

*Approved Meeting Minutes
South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Working Group
West Palm Beach, FL
November 5, 2002*

Welcome and Introductions

Rick Smith called the meeting called to order at 1:20 PM. Agenda (Encl. 1) ratified and the draft minutes (Encl. 2) presented. Terry Rice said the discussion on the status of lands in the CERP footprint is not on the agenda as he requested. Rick Smith suggested discussing it during open discussion.

Working Group Members	Nov. 5	Nov. 6	Alternates
Ernie Barnett – FL Dept of Environmental Protection	√	√	
G. Ronnie Best – U.S.G.S.	-	-	Nick Funicelli
Brad Brown – NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Service	-	-	Essie Duffie
Billy Causey – NOAA, FL Keys Nat'l Marine Sanctuary	√	√	
Kurt Chandler – Bureau of Indian Affairs	-	-	
Kathy Copeland – South Florida Water Management District			
Wayne Daltry - Southwest FL Regional Planning Council	√	√	
Gene Duncan – Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of FL	-	-	
Maureen Finnerty – National Park Service	√	√	
Roman Gastesi, Jr. – Miami Dade County			
George Hadley – U.S. Dept of Transportation	-	-	
Thaddeus Hamilton - U.S. Department of Agriculture	√	√	
Richard Harvey – Environmental Protection Agency	√	√	
Ronald Jones – Southeast Environmental Research Center	-	-	
Barbara Junge – U.S. Attorney's Office	-	√	
COL Greg May - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	-	-	
Peter B. Ortner – NOAA	√	√	
Donna Pope - FL Dept. of Transportation	-	-	Marjorie Bixby
Fred Rapach – Palm Beach County Water Utilities Dept	√	-	
Terry Rice – Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida	√	√	
W. Ray Scott - FL Dept of Agriculture and Consumer Services	-	-	
Jay Slack – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	√	√	
Rick Smith - Office of the Governor of Florida	√	√	
Ron Smola – U.S. Department of Agriculture	√	√	
Steve Somerville - Broward County Department of Natural Resource Protection	-	-	
Craig Tepper - Seminole Tribe of Florida	√	√	
Henry E. "Sonny" Timmerman - Department of Community Affairs	-	-	
Kenneth S. Todd – Palm Beach County Water Resources Manager	√	√	
Joe Walsh - Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission	√	√	
Julio Fanjul, Special Advisor	√	-	
Rock Salt, Special Advisor	√	√	

Ron Smola announced an Agriculture Ecology Workshop (Encl. 3) is planned for June 5 – 6, 2003. Purpose of the workshop is to understand agriculture as a long-term component in the south Florida landscape.

Thaddeus Hamilton announced his agency continues to move forward along with the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Council to train 1,000 volunteers to take the message into their own communities. He encouraged everyone to join the Earth Team Volunteer Corps.

Billy Causey noted that during the last meeting there was a ship anchoring incident in the Dry Tortugas. The matter has been investigated and the responsible party will provide restoration.

Craig Tepper thanked Ronnie Best for the award presented to him during the October Task Force meeting. He noted that Chairman Shore made a plea for some sort of consensus on a centralized way to handle all these meetings to better manage the shortage of manpower everyone is faced with. Rick Smith asked him to explain what the award was for. Craig described the joint effort between the SFWMD, USGS and the Seminole Tribe to measure flows into the reservation as well as the nutrient loading. The effort has resulted in a methodology that assures the quality assurance programs are followed and the data is matched to provide measurements of what is occurring to the reservation on the west side of the Water Conservation Areas. This process will be applied in other areas such as Brighton.

Richard Harvey announced Secretary Christine Whitman and Mr. Tom Gibson will be going to Fort Jefferson and they will be briefed on the water quality efforts that are ongoing.

Joseph Walsh asked whether there was a mechanism for the RCTs to provide input to the PDTs and asked for the co-chairs to be notified of meetings. He noted that in coordinating with FWS, he found valuable information was not provided. Dennis Duke encouraged members of the Issue Teams as well as anyone interested to attend PDT meetings.

