

*Approved Minutes
South Florida Ecosystem Restoration
Working Group Meeting
March 4, 2003*

Welcome and Introductions

Rick Smith called meeting to order at 12:45 PM. He noted the field trip to STA 1 East and the Palm Beach County Aggregates to see the work Dr. Jones is doing with submerged aquatic vegetation was very informative. He noted the agenda (Encl. 1) now has a section entitled Consent Items that would be sent out in the electronic read-ahead. These items would not be discussed unless there are questions. Julio Fanjul suggested scheduling consent agenda items on the second day enabling the members to review their hard copies. January minutes (Encl. 2) presented for approval the following morning. Fred Rapach asked what the status of the ASR Issue Team is now that Richard Harvey has resigned and asked for the rating to be changed to amber.

Working Group Members	Mar. 4	Mar. 5	Alternates
Ernie Barnett – FL Dept of Environmental Protection	√	-	
G. Ronnie Best – U.S.G.S.	√	-	
Billy Causey – NOAA, FL Keys Nat'l Marine Sanctuary	-	-	Dave Score (both days)
Kathy Copeland – South Florida Water Management District	√		
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	-	-	Bertha Goldenberg (both days)
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	-	-	Dennis Duke
Peter B. Ortner – NOAA	-	-	Judy Gray (both days)
Donna Pope - FL Dept. of Transportation	-	-	Marjorie Bixby
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	√	√	
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	√	√	

Follow-up from Task Force Meeting

Rock Salt provided the materials from the February Task Force meeting. The February 3rd draft of the Independent Science Review Concept Paper (Encl. 3) presented. The Army, Interior and State of Florida in consultation with the Task Force are required to establish an independent science review group. All three parties worked together and the Army will be the agent to create the contract with the NAS. The expectation is for the Army to link up with NAS and create a contract as outlined in this document. Task Force provided with the concept paper (Encl. 4) on the Avian Ecology Workshop scheduled for March 17 –

18, 2003. They approved the workshop in accordance with the paper they were provided with. Proposed Workshop agenda (Encl. 5) provided.

Working Group 2003 Priorities Discussion

The Task Force was provided with the Working Group's 2003 workplan and after some discussion they agreed the Working Group should provide their highest priority work items. This also tied in to the Seminole Tribe's request to find a way to avoid needless teams and meetings. A joint session will be conducted between the Task Force and the Working Group at the April meeting. He conducted a survey of the Working Group and the Summary of Comments (Encl. 6) was provided for review. Rock Salt asked what it was the Working Group wanted to do. Working Group creates a team to work on an issue and then spends a lot of time receiving updates and reports at its meetings. He said it was not clear whether the Working Group merely becomes a Board of Directors or is there a set of work for the Working Group to do. He noted this was not a complete list.

Rick Smith asked everyone to provide comments and opened up the discussion. Jay Slack suggested giving higher priority to those things where the responsible entity has come to the Working Group asking for help. Ron Smola suggested getting additional input from those folks who did not initially respond. Ernie Barnett said that instead of lumping things together it would be better to organize things by function. He said that the Working Group could be a good forum for stakeholder input and interagency discussion for the development of guidance memoranda for CERP implementation. On the water quality standard there is already a formal procedure in place and the group may want to receive briefings on. Rock clarified he understood that item on the list to be how it is designed and built given the standard. Ray Scott echoed Ernie's comments and added that there is a great need for the Working Group to spend time on the issue of water quality and how it will be dealt with. Although water quality is not a work item for the group, it is still a key issue. Fred Rapach noted many of the items on the tracking charts do not appear on this list, such as outreach. The Working Group is more familiar with these issues and should recommend those issues that are important. He said the group should stay focused on whatever it takes to implement the Plan, such as programmatic regulations and land acquisition. Thaddeus Hamilton suggested looking at the non point source pollution and ways to eliminate these problems. Rick Smith noted that 90% of Goal 1 is implementing CERP successfully.

