) Will not cause or contribute to a violation of the permit(s) discharge limits or specific conditions; and
- 3) Reasonable assurances exist that demonstrate adverse impacts on flora and fauna in the area influenced by the project element will not occur.

Kim said it was important to note that compliance with the WQBEL is determined once all the restoration strategies' projects are online and have been operating for a four year period. There are provisions if they were to implement a component of CEPP earlier than when all the restoration strategies' projects have been completed and a process has been laid out in the permits (NPDES, EFA, NPDES Consent Order and EFA Consent Order).

Kim Taplin reviewed what has been proposed as the sequencing of the various features of the TSP (Alt 4R) noting that they would have to first complete the Tamiami Trail bridge and the 8.5 Square Mile Area (SMA) connection to the C-111 South Dade area to mitigate the additional seepage of flowing more water into NE Shark River Slough which discharges into the C-111 project. So even before CEPP is started these projects have to be online so they can start the increase in flows to NE Shark River Slough. The information to be incorporated into the Draft PIR includes the evaluation of the final model runs

expected to be released on July 1st. Team needs to complete the Benefits and Environmental Effects of the TSP, complete the Savings Clause, Project Assurances Analysis, Interim Targets Analysis and Ecosystem Services Analysis. The Ecosystem Services Analysis has been contracted out to experts with USGS. Team also needs to update the Draft Preliminary Operations Manual and complete the Adaptive Management and Monitoring Plan. They are still working on the costs of these features and they need to complete the recommended plan section of the PIR. They have been writing the report all along the way and the final modeling results and analysis have to be incorporated into the draft PIR before it goes out for public release.

Chuck Collins noted his concern with the construction sequencing. They are doing the construction projects to the north before they do the ones to the south and he asked whether that would facilitate more water coming down even though they aren't planning to flow more water south. Kim replied that it is water quality limited and there is no capability for the state to move additional water from Lake Okeechobee into WCA -3A. Runoff from the EAA will continue to happen but the timing and distribution of those flows into 3A will improve by doing those northern 3A features of the plan. Tom Teets added they will start the hydropattern restoration work at the north end utilizing existing water so they are not adding additional water. Chuck Collins also asked why they didn't do some of the projects at the south end sooner in the sequence since they are experiencing problems with water pooling up. Kim Taplin explained that it requires the Tamiami Trail next steps project. First increase of flows into NE Shark River Slough will be associated with the one mile bridge of the MWDs project and the road raising. Once Tamiami Trail MWDs is complete they can go higher in the L-29 so they need that additional bridging and road raising associated with Tamiami Trail next steps project.

Shannon Estenoz said they have projects moving on different time frames and asked whether this PIR will say anything about redoing the Integrated Delivery Schedule (IDS). Kim Taplin explained that once they know what is authorized they will go through a process of integrating those newly authorized projects into the program. The last time they did this was through a public process the Task Force hosted and helped facilitate and that is what they will include in the PIR. Ernie Marks asked whether there was flexibility for implementing the individual projects within CEPP. Kim Taplin said there is flexibility and there is a process for doing that if that was something everyone wanted to pursue.

Rory Feeney said he shared the concern about the order and asked if the removal of the Old Tamiami Trail west of the S-333 was a new feature. Kim Taplin said they identified Old Tamiami Trail for inclusion in Alt 4R as a project element and it could have been added to any of the other alternatives. Rory said it could stand alone because it is not dependent on the S-333 and it could have immediate beneficial impacts to the efficiency of the S12 structures because of all the downstream impacts with vegetation particularly to the S-12 C and D. Removal of the old trail could increase the flow through the S-12s which have not been operating at full capacity. Kim Taplin said that would have to be a multi-agency decision with the SFWMD who is the 50/50 cost share partner. As everyone knows for the ERTTP and the operations for 3A they are trying to shift flows for the NE Shark River Slough keeping the Sparrow areas and Marl prairie habitat in good condition for the Sparrow. Rory said it would be nice to know once those S-12 structures are open according to ERTTP that they are actually pushing as much water as they can. Sequencing these conveyances differently could make some immediate beneficial impacts. They

are almost a foot above regulation schedule right now which puts them over ERTD and IOP, if they were still operating under it.

