

*Approved Minutes
Joint Meeting of the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force and
The Water Resources Advisory Commission
Miami, Florida
December 5, 2007*

Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Mike Sole and Mr. Mike Collins called the joint meeting to order at 1:15 PM. Mr. Sole announced that he was chairing the meeting while Ms. Kameran Onley was on maternity leave. He thanked Congress and the Florida Legislature in particular for the passage of Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) which includes several important south Florida restoration projects. He noted the importance of having a unified vision for Everglades restoration and the Task Force's role in helping to achieve that common vision. He recognized Ms. Susie Perez Quinn from Senator Nelson's office.

Michael Sole, Vice Chair, Department of Environmental Protection

Michael Collins, Chair, Water Resources Advisory Committee

Rock Salt for Kameran Onley, U.S. Department of the Interior

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

Roman Gastesi for Jose "Pepe" Diaz, Commissioner, Miami Dade County

Jim Giattina for Benjamin Grumbles, Assistant Administrator Office of Water, U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency

Dexter Lehtinen for Miccosukee Tribe of Indians

Jim Murley for Clarence Anthony, Mayor, City of South Bay

Patty Power for Jim Shore, Seminole Tribe of Florida

Kari Smith for Gary Mast, Deputy Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment, U.S.

Department of Agriculture

Ron Tenpas, Acting Assistant Attorney General, U.S. Department of Justice

Carol Wehle, Executive Director, South Florida Water Management District

J.P. Woodley, U.S. Department of the Army

Biscayne Bay Related Projects

Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands (BBCW)

Mr. Dewey Worth provided a presentation reviewing the location, objectives and major features of the project. Alternative O is the recommended plan. He noted that the Yellow Book conceptual plan for this project included a number of large reservoir systems that would need to be lined and would cost over \$1 billion. Alternative O produces the same benefits planned for in the Yellow Book at a far less cost.

Components include substantial habitat preservation of the coastal wetland systems, thirteen new pump stations and some ten thousand acres of land that would be restored. There are a number of issues they cannot resolve at this time primarily because there is not enough water in the region to support the entire designated plan. The Yellow Book recognized early on that additional supplemental water would be necessary. The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) and Miami Dade County recently signed a water use permit that establishes the use and implementation of wastewater reuse for Dade County and some of that water is designated for BBCW enhancements. While it

does not meet all of the water requirements necessary to restore all of the wetland features identified in Alternative O, the new agreement calls for 75 cfs of reuse water for the BBCW project.

Mr. Worth reviewed other issues including the timing of the water that would be made available for reuse and the availability of land at their disposal to support the entire (Alternative O) project adding that there is uncertainty as to when the remaining lands can be acquired. This PIR will be implemented in phases and the first increment of construction will provide early benefits by making use of existing water and the land they already own. The first phase - which includes all the Acceler8 features, all the Deering Estate features, Cutler Flowway system and the L-321 North culvert system - will move forward independent of federal funding. The additional components that have been identified, such as the four new pump stations, 1.5 miles of spreader canals, and rehydration of freshwater wetlands cannot move forward until there is Congressional authorization and funding. The construction and real estate costs associated with the project totaled approximately \$218 million. The start of construction of the Acceler8 features is planned for January 2008.

Ms. Jacqui Cohen asked about the land costs for the entire alternative. Mr. Worth said there may be another \$50 million required for the real estate. He said he would provide her with the exact figures. He noted that while most of the Deering Estate is in public ownership these costs are still factored into the real estate costs for the project.

Mr. Mike Sole anticipated that water quality is an issue that will be brought back to this group in the future and will affect the amount of water for reuse. Ms. Irella Bague noted her concern with water quality and added this project is critical to the viability of the area.

Mr. Jim Murley said he lends his support to Ms. Bague's comments and noted the importance of including sea level rise and the climate change work that is currently underway into these discussions. Mr. Sole agreed climate change needs to be integrated into the decision making process.

