

*Approved Summary of the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration  
Task Force conference call on the  
Strategic Plan/Biennial Report  
September 8, 2004*

Ms. Allbright called the conference call to order at 2:45 PM. Mr. Greg May reviewed the ground rules for the call to discuss the fourth draft of the Strategic Plan. He noted they were closely following Hurricane Ivan and hoped to announce by Friday whether or not the September Task Force meeting would be cancelled. He offered to provide updates over the weekend if members would provide the appropriate contact information. He explained that the draft Strategic Plan was posted on the website. Ms. Joette Lorion said she would provide minor edits to the conference calls summaries for August 3 and 6.

*Marti Allbright, Chair, U.S. Department of the Interior*

*Ernie Barnett for Colleen Castille, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Department of Environmental Protection*

*Frank Bernardino for Henry Dean, Executive Director, South Florida Water Management District*

*Billy Causey for Timothy Keeney, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere, U. S. Department of Commerce*

*Andrew Emrich, Counselor to the Assistant Attorney General, U.S. Department of Justice*

*Roman Gastesi for Commissioner Jose Diaz, Commissioner, Miami Dade County*

*Richard Harvey for Benjamin Grumbles, Acting Assistant Administrator for Water, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*

*Joette Lorion for Dexter Lehtinen, Special Assistant to the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians*

*Camille Mittelholtz for Linda Lawson, Director, Office of Safety, Energy and Environment*

*Patty Power for Jim Shore, General Counsel, Seminole Tribe of Florida*

*Earl Stockdale for John Paul Woodley, U.S. Department of the Army*

#### **Indicators of Success**

Mr. May explained that the fourth draft includes edits that make clearer the distinction between the Strategic Plan and the Biennial Report. He noted that the project tables in Strategic Plan have been edited to include information that will remain relatively stable from year to year. The Biennial Report now includes project tables with the information that will change from year to year.

He noted two agenda items, revised indicator text and revised water quality feasibility study text. He said the revised indicator text and approach that the Task Force previously approved had been added to the document. Ms Lorion suggested that the indicator text in the Executive Summary should also include the open process and peer review requirement. Mr. May noted those requirements were listed on page 21. Ms. Lorion made a motion to insert “which are currently undergoing an agency, public and scientific peer review process and will then be revised in future reports” in the Executive Summary. Mr. Stockdale seconded motion. Mr. Barnett offered a friendly amendment “interagency review”. Ms. Lorion agreed with the amendment. Mr. Stockdale said he was not sure what “interagency” meant. Mr. Barnett said he was just trying to capture the nature of the Task Force. Ms. Lorion said a lot of people that are concerned about this, and agree that the indicators should be subject to a peer review process and based on some science. She added she was open to ideas on the language. Mr. May suggested the language indicate that the SCG is developing a process which will include these things. Ms. Lorion said she thought the Corps required some type of public process. Mr. Stockdale said it would be accurate to say they are undergoing an interagency, scientific and peer review process. Mr. May clarified that the RECOVER interim goals and targets are undergoing a scientific and peer review in a public process but that the interim goals and targets were different from the system-wide indicators being discussed by the Task Force. Mr. May added that the system-wide indicators will be developed using an open process and will be peer reviewed. Ms. Lorion said the Task Force would not want to change what has been laid out in the programmatic regulations. Anything they would use would have to be subject to the public process and suggested using the revised language “which would be subjected to a public and peer reviewed process”. **All members voted in favor of the motion as changed by Ms. Lorion, none opposed.**

Mr. Stockdale asked to have the parenthetical revision on page 7 stricken since it is not needed. Mr. May agreed. Mr. Frank Bernardino asked to add the statement “and a system-wide assessment protocol” on the last paragraph on page 89. He said it was not sufficient to just identify the species and monitor their response. The protocols would give them a process of how to interpret that data. Mr. Barnett seconded the motion. **All members voted in favor, none opposed.** Ms. Lorion also made a motion to delete the word “revised” since it is not needed on the same page. Mr. Stockdale seconded motion. **All in favor none opposed.**

### **Comprehensive Integrated Water Quality Feasibility Study**

Mr. May introduced the revised water quality feasibility study text submitted by NOAA. Mr. Bernardino said the SFWMD was fine with the language. Ms. Lorion said the tribe was not fine with the language and made a motion add the following sentences to the end of paragraph. “It is the Miccosukee Tribe's position that the delay, and potential abandonment, of the Comprehensive Integrated Water Quality Feasibility Study described in the 1999 Restudy document as being necessary to ensure that water quality restoration targets are linked to hydrologic restoration objectives is indicative of the overall failure to address water quality as a priority. The Tribe believes that this bait and switch is contrary to the recommendation of the Federal Task Force and will undermine the entire restoration effort. In the Tribe's view, the state has always resisted this vital study, and it appears that the Corps has finally capitulated. DEP's and the Corps' unilateral decision to delay, or abandon, this critical study is unwarranted, harmful to restoration goals, and contrary to the promise made to Congress and the Task Force that a comprehensive water quality plan would be developed for the entire Everglades study area.” Mr. Richard Harvey seconded motion and noted he had not been able to print out the latest version of the document. He said that EPA has always been in favor of adequately addressing water quality and they thought the CIWQFS would help pull the water quality elements together and would object to any delays. Ms. Lorion said the Tribe is concerned with the sentence that states that they have yet to determine whether additional system-wide water quality monitoring is necessary. She also pointed out that the 1999 RESTUDY document addresses the CIWQFS and said the Task Force and the Governor’s Commission recommended it. Mr. Harvey asked if they could delay acting on this language until the full Task Force meets. Mr. Barnett said the language proposed by the tribe is not accurate. The state has money in their budget to move forward with the study and they have not made any determination whether to move or not move forward. There are also ample opportunities to move forward and there may be opportunities outside the auspices of the Corps. He said the study needs to be discussed and noted a great deal of misunderstanding with the project. Mr. Stockdale asked to have more discussion on this item. He was not sure of the Army’s view and thought additional discussion would be helpful. Mr. Barnett noted that that Mr. Duke would be providing an update on this at the next meeting. Ms. Allbright said this document needs to reflect the facts and it sounds as though the current words are not factually accurate and suggested tabling further action until next week’s meeting. Ms. Allbright asked Mr. Barnett to provide language that actually reflects the status quo. Mr. Harvey asked to research previous Task Force or Working Group resolutions on this issue and agreed with Ms. Allbright’s suggestion. Ms. Lorion and Mr. Harvey agreed to table Ms. Lorion’s motion and the members agreed. Mr. Causey said he shared EPA’s and the tribe’s concerns and wanted the monitoring. Mr. Barnett said they have had \$5 million that he has carried over in the last three budget cycles. He added that they are not the holdup and was not sure how to improve the language. He said he looked forward to having the discussion next week. Mr. Stockdale would contact Mr. Duke and suggested Mr. Barnett and Mr. Duke discuss this matter. Ms. Lorion said the Task Force has recommended this study.

### **Public Comment**

None

Ms. Lorion asked when she needed to provide the minority report. Mr. May suggested two weeks after Task Force meeting, assuming the document is approved. Ms. Allbright noted that procedurally they would take Ms. Lorion’s motion after the presentations are made at the meeting.

The conference call adjourned at 3:20 PM.

Enclosures:

1. Agenda
2. Draft Strategic Plan (August 2004, draft 4)