

*Approved Summary
South Florida Ecosystem Restoration
Working Group Conference Call
March 28, 2003*

Rick Smith called the conference call to order at 1:00PM. He noted the group needed to reach agreement on both the priorities and the Coordinated Budget Request for presentation to the Task Force at the April meeting. No members of the public identified themselves and the following members participated.

Working Group Members	Mar. 28	Alternates
Ernie Barnett – FL Dept of Environmental Protection	-	John Outland
G. Ronnie Best – U.S.G.S.	√	
Billy Causey – NOAA, FL Keys Nat'l Marine Sanctuary		
Kathy Copeland – South Florida Water Management District	-	Joni Burda
Wayne Daltry - Southwest FL Regional Planning Council		
Essie Duffie – NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Service	√	
Gene Duncan – Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of FL		
Maureen Finnerty – National Park Service	√	
Roman Gastesi, Jr. – Miami Dade County	√	
Joanna Goger, U.S. Department of Justice	√	
George Hadley – U.S. Dept of Transportation		
Thaddeus Hamilton - U.S. Department of Agriculture	√	
Richard Harvey – Environmental Protection Agency		
Norman Hemming – U.S. Attorney's Office		
Ronald Jones – Southeast Environmental Research Center		
Chris Katzenmiller – Bureau of Indian Affairs	√	
COL Greg May - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	√	
Peter B. Ortner – NOAA		
Donna Pope - FL Dept. of Transportation		
Fred Rapach – Palm Beach County Water Utilities Dept	√	
Terry Rice – Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida		
Mark Robson - Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission		
W. Ray Scott - FL Dept of Agriculture and Consumer Services		
Jay Slack – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	-	Barry Rosen
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	√	
Julio Fanjul, Special Advisor		
Rock Salt, Special Advisor	√	

Working Group Priorities

Rick Smith noted the priorities document (Encl. 1) reflects the consensus reached by the Working Group at its March meeting. He read the priorities into the record and noted Kathy Copeland's idea that the Working Group could become a part of the Task Force in terms of Committee structure was not voted on and is not included in the current list of priorities.

Ronnie Best said he was surprised to not see science coordination on the list. Rick explained it was understood that those things already in the workplan would continue. Fred agreed with Ronnie, and added the Working Group charter states the Working Group is to assist the Task Force in coordinating science. He said that item one, identify and frame issues in need of resolution, suggested rewording to clarify that the Working Group is here to resolve intergovernmental conflict. He suggested including ASR as an example of areas of concern for item two, water quality components. Joni Burda agreed science needed to be included in light of the GAO report. Ronnie said that an introductory paragraph articulating those things integral to the Working Group charter and are embedded as part of their activities. Those bulleted items

would be in addition to the charter responsibilities. Maureen agreed they should pick up those keys responsibilities in the charter and list those additional things.

Rick said that the charter language speaks to the Restudy and some may find it confusing. In looking at WRDA 96 and the language regarding the restudy, Rick said it could be interpreted that the Working Group is to provide assistance wherever it is needed. Patty Power asked about the purpose of this document. Rock explained the Task Force has asked the group for their recommendations. The Task Force wants to know what the strategic priorities/decisive elements that the Task Force and Working Group need to be focused on during this year. Rick added that within the framework of the charter, what is it that the Working Group will do to add value to the process. Rock Salt agreed Rick was correct in terms of the Restudy, the Task Force supported it is appropriate to be involved in providing comments to the Army and the Corps in CERP implementation. Patty Power noted Ann Klee and Congress are very interested in science coordination and was unsure of the value of just reiterating the charter. Rick Smith noted there is more to issues 1 - 5 than meets the eye. Fred suggested providing a list of specific items that the Working Group wants to address in the coming year. Rick noted this was what the group voted for on the second day. Craig Tepper said that when he hears "strategic plan" and "issues that revolve around time limits", it deals with specific things that need to be done and those things need to be separated. Ken Todd agreed and asked about what resources were available and whether they would be "biting off more than they could chew".

Barry Rosen said that item one included identify and frame issues for decision makers and identify roadblock issues. Rick said they could identify those things that would slow down progress on implementing the ecosystem restoration programs that are being readied. Roman Gastesi said he wanted to see Modified Water Deliveries first and also agreed they could not include too many things. Essie Duffie said NOAA wanted science coordination as the number one priority and asked for it to be elevated. Fred suggested picking a few examples for each of the five items and adding them underneath. He also suggested looking at "what's hot on the radar screen" in regards to water quality components and include those. Ronnie Best said where the Working Group identifies major science questions allowing for science to be coordinated through the Working Group without the group becoming the science coordination body. Rick Smith noted they would have to focus more on science than they had in the past because of the GAO report.