Jay Slack added three items that were not included in the list: multi species issue, the use of science and the role of the Science Coordination Team. The RECOVER process is very important and the working group and the agencies need to work together to make it a success. Articulating the successes is critical in light of shrinking budgets. The Working Group plays an important role in enabling the members to coordinate and share as well as provide an opportunity for stakeholder input. Kathy Copeland added this is a forum for third party interests to be informed as well as produce a Cross Cut Budget and Strategic Plan. A major function of the group is make sure the policy level people have a common understanding as well as make sure people are kept focused. A strategy is needed of what needs to happen over the next year to ensure obstacles are dealt with and policy level people know those things are coming. Rock asked the members for the most important things for them to be working on to give up to the policy guys. The guidance memoranda, which will guide how this will be implemented for the next forty years and it has to be right.

Kathy said there are people charged with the development of the memoranda, but it should be brought before this group. Julio suggested looking at how it all comes together, possibly by geographical location. Ronnie Best suggested looking at prior successes such as the land acquisition and ASR teams, good to have issue teams to get into the specifics. He said the group should focus on the Cross Cut Budget, science and elevating the science component as well as the policy component. A coordinated exotic species control program as well as securing the funding needed to move forward. A coordinated state federal multi species recovery effort needs to be looked at. CERP and getting the water right is the number one priority. Rick noted there is a perception that the agenda has too many updates and the group is not doing anything when in fact a lot is being done as a result of these briefings. Maureen Finnerty agreed that she would like to move beyond updates at these meetings. She wanted to be able to bring issues before this group for feedback and input. Some of the most constructive meetings have been when a variety of issues have been brought forward. Rick noted the STA 1E project headed by Dr. Jones is integral for the work the Corps is spending millions of dollars on. Marjorie Bixby said that identifying the roadblocks to CERP

implementation and understanding the issues would be helpful. Fred noted there are certain issues, some of which are short-term or long term, they have to be addressed as implementation moves along. He wanted to see a placeholder for current events that could have an impact on CERP. Members seem to be the last ones to hear about these issues when they should be in the forefront.

Thaddeus Hamilton noted educating and involving the 7 million people is key and pointed to the bond issue passed in 2000, which could have passed in 1983. This would remove many roadblocks. Kathy agreed that this group could serve as an outreach mechanism and add a Town Hall type setting using current events or hot topics. It would provide a forum for education and interaction. Rick Smith noted the concerns the residents of Belle Glade had with the impacts of ASR on the quality of their drinking water. It was through Ms. Cynthia Laramore and Richard Harvey that EPA was able to award a grant to help clean up the water. Kathy said that instead of meeting on the beach, it would be useful to meet in the communities. Rock said that part of the problem is to be committed to doing this. Kathy urged this be part of every meeting and agreed there needs to be a commitment from the members. Ray Scott said the idea of the Working Group becoming a forum for public input, he thought is was an essential function, but questioned whether it was the function of the Working Group. The Task Force has the responsibility to assess the outreach effort among the agencies represented, and if the effort is lacking, then there is value to identify where the efforts need to be strengthened. It would be useful to do this for specific issues and use that in making recommendations to the Task Force. Task Force is supposed to be coordinating and integrating those roles and responsibilities and not taking those responsibilities on, this group needs to focus on what is the Task Force is charged with doing. Thaddeus reminded everyone that the Everglades is only a portion of the ecosystem and the causes of the problem cannot be separated and that it would take a holistic approach to solve the issues. Rock Salt read the new topics (non point source pollution; science coordination/science coordination team; threatened and endangered species and multi species planning; public involvement, stakeholder involvement and public education; budget; identification of roadblock issues) to be added to the list. Fred suggested a column be added showing what it is the Working Group would do on these issues. Kathy Copeland clarified she was not suggesting this group take on public outreach. It would be good to give thought to what impact CERP is having in those communities and provide those folks with access to individuals they would not normally have. Rick Smith noted the Loxahatchee source of water could be solved from the water storage facility he toured that morning.

