

Workshop Summary

SOUTH FLORIDA ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION WORKING GROUP SPONSORED PUBLIC WORKSHOP

INTEGRATED DELIVERY SCHEDULE

South Florida Water Management District
3301 Gun Club Road, Building B-1, Governing Board Auditorium
West Palm Beach, FL 33406
August 20, 2015
1:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Attendees:

Ernie Marks	Nick Aumen	Rebecca Elliott
Steve Walker	Paul Warner	Tom Teets
Michelle Diffenderfer	Matt Morrison	Miguel Danial
Barron Moody	Ray Scott	Tabitha Cale
Dawn Shirreffs	Fred Sklar	Steve Walker
Karen Smith	Lisa Interlandi	H.M. Ridgely
Sandy Soto	Cara Capp	James Erskine
Marsha Bansee-Lee	Mark Perry	Caroline McLaughlin
Dennis Duke	Joel Van Arman	Comm. Ed Fielding
Allyn Childress	Carissa DeCramer	Nyla Pipes
Kevin Burger	Tom MacVicar	Michelle Metcalf
Carrie Beeler	Kim Taplin	Charles Barrowclough
Chad Kennedy	George Jones	Patti Gorman
Megan Jacoby	Pete Quasius	Ed Smith (phone)
Gary Ritter	Paul Millar	

Welcome 1:00 PM, Ernie Marks, FWC, Working Group Chair, Allyn Childress, SFERTF

Workshop Procedures and Ground Rules Allyn Childress, SFERTF

Allyn Childress went over the procedures. She reminded the group that at their November 2014 meeting, the Task Force directed the Working Group to conduct stakeholder workshops for the 2015 update of the Integrated Delivery Schedule (IDS). She reminded participants that further information, and the ability to sign up for email updates, is available at www.EvergladesRestoration.gov.

http://www.evergladesrestoration.gov/content/ids/meetings/082015/Welcome_and_Groundrules.pdf

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Overview Kim Taplin, USACE, Megan Jacoby, SFWMD

http://www.evergladesrestoration.gov/content/ids/meetings/082015/sequencing_plan_themes.pdf

- **IDS Process Update:** Kim reminded the group about the process and timeline.
- **Results of Stakeholder Input:** Kim went over the draft IDS worksheet and explained that it contains funding requirements to assist federal budgeting processes. The IDS doesn't include every state or federal restoration project, but it does include projects that the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) depends on. She explained that the projects in the blue area with an asterisk are not included in the costs; they are funded through other program authorities or by other entities. Projects above the black line are currently under construction. Projects in the green section are CERP Generation 1 projects authorized in WRDA 2007 and currently under construction. Those in tan reflect projects undergoing planning in 2015. The CERP Project List was similarly color coded.
- **Analysis of Sequencing Plan Themes:** Kim explained that they received 16 worksheets from the public at the previous workshop and the projects reflected subsets of the CERP. The input was analyzed and grouped into four similar themes. She noted that components in tan still need to go through a planning process. She explained the project dependencies. She noted that the Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA) of 2014 requires a Corps' SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Risk Informed, and Timely) planning effort ahead of the Project Implementation Report (PIR) planning process to determine if studies could be executed in less than 3 years and for less than \$3 million federal dollars. Allotted two planning efforts at a time due to staff and resource constraints.
 - **Theme 1, Complete Existing Projects and Plan Ahead:** Kim explained that some years the costs are lower showing there is capacity for project construction, however, actual construction estimates are not included for projects not yet planned.
 - **Theme 4, Spatial Extent, Estuaries, Restore Flow South:** Kim noted that Themes 1 and 4 are very similar; both include build-out of CERP Generation 1 and 2 projects and the CEPP. Differences are that Theme 4 includes IRL-South Natural lands that pushes C-43 project out in time as well as the timing of the Loxahatchee River Watershed Restoration Project. Planning projects were the same but differed in the order of priority.
 - **Theme 2, Greater Everglades Storage and Theme 3, Focus on Storage:** Themes 2 and 3 are very similar except for the projects

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undergoing the planning process. For years 2020-25, the proposals are well below the federal funding level due to not building out IRL-S.

- **Theme 5:** CEPP was broken out into individual contracts. Tried to keep it at \$200M per year. Also reflects recent budget priorities. The State is moving out with construction of the C-43 project. The Fiscal Year 2016 President's Budget includes design and construction of the Broward County Water Preserve Areas' C-11 Impoundment and the BBCW Phase 1 flow-way construction. Theme 5 benefits include: maximizing holistic benefits to the regional system as early as possible, ensures additional projects will be ready to continue progress on restoration, and consistency with project dependencies and constraints.

Discussion

Ernie asked for any clarifying questions before letting the group spend some time in discussion.

It was asked if resources were made available, if projects (such as Old Tamiami Trail removal in the tan section) could be moved up. Kim said yes, Theme 5 is scheduled based on authorizations. Assumed there would be a 2016 WRDA to get that project authorized and that moving that project up would require a reevaluation report; have allotted 1 year to get that done.

Nick Aumen, SCG Chair, noted that 20 year plans are good but will likely change and warned the group about delving into too much detail especially in the outer years. Kim said the IDS is a guide but project implementation is still dependent upon actual funding and appropriations.

There were concerns raised regarding grouping Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) storage and Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR), as some participants don't support ASR. Kim mentioned that the ASR Regional Study was recently completed. It was also discussed at a prior workshop that grouping EAA surface storage and ASR planning together would help identify ways ASR could complement or supplement storage efforts.

