

*Approved Minutes
South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force Meeting
U.S. Department of the Interior
Sidney R. Gates Auditorium
June 19th, 2012*

Welcome and Introductions

Ms. Rachel Jacobson called the meeting to order at 12:42 PM. She reviewed some logistical information and reminded everyone that the meeting was being webcast. She asked that everyone hold their public comments until the end of the meeting and announced that they would be able to receive public comment via e-mail as well. The members were reminded to review the minutes for approval later in the meeting. She welcomed Secretary Ken Salazar, Chair of this Task Force.

The following members were in attendance:

Rachel Jacobson, Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, U.S. Department of the Interior

Greg Munson, Vice Chair, Deputy Secretary, Department of Environmental Protection

Jo-Ellen Darcy, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, U.S. Department of the Army

Jose L. Diaz, Commissioner, Miami-Dade County

James M. Erskine, Water Resources Director, Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida

Greg Knecht for Herschel Vinyard, Secretary, Department of Environmental Protection

Linda Lawson, Director, Office of Safety, Energy and Environment, U.S. Department of Transportation

Melissa Meeker, Executive Director, South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD)

Ann Mills, Deputy Under Secretary, Natural Resources and Environment, U.S. Department of Agriculture

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

Ethan Shenkman for Ignacia Moreno, Assistant Attorney General, U.S. Department of Justice

Bob Sussman, Senior Policy Counsel to the Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Sally Yozell, Director of Policy and Senior Advisor to the Under Secretary, U.S. Department of Commerce

Tim Sargeant for Kevin Powers, Special Advisor, Water Resources Advisory Commission

Shannon Estenoz, Director, Everglades Restoration Initiatives

Opening Remarks by Secretary Salazar

Secretary Salazar welcomed everyone to the Department of the Interior. He said that from the beginning of the President's administration have been strongly behind the comprehensive restoration of the Everglades. The Everglades is a World Heritage site and the greatest opportunity they have to demonstrate to the world that they can do an ecosystem restoration project that will create jobs, help the economy of south Florida and enhance the conservation values that they hold so dear. He said he has heard that the planning process led by Ms. Jo-Ellen Darcy and Mr. Rock Salt from the Corps of Engineers is going very well. He said he was glad that they were looking at the next phase of the restoration of the Everglades. He recognized Mr.

Bob Sussman who led the effort for EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson in coming up with the proposed consent decree on water quality with the State of Florida adding that almost a billion dollars will be invested in the enhancement of water quality. He recognized the Department of Agriculture led by Secretary Tom Vilsack has done a huge amount of work in the Everglades and across the country as they work hand in hand with landowners and ranchers to protect some of the most important landscapes of America from the Dakota Grasslands to the Crown of the Continent to the Everglades. He thanked the other federal partners and recognized the state agencies, the Governor of Florida and Ms. Melissa Meeker for helping them to get to this point in time.

As they move forward they need to make sure they get the next set of projects up for the Everglades. He thinks they need to continue to build on the momentum on things such as the first mile of construction on Tamiami Trail and see how they can get not only the authorization but the funding to move forward with another five miles or so. That will make a significant contribution to the restoration of the water flows in the Everglades. On the water quality side there is still a lot of work to do. Having this historic agreement between the state of Florida and EPA is a good step in the right direction but obviously there is still a lot of work on the implementation side to bring about the vision. Finally he thinks there may be some additional opportunities to find dollars they can invest in Everglades restoration as they move forward with dealing with the aftermath of the BP oil spill and revenues that may come from that. That is still hanging in the balance on the litigation front and they still do not know where that will end up. The Restore Act was passed through the Senate and is going through the House of Representatives as part of the Transportation Bill. The bill includes significant funding for conservation initiatives and there will also be money that comes in from penalties. The Everglades is a great example of the work they do for conservation and job creation. He thanked Ms. Jacobson for her leadership not only on Everglades matters but on the Gulf restoration and so many other issues that she works on.

Task Force Member Whiparound

Ms. Linda Lawson said she was delighted to be present and hear about the areas of focus in particular Tamiami Trail and they will work with their colleagues on that issue. Mr. Bob Sussman said he had the exciting and gratifying experience of working with his colleagues in his agency and in the state of Florida to reach agreement on the state's water quality plan which is a landmark achievement. Ms. Patty Power, on behalf of Mr. Jim Shore, said they are interested in the discussion of CEPP and how it affects the western side of the system. They are excited with how it is moving along and they look forward to continue working on that.