Public Comment

Patrick Hayes (Loxahatchee River Coalition) agreed it could solve the problem. He noted that when the Indian River Lagoon Study was wrapping up and the southern mouth of the lagoon had not been addressed. Desperately missing, this is an ecosystem and there are components and a healthier systems report is needed. Loxahatchee River Watershed that he would like to see healthier and that system is healthier than it was a year ago. A specific systems view is needed and he asked whether Lake Okeechobee, the Indian River Lagoon, Loxahatchee River and the sawgrass plains healthier systems. He ended with asking whether the steps this group is taking could be filtered into tangible results. Rock noted this was one of the criticisms of the strategic plan. Julio Fanjul said the Strategic Plan is a work in progress. There are approximately 40 projects in the works with no goals to mesh up with and the work must continue. Rick asked about the WRAC meetings. Julio explained WRAC meets every other month in one of the sixteen counties and the agenda is tailored to focus on the regional issues. Rick Smith supported having joint meetings with the WRAC.

April Gromnicki (Audubon of Florida) said that Kathy's comments were right on point. The most important role the Task Force and Working Group has is as ambassadors for Everglades restoration. The role of this group is coordination and this forum should be used to inform the public as well. This group has a history of not talking about "the elephant" there are currently projects hitting major challenges at the Congressional level yet it has not been discussed at this level. This group needs to talk about the pressing issues of the time. She said she would like to see the relationship with the WRAC formalized and suggested this group look at the WRAC's workplan.

Rick said that when it comes to having the town hall meeting must be appropriate and the agenda setting exercise will require thought. Maureen Finnerty noted that when Dennis Duke gives the updates, the hard

questions are not being asked. Ernie said that the PMT is the place to be if you want to focus on CERP. Ronnie Best suggested meeting jointly with the PMT every third or so meeting.

Martha Musgrove suggested the priorities be coordinated with the sequence of projects coming online. In attempting to engage the public, but she found the most effective way was through community conversations where people were brought to a comfortable setting at a time that was convenient. In order for this to be successful, she stressed they needed to be prepared to have solutions. She noted the agencies represented here have outreach staff already in the communities and what the Working Group needed was a funnel to receive information back. She encouraged the Working Group to have their outreach staff invite people and engage folks at locations like churches and rotary clubs.

Rock said he was not sure how to come to closure with this. The Task Force wants to know what are the issues the Working Group wants to sink their teeth into. Jay Slack said the group needed to decide which items they could solicit information on and which ones they could actually work on. Julio said they needed to decide what were those things they were already doing and should continue such as CERP updates. The group also needs to be open and available for whatever issues arise. The members would be provided with the opportunity to select their top five priorities and the discussion continued the following day.

Land Acquisition Task Team Update

Rock Salt noted the Task Force received the recommended Land Acquisition Strategy document and directed three changes; statement added at the beginning such as a disclaimer that it is a planning and coordination document and not legally binding; they asked for it to be explicit that acceptance of the report did not mean the member endorses each land acquisition project; the Army requested the addition of a reasonable expectations section that said that even though this is ecosystem restoration, unable to restore everything. Edits will be made and Task Force members will be polled after which it will be sent to the printers. WRAC suggested a number of comments that are to be incorporated into the next update. New proposed team charter (Encl. 7) presented for a first reading. The new charter revises the membership slate and reflects the people participating or who have expressed an interest in participating. Team recommending Mark Musaus serve as co-chair along with John Outland. Document reflects those items that were deferred such as inclusion of local government. Comments due by the end of March to Theresa Woody and the next Team meeting scheduled for April 15.

