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Science Coordination Group DRAFT Meeting Summary – Meeting #14 FIU, GC Ballroom, Miami Fl 33199

November 2, 2005

Attendance:

Members:

Susan Markley
Joan Browder
Peter Ortner
Ronnie Best

Bob Johnson (for Dan
Kimball)
Cherise Maples
Greg May

Lisa Beever
Barry Rosen
John Ogden
Rock Salt

Staff, Contractors, Public:

Carrie Beeler
Tim Canan

David Erne
Kurt Buchholz
Brian Siems

Rafael Olivieri

Members not present:

Ken Haddad
Calvin Arnold
Richard Harvey
Greg Knecht

Loren Mason
Jay Slack
John Volin
Ed Wright

Terry Rice
Bob Doren

Whiparound

Susan Markley informed the group that Miami-Dade took some post hurricane monitoring in different parts of the county. Ms. Markley explained that coordination at the Biscayne Bay level was being discussed at the SFWMD and she not sure if the group was plugged into what is happening with CERP. Ms. Markey further elaborated, that it seemed some of the proposed work of the team was duplicative of activities occurring within CERP. Ms. Markley's assessment was that the Coastal Ecosystems group at SFWMD does not seem to be plugged into what's happening at the regional level. John Ogden asked to talk during the break regarding ways to enhance coordination.

Joan Browder expressed her approval of enhancing coordination activities as it relates to Biscayne Bay. Ms. Browder told the group that pink shrimp and grey snapper have been submitted to NOAA to be included in fisheries monitoring and assessment activities. Ms. Browder informed the group that she had trouble getting data for 2004 from DB Hydro and salinity data for Biscayne Bay. She suggested improvements be made to make data available quicker for assessment purposes. She also told the group that the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council is developing an ecosystem Management Plan, and sections on Mangroves may be of interest in south Florida. Finally, NOAA has been doing monitoring of abnormal fish in the St. Lucie river system and, pre and post hurricane information has been gathered and might be of interest to SCG members.

Tim Canan, David Erne, Kurt Buchholz, Brian Siems, and Rafael Olivieri from Booz Allen introduced themselves and explained which SCG items they were working on.

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Lisa Beever told the group that the Mote Marine Laboratory finished a study that explored the richness and abundance in degraded creeks that was being applied to the Picayune Strand Restoration Project. The primary investigator for that research activity is, "Aaron Adams". Additionally, the Conservancy of Southwest Florida did a study that proved that the removal of Brazilian pepper and Melaleuca improved diversity. Ms. Beever explained that although it was information that everyone assumed, it was good to have the documentation. She informed the group that the restoration mapping of the Southwest area for had been completed by the Southwest RCTs and there was a plan to use it for the development of restoration alternatives. Rock Salt asked how this mapping project gets integrated into RECOVER for consistency. Mr. Ogden said no one has approached RECOVER about this mapping project and requested a presentation to the RECOVER Leadership Group (RLG). Ms. Beever commented that the timing for a presentation on mapping was good since the project is in the early stages of development.

Peter Ortner informed the group that NOAA is modeling themselves after Department of Defense processes. As part of the process, Mr. Ortner will be sending a survey to SCG Members in the mail and wanted the group to be on the look out for this survey.

Bob Johnson explained that he had participated in some of the Ocean Action Plan activities as it related to the section dealing with, "A seamless network of Parks, Refuges and Sanctuaries." Mr. Johnson told the group that south Florida is being used as a case study. He told the group that much of his and his staff's time was being spent on issues related to DAMP and CSOP. He expressed his opinion that there has recently been a movement that is trying to think of a "complete water system" that includes areas both to the north and south of Lake Okeechobee. Additionally, he thought that the issues about the design of water quality network were surfacing again and the interest was spurred in response to the recent "wet" year and the exceedences that occurred in the refuge. He explained that some points of the water quality issue starts with the initial permitting and how it relates to ambient marsh conditions. There is also the link between water quality and CERP implementation as water is moved around.

Rock Salt mentioned that he was struck at how much damage that the hurricane did in relation to the marl. Mr. Salt explained that the hurricane had pushed marl up into natural areas. Mr. Ogden noted that the Everglades has been and is molded by these big events. Mr. Salt agreed and said that in some sense we have engineered south Florida so the big events do not have the opportunity to mold the terrain. Mr. Salt expressed the desire to have an understanding of hurricane's effects. Ronnie Best said that he would like to take the lead and pull together a hurricane discussion.

