

**Science Coordination Group
Meeting Summary – Meeting#9
Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Building
9300 N.W. 41st Street
Miami, Florida
January 5, 2005**

Attendance:

Members:

Ronnie Best
Joan Browder
Ken Haddad
Dan Kimball
Greg Knecht

Susan Markley
Greg May
John Ogden
Peter Ortner
Terry Rice

Barry Rosen
Rock Salt
Ed Wright

Staff, Contractors, Public:

Jim Barnes
Adriana Cantillo
Chris Farrell

Bob Doren

Rafaela Monchek

Members not present:

Calvin Arnold
Richard Harvey
Cherise Maples

Loren Mason
Fred Rapach
Jay Slack

John Volin

Administrative Items:

The meeting summary was approved. (Motion: Ronnie; Second: John; motion passed unanimously)

Whiparound:

Dan Kimball announced the NPS is working on streamlining their research permitting process and adding more resources. He is setting up a meeting in late January to review the current and future process. Canals were cut into Cape Sable in the early 1900s. In December a team looked at restoration options for the area and will providing a report in a few months. He will forward the report to Rafaela to distribute to the SCG.

Joan Browder complimented Ronnie on the success of the First National Conference on Ecosystem Restoration (NCER).

John Ogden said RECOVER has been working through the holidays on the interim targets report due January 10th to the USACE, USDOJ and the SFWMD. The team discovered that developing a common standard for measuring indicators is too difficult, and showing an understanding of the indicators would be more useful. John thanked Dave Hallac, Carol Mitchell, Elizabeth Crisfield for their work.

Adriana Cantillo is working on a series of projects with NOAA. The most recent is a hydrocarbon assessment of Biscayne Bay that will be out next month. The next study will be on the Panama Canal and invasive species.

Barry Rosen announced the FWS received 8.8 million in reprogrammed dollars. \$4 million has been allocated to date for predominantly research and contaminant studies. The hunting community in the southern GGE/Picayune strand was upset that ORVs were allowed in the area despite the lack of permits. The State Division of Forestry issued permits for 22,000 out of 55,000 acres. They met with other agencies and were informed that this is a restoration project, and a smaller, alternative area is under consideration. Ken Haddad said that he had heard a different perspective.

Rock Salt announced the final CROGEE report is expected to be released later this month. Given the new Total System model, a block 2 or 3 adaptive assessment exercise may be necessary, and modifications may need to be made to the

plan. The NAS panel will meet on February 3rd and 4th. The USACE extended the deadline on the guidance memoranda to January 10th.

Susan Markley said the county has some concerns about the guidance memoranda. She was concerned with how CERP teams are defined, and with ensuring water will not be removed in ways inconsistent with the savings clause. She isn't sure how outside-of-project team allocations will occur. Some decisions should be made at the RECOVER level. The process for bigger decisions to be made is unclear. There is an underlying assumption that projects will generate water to go to other places. She also expressed concern on the states approach to saving water and how it connects to the federal laws. She encouraged everyone to look at them and submit comments by the January 10th deadline.

Ronnie thanked the team for their compliments on the NCER. The planning team has agreed to plan a 2nd conference for the spring of 2007. The conference will most likely be in the Mississippi basin to include river restorations. He requested the SCG begin to think about the 3rd Greater Everglade Ecosystem Restoration conference (GEER), offering spring of 2006 as a potential timeframe. He recommended using the same facility the NCER was held at. The Florida Bay conference will be held separately. He expressed a concern that there must be a desire to have a GEER conference for it to be successful. He also stressed the importance in having the conference outside of Miami to encourage full participation from people in South Florida by allowing them to be on travel, and not confined by working hours.

Task Force Presentation:

The Plan for Coordinating Science Phase I was approved at the December 1st Task Force meeting. Greg congratulated Peter, Susan and Rock on a fantastic job presenting the issues. Greg suggested we continue to improve our techniques for communication with the Task Force. He also expressed the importance of getting information to them at least two weeks in advance of their meetings, and the importance of SCG members interacting with their Task Force counterparts. Peter had a chance to add to the Task Force presentation at the Coral Reef Task Force meeting the next day since many of the same people were there.

There will be a Task Force consultation workshop on January 13th. The next regular Task Force meeting is February 15 – 16th, with a Working Group meeting immediately following. Rafaela Monchek will distribute the Task Force calendar for 2005.