Kim clarified that resource-wise, planning efforts are limited in Theme 5 to two efforts at a time. As planning efforts are completed, the IDS could be revisited to plan for what's next.

Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule (LORS) will be considered once the Dam Safety Report is finalized. Once north and south of lake storage are completed it will require looking at LORS.

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Questions were raised about the SMART planning process and whether it is as intensive as PIR planning. The Corps staff responded that it is mostly an internal agency process.

Questions were raised regarding Themes 1, 2, and 3 whose non-federal costs are very low. It was explained that by staying true to the proposed sequencing, due to design and construction time-frames for the sequencing order of that theme, and the process to get new projects authorized, there are gaps if you don't continue construction of current projects.

It was asked why the planning efforts at the bottom didn't include construction phases. It was explained that there is an assumed timeline and cost for getting project authorization and appropriations, but construction costs/timelines aren't known until after the PIR is completed.

It was suggested that perhaps certain parts of projects be bundled in order to move forward more quickly and strategically.

It was asked whether there is more flexibility when the local sponsor is pursuing construction so don't have 902 roadblocks. For the C-43, since it's authorized and has a pre-PPA, credits have been received. Theme 5 represents the 50-50 cost-share that needs to be maintained. There isn't any additional flexibility just because the SFWMD is building it. They are allowed to move forward and go above the 902, but won't get credit unless there is a reauthorization. Cost-risk analysis is conducted to look at 902 issues. Theme 5 uses authorized costs.

It was suggested that planning for north and south storage be combined.

Planning for C-111 Spreader and BBCW are combined in Theme 5; staff thought since they are in the same part of the system and using some of the same features that those planning efforts could proceed at the same time.

It was explained that the remaining cost of Restoration Strategies is not included; it would be an additional \$32M per year.

Discussion

The workshop resumed after a short break for participants to review the themes in detail and discuss amongst themselves.

In response to a question about the federal funding going up and down, Kim explained that staff tried to maintain it at \$200M per year but projects have varying costs.

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A participant mentioned that Cutler Bay was pushed back, but due to climate change and sea level rise, these areas don't have a lot of time. The C-111 Spreader, not getting flow we'd like. Need plan to purchase lands for storage.

In response to questions about planning for storage sooner, and separating LOW and EAA storage, Kim replied that storage south of the lake can't be used until decompartmentalization features of CEPP and north new water have been implemented, which won't be until 2031. The planning effort would be 7 years old by that time. The thought is to go ahead and get benefits as soon as possible through the LOW and plan for the south storage closer to when it could be implemented. There is also a strong desire to address the western basins.

Participants mentioned that storage shouldn't be restricted just to the EAA, but that northern storage is important as well. There was general appreciation for the inclusion of Big Cypress L-28 storage to address the western basins, particularly in supporting the Seminole Tribe's water rights. It is also critical for Decomp success.

Regarding process, it was stated that the IDS will be presented to the Task Force for consultation (discussion and input), per the Programmatic Regulations. The IDS is a tool, not a USACE decision document that would require formal comment periods. Implementation will be based upon actual budget decisions of the Corps and SFWMD.

In response to a question about Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands Phase 1, it was mentioned that necessary design reviews, plans, and specifications, and real estate acquisition are driving that project timeline to 2021. Kim said that maybe it should be addressed that design is already underway in the chart.

It was suggested that a lot of work has been conducted looking at storage north of the lake (draft PIR planning efforts and Lake Okeechobee Phase 1 and 2 technical plans) so developing a PIR for northern storage should be easily doable in the 3 year timeframe. Moving forward with storage north of the lake is not dependent on anything but getting the PIR completed and project authorization so can purchase the lands.

Regarding planning for storage and ASR, it was mentioned that ASR can provide additional storage after surface storage is full instead of losing it to tide. ASR can optimize performance of reservoirs so it would be good to combine those planning efforts.

It was mentioned that prioritizing the BCWPA C-11 Impoundment will increase spatial extent of wetlands and improve conditions in that area. It was mentioned that although it is understood that the C-111 spreader is being delayed until testing shows how that portion of the system will best work, it would help to bump that project up as much as possible in order to prevent land loss due to sea level rise.

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Appreciation was expressed for the way the IDS is color-coded and how it helps explain the difference between Foundation Projects and CERP, illustrates what is currently underway, and shows what's next to be planned. Planning efforts, especially for storage, is key.

In response to questions on non-federal funding, it was stated that the jump in 2016 is in response to PPAs being signed and credits for state expedited construction. In response to a question if more state money became available, could other projects be sped up, it was stated that could finish or accelerate projects if additional funding becomes available. C-43 and C-44 are examples of moving things forward. Stimulus funding requires shovel-ready projects so the Corps tries to be ready for those opportunities. The agencies are constantly looking at the cost-share balance and what projects, or portions of projects, need to be focused on.

Questions about addressing invasive exotics and whether they are considered in the IDS. It was noted that those budgets are usually separate from CERP. The Task Force has begun a cross-cut budget on invasive exotics and more information can be found at www.evergladesrestoration.gov.

Next Steps, Allyn Childress, SFERTF, Kim Taplin, USACE and Megan Jacoby, SFWMD

- SFWMD WRAC, Sept. 3, 2015
- SFWMD Governing Board, Sept. 10, 2015
- Working Group Meeting, Sept. 23, 2015
- Task Force Meeting, Nov. 19, 2015

Closing Comments and Adjourn, Ernie Marks, FWC, Working Group Chair, Allyn Childress, SFERTF

The meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.