Ms. Sara Fain said that in south Dade there is an annual drawdown of the canals at the end of the wet season and keeping the water in the canals could provide benefits to the BBCW. Mr. Collins said they are holding the water to the extent they can and are using the canals for storage. Ms. Wehle added they have reduced the drawdown by half. Mr. Collins said the workshop to discuss this is planned for January 2008.

C-111 Spreader Canal

Mr. Dewey Worth provided a presentation reviewing the project area. He reviewed the features from the Yellow Book which included backfilling the area and providing an alternative means of getting rid of the flood discharges. He noted there are uncertainties with trying to provide flood control protection and with the location of the spreader canal. The further north the spreader canal is located, the higher the risk of flooding in Florida City and Homestead. There are also concerns from Everglades National Park with the pump station and water quality. They have refocused their efforts and have adopted the concept of Incremental Adaptive Restoration (IAR) as recommended by the National Academy of Sciences and are suggesting they split this project into two efforts. The first phase will deal with how they can best stem the existing effects of the C-111 system in drawing water from Taylor Slough. They are shifting their focus to Taylor Slough and away from the model lands. The second phase will deal exclusively with whether a spreader canal is feasible and where it should be located. He reviewed the alternatives for the first phase and noted that Alternative 2D was determined to be the most cost effective while producing a significant amount of habitat lift as a result of the re-hydration. The first phase will have the Acceler8 components and will be funded with SFWMD funds and the second phase may require federal authorization and funding for certain features. He reviewed the schedule and noted the Acceler8 components are expected to be constructed by March 2013.

C-111 South Dade

Ms. Kim Taplin reviewed the project location noting this project is upstream from the Spreader Canal project and is a pre-CERP project. She reviewed the project objectives which include restoring the ecosystem in Taylor Slough and the eastern panhandle of Everglades National Park while maintaining levels of flood protection in the areas to the east. She reviewed the project features noting the SFWMD is the local sponsor. The goal is to create a hydraulic ridge through the construction of a large continuous detention area to reduce seepage loss from the natural areas. The project construction is currently underway and completion is expected in 2012.

Mr. Dexter Lehtinen asked about the legal status for the Spreader Canal project noting the 1994 GRR changed the 1960s authorization for C-111. He asked whether the Spreader Canal project is new or something that has been added. Ms. Taplin responded that the 1994 GRR had a spreader canal with a 50 cfs pump station noting this component has been deferred until CERP determines what size it needs to be.

Ms. Sara Fain said they support the direction for the C-111 Spreader Canal project and asked if the 30% design will provide the size of the pump, the height of the levies and the operating system. Mr. Worth responded that the pump size and location may change adding the consultant is working on a generic pump design. They also need to figure out where the optimum location in order to get the greatest benefits. This may require two separate pump stations in order to move the water and in that event the pump stations will be smaller. The Acceler8 team and the Project Delivery Team (PDT) will be working closely on this over the next few months.

Mr. Sole thanked Mr. Worth and the Project Implementation Report (PIR) team and noted that splitting the PIRs allows them to learn as they move forward. Mr. Lehtinen asked whether the Spreader Canal was being built under Acceler8. Mr. Worth said they are not building the Spreader Canal under Acceler8 adding any issue associated with the spreader canal has been pushed to the second PIR.

CPT. Ed Davidson said that although they have lost half the Everglades they still have the estuaries and this is where they need to 'work their magic'. He said that as long as the C-111 can be open to being drained there will be enormous pressure to do just that. Mr. Sole asked whether CPT. Davidson supported the progress at this point. CPT. Davidson said there are a lot of good things here that are long overdue. He added that Florida Bay and the Florida Keys are the net recipient of the water that is managed or mismanaged.

Avian Ecology Update

Dr. Deborah Brosnan of the Sustainable Ecosystems Institute (SEI) provided a presentation reviewing the 2007 Avian Ecology Workshop. She introduced Dr. Barbara Bedford who was one of the nine experts on the panel. Dr. Brosnan noted the goal was to review new information since the 2003 workshop and look at the implications of that scientific information for the management of the four species (Cape Sable Seaside Sparrow, Snail Kite, Woodstork and the Roseate Spoonbill) of concern. Dr. Brosnan stressed that SEI's role is to help facilitate the synthesis and integration of science and not to make management or policy decisions.