WRAC Update

Julio Fanjul provided a status update on the WRACs work to date. The Governing Board workshop scheduled for the following day will address the rulemaking process. A copy of the Pre Cerp Baseline and existing legal sources (Encl. 4) presentation was provided. Working Group members were urged to review the state and federal tools, which have been worked through by Ken Ammons. Those interested in the full presentation could download it from <http://www.sfwmd.gov>. The January meeting of the WRAC will be dedicated to defining the pre CERP baseline and existing legal sources. The proposed topics for the next several WRAC meetings were reviewed. Rick Smith noted the proposed 2003 Working Group calendar (Encl. 5) is being provided for review. Fred Rapach asked about the relationship between the Working Group and WRAC. Rick noted the WRAC serves as the Citizen Advisory Group to the Task Force. **Follow-up: Fred suggested the Working Group discuss the relationship between the WRAC and the Working Group at a future meeting.**

CERP Outreach Update

Nanciann Regalado said COL May has requested that an update of CERP Outreach be provided at every meeting and today's focus will be on the project level outreach. She introduced Brice McCoy who will coordinate with Rhonda Haag. Brice McCoy provided a Power Point presentation (Encl. 6) reviewing how the project level outreach is being developed and the approach being taken. He explained that outreach has been broken into two regional efforts (Central and South) with specialized efforts within those geographic areas. They are also developing a database so that members of the public can self subscribe to receive information relevant to a project of interest. An outreach toolbox is also being developed jointly by the Corps and the SFWMD and will include use of the web, printed materials, etc. Billy Causey said his office, along with three other offices are in the process of funding a position that will look at how CERP and other efforts impact the resources downstream. Nanciann Regalado encouraged those agencies that have someone to let her office know. Maureen Finnerty announced ENP is also in the process of recruiting communication folks in connection with these efforts. Julio Fanjul encouraged the hiring of bilingual persons when filling these positions.

Update on Water Projects and Initiatives

Dennis Duke noted the PMT meets prior to every Working Group meeting and encouraged all those that were interested, to attend. An excerpt of his update is provided please refer to the Power Point presentation (Encl. 7) for the full update.

- Kissimmee Basin: Kissimmee River Restoration, 2nd backfill contract will begin in 2005, driven by the need to complete land acquisition and put protective works in place.
- Lake Okeechobee: Watershed PIR underway, baseline assessment completed; Critical Project final design underway; C-43 PIR also initiated.

- ASR: Lake Okeechobee Pilot Project monitoring wells installed, design of Hillsboro Project underway. CROGEE review noted their concerns regarding task integration and contingency plan if ASR is not implemented at the scale proposed. Public workshops planned around the state in the next few weeks. Miami Dade Special ASR Report has been transmitted to the Army and it recommends further study since the actual benefits could not be determined.
- Upper East Coast: Indian River Lagoon Feasibility Report undergoing review in Washington, once completed, HQ will seek a letter of support from the Governor of Florida. Working through cultural issues on the Ten Mile Creek project.
- North Palm Beach County: PMP underway. C-51/STA 1-E, six projects underway, pump tests should begin next summer. L - 8 basin GRR has been terminated and is now included in the north Palm Beach County PIR. Work continuing on the additional 245k for ENP, PMP being developed and cost estimate being prepared.
- Water Preserve Areas: Feasibility study terminated and numerous PIRs have been initiated. PMPs started to incorporate data and move forward with the PIRs for each of the components.
- Miami Dade County: Reuse Pilot PMP completed. Request for information has been sent out on the Lakebelt in-ground project. Trying to get agreements in place, looking at different technologies for the Lakebelt; C-4 Critical Project to be completed this month and the GRR proceeding, determined construction was not completed as originally intended or designed, now trying to determine what adjustments are needed.
- Everglades, FL Bay, Florida Keys: Modified Water Deliveries has been partially suspended due to ruling continuing with collection of base data; there was an amendment to an appropriation bill giving Congressional approval to Alternative 6-D is bogged down since Congress has not enacted an appropriations bill. Justice Department filed an appeal, may be months or possibly years before it is resolved.
- Florida Bay/Florida Keys: Feasibility Study initiated; Water Quality Improvement Initiative funding provided, finalizing a guidance memorandum to move forward with this in the future.
- Lower West Coast: SW Florida Feasibility Study underway. Lake Trafford, critical project, stalled because of the high cost of construction. Outside consultants have identified some problems, reducing amount of dredging resulting in a significant reduction of costs. SGGE draft PIR being prepared, several plans proposed with numerous alternatives, low cost fix, hope to release by early next year.
- CERP: Water Quality Feasibility Study being prepared; Initial CERP Update delayed until data problem is worked out and may also delay the ASR Contingency Plan. Implementation schedule being looked at in conjunction with the programmatic regulations and will be tweaked as the new models are in place. Interagency modeling center will be established in W. Palm Beach to increase capabilities.
- IOP – rod signed in July, operating in column 2 until mid-October and operating in column 1 since then. S-12A closed on November 1st, weather has cooperated and water levels in WCA 3A dropping.