RECOVER Update

John Ogden provided an update (Encl. 8) on the Monitoring Assessment Plan, which will be used by all the agencies as the primary means of measuring CERP's performance. Formal 60-day agency and public review will begin in March. Adaptive Assessment Team has worked through the plan and picked those initial critical projects that need to be implemented. Trying to obligate approximately \$2 million will be obligated in FY03 to implement those tasks associated with these projects. Development of the interim goals and targets document is called for in the Programmatic Regulations. Final draft report prepared in February 2003 and development teams (small technical teams) being formed. Development teams have the responsibility of developing the interim goals and targets with the agreed upon indicators. These teams have the responsibility to decide what to report on and how to predict performance of the element and calculate the predictions at five-year intervals. RECOVER will assemble all the reports from the development teams and it will go out for public and agency review. Trying to make RECOVER more effective and the first step was to develop a Mission Statement and a set of guiding principles to guide the way RECOVER does business. John Ogden and Stu Appelbaum will be taking this statement to the individual agencies and other potential participants to ensure everyone is comfortable. Once it is agreed upon, it will be used as a framework so there is clear understanding of what the roles and responsibilities are of those participating in RECOVER. Rock asked when the MAP would go to the Corps and District for consultation. John clarified it has been reviewed on a parallel track by the Corps and the District. Rock also asked about what the process is after RECOVER has recommended the interim goals.

Science Coordination Team Update

Ronnie Best encouraged participation in the Science Conference scheduled for April 14 – 18, 2003 held just north of Tampa. Approximately 412 abstracts will be presented and 386 people have already

registered. It will be an excellent opportunity to hear about Florida Bay science. Nick Aumen presented the Flows Paper “The Role of Flows in the Everglades” (Encl. 9) on behalf of the SCT. It has been one of the SCT’s priorities for several years and the flow workshop at the GEER Conference was very well attended and a series of research recommendations resulted. Another flow session planned for the Conference along with a series of papers, panel discussion and posters. The historical ridge and slough landscape has been degrading over a number of decades and there is a great deal of concern from an ecological standpoint. The Science Coordination Team conceived and developed the flows paper and worked on it through more than 5 drafts. Once the SCT was comfortable it was subjected to an external peer review panel with the help of the SFWMD. The purpose of the paper was to increase awareness among scientists and resource managers to the importance of flows to Everglades restoration. He reviewed the document and Ronnie thanked Nick for doing a phenomenal job.

Rock Salt noted that when the process was first started it was flows and levels. There could be another paper on the importance of levels. The questions how to reconcile flows with levels is very important since CERP leaves the details up to adaptive management. Nick replied that the paper focused on flow since they felt it was further behind since some of the other topics, this by no means puts it to the elimination of other components of hydrology that are equally important. Rock asked how natural flows and natural levels would be reconciled. Nick said he was unable to answer now. Ronnie said that if they are truly successful in restoring the remaining portion of the natural system, he did not see a significant conflict since they are integral parts of the same process. Rick Smith asked whether this had been discussed before this group. Rock said no not here, just between the scientists and this paper suggests that enough attention has not been paid to flows. Terry Rice said this has been a fundamental issue since the start and CERP was predicated on getting all the parameters right, unfortunately not always possible. Scientists came to the forefront and said that based on several factors, levels are important since they can be modeled and flows cannot. Terry clarified that there is not one performance measure based on flows in the entire restoration process. Rock explained that when the Restudy was formulated, the models could predict water levels and the Corps came up with the plan that was the best match for those hydro-patterns. Ronnie explained the tools were less dependent on flows as a component than they were as a stage. Through this paper, the SCT is saying that flows are an important component and the significance of flow needs to be understood. Terry explained it is not a question of not wanting to do it. Rock clarified that there are management choices the Corps and the WMD have as they proceed. Ronnie Best asked for this to be considered throughout the deliberations. He asked for it to be presented to the Task Force. **Follow-up: members were asked to read the document for discussion at the next meeting.**

Public Comment

Patrick Hayes (Loxahatchee River Coalition) said the focus of the flows paper was predominantly south of the Lake and did not include the Kissimmee chain.