Dr. Brosnan reviewed some overarching conclusions and noted the panel was impressed by the amount of science that had taken place since the last workshop. The main conclusion is that the status quo is not an option if restoration is the goal. It puts species and the ecosystem further at risk and moves toward degradation rather than restoration. She said that every effort should be made to move forward with the Modified Water Deliveries (MWD) and Decompartmentalization (DECOMP) projects. She noted that the focus on an individual species here and there often appears to put them in conflict when that is not the issue. The most important point is to move forward and manage through an adaptive management process. She said that the science structure that exists is inadequate for the scale of the task that lies ahead and a consortium type structure would help the effort move forward.

Dr. Brosnan stated that the fate of the four species rests on the hydrology and ecology. She noted that there is often a discrepancy between the hydrological and ecological models and the framework needed to link the two does not currently exist. She encouraged everyone to attend the following day to listen to a more in depth presentation by representatives from the panel. She summarized by saying that the species can be managed through the transition and that no species should or needs to hold up restoration.

Key Restoration Initiatives

Tamiami Trail - Modified Water Deliveries Limited Re-Evaluation Report Alternatives

Mr. Stu Appelbaum provided a presentation reviewing the authorization and the project purpose which is to move water from WCA 3A into 3B and ultimately into Everglades

National Park (ENP) through the park expansion area to restore a more natural hydrology. The two remaining features to complete the MWD project are the Tamiami Trail modifications and conveyance and seepage management components. He noted the last approved document of record is the 2 plus 1 solution which recommends a two mile bridge on the western side and a one mile bridge on the eastern side of the trail. He reviewed a chart showing nation-wide increases in construction costs and noted the resulting project cost increases.

Mr. Appelbaum explained there are nineteen sets of culverts spaced out over 10.7 miles for a total of 55 culverts. The ability to pass water depends on how high the L-29 stage is and how big the opening (culvert) is. The recently enacted WRDA 2007 has Conference Report language that directs the Corps to: increase the flows to ENP a minimum of 1400 cubic feet per second (cfs); to look at alternatives to reach a minimum target of 4,000 cfs; and to acknowledge that there is work yet to be done under CERP and to avoid making modifications that are not compatible with CERP. The Corps is directed to provide recommendations by July 1, 2008 and they are to start work under CERP as soon as possible. The Corps has reached an agreement with ENP to look at a \$2 million pilot project this year to test the effectiveness of the spreader swales.

Mr. Appelbaum provided a table with 27 alternatives for the Tamiami Trail re-analysis which is being conducted to address the WRDA 2007 language. They will document the cost increases, develop cost savings options and re-analyze alternatives for completing modifications to the Tamiami Trail. He explained the table assumes that all the lands necessary under the Park Expansion Act have been acquired. If lands are required outside the Expansion Act footprint, then those costs would need to be added. They have included escalation factors to take account the amount of time it takes to construct the modifications. All of the road improvement costs are based on current FDOT criteria. The best plan will be determined by a combination of costs, benefits and time to implement. Next steps include selecting the tentatively selected plan, preparing a draft decision document followed by public review.

Mr. Billy Causey read a resolution passed unanimously by the Florida Keys Advisory Council at their Oct 16, 2007 meeting requesting the Task Force direct the Corps to include DOI's MWD DECOMP transition plan in the alternatives to be presented as part of the Limited Re-Evaluation Review for the MWD project. Mr. Appelbaum asked for clarification. Mr. Causey said they would like the Blue Shanty alternative considered as part of the NEPA process. Mr. Appelbaum said it is included as Alternative 5.3 and 5.4. Ms. Jacqui Cohen asked whether the \$75 million difference between the 5.3 and 5.4 alternative was to move the alignment north. Mr. Appelbaum confirmed that the additional expense would be for the crossover.