Rick Smith asked about the 2nd backfilling project is waiting on land acquisition. Dennis clarified that it was the flood proofing works that were holding it up, not land acquisition. Richard Harvey asked when the SW Florida EIS be finalized. Dennis said public meetings will be held in January and the rod will be signed in February 2003. Richard Harvey agreed there were some positive comments made by the CROGEE on ASR but there was an underlying theme in the document. He read an excerpt of the report and said that it was critical that some of the task descriptions suggest the study be conducted as a routine engineering exercise rather than as a comprehensive and integrated study to investigate whether or not it works. The Corps and WMD response will be prepared and submitted to the Issue Team to see if what is being proposed adequately addresses these issues. Dennis said that this is what CERP is all about and why they are doing contingency plans. Wayne Daltry asked about the C-43 back-pumping. Dennis noted the original CERP plan had water coming down the Caloosahatchee being captured by the reservoir and back pumped when needed. Wayne added that DEP is saying that the purpose of the reservoir is for release for the estuary. Dennis noted there has been some concern, expanding what was originally in the scope to include the estuary impacts of releases. He has also heard concern over the source of water, if SW Florida continues to develop. Jay Slack shared Richard's concern with regards to SW Florida's feasibility Study, this needed to be taken care of now. Rock Salt explained that the law that governs the way the Corps carries out its 404 program, is one set of rules and laws. The rules for the SW Florida Feasibility Study is a

planning study and is different, it is true that they need to fit together. Terry Rice said that if ecological benefits are to be seen then they have to be a part of the process.

Public Comment

Patrick Hayes (Martin Soil and Water) asked that the modeling include the watershed and not just the six miles of the wild and scenic portion since the water restored has to come from the watershed. He said they are moving ahead with Pump 319 in the southern end and it was his opinion that something seemed amiss. Dennis responded that it was in the original plan, but there was no firm plan for the Loxahatchee River in the CERP, they are now working to develop that. The C-51 was part of the flood control project. They are using the north Palm Beach County Plan and believe his concern is being covered. Kenneth Todd, as a member of the PDT said he would make sure to check on this.

Programmatic Regulations

Stu Appelbaum reviewed the comments received (Encl. 8) all of which are posted on the website. They are currently being reviewed and analyzed within the Army. The majority of the comments received represent issues that have existed since the beginning and have been discussed in either this or other forums. Although these comments are not new, people are now offering specific language. The preamble will discuss the comments received and serve as the response. Final Regulations that are being prepared will require OMB clearance, which could take up to 90 days. Statements of concurrence or non-concurrence will then be required from both the Governor and the Secretary of Interior. The final regulations will then be published in the federal register, taking effect 30 days after they have been published. Fred Rapach asked whether the clock has started and what happens to revisions received from OMB. Stu answered no, OMB may offer suggestions but it will be the Secretary of the Army who will determine how to best to handle them. The Army and OMB are the only two federal agencies involved at this time under the federal rulemaking process.

RECOVER

Stu Appelbaum provided a status update (Encl. 9). He reported the Monitoring and Assessment Plan (MAP) is nearly complete and has been extensively revised from the March 2002 draft. Possibly going out for a formal sixty-day review in December but are currently unsure because of the continuing resolution. An exercise is ongoing to look at implementation options. Task order has been awarded with a report due back in January giving the Corps and SFWMD options to consider. Total System Conceptual Model will be completed by the spring 2003. RECOVER looking at how to implement adaptive management once you begin to get data. Some workshops planned in the New Year. Evaluation activities include the performance documentation report being prepared and it will be out for agency review. Revised modeling web page is now up and running. A number of facilitated meetings and workshops have been held to develop the mission statement.