Ms. Ann Mills on behalf of USDA said that they are particularly excited about the continued partnership at the federal and state level and the nonprofit partners to build on the three years of investment and the really hard work that has gone into Everglades restoration. She pointed to the closing the prior month of the conservation easement on the American Prime acreage on the south shore of the Caloosahatchee River which is important to the Florida Panther. She noted

that it was truly a team effort with the Corps of Engineers, Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service, USDA's NRCS and Walmart.

Mr. Tim Sargeant, Governing Board member of the SFWMD and Vice Chair of the Water Resources Advisory Commission (WRAC) attended for Mr. Kevin Powers. He said he was excited to see the progress and the federal and state partners moving forward on these issues and taking stakeholder comments and putting them into this expedited planning process. Ms. Melissa Meeker said she too was excited about where they are and appreciated the efforts of Secretary Salazar for working with the Governor. At the last Governing Board meeting they approved and sent forward to the Corps the Broward County Water Preserve Areas (WPAs) PIR, so even with the commitment that they have made on the water quality side they continue to push forward on Everglades restoration activities.

Ms. Shannon Estenoz said that from the Task Force staff perspective and a long time Everglades advocate and professional, she thinks the moral among the staff and the implementers is as high as she has ever seen it. It is giving them something they can sink their teeth into and the amount of progress being made has a tremendous lifting effect. They are watching progress almost on a monthly basis. She thanked the Secretary for hosting this meeting and for the staff at Interior who made this all possible.

Ms. Jacobson noted that this is her third time chairing this meeting in over a year and it is remarkable how much progress has been made. As part of the agenda they will give a synopsis of all the progress they have made because they should take stock of what they have achieved. They will hear about the proposed historic water quality agreement between EPA and the state of Florida. They will also receive an update on the progress on the expedited planning effort underway between the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) and the Corps. She thanked Commissioner Diaz from Miami Dade County and Director Jon Jarvis from the Park Service for also attending.

Mr. Greg Munson thanked the Secretary for hosting them and said he was very grateful for the opportunity to talk to everybody, coming so close on the heels of an agreement on a historic water quality set of projects in the Everglades. Last fall Governor Scott flew to Washington and met with the federal partners to propose a comprehensive plan for achieving water quality in the Everglades. Thanks to the hard work and cooperation of a lot of people they were able to finalize a reasonable and obtainable plan that will protect the Everglades and the interest of the Florida taxpayers. The plan contains the right set of projects in the right places to improve water quality in the Everglades. It includes 7,300 additional acres of STAs and three new flow equalization basins (FEBs) designed to get the right amount of water to the right place at the right time. Two of these equalization basins will be done within four years. In addition another 4,700 acres of stormwater treatment area (STA) expansion near the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge will be done within six years. He wanted to take this opportunity to thank all of the people who have been involved and said they were going to look back at 2012 and see this as

a year when things really started moving in the right direction. He thanked everyone for their support and cooperation and reiterated Florida's commitment of seeing these projects through.

Ms. Jo-Ellen Darcy thanked everyone in the room and everyone working so hard to make this possible under the leadership of President Obama as well as the heads of all the agencies represented here. It will be twenty years next year that she has been working on Everglades restoration and she hopes there will be even more historic things to report given the progress they have made. COL Al Pantano, who was not present, led the Corps in Jacksonville the last few years to help make this happen. He has that dedication and passion and anyone who has worked with him on this issue knows that. COL Pantano will be leaving to Afghanistan and she wanted to publicly thank him for everything that he has done and wish him the best on his next assignment.

Mr. Keith Saxe said that he was filling in for Mr. Ethan Shenkman who was on his way. Ms. Moreno was unable to attend and sent her regrets. She asked him to convey the Justice Department's strong support for the Task Force's mission of coordination and cooperation on Everglades restoration. Mr. James Erskine on behalf of the Miccosukee Tribe noted the first presentation is called Everglades Restoration, The Big Picture and as part of the big picture he wanted to point out things that are unique to the tribal lands. The tribal lands comprise 76,000 acres of Water Conservation Area 3 (WCA 3) and under the Clean Water Act (CWA), are designated as outstanding Miccosukee waters that are offered their highest level of protection. The tribe set 10 ppb for those lands to protect those waters. They are working on a unique project to create water level standards under the CWA to protect their designated uses within those outstanding waters. In addition they are working on a 8,600 acre hydrologic restoration of an area known as the triangle on the federal reservation. It is a three phase project that will unite these acres of wetland habitat back with WCA 3. Mr. Greg Knecht, representing Mr. Vinyard and Working Group Chair said he was looking forward to hearing about the water quality plan.