Mr. Mark Perry said the Everglades Coalition supports the removal of artificial barriers to flow and ecological connectivity within the Everglades should be initiated. They recommend replacing the existing grade level with an elevated roadway and financed as part of a transportation project. The Coalition passed a resolution on January 18, 2007 to

support the construction of an eleven mile skyway and urges federal and state officials to find creative ways to finance the construction of the full skyway.

Ms. Patty Power said Congress' message is clear that they want to see something done now. Mr. Sole said Congress sent a message that the dollar amount previously proposed was too much. Ms. Power said they sent a clear message to finish what they asked for in 1989 and then see them about CERP. Ms. Cohen asked for clarification about what comprises the habitat unit cost for 5.3 and 5.4. Mr. Appelbaum reviewed the process to identify the quality improvement and spatial extent of the habitat adding it is a measure of efficiency.

Ms. Fain said it was her understanding that time and money are of the essence and she read a letter from Senators Nelson and Hastings to General VanAntwerp stating that while cost is a factor, completing MWD without realizing the hydrological benefits for ENP is not a viable option. Mr. Appelbaum said more work remains to be done and said the question remains how much will be invested in Tamiami Trail before they know what they will do in CERP.

Mr. Salt said park staff was involved in the analysis and appreciate the Corps' efforts. He added that the skyway is the ecologically preferred solution and there are a lot of good things with the Blue Shanty plan. They are trying to balance time, costs, benefits and compatibility with follow-on projects. Congress has not spoken on the appropriations so it is not a done deal. Mr. Dexter Lehtinen said that if they want to move water then they need to get it done with the \$200 million. While local members will support any number, other members will need to vote on it as well.

Public Comment

Wayne Carter (Assistant Director for Constituent Services in the office of Mayor Carlos Alvarez) stated the mayor supports the skyway project and added that restoring the natural flow of water to the Everglades is of prime importance to the Mayor's office. He also announced the Mayor vetoed Resolution 1266 that proposed three projects beyond the urban development boundary.

Ms. Debbie Harrison (World Wildlife Fund - WWF) said she wants to see this project finished properly and is pleased with the Congressional report language included in WRDA 2007 that said the minimum target would be 4000 cfs. She noted her concern with the cost analysis presented and said she finds it difficult to understand how a two mile and one mile bridge is estimated to cost \$557 million - \$452 million after cost savings - while a one mile bridge project comes in at \$626 million. She also noted her concern that what they provide needs to be economically viable, provides a transition into DECOMP and real benefits to Florida Bay. WWF believes the Blue Shanty project does just that and they request an independent analysis of the costs. She noted that there is \$1 million appropriated for an analysis of the Tamiami Trail project and on behalf of the WWF she requested the State of Florida ask for those dollars and have a DOT economic analysis done. Ms. Harrison noted her concern with the escalation in cost for Corps projects while DOT costs remain stable.

Mr. Tom Van Lent (Everglades Foundation) said that restoration includes storage, restoration of sheetflow and recovery of the estuaries. MWD was to be the first step toward the restoration of sheet flow. Today, by doing nothing and spending no money they can put 1400 cfs through Tamiami Trail at 7.5 feet. With this plan they get 1400 cfs at 8.0 feet and the other goals are abandoned. Mr. Van Lent stated that this plan provides an extremely modest environmental benefit for a cost expenditure of \$500 million and \$100 million for land acquisition. He said that the environmental community expected far more than this. He added that worse than doing next to nothing is doing something that inflicts environmental damage with no real benefit and the swales are just such an example. The analysis does not reflect actual on the ground conditions and he invited them to go and see for themselves adding that the vegetation is not an obstacle to flow. The Everglades Foundation urges the Corps to support the transitional DECOMP plan.

Mr. Richard Grosso (Everglades Law Center) said Mayor Alvarez did something extraordinary to try to restore the Everglades and he urged everyone present to do something extraordinary as well. They need to do MWD in a way that will bring about significant environmental benefits similar to what was outlined by Mr. Van Lent and this needs to be the priority project. He asked all the agencies at the table to get real cost estimates and a real time frame.

Ms. Robin Wolf ceded her allotted time to Mr. Ullman.

