

*Approved Mini Meeting Summary  
South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Working Group  
Delray Beach, Florida  
December 3, 2003*

**Welcome and Opening Remarks**

Jay Slack called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM.

<b>Working Group Members</b>	Dec. 3	Alternates
Ernie Barnett – FL Dept of Environmental Protection	√	
John Benjamin – National Park Service	√	
Frank Bernardino – South Florida Water Management District	√	
G. Ronnie Best – U.S.G.S.	√	
Billy Causey – NOAA, FL Keys Nat'l Marine Sanctuary	√	
Alex Chester – National Marine Fisheries Service	√	
Wayne Daltry – Southwest FL Regional Planning Council		
Dennis Duke - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	√	Erik Stor
Gene Duncan – Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of FL		
Christopher Flack – Office of the Governor		
Roman Gastesi, Jr. – Miami Dade County	√	
George Hadley – U.S. Dept of Transportation		
Richard Harvey – Environmental Protection Agency	√	
Norman Hemming – U.S. Attorney's Office		
Donna Pope - FL Dept. of Transportation		
Fred Rapach – Palm Beach County Water Utilities Dept	√	
W. Ray Scott - FL Dept of Agriculture and Consumer Services	√	
Jay Slack – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	√	
Ron Smola – U.S. Department of Agriculture	√	
Craig Tepper - Seminole Tribe of Florida		
Kenneth S. Todd – Palm Beach County Water Resources Manager		
Anna Townsend – Bureau of Indian Affairs		
Joe Walsh - Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission	√	
Vacant – Broward County Department of Natural Resources		
Vacant - Department of Community Affairs		

**Whip Around**

Major Erik Stor explained that the Jacksonville District’s organizational structure includes two deputies. Currently one is based in Jacksonville and the other is based in the Antilles. Due to workload projections, the deputy position in the Antilles has been moved to West Palm Beach. This deputy will be responsible for South Florida and the Antilles. Major Stor is serving as the deputy in West Palm Beach and will be helping take some of the workload off of Dennis Duke, the new Working Group representative. Major Stor will ensure that an updated organizational chart is provided at the next meeting.

Richard Harvey noted that he was encouraged by the Task Force meeting and is hoping the Working Group can work on guiding principles and criteria and tee up more issues.

Alex Chester said that he was participating along with Essie Duffie as they transition to the new charter and membership.

Billy Causey noted that he had been traveling a lot and exchanging information with other countries on coastal management. As an example he met with remote sensing experts in China exploring the link between nutrient runoffs from agriculture and harmful algal blooms . NOAA has also been working with the Corps and the Navy on the maintenance-dredging project for Key West Harbor. Their collaboration was successful in getting a permit that met the needs of the Navy and that will help the reef.

Joe Walsh provided the Working Group with two reports: Assessing the Economic Impact and Value of Florida’s Public Piers and Boat Ramps and The Economics of Selected Florida Wildlife Management Areas. These reports were also distributed at the Task Force meeting. The first report will hopefully be a

useful tool in recreational planning under CERP. The second should help to provide benefit analysis. The full report will be available on the website and on CD.

Roman Gastesi said that he was looking forward to the first CSOP meeting in two weeks. Miami-Dade County has formed a Climate Change Task Force to see what local governments can do about sea level rise.

Gene Duncan said that he would not go over his issues because most of the Working Group members had attended the Task Force meeting and had already heard them.

Frank Bernardino said that he leads the lobbying team for the SFWMD in Tallahassee. He offered to be a resource on water law and resource appropriations or serve as rumor control if anyone had any questions.

Jay Slack provided an organizational chart of the FWS office in Vero Beach. He mentioned that Ms. Klee reported yesterday that the FWS spent \$17 million in FY 03 on South Florida restoration. He invited other agencies to provide a snapshot of their expenditures and to encourage new partnerships.

Patti Webster, Steve Somerville's alternate, said that Steve had retired after 30 years of service to Broward County. Broward County currently has an Acting Director and she noted the county's concern in maintaining a seat on the Working Group under the new charter.

Fred Rapach from Palm Beach County echoed Patti's concern on maintaining their seat on the Working Group. Palm Beach County has been supporting the relocation of Scripps biomedical research to Florida. He is working with the WMD and other agencies to accommodate them. He also mentioned that the Programmatic Regulations will become law on December 12<sup>th</sup> and that he was looking forward to the challenges ahead.

Ronnie Best announced that the new USGS Working Group representative would be Jess Weaver from the regional office.

Ron Smola reported USDA has developed a new mobile irrigation lab in Broward County in cooperation with several other agencies. This is the 9<sup>th</sup> mobile lab established. He also noted that the Coral Reef Task Force is addressing coral reefs throughout the country and that the Southeast Florida team addressing the off-shore reefs in south Florida.