Shannon Estenoz said there needs to be a conversation about sequencing as a program. The thing that is different about CEPP is that there are elements that could move forward in a slightly different order. For Interior their objective is to take that extra water in 3A and shift it to the southeast, solving two problems at once. It is not a restoration objective to push more water up on the high ground of Marl Prairie. Old Tamiami Trail coming out would be terrific. They would rather see projects accelerated that takes the ponded water and moves it where it is desperately needed by the ecosystem. Dan Kimball said they have always been supportive of getting that “ribbon of disconnected asphalt” out of the park however there are issues with the power line relocation and money.

Public Comment

Drew Martin (Sierra Club) said they want to see the project move forward and water flowing. He questioned the difference between rainwater and water coming down from the north. Some of these areas are very dry and they want to get water into them right away. That was the concept of why the order was done the way it was. When water is brought down from the lake it has to meet a certain standard but it is not the water coming from the north that will cause a problem it will be the heavy rain event. They don't have to have the perfect plan to begin to move it forward. He said he hopes the process doesn't become the end of this and reminded them of the concept of Adaptive Management adding that there is no reason they cannot get sign off from the District and get it into a WRDA bill.

Dawn Shirreffs (NPCA) encouraged the team to continue working through the cost and the water quality issues. They are obviously important and need to be resolved. They can't let perfect stand in the way of the good. They need to have a draft PIR out in July so that they can move forward. She noted her concern that they are going to be looking at additional rounds of modeling to identify ancillary water supply benefits. The goal of this project has always been to provide environmental benefits for the central Everglades and the northern estuaries. She urged them to continue to stay focused on that and not allow water supply demands to be used as a constraint. She did not want them to get caught up in additional modeling and not have a draft report that will be ready on July 11th for the Governing Board to review. She urged them to stay focused and get language they are comfortable with so they do not miss the WRDA timeline.

Jane Graham (Audubon Florida) said ditto to Dawn's comments. They are very supportive of everything the WG, DOI, Corps and the SFWMD have been doing to push this forward. They would love to see the Chief's Report by Dec. 2013 so that there could be Congressional authorization. The planning process has been incredible between all the agencies and there has been a tremendous effort put into it and it will be a shame to have all this effort invested from human capital, time and resources in expediting a plan to have a “hurry up and wait” situation. They don't want the perfect to be the enemy of the good. A draft PIR is still a draft and there are opportunities over the next few months to make modifications and they would like to see this move forward.

John Rosier (Full Track Club of Dade County/Everglades Coordinating Council) said they are the sportsmen that are out there all the time and it is a shame that there aren't more users here other than the people who are trying to change the area. The biggest problem they have is with the water levels and duration. Today they are a foot above regulation schedule. If this is an indication of the future water levels then there will be habitat destruction. Unfortunately, the sportsmen are the only ones that keep bringing that up. Wading birds won't be out there because wading birds are not swimming birds. One of their concerns is that every time the water gets high the wading bird population goes away. The projects up north, moneywise, are much less than all the structures that will be built down south. Deathly afraid that they will do the stuff up north and run out of money and they will sit and wait for 10 or 15 years until the water can be moved south. If they have a hurricane, wet tropical storm or a particularly rainy season they will have a lake out there from the L-4 levee all the way to Tamiami Trail because they will not be able to move the water out. He questioned the sequencing of the events adding that if they can't get it out of the bottom why are they building on the top first. The park states that they want all the water they can get but he gets a sinking feeling that they still want to be able to control the amount of water to the park at any given period just in case something catastrophic happens. Sheetflow historically was never shut off so he urged them not to shut it off and just let it flow.

Fred Haquiz (private citizen) said they have to meet the deadline, if it is not perfect they could always change it later. They have to get it in or it is 7 years later and 7 years of more damage being done. If they keep doing this there is not going to be anything left to save. It has been over 30 years since they started and they are going to have a brain drain of the people who know what is going on. He urged them to get things done.

Freddy Fisikelli (private citizen) said that if they put water in the conservation areas year round they will destroy it. They all want to rebuild what is left of the Everglades. He noted he is 84 years old and was born and raised in the Everglades and it has never been wet year round. House Bill 643 states that flora and fauna are a part of this and if they put water into the conservation areas it will destroy all the tree islands and the bird population. He said he sits on the Lower East Coast Water Supply and knows there will be problems with water in the future. He urged them to think about some of the other things other than drinking water.