Mr. Jonathan Ullman (Everglades Skyway Coalition) said the coalition is a group of 36 government, business and civic organizations seeking the skyway across Tamiami Trail. They have spent over twenty years trying to figure out what to do with MWD and it is time to think out of the box. He said the Everglades Skyway Coalition endorses the Blue Shanty canal plan because it provides the 4,000 cfs required by Congress. He alleged that the Corps' figures cannot be trusted and quoted the editorial from the previous weekend's Miami Herald.

Ms. Helen V. Tallman (Everglades Skyway Coalition) said everyone has it in their hands to create something for the future. She understands everyone is concerned about money but she encouraged them to focus on the goals.

Mr. Jay Jule noted the ages of the members of the Task Force adding that everyone has a 'dash' between their birth date and death date. Mr. Jule said Tamiami Trail was built on his birth date and the best solution would be to remove it and use I-75 to the north as a temporary road while Tamiami Trail is re-built. He closed by saying there is no question that the skyway is the only solution.

Ms. Lee Buckner (interested citizen and Sierra Club member) stated that Tamiami Trail is an absolute obstacle to flow and asked that the swale project not be considered since it will be destructive to pristine lands. She urged them to go back to the drawing board on the costs. She noted her support for the Blue Shanty alternative.

Paul Cook (Shore Sox - Sanibel Bio-solutions) provided a press release on a product his company sells that is designed to filtrate out nitrates and phosphates from the waterways for the members to review.

Nancy Lee (citizen) noted a 2,180% increase in FPL's water withdrawal demands during a twenty year planning period. The BBCW CERP project footprint is targeted for hydraulic restoration which is critical for Florida Bay, Biscayne Bay and waters in Biscayne National Park. The FPL plant expansion will require the filling in of approximately 300 acres of coastal wetlands on the edge of a national park. She noted that even if the plant is constructed at a higher elevation in order to make up for sea level changes as a result of global warming, there does not appear to be a plan to address the elevated road that will be needed. Many neighboring lands are relying on the ecological benefits promised by CERP. She provided written comments for the record.

Ms. Juanita Green (citizen) urged everyone to tell the Corps to get moving on their share of the EAA Reservoir adding that they can't stop back pumping dirty water into Lake Okeechobee until they have a reservoir to store the water. They need sufficient clean water to restore the Everglades.

Joette Lorion (Miccosukee Tribe) said she never imagined she would hear the park and the environmental community support a plan that builds levies in the park that may hydrate 5% of Shark River Slough instead of the entire slough as Congress ordered. She reminded everyone that not completing MWD has contributed to high water in the Central Everglades and damaging discharges to the estuaries. The snail kite has declined by 50% and is on the road to extinction and now is the time to move forward and get MWD done and move on to CERP DECOMP. She also noted that under the park's Blue Shanty plan people did not need to be removed from the 8.5 SMA and she urged them to think about what it is that they are supporting.

The meeting adjourned at 4:10 PM.

*Approved Meeting Minutes
South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force
Miami, Florida
December 6, 2007*

Welcome and Administrative Items

Mr. Sole reviewed changes to the agenda noting the Integrated Delivery Schedule would be scheduled as the second item of the day and the whiparound would be held at the end of the meeting.

Long Term Restoration Issues

Panel Presentation and Discussion

Dr. Brosnan stated she would not repeat the overview and science process information presented the previous day. She reminded everyone that at this stage the science has been presented and the panelists have come up with conclusions. She reviewed the major conclusions and introduced four of the nine panelists (Dr. Virginia Burkett, Dr. Jeff Walters, Dr. Barbara Bedford and Dr. Randy Hunt) who were present and moved into a question and answer session.

Mr. Lehtinen said he appreciated the science process but said he found parts of the report to be making policy recommendations. He questioned whether Hurricane Andrew caused the decline in subpopulation A. Dr. Jeff Walters said there was a catastrophic drop following Andrew but he noted the difficulties in conducting a census for several years after the hurricane because of the high water levels and therefore the conclusion was more general.