Fred Rapach asked about the difference between “ a benchmark” and “ a target”. Stu said they are the same concept but a different word, different connotation. Fred said he was unclear with the answer. Stu further explained that the Programmatic Regulations has two parallel tracks interim goals and targets. They both have RECOVER doing certain activities and providing recommendations by June 30, 2003 and RECOVER wanted the terminology changed. Ernie Barnett stressed the importance of making sure whatever RECOVER does is compatible with the regulations. Terry Rice said that although this is a subtle change it could cause some concern with those people not involved in the process. Joseph Walsh explained they were trying to distinguish between target which is said to be something that would progress and benchmarks would be those things you wanted to keep track of. There were some questions about how to do that. Stu said the word “target” was used elsewhere and this was an attempt to distinguish between the two and there is an opportunity to work this through. **Follow-up: Fred Rapach requested some time at a future meeting to discuss “performance measures, benchmark or targets”.**

John Arthur Marshall (Arthur R. Marshall Foundation) said the same subject came up during the Environmental Advisory Board meeting held last week. It is a problem that he has commented on various times. The term “performance measures” is misused because if it is a desired result, then what is a performance measure that is an undesired result. He suggested harmonizing the definitions found in the glossaries of these documents.

Task Force Follow-up

Rock Salt reported the Task Force received the draft Land Acquisition Strategy and asked for three items: project sheets to be updated as of September 2002; inclusion of a less than fee narrative discussion; and clarification those state and local land acquisition projects with a federal interest. The Land Acquisition Team will provide an update on the following day. The WRDA 2000 (Encl. 10) directs the creation of an independent science review panel in consultation with the Task Force. The Task Force discussed a number of approaches and decided that the Army will have the lead to develop a proposed contract with an entity to prepare the Biennial Reports to Congress, as required by law, on the implementation of the plan. It will leave open-ended the process by which independent peer review is done. A draft of the contract will be brought to a future Task Force meeting for further consultation. DOI presented a proposal for the Task Force to sponsor an Avian Ecology Workshop (Encl. 11) for the purpose of trying to identify scientific and technical issues. He suggested a team be created to help put the workshop together.

ASR Issue Team Update

Richard Harvey provided an update (Encl. 12) on the work of the ASR Issue Team. The purpose is to track the progress of ASR implementation ensuring those issues originally identified by the initial ASR Issue Team and initial CROGEE Report are addressed by the Corps, SFWMD and PDTs. CERP identified a number of ASR wells to store water pending pilot testing. Those individuals who are interested in seeing an ASR well in use can go to the City of West Palm Beach Water Treatment Plant. PMPs have been approved for all the proposed pilot studies and monthly progress reports can be accessed online (www.evergladesplan.org). EPA promulgates the UIC Regulations and it is delegated to DEP, who will serve as the permitting agency. Two types of wells are being used for the pilot projects, one is a test injection well and the other is an exploratory well. Source water characterization was a big issue, needed to meet primary drinking standards. Agencies came up with a plan to conduct four quarters of sampling supplemented by two sets of sampling that would be conducted during storm events. The third quarter of sampling has been completed for the Lake Okeechobee ASR Pilot Program. One test injection well has been drilled in three locations around the lake and they have applied to DEP for the exploratory well construction permits and federal NPDES permits. The SFWMD conducted some pilot tests on the various treatment technologies and are awaiting the results. Source Water Characterization Study for the Caloosahatchee River ASR, first quarter of monitoring has been completed and the permits have been applied for. Hillsboro Canal ASR Pilot, three quarters of the sampling for the source water characterization effort has been completed and exploratory well has been constructed. ASR Issue Team identified seven issues and some related to the regional effects of widespread implementation of ASR technology. CROGEE Report recommended a regional study be implemented to address the regional implementation as well as some water quality issues. The COE and WMD put together a series of draft PMPs and CROGEE was asked by the Task Force to review the PMP. CROGEE has completed its review of the PMP for the Regional Study and provided a report in October. Issue Team met on October 8th and it was agreed that the WMD and COE would prepare a response to the CROGEE Report and submit it to the Issue Team for review. Other issues discussed at the team meeting included the source water characterization, quality control issues since there are a number of labs involved. Data quality problems occurred and the Corps has assured everyone it will be resolved. He stressed this is an area where corners will not be cut. The timelines for the various pilot projects were also reviewed.

Water Supply and Resource Protection Tools

Ken Ammon provided a Power Point presentation (Encl. 13) on the tools that are available, noting that the PIR baseline condition has been added and will be included in the white paper. Pre-CERP Baseline is meant to protect existing legal sources as of December 2000 from elimination or transfer by a certain project. It applies to actions within CERP only, no federal or state law for projects outside of CERP and will not change over time. The proposal is to develop a PIR baseline for every CERP project that would change over time to reflect current conditions. It will serve as a reference point for planning objectives and will include other non-CERP projects (structural or operational changes) and previously approved PIRs. Initial Reservation, areas have been added where an initial reservation is being proposed and is needed for the interim protection of the environment until CERP comes online. Regional Water Availability identifies current regional water available for consumptive use allocation. It will be consistent with the initial reservation to protect those legal users and will be amended through time, as additional water is identified.

