

**Science Coordination Group
Meeting Summary – Meeting #15
SFRPC, Hollywood Florida**

February 14, 2006

Attendance:

Members:

Paul DuBowoy	Ronnie Best	John Ogden
John Volin	Bob Johnson (for Dan	Rock Salt
Ken Haddad	Kimball)	Bob Doren
Calvin Arnold	Greg May	
Joan Browder	Barry Rosen	

Staff, Contractors, Public:

Carrie Beeler	David Wegner
David Erne	Brian Siems
Kurt Buchholz	Rafael Olivieri

Members not present:

Peter Ortner	Greg Knecht	Terry Rice
Cherise Maples	Jay Slack	Lisa Beever
Richard Harvey	Bill Reck	Susan Markley

OVERVIEW OF INDICATORS

Rock covered the overview of indicator write-ups and their status. John Ogden explained that he has set aside time this week to complete his write ups for Woodstork and White Ibis indicators. John asked how this write-up differs from the RECOVER documentation and Rock explained that this write-up is a condensed version of the RECOVER documentation.

Rock continued to describe the three compatibility indicators completed. Rock asked if the format should be consistent with the other indicators. The group felt that it should if possible, but there might be some challenges to creating a consistent format. Barry noticed that 2 of the 3 compatibility indicators were not really systemwide and Rock agreed and noted that these are the examples. Although they were not all systemwide, Joan advocated keeping all of them.

Greg explained that this briefing will be presented at the Task Force meeting. The group wanted clarification on what the relationship is between the indicators here and the Interim Goals and Targets. Rock explained that these indicators are available in the RECOVER IG and Targets Report (IGIT). John explained that RLG has agreed update the IGIT Report.

There were some indicators, such as contaminants, that were still in development that will not be ready for the 2006 report but should be in the 2008 update. Additionally, he told the group that the exotic plant indicator had not yet been peer reviewed.

Rock reviewed the timeline for action items. He noted that the PCS phase II initial draft is scheduled to be available May 2006.

Joan wanted to know if she could get a copy of the presentation and Bob said yes. Ronnie suggested that they should take the names off that were listed as leads for the indicator write-ups and the group agreed.

WHIP AROUND

Rock informed the group that Jay Slack is moving to Denver to accept a new position.

John Ogden explained that the Special Wetlands Issue had been released and he had not had as many extras as he originally thought, so he was trying to make sure the SCG members had a copy. He asked the group how many needed a copy and 6 replied. He also informed the group that the RECOVER Leadership Group (RLG) has developed an Adaptive Management (AM) Strategy for CERP. There is an implementation strategy insert that actually tells how to integrate AM into the PIR process. Rock wanted to know how this AM document is different from the Guidance Memorandum (GM) 6 on AM. John explained that this is just one piece of the total AM process (the assessment box of the AM diagram). Paul DuBowy noted that RECOVER feels they are taking the lead to meet the requirements of the Water Resource Development Act regarding AM. Rock explained that GM 6 is the policy document. Rock asked if this document is the transition document from policy guidance to on the ground implementation. John Ogden said that it was.

Greg May informed the group that the next Task Force meeting is scheduled for February 22 and 23, 2006. Greg also explained that he got a call from Jim Boone discussing the direction he received from Quality Review Board (QRB) to develop a systemwide monitoring plan. QRB wanted this plan to ensure good coordination and avoid duplication. John Volin and Ken Haddad agreed that in many cases there isn't as much overlap as suspected. Ronnie Best pointed out that this kind of plan might find duplication and get cost saving on one end, but also find gaps and needs and have to spend money on the other end. John Ogden explained that there are still discussions about who should take the lead on this endeavor. John Ogden suggested that maybe the SCG could be the lead. Ronnie Best thought the group should ask the Task Force to assign this task to SCG.

Ronnie Best told the group that there are several workshops such as remote sensing scheduled for this year. In particular, he mentioned the Greater Everglades Ecosystem Restoration Conference (GEER) June 5-9, 2006 in Lake Buena Vista, FL and encouraged SCG members to attend.

Joan Browder announce that since the group was talking about avoiding redundancy and filling gaps, she would like to let them know that one of the outgrowths of the last workshop ended up helping coordination for the St Lucie River including monitoring, a hydrodynamic model, and a sediment and nutrient model was added because of collaboration and communication.

Barry Rosen said that there has been a response in Caloosahatchee and an outgrowth of algae has created the opportunity for lots of secondary producers such as anthropods. He noted that it might not last. Bob Doren thought this situation sounded a lot like what had happened in Florida Bay.

Calvin Arnold told the group that the new Deputy Undersecretary Merl Pierson would be coming to South Florida. He new of two items he would be seeing, one was Ted Center and his research center and the second was the Ft Pierce office regarding the Citrus Canker issues. Rock Salt extended an offer to help in any way. Bob Doren asked how funding cuts affect citrus canker research. Calvin said that it did create problems, but they were trying to use BMPs to stop the spread. Joan asked about the sugar cane research to find tolerant strains to high water. Calvin said that he was not sure where that research is. Ronnie told Calvin that the sulfur in the Everglades would replace the phosphorous issue because sulfur changes into sulfide in the ecosystem, which aggravates mercury methylation. Ronnie thought it would be good to talk about future replacements for sulfur in agriculture with the new Deputy Undersecretary.