Ed Fielding (private citizen) said he appreciated all the hard work and urged them to focus on the end result of saving the Everglades. South Florida is not sustainable and he is elated that so many qualified people have taken on this task. However, in the recent past there have been some events that have been very troubling such as the rain event that happened several weeks ago and water was not moved very quickly into the lake. Although most folks would say the water was polluted many say it was poisoned. To him it was an enormously painful observation. They have to have sufficient capacity south to store and clean the water and sufficient capacity to flow south. He urged them to do something.

Albert Bryan (private citizen) said he was just out in the Everglades over the past weekend and there are 14 inches of water out there. His middle son has a camp out there and about a third of the island is saturated with water. There is a strangler fig out there that is trying to come back and when the island

is saturated with water the roots rot and the big trees fall over. The willows, myrtles and maples can tolerate more water but they are actually changing the ecology of the area. They are not against having water in the Everglades obviously that is what makes it unique. Their problem is with the elevation of water. They could debate what it was 100 years ago but the reality is that they could lose what they have right now. It is a very fragile environment and three or six inches of water makes a major difference between life and death for the fur bearing animals. He thinks they need more capacity to release water at the bottom end. Water currently moves about $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile per hour if it stepped up to $\frac{1}{2}$ mile per hour that would not be a problem. It is the water elevation that will hurt them. With 14 inches of water out there, if they had a weather system move through it would shut the area down. The tree islands are now gone and he sees either too much or too little water. Anything over 15 inches of water is catastrophic to the area and the fur bearing animals will be wiped out. He urged them to restore Area 2 which is a wasteland. On another note Stiltsville may not have historical significance but it means a lot to him and he would like to see it saved. He said he has been reading Chris' book like the Bible and he disagrees with some of the information that is in there. On yet another note, he owns land down south and they have had problems over the years with the amount of water that was released because they would flood out the farmers and the groves. He urged them to make sure that whatever water is put in the north end that they have the same capacity to put it out on the south end so they don't end up stacking up the water. He closed by saying that they see firsthand what is going on and he cringes when he hears there will be 18 inches of water out there.

Tom Teets announced the July 1st model runs would be done that day. Shannon Estenoz on behalf of Interior congratulated and thanked Walter Wilcox and his team who have been working around the clock. From Interior's perspective, they have been very frank about the additional water supply demands and think it is terrific if they can find win wins if there is actually water to meet future water demands. But it is Interior's perspective that meeting those demands cannot come at environmental performance when it comes to restoration. From an agency perspective they will crank as quickly as they can on those results and try to make sure that they make their own herculean effort to keep that time frame. On sequencing, it is in Interior's best interest to get water to ENP as quickly as possible. They are very sensitive to the idea that water needs to come out of the bottom before it goes into the top and they are sensitive to this notion that they don't want any restoration program to hurt a part of the ecosystem. Interior looks forward to working with everyone on sequencing the projects so that they are cost effective and they maximize early benefits to the extent that they can and use existing water to help the ecosystem to the greatest extent they can. She said she appreciated John's comments noting that she was not as sensitive to the idea that they would do the northern projects and then run out of money and suddenly they have more water to impound. No one wants that to happen and careful sequencing is important and continuing this robust public discourse will help them make smart decisions.

Ernie Marks also thanked Walter and his folks for the work they have done. They have gone over and above and deserve to be congratulated. On the sequencing issue, obviously there is a concern with quantity at the southern end of the system and getting that water out now. When DEP looks at moving these potential pieces forward, it is something they have to weigh from an impact point as well when

they issue permits. They can't issue permits for something that will cause or exacerbate impacts at the southern end of the system and that is something they have to take into account when they are planning these projects. He said he did not want that to be lost on folks. The quality issue is something they need to take into account as well. If they are going to be building features, water quality is something that they are very sensitive to and they need to be sure that the water quality conditions can be met as well.