Mr. Lehtinen asked whether the 1993 – 1995 numbers were inaccurate and should be higher. Dr. Walters responded that those numbers show more fall-off for a couple of years. Mr. Lehtinen said that the catastrophic drop takes place before the high water levels and the increase takes place after the high water levels. Dr. Walters said Mr. Lehtinen was the first person he has ever heard say that the sparrows disappeared before there was high water and he did not think that was true.

Mr. Sole asked Dr. Walter whether it is his statement that the population of sparrows is 100% related to water levels and flows to the S-12s. Dr. Walter said several panels have looked at this and have come to the same conclusion that the subpopulation dropped because their habitat was under water during the nesting season for a couple of years.

Mr. Lehtinen referred to pages 31 and 32 of the report which states that the hydrological goals were met in NP 205 in all but one year and yet the bird has not recovered. He asked if they had additional data. Dr. Brosnan said that Mr. Lehtinen was referring to the paragraph on page 31 stating the intended hydrological consequences of ISOP/IOP may not have been met. Mr. Sole asked whether or not there was data on P 34. Dr. Walters clarified the report states there is a lot of uncertainty with what has happened with subpopulation A and about its ability to rebound. Mr. Sole asked if the panel is saying that the NP 205 measured goals were met, however, the resulting water levels did not seem to be responsive to that measurement because there are still high water conditions.

Dr. Walters said this conclusion was based on the vegetation and people like Mr. Dennis Duke telling them that there were concerns with the water being higher than anticipated.

Mr. Collins said the biological opinion makes an assumption that they can manage the population based on monitoring water levels at a specific location. He questioned how long they would maintain that regime when they know it is impacting tree islands in the WCA, snail kite populations and the eastern part of Florida Bay. He said the national park is being managed as an altered wetland.

Dr. Brosnan said there have been many discussions concerning the biological opinion but the goal of the panel was not to re-evaluate the biological opinion but to address the avian species in terms of overall restoration. The conclusion of the panel is that there is new evidence on how to manage the species and moving forward with restoration will benefit the species.

Mr. Lehtinen replied the report endorses the biological opinion. Mike Collins stated that if they are supposed to make science based decisions then science should tell us what time it is prudent for the managers to decide that something is not working.

Mr. Sole said the panel is not there to defend or support the biological opinion but to look at the four species and evaluate the effects of restoration and inaction as well as interrelationships between the four species. Now that the independent scientists have provided the information he asked what would be done with it.

Mr. Lehtinen said he appreciated the science in the report but it also endorses the biological opinion and recommends maintaining the status quo. Dr. Walters said the panel was not trying to say what the policy should be, but they still think subpopulation A is important. The panel concluded that it wasn't obvious that changing the regime would help the snail kites. In order for the sparrow to rebound, the important point is that good habitat needs to be provided and that the sparrows need to fill the habitat. He said that it's not certain that the habitat has been provided.

Mr. Collins said he thought the report was an honest report and acknowledged uncertainties, but he said he did not see a lot in the report other than some vague, conceptual stuff telling them what science they should be using and where. He noted he was Chairman of the SFWMD when they shut those structures down and at the time every instinct told him what they were doing was wrong.

Mr. Murley said he thought the discussion on climate change was relevant and very understandable from a layman's perspective. He noted the absence of any reference to the work by Dr. Hal Wanless from the University of Miami. Dr. Virginia Burkett said that although they did see a draft of his report it was not referenced. Climate change needs to be incorporated into a flexible design that allows for high water years, intense droughts, and sea level rise at rates greater than the global averages as well as the intensification of storms. Mr. Sole said that he thought this group could help address climate change by focusing on the adaptation issue.

Mr. Lehtinen said he appreciated the panel being here. He commented on the potential use of the recommendations in this report by the Fish and Wildlife Service and FACA violations noting the meetings were not all in public. He said this could be addressed by using the science and not the recommendations. Dr. Brosnan said they did not take part in private meetings.