Mr. Jose "Pepe" Diaz thanked Secretary Salazar for all of his hard work and dedication. He noted this has been an ongoing and difficult process to find the balance between the environment and the urban side. He informed the group of a recent event where they received 10 inches of rain in a matter of three hours, although it was hectic, it was not as bad as it could have been thanks to a lot of work that has been done. Ms. Sally Yozell said she returned to Everglades issues after many years and said she is impressed at what has taken place over the last several years under Secretary Salazar's and the state's leadership and under the guidance of Ms. Jacobson and Ms. Estenoz. As everyone knows NOAA is the little partner with a lot at stake. Everything that flows down ends up in Florida Bay and the Florida Keys so they are grateful for the work everyone is doing. It is so important to tourism, fisheries and species such as corals and seagrasses. She announced that a review of their Zoning Plan is kicking off today and it is a review of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS) and the Florida Keys National Wildlife Refuge. The state is a partner and this will be a big review of the boundaries and

regulations. She is hopeful that folks will provide comments on the review and said she also looked forward to today's session.

Secretary Salazar said he would be leaving to work on issues related to Louisiana and the Gulf but asked for Ms. Darcy to pass on his great admiration and thanks to COL Pantano for what he has done for the Everglades. He is sure he will provide great leadership and contributions in Afghanistan and he wished him well. He said that they work on thousands of conservation projects around the country such as the Penobscot River in Maine where they led the effort to basically bring the restoration within grasp and get it done within a year or year and a half. That project has been 50 years in the making and they have probably a thousand of those projects that they work on under the umbrella of America's Great Outdoors. A fact of the matter is that as they work on all these projects, the Everglades is still their number one conservation investment under President Obama's direction. As a team of people here working with this Task Force in coordination with the state, the SFWMD and all of their partners, they at the federal level have invested something in the neighborhood of \$1.5 billion and they can see those results on the ground. It is important for them to celebrate the exemplary progress that has been made and they need to continue that progress so that when they look back at this time they will say that this was the time when they made restoration of the Everglades happen. The Vice President told him that when he was in the Everglades a month or so ago, it was one of his best visits. He said he appreciated Ms. Jacobson's and Ms. Estenoz's leadership and well as Mr. Strickland's and added that he was very thankful and euphoric for all the great work that has been done. He hopes to be able to go and visit in the next 3 to 4 weeks the Refuge where some of the commitments were made on water quality.

Ms. Jacobson said they had hoped COL Pantano would be present and asked Ms. Darcy to thank him for his service. She acknowledged his hard work and direct contribution to the many significant achievements that have been made during his tenure.

Everglades Restoration, The Big Picture

Ms. Jacobson noted this presentation would be a review of two decades of accomplishment that have been realized. This will also put into context the water quality agreement EPA and the state of Florida have entered into. This meeting represents a juncture between taking stock of the past and kicking off the future so they will also hear about the continued progress of the Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP) and the work of the Task Force in engaging stakeholders and the public.

Ms. Estenoz explained that this presentation is designed to provide context, celebrate the history and progress they have made so far. Restoration of the Everglades is about preserving those things that make the Everglades unique. It is an oligotrophic system with high biodiversity. The Everglades is not just about an ecosystem, it supports a vibrant urban and agricultural region central to Florida's overall economy. Approximately 7.5 million people live in this region, nearly 40% of the state's entire population. It is 18,000 square miles and a lot of folks forget the

scale at which they are operating. Florida is an incredibly important agricultural state in the country. Water in the Everglades ecosystem is very carefully controlled with thousands of miles of canals and hundreds of smaller water control structures that precisely control water levels and where the water goes in the system. The result of the water control has been a dramatic shift of the Kissimmee – Okeechobee watershed complex. It not only reduced the size but more significantly cut the watersheds off from each other and restoration is about trying to reconnect them. The Central and Southern Florida project is one of the world's largest and most effective flood control projects which has done yeoman's work and done its job very well. It was originally designed to serve two million people and is now serving 7.5 million people. This Task Force is largely tasked with dealing with unintended consequences of having too much or too little water, poor water quality and the wrong timing and distribution of water. She noted that WCA 3A and 3B is an example of a small geographic area where in a space of 60 – 70 miles they have a myriad of problems. She also reviewed a list of some of the invasive species they are dealing with and reminded everyone that they need to get a handle on the problem. She reminded everyone of the Task Force's three strategic goals: Get the Water Right; Restore, Preserve, and Protect Natural Habitats and Species and Foster Compatibility of the Built and Natural Systems. She reviewed a list of accomplishments made to date and noted they have made a lot of progress because of the partnerships they have.