Invasive Exotics Update

Shannon Estenoz provided a presentation (Encl. 5) with the goal of getting feedback for the Task Force update which will be provided at the July 9th meeting. This is the second conversation the WG/SCG will have on this issue since the Task Force directed the OERI/WG/SCG to conduct a comprehensive review of current efforts to combat invasive exotics and present update recommendations for how to improve our efforts and boost our effectiveness. Presentation to the Task Force will include restating the magnitude of the problem, reminding them of their direction to OERI/WG/SCG, summarizing activities to date and making recommendations for immediate action. Over the last six months there has been an ongoing conversation and extensive engagement between her office and the interagency invasive staff. They have developed a conceptual Solutions Pathway framework, participated in two summits (pythons and ambrosia beetle), gathered information on resource allocation and gaps and met with National Invasive Species Council (NISC) staff. She recognized the folks they have working on invasive species as some of the most dedicated, hardworking people that they have working for them. A lot of them do a lot more work than they are resourced to do. They had to push hard to get them to think hard about their needs. The NISC is staffed by Interior and she has been trying to understand how invasive species are being approached on a national level. South Florida is a hotspot for invasive species but it is not the only place where these problems are prevalent. There is potential to get support and good thinking from the NISC staff.

In addition our agencies have been simultaneously trying to raise awareness of the invasive species issue. Her staff with the help of ECISMA created an invasive species display for the Everglades Coalition Conference which was visited by Secretary Salazar. The Task Force website now has an invasive species portal for folks to go and learn more about the issues. They arranged briefings for Secretary Jewell during her first visit to the Everglades and also for Senator Marco Rubio. She and Dan Kimball are committed to include invasive species into all their high level briefings, site visits and field trips whenever possible. She has addressed the CISRERP twice on the subject of invasive species and strongly encouraged them to take this issue up in their next biennial report to Congress. The CISRERP provides really important support to the TF on a number of issues and it is helpful to have the National Academy of Science (NAS) weighing in when they talk to decision makers particularly those who control resources. There is significant interest in having the CISRERP take this up. Invasive species is an under resourced effort and she has learned that it is hard to stand on the sidelines and watch what is happening and the tendency is to jump in. Her office is trying to help provide some coordination support on some of the early detection and rapid response initiatives. The most important thing they have learned over the last six months is that they know the ingredients of an effective invasive species management program which requires an integrated approach with sustained resources and involves:

- Long term suppression of an established species
- Containment of established but localized populations
- Detection and possible eradication of newly established species
- Prevention of new introductions of un-established species
- Cross-jurisdictional coordination

They used the invasion curve as the organizing principle and shows that the best bang for the buck comes in eradication and prevention. They stand a better chance of increasing their success if they coordinate the invasive species effort at multiple levels and if they invest more in a more sustained way in those strategies that are more cost effective. Team is looking at long term management; containment; eradication; prevention; coordination, education and research; and doing a needs/gaps analysis. They are looking at their current effort as well as the overarching need on an annual basis. They know the invasive species crisis in south Florida is being addressed by a dedicated, effective and well-coordinated group at the staff and grass roots level. ECISMA is the center of gravity of that coordination and they are a tremendously effective group of folks. They learned that the current invasive species effort does not have a complete governance structure in place. They have tremendous coordination at the staff level but less coordination at the higher management level and they are missing that interface between the implementing agencies and the folks who control resources. This is something they have identified as a need and something the TF will be briefed on. There is an immediate need for additional coordination and organization of resources. The good news is that a significant level of professional consensus exists and can form the foundation for increased coordination and effectiveness. Current efforts are chronically, and in some cases dramatically under resourced. Recurring, predictable and adequate funding is important for long term planning. A comprehensive, integrated (plants and animals) strategic framework for invasive exotics in south Florida does not exist.

Shannon reminded everyone of the 2010 WG recommendations to the TF and noted that they have heard they are still valid. The July 2013 recommendations for immediate action include maximizing existing resources to address the 2010 recommendations. OERI will try to use existing resources to immediately provide some full time coordination help to the invasive species effort. She will reassign 20% of staff's time for the next six months to be focused full time on implementing some of the more immediate actions and try to come up with a longer term strategy for implementing some of the larger recommendations. Carrie Beeler will be working full time on invasive species along with Allyn Childress. Shannon said she was committed to devoting a portion of her time to invasive species as well. Once they get the nod from the TF they will immediately begin providing coordination support for those federal invasive species efforts. They will also support and spearhead the development of a Comprehensive Invasive Species Strategic Action Framework that includes a cross cut budget. Their desire to increase federal coordination is in response to a need that was identified in 2010 and they will do it by applying some human resource capacity. They will help the federal invasive species team look for ways to build cost effective short and long term capacity and opportunities for increased coordination. They will also help the federal family with budget coordination. For the Strategic Action Framework they are not proposing another plan but rather a framework for action and take all that is working right now and make sure that it is leveraged to the maximum. The objective would be to