CERP Reservation, required by WRDA, would be a quantification of the water made available by CERP projects for the protection of fish and wildlife.

Joseph Walsh asked how the initial reservations and mfl would play out. Ken replied that initial reservations have to be for the protection of fish and wildlife. He saw minimum flows and levels as the lower gauge of what's beneficial in the initial pre-CERP reservation. Delivery will not be changed, a key indicator of what is beneficial. Fred Rapach said great strides have been made. It makes common sense that if you are looking at initial reservation, and there is available water, then set it above mfl since there is a provision that it can be increased as more water availability comes online and suggested looking at the quantification of water. Ken explained there are two steps in quantifying regional water availability, first step is looking at the time period, but this also needs to be done in concert with the initial reservation. Fred asked whether the existing legal users would be determined by the permitted amount or the amount of water available from the C&SF system. Ken explained that in all probability it would be the permitted amount and the key is not to get ahead of CERP implementation. This needs to be resolved before the initial CERP update is done since there will be assumed demands that increase through time. Fred Rapach clarified the utilities concerns had to do with the sources of water and how it is quantified, not the amount pumped or permitted. Rock said he felt convinced this could be worked through. He thought the concern of the farmers and the utilities was whether or not they would have the water they need to support their existing and projected demands. He suggested focusing on making sure there is a system that can provide on the existing plus future demands, now, in the interim and in the end. This endeavor will not work if there is no water for the utilities or the Everglades. Ken said the WMD is not proposing anything differently it is a matter of quantifying those assumptions and updating information. Rock said there is a need to work together to meet the concerns of Interior and the utilities. Wayne noted his concern that it is the 5th day of November and it is the third day of no flow in Caloosahatchee River and he said he felt it should not be legitimized. Joe Walsh said he asked Ken at the last pre CERP baseline meeting of the WRAC, setting initial reservations and looking at baseline conditions for any natural compartment as well as any service area that is actively managed for freshwater, there may be some areas that are currently not on the slide that may be added later.

Public Comment

Dave Friedrichs (Dade County Farm Bureau) said that as an ordinary person coming to these meetings, he is trying to grasp what is being said here and "sell it to the people". He explained that his "people" include not just the Farm Bureau but the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club and Kiwanis among others. You need to agree among yourselves what it is that is being said so that he can communicate it back to the people that "you want on your side". He questioned the timing of the proposed Avian Ecology Workshop, although this is a subject that is on everyone's tongue, he suggested on behalf of the Farm Bureau to see what happens first in Congress.

Rick Smith explained this would be about all the bird life in the Everglades, not unlike the Florida Bay Conference held every year and asked whether there would be a problem if they were asked to participate. Dave said he agreed, but just by saying ESA it brings to mind one subject only, the sparrow. Jay Slack said that DOI and FWS listened to the comments and this workshop in response to what they have heard, not about one bird but about the ecology of the area. Regardless of the Endangered Species Act, they are about restoration and it is important for everyone to have a common understanding.

Meeting adjourned at 5:10 PM.

*Draft Meeting Minutes
South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Working Group
West Palm Beach, FL
November 6, 2002*

Welcome and Introductions

Rick Smith called meeting to order at 9:00 AM. Kenneth Todd provided an update of the meeting held by the Working Group of the Florida Association of Counties and the three areas that were discussed regarding water conservation/water supply funding, water pricing and privatization. The report will be presented to the full Association of Counties for their approval. Peter Ortner said he was happy to report he received an official request to have the Biscayne Bay Subcommittee of the Science Committee conduct a formal review of the science projects that were submitted to the Regional Coordination Team.

Multi-Species Recovery Implementation

Cindy Schulz provided a Power Point presentation (Encl. 14) reviewing the schedule and the strategy of the Recovery Plan and how it integrates with CERP. The MSRP was developed to fulfill two objectives to recover threatened and endangered species as well as restore and maintain biodiversity of natural communities in south Florida. MERIT created to help FWS with the implementation strategy, recovery actions as well as with technical assistance. The tasks of the three sub teams as well as their work completed to date were reviewed. MERIT and the MSRP are being integrated with CERP. RECOVER is involving the MSRP and MERIT in developing their conceptual models and research priorities, biological performance measures and coordinating their scientific peer reviews among other things.