Mr. Knecht said they have done a lot and it is like owning a house where every week they are doing something. Every once in awhile it is important to step back and think about all the stuff that is going on because they do get immersed in the day to day activities. The SFWMD and local programs and folks in Miami Dade are constantly doing projects and there is an amazing amount of activity. He reviewed the historic flow from the Kissimmee River through Lake Okeechobee and down through the Everglades and projects such as the C&SF that have done what they were intended to do. He reviewed the major restoration initiatives to include the foundation projects, the 1st and 2nd Generation CERP projects and more than 60,000 acres of storm water treatment areas. He pointed to the Kissimmee River restoration as an example of what they can do for the rest of the system. He also reviewed other examples to include Tamiami Trail, Picayune Strand, C-111 Spreader Canal and Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands. On the Central Everglades he said that it is astounding how fast and how productive those folks have been. The intent is to deal with the future flows in the central part of the system and everyone working on this has been great. The workshops have been not only refreshing but also incredibly productive and he hoped this would be the model for working with stakeholders on future projects.

Ms. Jacobson thanked them for the presentation noting it was very informative. She added that she learns something new every day about the Everglades which is important not only to south Florida's economy but also to the economy of the U.S. The opportunities before them with Tamiami Trail and other projects underway is a sign of hope. The one thing she noted where they may have some more work to do is with respect to invasive species and suggested they

dedicate a session at the next meeting, particularly with working together with limited resources. Even if they accomplish everything with water quality, timing and distribution invasive species could stand in the way of progress.

Water Quality Discussion

Mr. Sussman said they find themselves in a good place and they all feel they have reached an important milestone that will chart the path forward for the next 10-15 years and perhaps beyond. They have a solid shot at achieving water quality standards which he thinks is the gold standard but one that has been elusive. He recognized the leadership of the State of Florida, Ms. Meeker and her staff at the SFWMD, Mr. Vinyard and his staff at FDEP as well as the EPA and DOJ teams.

On June 13, 2012 they at EPA accepted the comprehensive submission they received from FDEP. The submission contained three consent orders, a framework agreement between EPA and the state of Florida and a comprehensive set of remedies for improving water quality which is backed up by very extensive data and analysis. They were pleased to inform the state of Florida that they thought the draft permits, together with the consent orders passed muster under the Clean Water Act. They also felt the corrective action, the science plan embedded in the remedies and the overall technical collaboration reflected in the framework gave them the confidence that they were well on their way to meeting water quality standards. He provided a brief history of how they got to where they are starting from the April 14, 2010 with Judge Gold's order. A key milestone was reached on October 6, 2011 when Governor Scott and other state officials met with Secretary Salazar, Ms. Darcy and the senior EPA team and presented them with a conceptual plan for achieving the total phosphorus clean water standard in water delivered to the Everglades. The plan was a very good step forward and an impressive advance on previous efforts by the state of Florida. A breakthrough occurred in March 2012 when they came to an agreement on a set of enhancements to the Governor's plan that based on technical analysis and modeling could reasonably be expected to achieve the water quality based effluent limitation (WQBEL). This is a significant and historic event and is the first time that EPA and the state have agreed on a translation of the water quality standard for the Everglades into a permit limit and includes an enforceable suite of projects with specific deadlines for each phase of each project. It requires project construction to begin now with completion by 2025 and will result in significant water quality improvements as projects are implemented especially in eastern and central flowpaths. It is a very detailed plan with detailed project specifications and milestones. They expect to see some significant near term water quality improvements. One feature of the plan that is very important to them is that it contains a robust plan of monitoring and scientific research to ensure they are on track. The SFWMD will develop a science plan with input from EPA and others and there is a process whereby the SFWMD can consult with technical experts from EPA and others. There is a lot of confidence that progress will occur and there is a serious commitment by everyone to get the job done.

Ms. Meeker recognized the team who put a lot of thought and effort into developing a science based plan they all felt comfortable with. The leadership push from the very top proves that it is a bipartisan issue. This is the first opportunity to have an agreement on a water quality based effluent limit which is being incorporated into the permit. The proposed projects were developed to meet the discharge limit necessary to achieve the 10 ppb. She recognized the incredible effort from her staff that did more than 100 modeling runs and continued to look at different project pieces and how they fit together. They are focused on two project types, Stormwater Treatment Areas (STAs) expansion and Flow Equalization Basins (FEBs). She reviewed the existing treatment and the work that has already been done to establish the groundwork as well as the projects that are being proposed for the three flow ways: eastern, central and western. It is an incredibly highly managed system and represents a significant commitment by the SFWMD.