First Report from the Indicators Sub-team, Rock Salt and Bob Doren:

The SCG Subgroup met in Orlando during the NCER to begin discussions on indicators. Bob developed the results of the meeting into a draft, including technical background on indicators, criteria for selecting indicators and indicator candidates. The team requested the following changes:

- 1) Criteria:
 - a. "Technical" and "Policy" headings were merged into one category. The term "Criteria" will be changed.
 - b. The following "Technical Criteria" were determined to be companions of "Policy Criteria" and will be merged:
 - i. Technical 1 was merged with Policy 4
 - ii. Technical 2 was merged with Policy 3
 - iii. Technical 4 was merged with Policy 5
 - iv. Technical 5 was merged with Policy 6
- 2) The following additional comments were made for consideration and adjustment by the subgroup:
 - a. Policy Criteria 6 may create an expectation that the indicator will tell you what to do
 - b. The terminology will be fine-tuned
 - c. The term "Vital Signs" was added to recognize two levels of ecosystem condition signs – vital signs and indicators. Several indicators could add up to a vital sign.
 - d. A two part list will be created – the first will apply to whether something is an indicator; a set of indicators will then be run through questions to determine if they are a vital sign.
 - e. A gap is when there are known indicators and no one is working on it.
- 3) The stressors and attributes will be based on conceptual ecological models, and clumped in a rational way, possibly as vital signs.
- 4) If the indicators are reported every two years with the Biennial Report, the information on indicators may or may not change each reporting cycle. This should be explained to the Task Force to prevent an expectation of change on each indicator on each Biennial Report.
- 5) Potential Vital Sign Categories:
 - a. Hydrologic Restoration
 - i. sheet flow
 - ii. hydropattern

- b. Native Plants and Animals
 - i. Contaminants
 - c. Exotic Control
 - i. acres
 - ii. types
 - iii. expansion
 - iv. control effort
 - d. Water Quality
 - i. nutrient loading
 - ii. contaminants
 - e. Secure and Protected Natural Areas
 - i. land acquisition
 - ii. land use
- 6) The "Next Steps" section will be designed to create a process that is understandable for independent science review.

Public comment:

Chris Farrell commented that Audubon found that with spoonbill nesting, the location and spatially differential success, showed the effects of flows in Florida Bay. There is a lot of data and smaller performance measures, but when a presentation is given, only changes of spoonbill nesting success over time is shown. Nesting is like a vital sign, it shows other problems. One of the performance measures missing is forested areas outside of the levees. Everything outside of the everglades is being destroyed. Task Force needs to find ways of monitoring land uses for lands not in CERP. Florida is Atlantic coast flyway for birds, research on hardwood hammocks in the keys must see how losses of hammocks are effecting migratory birds.

Revised workplan:

The team's requested changes on moving quality assurance, data sharing and progress tracking to their own line (this was done per the previous meeting request and was handed out for this meeting), and the timeframe changes have been made. The timeframes were also changed based on the last meeting. The three major tasks for next year were identified as:

- a) Indicators
- b) Refinement/Phase II of the Plan for Coordinating Science (PCS)
- c) Implementation of Phase I of the PCS

The SCG subgroup will work with the RECOVER teams to tie into their meetings and schedule. The SCG will turn the RECOVER information into the reports. In March, another subgroup will be developed to deal with quality assurance, data sharing and progress tracking resources and on assuring quality science supporting restoration. Members of the team will be selected to champion each section.

The team also discussed creating an open and transparent process, to receive more input and feedback including informing participants from the NCER.

Unconstrained resources:

The team discussed what resources would be helpful in completing their next set of tasks. Greg announced Washington staff members were impressed with the final version of the PCS. To complete the next 3 tasks, the team requested the following resources:

- a) Use a facilitator, for example Jack Gentile, to centralize thoughts during the CEM workshops.
- b) Involve PhD level scientists that have prior involvement in this process.
- c) Maximize resources to complete shared goals with the RECOVER process, and where applicable, create a schedule that coincides with theirs.
- d) Ensure the appropriate message isn't lost in translation into layman's terms when Phase II of the PCS is drafted by appointing several technical scientists to work with the contractors.
- e) Acquire additional contractor support for completing the indicators.
- f) Additional technical support is needed for Bob to pull together the information.

In addition to the above resources, the team had several other recommendations for successfully working with contractors on their future projects. Prior to proceeding with the next stages of the Plan, a dialogue will be created between the contractors and the SCG for achieving the interests of the team. There will be one contact person from each of the contractor's offices working with the team to allow for consistency, and all technical information will be provided to the contractors in writing for comparison to the final product. The tone and scope of the Plan will be established before it

is turned over to the contractor to translate into a layman's document. Peter offered a 20 hour/week person to assist in the team's tasks.

Public Comment:

Lisa Beever recommended looking at all conceptual models and putting them into the same format. She feels the Workplan is and will be very useful, and is happy to see Caloosahatchee included. She identified several missing pieces, including the CEMs from the Southwest and Florida Bay Feasibility Studies. She mentioned that there are two CEMs for Caloosahatchee, one from the Feasibility Study and one from CERP. The Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program spends about \$10,000 for each workshop and offered to pay for 1/2 of that regions workshop for Phase II. She will send Rafaela Monchek her ideas on where to group the missing pieces in the Workplan.

Chris Farrell stressed the importance of picking the right indicators and performance measures. He cautioned that elements of manatee habitat are better indicators than manatees themselves, and stressed the importance of picking the right indicators. He also explained sometimes the appropriate indicator is not necessarily the bird, but the types and places of nests.

Future Meetings/Tasks:

The SCG subgroup will meet before the March 2nd SCG meeting.