Ray Scott reported a USDA-NRCS contingent were able to tour Lake Okeechobee, some dairies and a ranch. A series of workshops held with the cattle and citrus leagues and folks were able to see the some of the efforts underway. He said he hoped to see some priority work efforts regarding the role of agricultural conservation and Farm Bill programs in the overall restoration effort. Legislation being filed, may provide a financing program to fully implement the Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan for all the dairies. Six-year funding package allowing the dairies to fully comply with the TMDLs for Lake Okeechobee. Lake Okeechobee Interagency Group will be meeting on April 2nd in Tallahassee and the Nature Conservancy will present the encouraging results of research on the water quality benefits.

Dave Score provided a Barrier Reef article (Encl. 10) and the Coral Reef Task Force Resolution (Encl. 11). Ron Smola added that the Coral Reef Task Force, a nationwide effort, decided that a better job of addressing those issues impacting coral reefs including the land based source pollution is needed. USDA and EPA have taken the lead and put together a draft Strategic Plan on how it will be done. He explained he was hoping this Working Group could undertake this effort and establish a task team to implement a plan for dealing with land based source pollution. The Coral Reef Task Force is comfortable with the Working Group taking this effort on.

Meeting adjourned at 5:10 PM.

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Welcome and Administrative Announcements

Rick Smith called the meeting to order at 8:35 am. There January minutes were approved without objection.

Avian Ecology Workshop

Jay Slack noted registration forms are now available as well as the agenda for the March 17 – 19, 2003 workshop. Panel members have been selected and interviews have been conducted with scientists and other individuals. The panel members will work out issues and collect information on the third day. Second workshop is being planned but no date has been selected as of yet. He clarified that the management questions will be a part of the first workshop. It is imperative that the state be involved even more than FWS when habitat based recovery is being discussed. Rock noted the best scientists in the field would be participating in the workshop. Rick asked whether recommendations would be made on certain issues. Rock answered no, people will have an opportunity to raise issues and how the science is being applied will be discussed.

NEWTT Update

Bob Doren reported on the 3-day Detection Conference that was a success. The Conference included twenty-five invited presentations, 4 workshops and was attended by over 125 people. First day focused on the various types of technology such as GIS, GPS and remote sensing. What can and cannot be done with current technology was discussed. Second day focused on the application of the technology and what people are doing in the field and how they are using modeling. Recommendations on how best to use this technology will be produced and provided to the agencies. This conference will be reported on at the Joint Conference in November. He noted that remote sensing using imaging systems is not practical in those instances when detailed resolution is required or where large areas are being covered. This technology being used for a focused need and not broad scale applications. Simple low tech/low cost tools are needed in the field. The existing low-tech field sensing methods, while they achieve agency aims, these methods are not sufficient to meet other critical needs such as being able to determine if a plant is the same one that was previously treated. Aerial extent and invasion rate are applied in different ways and are not as accurate at this time. Precision is crucial and talks are ongoing with the Corps to develop prototypes. Abstracts and agendas were available to those who were interested.

Bob stated he prepared a letter on behalf of the SCT on the arundo donax issue and it is being reviewed. Rick said he saw a copy of the draft and had no problem with it. He said that DEP's Bureau of Aquatic Plant Management has recommended that folks interested in growing crops for biomass or energy use, look at the common reed that is native to Florida. Bob said he could modify the letter reflecting this. Rick noted the Working Group and Task Force cannot prevent someone from planting this since it is not listed anywhere as a problem, and more work may be needed on the letter. Rock suggested sharing the letter from the SCT with the Task Force and Working Group. Rick added it was an issue of time since Lykes is planting approximately 800,000 acres. Bob clarified the letter would come to the group for some sort of action that needs to be determined by this group.

He also noted that of the \$5.8 million provided by the Corps for bio control and the Quarantine Facility, \$200,000 was set aside for the Corps to organize a report on the federal role on invasive species in south Florida restoration. NEWTT will work with the Corps to develop the comprehensive report. Further information will be provided at upcoming meetings.