The Science Plan objectives: requires research regarding STA and FEB performance; evaluates factors influencing phosphorus treatment performance and determines how information from the science plan can be implemented to improve treatment performance of existing projects. They will focus on building a very robust science plan which has a very large budget. In terms of construction they are focusing on the eastern and central FEBs. These two projects will account for 90% of the flow and storage needs in the entire plan. The next set of projects will focus on the larger expansion in STA 1 West and then they will focus on the western FEB. She reviewed the estimated project costs which total \$880 million.

Mr. Munson outlined what will happen over the next 60 days or so. The projects give them at FDEP a reasonable assurance that the WQBEL will be met. The WQBEL shall not exceed 13 ppb as an annual flow weighted mean (FWM) in more than 3 out of 5 water years on a rolling basis; and 19 ppb as an annual flow-weighted mean (AFWM) in any water year. They are on a fast track moving forward and they expect to publish the notice of draft permit and provide draft permits to EPA for their review. He reviewed the schedule and said they were hopeful there will not be any changes. He extended his thanks to Administrator Jackson and everyone at EPA who was present at the meeting as well as Ms. Meeker and her staff at the SFWMD. He recognized the tremendous amount of work done in a relatively short time and recognized Mr. Knecht from FDEP who was an important part of this plan and a tremendous asset to the Department and to the state. Ms. Jacobson asked for a round of applause, not only for the speakers but for the remarkable accomplishments achieved. She encouraged everyone to review the handouts particularly the Q&As.

Ms. Jacobson presented the meeting minutes for approval. Ms. Meeker moved that they be approved, motion seconded and minutes were approved as presented. Ms. Jacobson noted they have a couple of substitutions sitting on the Task Force, Mr. Ethan Shenkman and Ms. Gail Mitchell. The National Academies of Science (NAS) is poised to release their fourth biennial report this week and she suggested they have a synopsis at the next meeting.

Working Group Sponsored Public Workshops for the Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP)

Ms. Jacobson noted that they have sponsored eight public workshops to advance the CEPP. Public participation is a major component and the workshops have been sponsored to receive input from the public and keep them engaged as active participants during the planning process.

Ms. Estenoz reminded everyone that the concern at the time was that they did not want stakeholders and the public to get left behind during this accelerated planning process. The Task Force used its authorities and flexibility it has under its authorizing legislation to host additional workshops using tools developed by the SFWMD during the River of Grass (ROG) process. They have received terrific reviews and have had tremendous engagement. The workshops have been held almost monthly since the initiation of CEPP and have averaged 50 attendees and 30 viewers on the webcast. They encourage webcast viewers to ask questions via e-mail. They have been ably chaired by Mr. Knecht and Mr. Barry Rosen. The workshops have been incredibly interactive and it is not insignificant given that the vast majority of workshops have been held during the day. Of the eight workshops, seven were sponsored by the Working Group (WG) and one by the Science Coordination Group (SCG). Two workshops were held in the evening and Google Earth was used during these sessions to help people visualize the structures on the landscape as well as the changes. This has been helpful in moving beyond some of the long standing anxiety about some of the features in the central Everglades. Two configuration workshops have been held to date allowing citizens to provide hand drawn suggestions and concepts for the focus area. This has been facilitating not just a dialogue between stakeholders and government but a dialogue among stakeholders. As the workshops have progressed they are starting to see stakeholder groups pick up the ideas of other groups which has been the most remarkable part of this public process. The next workshop is scheduled for June 26th and will be held in the St. Lucie region. She noted that Mr. Jose Cabaleiro has redesigned the website and anyone can access the materials (videos, handouts, etc.) from the workshops at www.sfrestore.org.

Mr. Bob Johnson and Ms. Allyn Childress provided a live demo of how they are using the Google Earth tool. Ms. Jacobson noted that this visual imagery is remarkable and brings the concept of public engagement to a new level. Ms. Childress and Mr. Newman from the Corps were acknowledged for their work in putting these videos together.

Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP)

Ms. Darcy recognized the exceptional effort from the staff at the SFWMD and Jacksonville District. Ms. Kim Taplin noted she was there on behalf of a tremendous technical team that has done an incredible amount of work. She reminded everyone that the projects have been on the periphery and the next logical step is to restore the center part/heart of the system. They will accomplish this by reducing the undesirable discharges to east and west coast estuaries; delivering new sources of clean water to the central Everglades and ENP; and restoring habitat in the central Everglades, focusing on the River of Grass. This is not new and is a subset of the 68

components that made up the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP). The objectives are the same and it is still about getting the quality, quantity, timing and distribution of water correct. She reviewed the CERP components that are under consideration such as operational changes, storage, treatment and conveyance in the EAA, decompartmentalization and sheetflow enhancement and seepage management. They are looking at what is the first increment towards meeting the goals that these components were trying to achieve. There will be future studies that need to happen to fully build out these CERP components.