Barry Rosen read the bullets under each of the remaining five items. Rock noted that those comments were synthesized into the remarks in the current document and it is up to the group whether it wants to flush it out even more. Rick said he was in favor of bulleting them and making it simpler. Fred agreed with keeping the five main categories and adding some specifics under each one. Craig Tepper said he had no problem and suggested adding some weight to the bullets as to which one to attack first. Ron Smola said coordination of science be added as a bullet under number one. Rick Smith explained that everyone expected those things would go forward anyway. He wanted to stay "true" to what was done by the Working Group at the last meeting. Maureen Finnerty also agreed. Fred agreed to keep the existing five and just add 5 and add examples under each one. Chris Katzenmiller said that right before the Working Group vote, it was stated that the Task Force would put science as number one and may explain why some of the votes went to other areas. He suggested Rick highlight that the Working Group understands science coordination would be a high priority for the Task Force.

COL May said he thought they were on the right track. The tension he is hearing is between those things that are important but will happen automatically and those things that important but may not happen. He understood the desire to stay with the five issues and science could be a part of the first priority. COL May added that science is understood to be an underpinning of the entire effort similar to the conceptual models that drove the Restudy and the group needs to manage by exception and identify those critical issues to spend its valuable time on. Rick said there was no disagreement with that it is just on how to get there. Joni Burda said the problem could be with number one being a process item, and everything falls under number one. She suggested removing it and concentrating on the others. The bullets need to be an action/task the Working Group would do. Ronnie Best said he like number one saying it provides flexibility when issues are identified. Rick Smith suggested taking a priority ranked list to the Task Force that reflects what the Working Group did at their March meeting. The bullets will be included as well an

introductory paragraph noting the Working Group felt ongoing issues such as science coordination would be done as a normal part of the Working Group's business. Barry Rosen cautioned not to say the group would be doing the same kind of science coordination as has always been done since it has been the target of criticism. **Action: Roman Gastesi made a motion, Ron Smola seconded and there was no objection.** Rock noted the group is now empowering Rick to take this memo and add some stuff to front end in addition to the bullets and present it to the Task Force.

Coordinated Budget Request

Kevin Burger reminded everyone of the protocol established by the Working Group for developing the Coordinated Budget Request (Encl. 2). The work product as a result of that process was handed out at the last meeting. Several members said that they needed something that would help identify the priority issues that needed budgeting considerations as the various agencies undertook their budget processes. The three priority issues were ASR construction start-up, invasive exotic plant species and multi-species/endangered species recovery. The Seminole tribe also submitted another item for tribal water quality monitoring and research in support of their critical project, and that item is also on the table for discussion. Rock noted that the statute that creates the Task Force specifies as a duty of the Task Force to prepare an annual Integrated Financial Plan and recommendations for a Coordinated Budget Request for the funds proposed to be expended by the agencies and entities represented on the Task Force. His office has had the task of pulling together the budget decisions into a single document. It has been a difficult and has only been done twice. It is intended to be an opportunity for the Working Group to identify, early enough in the process, requirements that could be important as the agencies develop their budgets. Congress and the Florida Legislature are taking up the FY04 budget decisions. The impact of not completing this would be that an opportunity to speak to key policy officials on the federal side would be missed. Maureen Finnerty noted the federal process is starting now. Rick said the State does not start its FY05 process until August. Rock said the Working Group would be able to identify areas that the state would be aware of as they begin their budget process. Task Force meets again in July but everything will be locked in. Rock said he believed that if they don't get a construction new start for the ASR pilot projects, those pilots would be delayed. Corps has been able to continue on schedule with design activities but no authority would translate into a delay in the pilot projects. COL May agreed and noted this is a concern.

Fred Rapach noted his concern with the people working on the ASR and added he would hate to see Bob Doren's work on exotics take a back seat and asked whether this would hurt his efforts. Rock clarified that Bob's role is to facilitate the coordination. In every case it is the agency that has to raise the flag. Maureen said it is fine to identify them since each of the agencies will be putting in requests for additional needs and this will just ensure it is on a parallel track. Rick Smith said that no one knows what the Legislature will do this year and suggested carrying forward the base from the District's budget as a placeholder. Joni said the WMD has projected numbers taken from the 5-year annual plan on those projects where they have the lead. Rick Smith noted he had a problem with the other state agencies and would discuss with Kevin. Joni said they have a proposed format for future iterations. **Follow-up: Rick asked that Kathy Copeland and Joni Burda present their proposed format at a future meeting.** Rock suggested this be provided as a working draft to the Task Force and he hoped the Task Force would ask what they could do to help with those things such as the no new start money. Craig Tepper explained the Seminole Tribe write-up is to ensure monitoring and management of many of the projects once they are completed. Rock recapped the discussion that the Seminole water quality monitoring statement would be added to the memo and expanded to include monitoring and research in support of critical projects. Rick and Kevin would work through the language with the key proponents to make sure it is right. Table would be attached as a work in progress. Revised document would be presented to the Task Force at the April meeting. **Action: Craig Tepper made a motion and Chris Katzenmiller seconded, no one opposed.**

Conference call ended at 2:50 PM.

Enclosures:

1. Draft Working Group Priorities Memorandum
2. Draft FY 2005 Coordinated Budget Request