Ms. Markley added that although they were not able to monitor much in Biscayne Bay during the hurricane, she personally was able to see the springs in Biscayne that people had thought were part of the historic properties of the Bay. Ms. Markley said there were different physical characteristics of the water in the areas of the springs and the salinity was different as well. Miami-Dade did not do a big monitoring program for this storm, but the county was able to get funding for this type of activity from state and federal programs that offer grants for disaster related monitoring.

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Barry Rosen expressed Jay Slack's apologies for not being able to participate in the SCG meeting because he was attending a dedication event for a wading bird facility. The facility will house a study for the effects of ambient levels of Mercury on White Ibis. Mr. Rosen informed the group that USFWS was funding work on contaminants in particular, the effects of Copper on Apple snails. Mr. Rosen said that he and others are curious about information regarding the new exotic snails. He said that there have been conflicting reports on what might eat them. He also told the group that he attended the Symposium that discussed blue/green algae. The Symposium was executed to help gather information in response to an act that requires a report on the subject due by the end of 2006.

Greg May said he testified before the Little Hoover Commission in California as part of a governance review of the CALFED program which Governor Schwarzenegger had requested. Mr. May commented that the Little Hoover Commission was unique in that it consisted of elected officials, business leaders and stakeholders. Three models were selected for the review, the Everglades, Lake Tahoe and Chesapeake Bay. Mr. May remarked that the CALFED team was very interested in adaptive management and noted that it was easier said than done. Greg provided DAMP as the latest example of adaptive management in Everglades restoration. Mr. May reported that the Chesapeake Bay representative acknowledged they had too many indicators and was concerned that GAO would take note. He was very interested in the "elegant few" approach being developed by the Everglades SCG. Much of the discussion revolved around the relationship between the state and federal government. Greg explained that the key to success in the Everglades had been leadership and shared vision between multiple agencies. He described the Governors Commission for a Sustainable South Florida and the Task Force as keys to a successful relationship. Mr. May explained that a "culture of restoration" was created that provided a context for decisions that could be supported and implemented by all the players. He said our success in the future would be determined by the degree to which we continued to provide strong leadership and a shared vision. Additional information could be found on the CALFED and Little Hoover Commission website.

The group discussed the differences of CALFED's structure with oversight and the Task Force's (TF) role of coordination. The oversight role did not seem to be working for CALFED while TF's coordination model appeared to be a better model. Peter Ortner discussed the fact that many people criticized the TF for not having oversight authority but considering the CALFED experience it seems that oversight does not work. Mr. May pointed out that, while the TF does not have implementation authority, its coordination model allows for complementary roles for the implementing agencies. Mr. May further explained that the TF did have accountability such as reporting to Congress every two years.

Greg May informed the group that there were two TF meetings coming up. He suggested that there were a couple of SCG issues that would be relevant, such as CSOP as it relates to system wide operations. The regular SCG update will take place at the December TF meeting and the members will be informed of the independent review of the PCS Phase I.

John Ogden commented that there were many large restoration initiatives around the country and a national organization might be needed to help keep the individual restoration initiatives from competing and help them learn from each other. Mr. Ogden used the example of Louisiana's

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advertisement, (X number of acres of wetlands are lost per minute”) as and opportunity to learn how to promote restoration initiatives through good messages.

Cherise Maples introduced herself and had no additional update.

Break.

John Ogden will send information to Carrie Beeler regarding the Wetlands Special Issue.

System-wide Indicators

Rock Salt gave an overview of the list of proposed Indicators. Mr. Salt recommended that the team present the list as a proposed list for the TF to give comments on and then to go through independent and public review. Mr. Salt noted that the key point is that we are running out of time. There are three categories of indicators: those that are ready; those that the group feels could be ready (such as: invasive exotics, salinity and water supply); and finally there are built system and ecological indicators that are probably not going to be ready for 2006. The indicators that will probably not be ready are termed, “indicator areas under development”.

Joan Browder was concerned that the contaminant indicator had a note that development is 2-3 years away and the group suggested removing the time estimate to be consistent with the other indicators.

Bob Johnson asked what the issue was surrounding the vegetative mosaic indicator. David Erne explained that this just would not get done before the drafting. Bob Johnson commented that many scientists were concerned over the tendency to split when dealing with wildlife and lump groups when it deals with vegetation.

Built System Indicators

Tim Canan explained that the subgroup was not able to meet due to the hurricane. The terms approved for the indicators could be too strong, although water supply and salt water intrusion was reasonable. Tim noted that if SCG still gave the subgroup approval they could move forward to complete the indicators by January. Several of the indicators such as water volumes and new fresh water are adapted from RECOVER Interim Goals and Targets (IG and IT) document. Rock Salt asked if RECOVER emphasized the “new fresh water”. John Ogden said we looked at “new fresh water” for the IG and IT process. Mr. Salt asked if it water is moved from an area that is considered to have water depths that are too high, then is that water considered “new fresh water”? Susan Markley indicated that she is not comfortable with this term and explained that there is a Guidance Memo that is being written and developed and should answer these types of questions.