She reviewed how water flows in the Everglades and explained the red line shows where water enters the remnant Everglades system (the natural areas) from the north. The yellow line is how the water currently flows across the red line. On average they deliver about 1.4 million acre feet per year across the red line. The purple line is what the pre-drainage system looked like, much more flows going into the dry season that tapered off and as you get later into the wet season, that is when the water would deliver much higher volumes that went through the pre-drainage system. This is an example of the type of information and scientific understanding of how the pre drainage system works. They had a SCG sponsored workshop about all the new science they have learned in the ten years since CERP was authorized. While they do not expect to reach this magnitude of volume in the first increment for the CEPP, they want to make sure they are on the right track.

The expedited planning process was kicked off on November 1st after the Task Force announcement in late October. They are striving to get to Decision Point 3 which is where they do a Civil Works Review Board and release the final report within the 18 month period from November 1st. The idea behind the expedited planning process is not to spend years on finding the most optimized plan that can be developed but to develop a good plan and get restoration going. They will be making sure it is a good plan by focusing on the critical key questions and trying to meet their objectives. They are currently half way through the analysis phase. To be successful they know they have to bring in the public and they have been doing this through the WG sponsored workshops. They are also using existing forums and meetings to engage the stakeholders. This is very resource intensive for the agencies to support this but they know they need to do this to be successful.

They have a large geographic area and they are taking a spatial approach to their plan formulation. They are doing a robust screening of all possible options and combination of options and they started north of the red line. They are looking at solutions to meet the goals and objectives such as STAs, shallow storage with STA, deep storage with STA, FEBs, flexibility within lake operations and improved conveyance. Both tribes have interest in the area and have asked to be a part of the CEPP process. The Miccosukee Tribe would like to see if they could remove gaps to reconnect the conservation area to the tribal lands in the triangle. Similarly, the Seminole Tribe has asked whether they could enhance the Seminole Big Cypress project and enhance the ecosystem benefits of that project. They have been meeting with technical staff from both tribes to see what opportunities are available. Starting here is important because it

will determine the water budget they have to design the other features such as Decompartmentalization and seepage management. She reviewed the screening criteria used for evaluating the options north of the red line as well as the results. All of the options rater better than if they don't move forward and the top overall performers were the 28,000 acre FEB and the 12,000 acre 12 ft. reservoir with 7,000 acres of STA. The 12 ft. reservoir provides the greatest benefit, however, the cost is prohibitive, \$1.5 to \$1.7 billion for just this portion of the plan so they have eliminated that option because it is beyond the cost level. The take home message is that the 28,000 acre FEB costs the least and provides a significant increment of benefits they are looking for with 190,000 acre ft. of additional water going across the red line. The Yellow Book estimated 300,000 acre ft. going across the red line. That is a significant step, over half of what was envisioned by the overall CERP plan and they can do this within a price range of \$250 - \$360 million on the Talisman property. Next step is south of the red line. Team will look at options for distributing water across the top of WCA 3A, look at how much back filling of Miami Canal they want as well as look at what kind of conveyance they need to consider as a first increment for moving forward. There have been a lot of studies on these things in the past so they will be screening down the myriad of options to a small set. Milestones include evaluating a final array of alternatives and selecting a preliminary Tentative Selected Plan (TSP) by October 30, 2012.

Ms. Jacobson thanked Ms. Taplin for her thorough briefing adding that how they arrived at the FEBs is a testimony to the transparency of this process not only on how they are engaging the public but for this Task Force to follow the process as it goes forward.

Mr. Knecht noted that Ms. Taplin and everyone on the team are unsung heroes going through these alternatives quickly and the modelers are amazing. The recreational workshops have been some of the most interesting workshops he has had the opportunity to attend. He encouraged them to continue those kinds of outreach. Mr. Diaz congratulated them on this incredibly aggressive plan that is bringing all these components together. On the outreach side he urged them to make sure people understand these meetings are taking place so that they can understand what is going on. They also need to know where the money is and the amount of return they will get. As he goes through the halls of Washington he is hearing about budget cuts and he encouraged them that as they move forward to have a Plan B, C and D. Also, he asked about the effect of one species over another and the final effect of seepage management.