CSOP Issue Team Charter

Rock Salt noted the Corps is still working on the concept of the Modified Water Deliveries Issue Team. COL May introduced this idea at the January meeting. The goal is to provide a forum for exchanging information and dealing with misinformation. Corps is working on this concept and no paper is yet

available. Rock noted Dexter Lehtinen raised a number of concerns with what this team would do. Concurrently, the Corps WMD, FWS and ENP had been part of an initiative with the US Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution and they commissioned the Institute to conduct a broader survey of interest groups about improving the IOP process. They suggested and the four agencies have agreed to establish an advisory committee as a team under the Task Force. Joan Lawrence has been working with staff to develop a team charter. He provided a draft of the Combined Structural and Operating Plan Advisory Team Charter (Encl. 12), which may make COL May's previous suggestion moot. He clarified he is presenting this on behalf of the four agencies as a first reading and a revised draft reflecting everyone's comments will be presented at the May meeting. This group would provide advice to the Working Group as it relates to the CSOP and provide for broader participation. The four agencies will continue to work together. Dennis Duke said there was much criticism during the development of the IOP and the attempt is to open this up and have a larger team involved, consistent with federal advisory committee process. Rock clarified this is not the team COL May talked about.

Marjorie Bixby said she was enthusiastic about COL May's proposal particularly with dealing with the Tamiami Trail issues. Rock said that is included and the intent is to combine the structural plans for Modified Water Deliveries (seepage and conveyance, Tamiami Trail, 8.5 square mile area and C-111 issues). Some have raised the issue that the current design was not designed to fit together. Water quality issues and the operating schemes/ rules will also be part of this. Dennis clarified there is a General Reevaluation Report for Tamiami Trail that was stopped because of the lawsuit. Now being re-initiated.

Julio asked how this team relates to the use of the WRAC since they are already online to provide results on the CSOP facilitated process. Rock explained the WRAC was set up to deal with water management issues and advise the Governing Board. Part of this was to be responsive to the recommendations of the group as they did their stakeholder survey and a consistent balance. Rock said briefings could be provided and some of the people may be the same people. Rick asked why this couldn't be a sub-committee under the WRAC. Rock said the WRAC is ecosystem wide and this group will be tailored to a smaller region. Dennis said they looked at both the WRAC and Working Group and doing it this way would provide a more direct link. **Follow-up: Members were asked to provide comments on the draft Charter to Joan Lawrence.**

Public Comment on the CSOP Charter

Mary Munson supported a connection with WRAC and suggested the team have clear guidance on the baseline statutory purposes. The 1994 C-111 GRR should not be subject to advice or renegotiation. Rock said it is intended to attach the purposes and objectives.

April Gromnicki said she supported using the WRAC as a stakeholder group for input to a technical group. It would be confusing to have two entities.

General Management Plan for ENP

Maureen Finnerty introduced Fred Herling and provided a Power Point Presentation. Everglades National Park has embarked on a process to develop its General Management Plan, required by law for every park. Plan needs to be consistent with the overall restoration effort and will set the course for the park's vision for the next 20 years. Existing Master Plan was prepared in 1979 and much has changed since then. Park's purpose and vision needs to be identified along with desired future conditions for resource and visitor use. General Management Plan will be accompanied by a full EIS. A series of meetings have been held to date with more meetings planned throughout the process. It is hoped to have a final plan in 2006. Survey and newsletter (Encl. 13 and 14) were provided. Several agencies have already participated in the scoping process. She hoped the Working Group would identify how it may want to be involved and asked for their input noting the "opportunity is there and is welcomed".

WRAC Update

Julio Fanjul noted the WRAC's January meeting was dedicated to receiving updates on the 7 issue workshops on the pre CERP baseline issues. A resolution was initiated on the Lake Toho draw-downs. Final resolution hoped for the April meeting of the WRAC. July meeting planned jointly with the Task Force in Task Force. The WRAC Priority Plan (Encl. 15) was provided. Joe Walsh added the WRAC is

working on an inventory of natural areas that need to be identified as to the quantity of water they are currently getting under existing conditions.