develop a framework that helps decision makers and resource allocators understand the connection between goals, strategies and tactics and that defines success and provides for accountability. The framework for action will help decision-makers make wise and timely investment decisions in the battle against invasive exotics. The resource needs are very daunting and as an example the estimated annual need is \$406,000 to implement the amphibian/reptile early detection and rapid response initiative. If they are going to be successful in closing the gaps their chances are better the more strategic they are. The economics of failure are even more daunting with the economic impacts to crop and livestock losses for Florida from selected invasive species at over \$48.4 million. Shannon showed a photo of a crocodile on its nest at night and then a photo of a Tegu hovering around the same nest during the day. Next steps include updating the Task Force and seeking input on the proposed immediate actions; OERI convening a high-level partnership workshop to discuss the Strategic Action Framework; and OERI working with federal partners to enhance federal coordination.

Joan Browder said what was laid out was great but weak on prevention which is the lowest cost but most difficult to address. Shannon replied that the idea today was not to drill down to the tactical level but to argue that what they need is a strategic framework to plug those tactics in. Joan Browder said there are a bunch of species sitting in pet shops right now that they know will likely become problems in the future.

Ronnie Best said there was a plus for FY13 and hopefully it will make it through for FY14, if they get a federal budget, for early detection and rapid response and research opportunities. Shannon said that is an example of dollars that are being requested. Chad Kennedy asked if the product that would be produced by Carrie and Allyn would be a comprehensive list of all the agencies around this table or everybody under the sun. Shannon said it would not just be the agencies around this table and the idea would be to have this group be the hub, convening mechanism for a high level discussion and bring in some extra voices such as the counties from the beginning and then others such as Port Everglades or The Port of Miami. Bob Johnson said invasive species coming into an area seems to be very affected by climate change and they need to make sure they have whatever information they can to look at because it is really impacting the reptiles and amphibians. Shannon asked if there was someone looking at invasive species in the context of climate change. Bob said they do and it is important those people are in this workshop.

Tom Teets said he appreciates the TF putting the resources towards this and asked if there were additional potential resources to help out when they encounter a situation such as the Tegu on the crocodile nest. Larry Williams said there isn't a pot of money that gets triggered but it certainly raises the urgency to deal with that individual species. The American Crocodile is listed as endangered and now they have an invasive lizard hanging around the nest so the level of urgency goes up. They can use the authority of the Lacey Act to list a species as injurious and if they are listed that way that precludes that species from being imported into the country or being transported across state lines. There is legislation in the House and Senate that would speed up the way that they do those Lacey Act listings. They are supportive of this because sometimes the listing process takes so long that a lot of damage can happen before a species is listed. It is proposed legislation and he was not sure of the FWS or the Department has taken a position.

Ronnie Best said they had the same problem with the Key Largo Wood Rat and pythons and the FWS and USGS came up with money to do a quick response. This Strategic Plan will lay out that they need to have a mechanism in place that allows them to do early detection and rapid response.

The January meeting minutes were presented for approval. Shannon noted Sara Fain's name was misspelled. Ronnie Best made a motion to approve the corrected minutes which was seconded by Ernie Marks. Corrected minutes were approved without objection.

Public Comment

Albert Bryan said they have the Melaleuca trees out in the Everglades and his club went out there about 40 years ago and eradicated the trees and then they ran into a problem where they had to have a license to handle the herbicide and some of the guys went and got a license. Most recently they had the python hunt. He suggested they try and incorporate the public into this somehow with the use of a bounty or trophy adding they are a free army. Shannon said the private sector and NGOs have been in their toolbox for a long time and have been very effective.

Next Steps

Ernie Marks congratulated Phil Everingham and wished him well with the BBRRCT. Task Force meeting is scheduled on July 9th at the SFWMD in West Palm Beach. Model results are out so folks will begin to review them. Carrie, Allyn and OERI will start working on the invasive exotic species issue. Shannon added her office will reach out to the members directly and it was her hope that when they convene this initial meeting that she sees folks at a senior level. They need to send a signal to their folks on the ground that they are here to help them.

Meeting adjourned at 12:20PM.

Enclosures:

1. Agenda
2. Draft minutes, January 2013
3. BBRRCT Letter on CEPP and Biscayne Bay
4. CEPP Presentation
5. Invasive Species Presentation