Ms. Jacobson said they have to make sure they are reaching out to as many members of the public as possible so adequate notice of the meetings is essential. Attendance has been robust and they will continue to make sure of that. The Corps through its modeling has looked at the best return for the investment, but it is true that these investments are substantial. The public engagement and contribution to inform the process will also help to tease out the right alternatives. All the constituents could help demonstrate to those who supply the funding that this is important, well supported and in the public's best interest. She said she thought it would be very useful in terms of examining the effect of water levels on people and species as well as

effects on aquifer and would be a good topic for the next Task Force agenda. Ms. Estenoz said they could ask Mr. Tom MacVicar to follow-up with the Task Force on the seepage management project and they could ask him to talk about the dialogue with Miami Dade County, particularly WASO, and the issues they raised about whether seepage management would cut off recharge to drinking water aquifers. She added that for the pilot project, WASO was very satisfied with the modeling they saw.

Ms. Gail Mitchell said she tends to think about the flows in terms of the current situation with the existing flows of 1.4 million acre ft. The A1 and A2 site will both be FEBs and the two will meet the water quality objectives for the existing flows. She said she thought they needed the A1 site to treat the existing flows and assumes that when they are doing this modeling they are looking at the existing flows plus the new flows and modeling it with the FEBs. When they did the modeling for the existing flows they really needed the whole A1 to get to the WQBEL for the existing flows. She wanted to make sure they are not keeping things separate in a way that they don't match up when they bring in the new flow. Ms. Meeker said the good thing is that Jeremy and Walter are doing a lot of the modeling and they know what the existing flows are and what they can bring in. Ms. Taplin referring to the cross section slide said that A1 can meet the state's requirements. There are times when they are not having peak runoff in the EAA that is filling up that FEB and there is capacity in that FEB plus if you add an additional FEB on A2 to bring in more lake water. It is in the off-peak times that they can use that capacity and where all the modeling is being done and they verified this and all based on meeting the WQBEL for all the water both existing and new.

Recognition of Greg Knecht

Ms. Jacobson recognized the work of Mr. Knecht who will be leaving public service after almost 20 years at FDEP to become the Director of the Florida Chapter of the Nature Conservancy. He was a key member of Florida's water quality team to help deliver this milestone agreement, which is just part of his legacy. Mr. Knecht has been an integral member of this Task Force and served as Chair of the Working Group since February 2012 and Vice Chair for some time before that and will be missed. Mr. Knecht was also instrumental in leading many of the CEPP public workshops. His friendly demeanor, thoughtful manner and brilliant grasp of all the issues made those public workshops the success that they were. In his new position he will continue to be a tremendous steward of the environment and everyone is happy that he is staying in this field. We know where to find him and know that he will help us as a key partner going forward. Mr. Knecht was presented with a Clyde Butcher print of Tamiami Trail in recognition for his contributions to Everglades restoration initiatives. He was also presented with the Working Group gavel he used during his tenure as Chair.

Ms. Meeker said she had the opportunity to work with him for over a decade and what has really impressed her is his openness to new ideas and challenges and has never seen him back down from anything. He has always been there whenever she has wanted to do something new. Most importantly he has a fantastic ability to bridge the gap between technical expertise and policy. It

takes a special human being to do both. She thanked him for teaching her, helping her and for being a friend. She presented him with a picture on behalf of the SFWMD.

Mr. Munson said that many are sad that Mr. Knecht is leaving and he is not, he is petrified. He was fortunate that Mr. Knecht had been at FDEP for many years and has the expertise that he has. He has the ability to turn good science into sound policy, which is not an easy thing. He has been so helpful on all of the key issues they have had over the last few years, particularly on the water quality issue. It is always sad to see a member of the FDEP family move on but they are happy to see that Florida's environment will not be losing an expert.

Public Comment

Brian Moore (National Audubon Society) said that as these plans are laid out today, the one thing they all know is that they cost money. Right now they are working on CWA penalties for British Petroleum (BP) to pay for the oil spill and National Audubon hopes there is a way to work with the Task Force and Congress to make sure some of that money goes to the Everglades as well as the projects that have been put forward today.

Ms. Jacobson said that the Restore Act is stalled and there is nothing to report. As Secretary Salazar mentioned perhaps that might provide some opportunity but that is not known at this point.

Ms. Dawn Shirreffs (National Parks Conservation Assoc.) said she wanted to echo some of the credit that the folks working on the CEPP are doing a tremendous amount of work. She has had the privilege of being at every Project Delivery Team (PDT) meeting and CEPP workshop and she is able to see the amount of work that gets put into it and it is shared with the public. It gives them the level of transparency and honesty that means they all can have fair and honest dialogue which this Task Force has fostered. It allows them to complement the Corps' innovative expedited planning project. Members of the recreational community specifically requested Mr. Knecht because he is seen as a straight shooter. It is an enormous opportunity that has been created to achieve results. They are going to miss Mr. Knecht but know they will keep him in the loop. She thanked the staff for all the incredible work and offered NPCA's support with authorizations, funding and any other challenges that come up. NPCA is happy to be working at the table with the Task Force.