John Volin informed the group that he had been in Australia studying Lygodium Microphyllum (Old World Climbing Fern). He explained to the group that he had found that it was very substantial in its native environment.

NEEDS AND GAPS

Rafael Olivieri described the process of taking the large number of needs and condensing them into a few macro level needs. He then gave some examples of gaps such as Northern Estuary high resolution maps. Actions were identified, but no entity was assigned to grapple each action. Ken asked if the level of difficulty was assessed. Rafael explained that Battelle had addressed the need to prioritize in there ISR, but it wasn't addressed at this time. The SCG felt that there was a need to identify a responsible party to pursue the actions.

Rafael explained the next step was to send the consolidated needs, gaps and actions out for review. Bob asked if the group wanted to see the consolidated list after all comments were incorporated and the group responded yes. John Volin was concerned that he was on the Greater Everglades and he had never seen this. Rafael explained that he was waiting for Bob Doren's review before it goes out to RECOVER groups.

Greg said that each package of actions should have a preamble that explains why they are important and what happens if they are not done. Rock's and Ronnie stated that there is a need for a way of prioritizing the actions. For instance, topics like, degree of difficulty leveraging, and feasibility.

John Volin noted that over half of the actions were from a single module, the estuaries module-Bob Doren said that estuaries legitimately need more information. Barry noted that the actions need to be linked back to the “so what” factor.

We need to link indicator package and the PCS II. Rock believes that every action needs to be understood as next step including who is going to do each one. Rock doesn't want SCG listed because SCG abilities are limited. Rock wants to get the agency to agree to put their names down or else there is no point. The group also thought in some cases the answer to complete the action might not be clear in which case, the group could report just that. Ken said it sounds like a qualifier is needed for each of the actions from the perspective of feasibility and significance of the 3 core elements of restoring the system. Bob explained that he would come up with the grouping and evaluate feasibility and matter of precision. Ken also thought it would be good to know the difficulty of each group, the cost, and how often each action would need to be updated. Additionally, it should be noted if any agency has stepped forward and if not which agency should. Joan felt this list should go around to a broad audience. Rafael said that they would try to get the groups to pick the most important actions that need to be done. Greg told them to add a question regarding why it is important.

INFROMATION SHARING

Brian Siems starts the information sharing presentation. He gave some examples of information that could be shared. He explained that the risk of not sharing information creates redundancy and a loss in an opportunity to make management decisions. He further explained that if the manager is not aware that information exist they may decide to start data collection which, wastes time and money. Ronnie told the group about a data call that went out and a response of “again?” was given.

The group had some questions on the statement dealing with “...recommend policies for sharing information”. Calvin elaborated that the group could recommend sharing or coordinating policies, but could not force policies on different agencies. Greg suggested adding language such as, “to support congressional duties to coordinate consistent policies”.

Brian covered information sharing statements. Ronnie Best suggested that this could be a topic at an upcoming workshop. Bob Doren explained that these statements were meant to be broad statements of agreements that would give Task Force members something to point to relate to sharing information. In other words they create a common place to start with. Joan suggested broadening the statement to include the concept of fully utilizing resources and this would help ensure fewer gaps. All agreed. Rock thought these 2 statements should be firm and up front.

Brian gave 3 options for information sharing approaches from a very basic option 1 (i.e. phonebook, which gives a list that tells the “who and whats” and might tell contact information to access before launching your own data quest. It is a limited but inexpensive option and has a short timeline. Option 2 consists of linking to all available

databases and acts like Google. This option does not include building a database; it has no ownership, and no updates from the SCG. The third option takes the approach from option 2 and adds to it. It includes interpreting the data which becomes complicated and expensive.

Bob clarified that option 2 would include getting permission to access data from the multiple agencies and put the data into a single framework. The minimal amount of information includes subjects such as title, abstract, primary investigator's name/ contact, amount of funding, and duration. There will also be a thesaurus with a synonymy to help explain and align the different terms use throughout the different data bases. Calvin asked if anyone has attempted something like this, and noted that RECOVER is doing something similar. Bob explained that the different initiatives were not in conflict and are moving in the same direction.

Bob said the language on the last slide provided the TF member agencies with a method for how to share information. Ken pointed out that there was a difference between internal agency stuff and external calls for information. Joan suggested that the third statement add in thoughts pertaining to making information widely available, utilizing information collection effectively, avoiding duplication, and enhancing coordination. Ken explained that a major problem with data collection and sharing was the "static dynamic". He added that there needs to be a system for updates, including more up-to-date information or "maintenance of the tool". Greg asked about different ways to prioritize sites when Google searches are done so that they are at the top of the list. Greg also asked why using Google would not suffice. Bob explained that if Florida Bay research was googled, SOFIA may come up, but that might not take a researcher into the data. Bob explained they needed a web crawler that searches data base and has authorization to read the data.