Biscayne Aquifers was one proposed indicator and Lisa Beever explained that the indicator should be coastal aquifers not just Biscayne Bay aquifers so that the indicator captures SW Florida wells. Rock explained that part of this was to have ability to monitor and use data. Susan Markley was concerned that confusion over a common vision would make the indicator

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selection process difficult. Ms. Markley noted that the process was based on the process used for Eco-Indicators, which works on the premise that there are CEMs, and there is no similar system set up for the built system. Rock asked how RECOVER came up with their set and John Ogden replied that were workshops. Rock suggested that RECOVER's list was at least a starting point. Susan Markley informed the group that she knew of a bunch of monitoring wells, but she does not know if there is a network system wide. John Ogden commented that he prefers to move forward, understanding that this is a less than perfect world. Rock emphasized the point and explained that part of the success for CERP is that we were able to move forward when things are not perfect but stay on top of thing and adapt.

Peter Ortner thought the issue is that capturing additional water to deal with both expected uses and the water required for the natural system. Rock Salt commented that his concern dealt with water management choices like, every time it looks like rain the canals levels are dropped sometimes, unnecessarily and therefore the losses are from management and not usage. In this case the subgroup needs to continue to work on this indicator.

The group decided to let Jennifer McLeod from Battelle give her information on the Independent Scientific Review (ISR) and come back to the built system indicators later in the day.

BATTELLE ISR

Jennifer McLeod explained that Deb Drum is the Project Manager, but due to Hurricane Wilma she had to go to Massachusetts. Ms. McLeod went through the report process with the group. She indicated that each reviewer did their review independently to maintain the integrity of the report.

The major findings included formatting and content suggestions such as the need to add specificity on problem definition for summary of historic activities and use of visual aids for coordination process framework and the scientific needs associated with Conceptual Ecological Models (CEMs). Reviewers recommended more specificity in defining gaps and actions, and recognized that the Plan sufficiently addresses coordination issues.

Reviewers had broad consensus that the use of CEMs is appropriate and preferred in regional restoration efforts, and recommended improvements to include: Reorganization of needs-gaps-actions by eco-regional module and a clear representation of where scientific inputs to the Task Force occur. They suggested using CEMs and indicators to assess research and management needs and to develop CEMs for Kissimmee River Basin, Florida Keys, and Western Big Cypress Basin.

Reviewers thought that the presentation of needs, gaps, and actions was straightforward and the plan could benefit from more explicit linkages among them. Reviewers suggested that the risk for each need and gap should be assessed using CEMs to focus coordination efforts on those that, if not addressed, could lead to a "high risk of restoration failure". The reviewers thought SCG should comprehensively assess "who is doing what, and where."

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Rock Salt said that the ISR reminded him of the need to follow up on the tracking and accountability program, for example the SCG said the SFWMD should include a water quality module in the estuary stuff and there is no status of this activity. Mr. Salt suggested that there is a need to improve the system for tracking. Ms. Markley noted the tracking is going to get more challenging and Mr. Salt agreed and explained that was the reason for the need for a tracking system. Mr. Ortner noted that tracking would work only if the agencies had the capacity to implement and Ronnie Best explained that he believed that if the TF member agrees that it is a priority, the chances are, it will be done.

The SCG thought that in some cases, comments by the reviewers reflected a belief that the TF model had more of an oversight role than was actually the case.

Lunch Break

Meeting summaries from July and August 2005 are accepted with no comment.

PHASE 2 Plan to Coordinate Science

Rock directed the team's attention to the Phase 2 Plan to Coordinate Science (PCS) and noted that the Battelle document recommended a lot of things that are already being done. Booz Allen is going to put together a matrix or tracking system for the recommendation from the ISR.

Rock went over the goal 3 language and further explained that the goal 3 indicators dealt with being compatible with the natural system and not assuring sustainability and growth of built system. Susan suggested that we change the name to Peter's recommendation of "compatibility" indicators.