Terry Rice noted there have been previous discussions about transitioning from a temporary status to CERP implementation and he was still unsure how CERP and the MSRP are coordinated. Jay Slack responded that the reason they have all the teams with all affected interests is to incorporate the needs of the communities and species as projects are developed. He was concerned to hear talk about species and native habitat of getting in the way of restoration, when restoration is about the native habitats and species. Terry said it is very important for each PIR to have a plan for each species affected by the project. Jay agreed and said that although they don't have all the answers now, there is a healthy process that in the end will produce what is being looked for. Dennis Duke said that because of the nature of the program as well as the concerns there is an unprecedented level of engagement between the FWS and the Corps. FWS has been engaged as a team member in project formulation and development of the PIRs. Wayne Daltry pointed to the Strategic Plan with three goals to alter the geography to get the water, natural system and urban/agricultural system right. This group has never come up with a footprint that shows where the policy is dominant for each of those three goal areas. It was his opinion that it was being door through the back door as shown by Ken Ammons' white paper where dominant policy will be applied to each of the geographic areas. He urged this get done on the front end or they will find that it has been done for them. Peter Ortner agreed that integration is needed and questioned whether a fundamental change is needed in the Endangered Species Act or in the way it is interpreted to avoid running into the same situation over and over. Nick Funicelli said the laws were written to manage by species and they have come a long way from ten years ago. They now realize they may need to sacrifice some short-term losses. Terry said the law needs to be looked at and the legislative changes made if needed. Jay explained the status of the implementation schedule is the same as the plan. Congress has directed the Secretary of Interior, which has been delegated to the Regional Director of the Southeast Region to put in place Recovery Plans under section four of the Act. The plans are meant to be collaborative and not force situations.

Joseph Walsh said the fundamental question of what is restoration needs to be asked and how the MSRP will fit into this. Ernie Barnett acknowledged problems have been identified with the models and they are being refined. Although the plan is called a comprehensive plan, it is not comprehensive it is a hydrologic restoration plan. At some point some difficult policy decisions have to be made other than getting the hydrology right to ensure the other goals are achieved. Rock asked to what extent is the FWCC in the loop. Joe Walsh said that as far as the MSRP they have no problems with it. **Follow-up: Rick Smith asked for periodic updates on this effort.**

Land Acquisition Strategy

John Outland reported the team would be working on those revisions requested by the Task Force over the next few months. Team will present a revised Strategy to the Task Force at their January 2003 meeting. Ron Smola asked about including WRAC representatives on this Team and Rick said this would need to be worked out. He asked about land acquisition that would fall out as a result of the MSRP process and John said he would continue to work with Cindy Schulz WRAC. Ernie Barnett said WRAC's land acquisition group should not be constrained by the narrow scope of this group. Barbara Junge emphasized the expectation not be raised that any level of government will have control or influence over acquisition decisions of other levels of government.

CROGEE Update

Peter Ortner reported the reviews have come back on the map and indicators and are due out in one month. CESI panel review progress due in 2 – 3 weeks. Next CROGEE meeting scheduled for December 15 – 17 in West Palm Beach. Role of CROGEE needs to be clarified and a decision made on whether they will be responsible for the Biennial Report.

Museum Collaboration Committee

Ron Smola provided an update (Encl. 15) on the work completed to date as well as highlights from the ribbon cutting ceremony held at the Museum of Discovery and Science. Next steps, Phase II. Kim Cavendish said she looked forward to working with everyone and announced the Coral Reef Imax Film opens at the Museum in early March 2003. Billy Causey congratulated the Committee adding this may be one of the only venues where outreach outside of the agencies can be seen.