Rock and Ken both thought the important goal was that research was made available to inform managers of who is doing what and what information was out there to help them make decisions? They asked how this tool would help managers. It was explained that researchers or people that mangers ask to pull info together for decision-makers will be able to use this tool to find information easily that helps managers make decisions. Ronnie gave an example using DDT in agriculture lands. He explained that you could do a search on DDT to find out what was known already and then make either management decisions or begin additional research as needed. Bob noted that this tool would be capable of organizing synthesis products and information.

Rock asked who would be capable or probable to implement option 2. Ronnie suggested that the group should search out option. Greg believes that the group should get an estimate before figuring out who should do this.

Bob wanted to know if a prototype should be set up. Greg recommended ecostems be used as the example. It was noted that the costs for development and maintenance needed to be included.

Greg asked if there were any guidelines due to Homeland Security issues. Ronnie said yes there would be and Brian agreed to get information on the guidelines.

ENSURING QUALITY SCIENCE

Task Force needs to ensure that its science products follow accepted protocols and standards of quality science in order to be scientifically defensible. The group decided to strike the language below;

~~Task Force needs to coordinate with agencies to ensure that their data, research, models, monitoring, science applications, and reports are of sufficient quality to be scientifically defensible.~~

Brian brought up several questions and topics that applied to the Task Force ensuring quality science. Brian posed that the Task Force will be unable to “ensure defensibility” if there is no governance mechanism for it to successfully conduct this role. The Task Force has no established processes or criteria for synthesizing science information, or conducting independent science reviews (ISRs). The Task Force should develop a quality science policy statement or agreement.

Joan asked about publications she said “we should encourage research moving into publication.” Rock and Greg said that implementing agencies such as DEP or NOAA were responsible for ensuring quality controls for science. Ronnie explained that he was not sure quality assurance needs to be in this plan. Each member agency has their own protocols we can ask that they share it. Greg pointed out that the Task Force should ensure its products are subject to independent reviews such as the PCS. Ken explained that the group could get mechanisms for getting things peer reviewed out of this process, such as the vegetative matrix. Ken noted that the group should not get into the agency peer review. Ronnie said bullet 2 doesn’t belong. Rock said that this was in only because CROGEE had dissipated, but now CISREP has filled that spot. Rock agreed that the Task Force role of coordination could not ensure quality science, but could promote, assist, guide, encourage etc.

Bob agreed to summarize first statement. The group discussed the different perceptions of peer review and ISR. The group agreed that for their purposes it did not have to be different. Rock said model development doesn’t have same kind of QAQC controls as other research, but wanted to defer decision to dump this part of the document. The group was not sure what the Task Force’s role is for modeling.

TRACKING PROGRESS

Brian went over the slides and discussed updating and tracking the progress for address Gaps, Needs, and Actions, including processes to incorporate improvements. The group asked for simple tool (i.e.... red-yellow- green) to reflect status. Rock asked that a lead be designated for each item for follow up for the thing. He pointed out that he last item for the CEM development indicated the lead as CEM. He noted that the CEM can not be a

lead. Ken pointed out the red dots for the Florida Keys CEM. He suggested that they take it off the list. Other group members felt it was important to leave it on the list to stimulate additional interest in developing the CEM.

The group decided that Phase II would completely replace the Phase I PCS.

SYSTEMWIDE INDICATORS

Rock noted that additional follow up will be needed for the indicators going into the documents for 2008 and beyond. It was also mentioned that the current list may not be complete. Bob explained that a Biennial reporting system is the expectation.

There was a question of whether the Roseate Spoonbill indicator write-up met the same standards as the rest. All agreed that the technical reviews of each indicator should be included. The exotic plan indicator will be completed

ASSUMPTIONS

The group discussed the assumptions and it was explained that assumptions give us an indication of how we doing? The Yellow book contained several assumptions such as, per capita water use, waste water reuse and water quality. Assumptions might help SCG and others understand what is happening as CERP and other restoration is being implemented. The group felt there was a need to decide if it is worth the group's time and resources. Greg and Rock thought that asking people like Stu Applebaum might be a simple solution. Some group members felt that concepts such as alternative Water supply were very important for the SFWMD. Greg explained that the SFWMD may be tracking some of the assumptions already. The group could select the ones that are important to follow.

NEXT STEPS

John Ogden will complete his write ups for Woodstork and White Ibis indicators.

Rock will come back to group on Quality Assurance

Bob will come back to the group for the Needs, Gaps and Actions

Joan will look at the indicator for exotics

Assumptions follow up to see what is being tracked at SFWMD

Bob will give a copy of the Exotics indicator to Joan

Carrie will send the Task Force presentation to the Group

John will give the 6 SCG members copies of the Special Wetlands Issue