The group talked about land availability for CERP projects. Joan Browder said that there was not a defined consensus on the minimum amount of land needed. Greg May said that the issue with a band 4 project consideration of ownership was not taken into consideration. If it is a PIR it is easier to deny a permit. Mr. Salt explained that the land owner's point of view is that the project will not be built for decades and the owner should be able to use the land. Peter Ortner further explained that this equates to the legal issues surrounding denial of a permit. Greg May described the TF effort to better define land needs. Rock Salt thought that it was possible that land availability and contaminant are more of stressors, and it may be best to keep indicators on the ecological side or: count it as a stressor and say as it is reduced you get ...less cattails (for example). Mr. Salt defined his question further and asked if indicators should only be attributes of the natural system or should there be a stressor management category for the Goal 3 built system? John Ogden said that if the group is looking for compatibility, the indicator would then be that stress the built system does not put stress on the natural system. Susan Markley remarked that water consumption would fall into that category, but salt water intrusion would not be a stressor. Greg May commented that he would like the indicator to read as a positive. John Ogden said that other things need to be measured such as rainfall to get the full picture, not just indicators. Rock Salt said that is like validating our assumptions from the plan designs. Greg May advocated for precision on vocabulary for better communication.

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Tim Canan explained that these indicators are very conceptual and that there are four indicators of compatibility that are under consideration and would require additional development including: Per Capita Use of Water, Water Reuse, Flood Protection, Aquifer Water Levels, and Changes in Land Use.

The group talked about waste water (WW) reuse mitigates demands for fresh water. The subgroup considered different types of measures for reuse but no single or set of measures were agreed upon. Greg May explained that some of the initial WW reuse projects considered in the Strategy were evaluated they were found to not be economically viable, but as time goes on that analysis may be different. Mr. May commented that key assumptions from Restudy may need to be tracked. Susan Markley said that she remembered Colleen Castile giving a speech about reuse and that there may be a State of Florida target.

Lisa Beever thought that land use related to impervious surfaces would be a good indicator for the built system. Others thought it might not help with compatibility. Joan Browder said that impervious surface exacerbates flooding. Susan Markley explained that she could not support it on behalf of Miami-Dade County. Ms. Markley explained that potentially the problems with detention could be engineered away. Other members pointed out that those engineering techniques described by Ms. Markley did not address water quality problems. Ms. Beever explained that the engineering solutions do not mitigate for everything for example, nutrients fecal coliform or turbidity. Mr. Salt commented that it would be easier to go to Corps or District to ask what the assumptions for development were then to try to fit this as an indicator. Mr. Salt suggested a good avenue to address limits to impervious system was the SFWMD. If the SFWMD looked favorably on more pervious surfaces, it might provide incentives to development.

Greg May asked the team to look at the Recover indicators again to determine what items should be tracked for compatibility. Rock Salt reviewed the list of requests for write ups on indicators. These will go for ISR. John Ogden mentioned a meeting on spoonbills that it hadn't happened yet.

Needs, Gaps & Actions (Rafael Olivieri)

Rafael Olivieri told the group that there were a series of workshops. He explained that currently the needs are being consolidating and put to the TF level. The plan is to distribute by November 14, 2005 to the SCG and sub-teams to get finalized at the Jan 06 SCG meeting. The expectation is to have 12-15 needs.

Ensuring Quality Science

Kurt Buchholz explained that coordination is controlled at three separate levels, the Science institution (e.g., member agency or contractor), the Task Force (e.g., SCG and other scientists), and third-party reviewers (e.g., ISR panels, science advisory boards, GAO). There is no evidence that the current process of ensuring quality of science used by the Task Force is broken. Improved application, documentation, transparency, and communication of agency quality

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systems will: improve defensibility of results, speed understanding of conflicting scientific interpretations, and reduced uncertainty of coordination decisions.

Mr. Salt asked about the definition of Peer Review and ISR. The group discussed the difference between them and debated if they were the same thing. Mr. Salt asked if scientist had to be part of the review. The group decided to lump the two into a single definition to ensure quality science, perhaps using the OMB document.

Needs, Gaps and Actions

Mr. Olivieri said we need to track and fill gaps. He explained we could have a very simple tracking spreadsheet or more detailed database type tracking. Mr. May explained that given the differences in TF members in regards to detail or summary information, he was not in a position to give direction. He mentioned that there was not a clear understanding at the TF level of the requirements. Mr. Salt was not sure that every gap has an action to deal with the shortfall, and thought that they would in that case track actions only. The consultants explained that they thought every gap should have an action and status should be given on them. Mr. Salt pointed out that in that case every action should have an SCG champion to track it and if it there was not an SCG person who was in charge of the action then someone to follow it would be needed, maybe Bob Doren. Mr. Erne commented that he believe that SCG members are covering the leads.

Next Steps

Greg May and Rock Salt wanted to get a good report-out template from Booz Allen for the TF level of audience in the language they are accustomed to hearing.