Ms. Jacobson thanked Ms. Shirreffs for her comments and said the Task Force appreciates the partnership NPCA has given to the process.

Ms. Julie Hill Gabriel (Audubon of Florida) said she enjoyed the presentations and seeing the historic efforts. The incredible effort and leadership from the people at this table and in this room are the only reasons why there are making these strides. She welcomed Mr. Knecht to the 'dark side' adding they will be sure to take advantage of that. On the water quality plan, they are very pleased to see this type of solution move forward. She thinks they do have a big communication challenge ahead of them to explain why this is so important for the public, why

they need to move things ahead quickly and what this investment is for. For people who understand a little bit better that this is not CERP and they have other restoration projects. She urged the, to try and merge the water quality plan into the CEPP so they can continue these historic efforts and lead the way for the rest of these ecosystems. Ms. Jacobson thanked Ms. Gabriel and Audubon for their incredible support. They have to think hard about the communication plan for the water quality planning and the Task Force looks to Audubon to help them communicate this to the key stakeholders and the general public.

Ms. Estenoz noted that they had between 50 – 60 viewers on the web and they have received comments via e-mail from two folks. Both e-mails were quite lengthy and will be submitted into the record.

Public Comments received via E-mail

Mr. Matthew Short Executive Director of the South Florida Wildlands Assoc. submitted a general comment directed at the Department of Interior regarding the addition lands of the Big Cypress National Preserve. His organization has a longstanding position about ORVs and he is reiterating the position that has been submitted many times over the last several years. On the water quality issue he expresses concern about the nutrient loads going into the Everglades and urges the acquisition and restoration of the original U.S. Sugar land purchase.

Mr. Larry Fink submitted a process question about the EPA's independent review of the technical work on the establishment of the WQBEL. She asked Ms. Mitchell to perhaps characterize the collaboration between EPA and the state of Florida on the technical analysis. The second part of the question, which has been asked and answered, is related to the schedules associated with the water quality agreement.

Ms. Mitchell explained that when EPA did the Amended Determination in 2010 they came up with a WQBEL that was developed by their scientists. At that time EPA did say that there could be a different expression of the WQBEL and offered the state the opportunity to submit an alternative, which they did. EPA had their experts look at the WQBEL that the state had submitted and found that it really wasn't very different. EPA had their experts go in and evaluate the state's WQBEL and found it was as protective and in one area was slightly more protective. EPA was very satisfied technically with the state's WQBEL after thorough analysis by EPA scientists. Mr. Knecht added that the documents are available on EPA and FDEP's website. In addition, documents were also provided for the Task Force website. The public workshop is scheduled for July 25th. Ms. Estenoz said the documents contain clear and easy to read schedules associated with each flowway. The other two questions are related to Mercury TMDLs and timely attainment of restoration goals and they will take a more careful reading of the questions and submit them to the Task Force members who can answer them directly.

Ms. Jacobson thanked Ms. Estenoz for reviewing the comments from those following on the web. She reminded everyone that handouts of these documents are available today and will be

included as part of the official record. She thanked the Task Force staff for their hard work. She also thanked everyone who attended and for sharing in the celebration of the terrific accomplishments to date. The next meeting will be held in south Florida and Task Force staff will poll members with some possible dates.

The meeting adjourned at 4:26PM.

Enclosures:

Briefing Book

1. Administrative Items
 - a. Agenda
 - b. Draft meeting minutes, March 7, 2012
2. Everglades Restoration, The Big Picture presentation
3. Water Quality Discussion
 - a. Presentation given by Sussman, Meeker, Munson
 - b. Everglades Water Quality Improvements Q&As
 - c. EPA News Release (dated June 13, 2012)
 - d. DEP News Release (dated June 13, 2012)
 - e. EPA letter to Herschel Vinyard with enclosure (dated June 13, 2012)
 - f. FDEP letter to Gwendolyn Keyes Fleming with enclosure (dated June 5, 2012)
 - g. FDEP memo to Interested Parties (dated June 7, 2012)
4. Working Group and Science Coordination Group Sponsored Public Workshops
 - a. Overview presentation
 - b. Google Earth presentation
5. Central Everglades Planning Project presentation