Ms. Jacqui Cohen (Audubon of Florida) said Audubon was pleased to participate in this workshop. She read the first full sentence on page 2 with regards to every effort being made to move forward with MWD and DECOMP and while they believe this is accurate they note there is no mention of the C-111 or the Spreader Canal and they are critical components of restoring the health of Florida Bay and should have been incorporated into the recommendations. Dr. Brosnan said it is addressed on page 10 of the main report. Ms. Cohen urged that it be included in the summary as well.

Ms. Joette Lorion said the hydrological information provided at the conference was not included in the report. She highlighted several mistakes she found throughout the report to include incorrect references, data and contradictions. The panel has endorsed the status quo to the detriment of the Everglades and the sparrow. Dr. Hunt said that was never their intent and they wanted to emphasize that there could be a process that looks at the operations of the system in a more holistic way.

Dr. Brosnan said the panel will meet to write the report and will accept remarks from the members and others to address the comments made at the meeting.

Mr. Salt said it was Ms. Onley's understanding that the Task Force commissioned this effort. Mr. Lehtinen said it may have been Ms. Onley's understanding, but he would have voted no adding this is a FWS committee and this Task Force never commissioned this report. Mr. Sole said they would review the records. He said anything for Task Force action should have a vote. Mr. Sole said the Task Force will review the report after the peer review process has been completed.

Key Restoration Initiatives

Integrated Delivery Schedule (IDS)

Mr. Sole invited the WRAC members to the table. Mr. Stu Appelbaum said the IDS will be different from the banding concept and will include federal and state projects. He reviewed the guiding principles which include getting projects done as early as possible consistent with funding and physical dependencies. He noted the themes have been revised since the September Task Force meeting based on comments. The costs have also been updated based on the five completed PIRs. The splash sheets provide a matrix with two different funding scenarios - \$200 and \$400 million federal - for each of the themes. The selected themes include sheetflow to the Everglades and Southern Estuaries, Lake Okeechobee and Northern Estuaries and optimizing storage and flexibility. As an example he said that sheetflow will be driven by the ability to store sufficient water upstream, to have enough seepage management and DECOMP to restore connectivity. The schedule starts now and will go up to 2020 because going beyond that would be speculative.

Ms. Power said this is a terrific exercise but she hoped to have a discussion as to what the themes should be adding it will be well worth the time. Mr. Sole agreed they need to have the discussion as to whether these are the right themes. Mr. Appelbaum said the themes have not been locked in. Ms. Power said it was important to start the discussions with the Yellow Book and the NAS report noting there are a lot of new folks around the table who will benefit from the review. Ms. Wehle suggested the handouts for the next discussion should be on one sheet with projects color coded.

Mr. Sole said this task – prioritizing and scheduling projects - will be one of their most important efforts. He agreed there was an original theme in 2000 and maybe they should make some comparative analysis. He asked Mr. Appelbaum that they have a more deliberative discussion at the next meeting adding that if they don't prioritize and focus on what needs to be done next in a public forum then they will continue to have confusion. Ms. Wehle suggested this be the only item on the February agenda with sufficient time for discussion. Ms. Wehle stated that long term operation and maintenance expenses of these facilities need to be factored into the discussion. Mr. Sole agreed to work with Mr. May on the February agenda and to provide the read ahead materials several weeks in advance.

Ms. Cohen said Audubon of Florida supports the prioritization effort and asked for the opportunity to contribute to the formulation of the ideas.

Mr. Patrick Hayes said it is clear that from a system point of view we are still very bifurcated. He said they have to get sheetflow and water from the north to the south adding that the estuary component has to be addressed as well.

Ms. Wehle suggested they add Lake Okeechobee to the discussion noting the biggest challenge is the quality of water in the lake.

Final Strategy Recommendations

Strategy Recommendations

Mr. Greg May presented the recommendations for revising the subgoals and objectives in the Task Force Strategy for member approval. He explained that additional recommendations will be presented at a future date. Mr. Collins said the recommendations were consistent with what has been discussed. Mr. Sole said he was comfortable with moving forward with approval of Phase I and Mr. Salt recommended adopting the revised Strategic goals which was seconded by Mr. Murley. The goals were adopted without objection. Mr. Murley asked that the goals be reprinted in a format that could be handed out at meetings.