### Follow-up to Task Force Meeting

Greg May reiterated that the recently approved charters for the Working Group and Science Coordination Group provide for streamlined membership. He noted that the Task Force members were in the process of providing the names of their representatives via e-mail. He said that the Task Force acted quickly on the leadership designations because of the important and challenging work schedule for 2004 to include an analysis of staff support for science that is due in February. Things will be moving quickly and information will be provided as it is received. Simone Marstiller and Christopher Flack are the new Task Force and Working Group representatives from the Governor's Office. The Task Force asked the Director/OED staff to develop a draft document that outlines principles to assist the Task Force in selecting the highest payoff priority efforts. Greg solicited the group's thoughts on this issue. Richard Harvey asked how the WG would interact with the SCG. Greg said the details and procedures need to be worked out. Fred Rapach asked whether the ASR Issue Team would stay as a part of the WG or SCG and he recommended that ASR be put back on the table. Richard Harvey noted that he had lost much of his staff and is sending the reports to his regional office in Atlanta. The WG then began to discuss what makes an issue relevant for the group and what aspects of those issues are the most relevant. What provides the biggest value added and doesn't duplicate what the agencies are already doing. Greg noted for example that with ASR, the no new start policy could be a value added issue. He asked what aspect of ASR the Working Group would recommend to the Task Force that would not duplicate the work of the agencies. Frank Bernardino said he could have Pete provide regular briefings on ASR. Richard said he needed to engage his UIC folks from Atlanta. Greg noted that everyone thought ASR was important and he encouraged all interested parties to attend the WMD presentation. Ronnie Best asked how many teams were moving forward or were they starting with a clean slate. Billy Causey agreed that it was critical to get these things hammered out. Jay Slack noted the

next meeting would be a critical one in helping to flush out the questions and clean up the responsibilities, standing committees, in addition to teeing up three to five issues that may be next in the cue. Greg noted that the e-mail approach to the charters saved the Task Force a lot of meeting time and he asked if this was okay with the Working Group and they concurred. Fred said they needed to start the interim goals and targets process. Ernie Barnett suggested they review the programmatic regulation schedule for all tasks as well as the points of public entry. Jay Slack suggested they get a preliminary list before the next WG meeting.

Greg noted that the CSOP had been designated as a named priority for 2004 by the Task Force. The first CSOP Advisory Team meeting will take place on December 18-19 at the FIU Graham Center.

Greg said that the Land Acquisition Strategy had been a very successful document and that it might be time to take it to the next level. OED staff will get specific feedback from Task Force on how to refine the current Strategy. Fred Rapach extended the kudos, but asked for clarification on a higher level. Greg said that it's possible that there are now expectations to take the document beyond the original charge and that would be verified. Gene Duncan noted that the Corps' policy seems to support fee acquisition, yet the Strategy talks about less than fee. He said he thought he heard the Task Force wanted a policy discussion on whether less than fee could be used for CERP projects. He added that a policy discussion between the Corps and the state on whether less than fee could be used could head off a lot of legal conflicts and asked the group not to let this drop off the table. Ernie added the state and local sponsors are operating on assumption that the Corps requires fee ownership. Other options need to be explored. If we're building a reservoir to store five feet of water, then we would need fee acquisition. But if it's a matter of flowing water over a piece of property periodically then that goal could be accomplished with less than fee acquisition. Ronnie Best suggested a joint meeting with the WG and SCG for the interim goals briefing. Greg said he has already talked with the Corps about the schedule and will explore the potential of conducting joint meetings. He also noted that his goal was to synthesize more information for the TF and for the public.

Greg noted that it appeared that group recommendation is not do an Annual Report, however, he asked the members to review the format. Ron Smola said he thought the TF was going to make this decision. The Biennial Report is due this Fall the draft should be ready for the May Task Force meeting. Jay Slack said he could bring this recommendation to the TF at the next meeting.

#### Open Discussion and Next Steps

Joe Walsh reported that Ken Haddad had accepted the Chairmanship of the SCG.

Ray Scott suggested that the group consider the WRAC when talking about interagency issues with stakeholder involvement.

Fred Rapach reflected that he was not quite comfortable with the new structure of the SCG, WG and TF and that it now seemed that the Working Group was an advisory group to the Task Force. Jay Slack said that he felt good about what he saw at the Task Force meeting noting there is more clarity.

Major Stor will arrange for a more in-depth briefing on RECOVER and the programmatic regulations for the next meeting. Frank Bernardino will arrange for a SFWMD ASR meeting. The meeting adjourned at 2:25 PM.

#### Enclosures:

1. Agenda
2. Report: Assessing the Economic Impact and Value of Florida's Public Piers and Boat Ramps
3. Report: The Economics of Selected Florida Wildlife Management Areas.