Kissimmee Valley RCT

Craig Tepper reported team has been exchanging information with members from various groups who have been attending the meetings. Team is currently reviewing the Upper Chain of Lakes EIS. He thanked Theresa Woody for spearheading this effort and getting people involved. The Corps workshops have been successful in attracting citizen participation and the technical groups are looking at issues such as new drawdown schedules, controlling nuisance vegetation among other things. **Follow-up: Craig offered an in-depth presentation from the Team at a future meeting, possibly March 2003.**

Concept Briefing for Coordinated Budget Request

Kevin Burger noted this item is required under WRDA 1996 and has not been updated since 1999. A draft (Encl. 16) was provided for illustration purposes. Working Group was asked to develop a coordinated budget request recommendation by March 2003 for fiscal year 2005. The intent is to go through an exercise to categorize all the projects in the Strategic Plan. Category I represents projects or programs not getting the adequate level of funding, Category 2 projects are getting the funding but should funding be reduced or withdrawn, it would be devastating to the accomplishment of the goals. Staff has been assigned to contact the appropriate project managers. Maureen Finnerty asked if this would just be project based. Kevin explained that it was done that way originally. Maureen agreed that program based would provide a more complete picture. Kevin, do not expect this to be the final on either the federal or state process.

Executive Director's Report

Kevin Burger announced the December Task Force meeting is cancelled. He noted the 2003 Task Force dates on the proposed calendar are tentative. Next Working Group meeting is scheduled as a one-day meeting in conjunction with the Everglades Coalition Meeting. Maureen Finnerty suggested the Working Group on January 9th. Kevin Burger to check on the availability of a meeting facility. He reviewed the 2002 Workplan (Encl. 17a) presented noting most items have been completed. The Office of the Executive Director will work with Rick Smith to develop the 2003 workplan. Actions/Issues and Issue Team Tracking Charts (Encl. 17b and c) presented. Ron Smola asked for the Sustainable Agriculture Team to not be dissolved since there is a possibility that a series of workshops will be held next year based on the report produced by the Team. He also offered an open invitation for the Working Group to meet at the ARS Lab in Ft. Pierce. **Follow-up: Rick Smith asked about the status of the Exotic Animals Task Team and requested an update be provided at the January meeting. Rick Smith also requested time on the agenda to discuss streamlining some of the work items.**

Public Comment

Joette Lorion (Miccosukee Tribe of Indians) said it was good to see in theory what is not happening in reality. Single species management has been harmful to the tribal Everglades, Water Conservation Area 3A and the snail kite. Corps and the FWS have “engaged in a conspiracy of silence for five years” as water was raised. The Corps has undertaken a new plan, IOP, even though the FWS said it would adversely impact critical snail kite habitat. She encouraged the Working Group to bring people in for updates on what is really happening and urged for there to be a focus on the state and tribal Everglades, which are just as critical as the federal Everglades.

Patrick Hayes (Marlin Co. Soil and Water) said that after 30 years of not moving forward on mfl and water reservations, CERP is now bringing this to a head. He wanted to go on record noting the first presentation was on consumptive use permitting criteria for RECOVER which means they are unable to meet the minimum until CERP projects come online. It does not protect the southern, western, northern end of the river and withdrawals can be made from the tributaries of the river and the only thing protected is the “little box” which is the seven miles of the wild and scenic portions. This process of recovery is for the environment and that is where the focus needs to be when setting the rules.

Jay Slack explained the purpose of the Avian Workshop is to present what is factual allowing everyone to understand why decisions are made. Ron Smola made a motion to approve the minutes and Peter Ortner seconded. Minutes approved.

Follow-up Items:

1. Fred Rapach requested a discussion be held at a future meeting on how to formalize the relationship between the Working Group and WRAC
2. He also requested discussion be held on the definition of “benchmark” and “targets” as used in the Programmatic Regs
3. Rick Smith asked for regular updates on the Multi-Species Recovery Implementation
4. He also suggested possibly scheduling time on the agenda to discuss streamlining some of the WG work items.

Enclosures:

1. Agenda
2. Draft September Meeting Minutes
3. Agriculture Ecology Workshop
4. Pre-CERP Baseline
5. 2003 Working Group calendar
6. CERP Outreach Update
7. Update on Water Projects and Initiatives
8. Programmatic Regulations Update
9. RECOVER Update
10. WRDA 2000 excerpt
11. Avian Ecology Workshop proposal
12. ASR Power Point Presentation
13. Water Supply and Resource Power Point Presentation
14. Multi Species Recovery Power Point Presentation
15. Museum Collaboration Committee Phase II Update
16. Concept for Coordinated Budget Request
17. Executive Director’s Report
 - a. 2002 Working Group Workplan
 - b. Issue Team Tracking Chart
 - c. Action/Issues Tracking Chart
 - d. Strategy Document (Volume I and II)
 - e. Working Group Roster

Meeting adjourned at 11:40 AM.