Plan to Coordinate Science Update

Mr. May provided copies of the member edits (in track changes) to the current draft of the Executive Summary in the Plan for Coordinating Science. He introduced Dr. Jeff Jordan who provided an update via telephone on the process the panel has developed for prioritizing the gaps identified in the document. Dr Jordan said that they settled on the system-wide indicators to use as the basis for prioritization the gaps. Mr. Collins asked

whether Dr. Jordan had the chance to review the recommendations SEI provided. Dr. Jordan said he did not. Mr. Collins said they don't have enough oversight on the science they are doing to keep it focused. He said they are getting ahead of themselves to identify gaps if they don't have a structure in place to do anything to organize the science. Mr. Bob Doren reiterated that Dr. Jordan and the panel are taking the gaps in the PCS and trying to prioritize the gaps using the system-wide indicators. Dr. Jordan said they have identified gaps in the indicators, one on native animal species and one on toxic substances. Mr. Collins said prioritizing is a good step but they need to figure out what to do next with those priorities. Mr. Sole said they could have a more substantive discussion once they see the recommendations.

Mr. Salt said they do have a peer reviewed set of hypothesis of how all this fits together and although it does not get to Mr. Collin's comments, it does outline how these needs and gaps fit together.

System-wide Indicators Update

Mr. Salt referred to the presentation in the briefing binder noting it includes an example of the three different tiers of information used to provide a transparent way to take the base science and then synthesize it. Mr. Salt said RECOVER deals with CERP and these indicators include things that are not necessary affected by CERP such as exotics. Mr. Doren added that it is integrated with RECOVER noting the scientists and their reports are the same. Mr. Sole noted his concern that there is a RECOVER Plan and a System-wide Indicator Plan and there is overlap and we will be asking the public to get their arm around these two efforts. Mr. Salt said the information is not duplicative and the TF will be looking at the information in a broad strategic way which is different from how COL Grosskruger and Ms. Wehle will look at the information. Mr. Collins said they don't have a common format or consistency with the reporting and it will not work for the non scientists. Mr. Doren said the Recover Leadership Group has looked at this format which is easy for anyone to understand.

Next Steps, Closing Comments and Evaluations

Mr. Sole noted he will begin to work on those items that will be discussed at the next meeting. He presented the meeting minutes which were approved without objection.

Mr. Salt announced the dates for the GEER Conference. Mr. Causey thanked the Governor and Cabinet for taking action on the Management Plan for the Florida Keys. He announced the Islands in the Stream Gulf Initiative Concept and provided a fact sheet.

Mr. Jim Giattina provided the members with a copy of EPA's Everglades Ecosystem Assessment (REMAP Status Report) focusing on mercury, water quality and sediment quality.

Ms. Wehle commended Miami Dade County for their work on the recent consumptive use permit. She said the funding they were anticipating will not be realized this year and the Governing Board will need to prioritize effort. She concluded by announcing the

Governing Board recently took a position to not issue an environmental resource permit in the footprint of Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands project.

The meeting adjourned at 11:50 AM.

Enclosures:

- I. Briefing Binder
 1. Agenda
 2. Biscayne Bay Related Projects
 - a. Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands
 - b. C-111 (C&SF)
 - c. C-111 Spreader and PIR Part 1
 3. Corps Update
 - a. Program Update
 - b. Tamiami Trail – Modified Water Deliveries LRR Alternatives
 - c. Integrated Delivery Schedule
 4. Administrative Items
 - a. Agenda
 - b. Task Force Roster
 - c. Draft Meeting Minutes, September 2007
 - d. Meeting Evaluation Summaries
 5. Long Term Restoration Issues
 - a. Avian Ecology Workshop Power Point
 1. Final Report - Everglades Multi Species and Avian Ecology Restoration
 2. Summary of Findings and Recommendations
 6. Action Items
 - a. Final Strategy Recommendations
 - b. Plan to Coordinate Science – System-wide Indicators Update
- II. Shore Sox Press Release
- III. Nancy Lee's written comments
- IV. Gulf Initiative