Museum Collaboration Committee

Ron Smola reported the Committee is proceeding with the next phase of the plan. Kim Cavendish said the premiere of the Coral Reef Imax film is on Thursday evening and she invited the members to the reception the following evening. Howard and Michelle Paul, world-renowned divers who photographed the film, would be attending the premiere.

Update on Water Projects and Initiatives

Dennis Duke provided a Power Point presentation (Encl. 16) on the status of Corps projects:

- Kissimmee Basin: Lake Istokpoga regulations schedule being reviewed and the proposal is to combine with the Lake Okeechobee Watershed CERP project. Lake Toho drawdown stopped due to December being the wettest month on record, with January being the driest. WRAC resolution on the EIS Upper Chain on deviations of operation schedule.
- ASR: Lake Okeechobee and Hillsboro pilot designs underway. Rock asked whether the Corps has the authority to initiate construction. Dennis explained that all pilot projects are treated as new start construction at this time. No money included in the President's budget and this will have an impact on the schedule. Corps is going as far as it can go except for installing the actual pumps. Cost overruns have proven to be difficult to execute within the \$75 million cap. Legislation to increase the cap to \$95 million did not make it in. Corps will be faced with making decisions on the 8 projects on the list.
- Everglades Agricultural Area: PIR underway. Corps has started incorporating the requirements of WRDA into the PIR process and is looking at the implementation schedules to make sure it will be able to meet those requirements. Master implementation schedule will be updated this summer and it will impact on how projects were originally sequenced and planned in the yellow book.
- Upper East Coast: IRL Feasibility Report submitted to headquarters and being processed in Washington. Congress has asked for a PIR and it does not contain all the requirements specified in WRDA such as assurances and savings clause and flood protection. This will be done through a special PIR, working through challenges. Comments have been received regarding the IRL sequencing in relation to other CERP projects. Corps is examining the best sequencing of the components of the project. Corps will need to make decisions on which projects to delay or move into CERP.
- Northern Palm Beach County: Reconnaissance for the additional 245 k, internal review completed, draft for public review will be out this month. STA 1-E is designed to take water out of C-51, treat it and put it into WCA 1. The challenge is to meet water quality requirements established for that area. The PSTA facility test results are very good and are expected to meet the standards. Two issues: slug flow with the pump station and if the plan calls for laying a bedding of limestone, there is a concern with the hardness of the water. Rock added that the phosphorus is lower for the other STAs treating water going into the ECP. In the case of STA1East, deals with bringing in new water rather than cleaning it up. Dennis explained that because they are changing the intended use of that water, the federal government has an interest. The results from the test of the PSTA facility are needed along with the recommendations. There are verbal indications that they may be looking at a phase plan to line a couple of cells and see how they function to make sure there is no issue with the hardness of the water when discharged. They are not sure what the effects are. All the STAs would be subject to the same standard and it is the state's responsibility to clean up what was going into the Everglades Protection Area.
- Miami Dade County: Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands PIR underway. Corps has the Lakes By The Bay permit action before them now. Working with the developer on the permit. C-4 critical project S-380 structure is physically complete. Another C-4 CERP project, PMP being developed. WMD is separately funding and the Corps is participating in on another C-4 project, 1,000-acre detention basin and pump station. In addition, the Corps is working on a C-4 GRR to look at the existing C-4 canal. Initial analysis done and have determined that the construction was never completed. Recognize they have a problem with this project. GRR will focus on the authorized plan and will be looking downstream. The downstream portion is consistent with the authorized project. Julio Fanjul noted the

issues with the shipping industry blocking the flow downstream of the structure. Dennis said this is part of yet another project, Miami River Operation and Maintenance Dredging, involves removal of the material that has built up and is going to contract now. Miami Dade Regional Canal Study schedule being developed and focuses on the primary system. It is intended to piggyback to the \$800 million received to improve the secondary system due to the No Name Storm and Hurricane Irene and will be funded separately.

- Everglades: PIR resumed on the WCA decomp due to the ruling on the 8.5 square mile area. Working with Justice to resolve legal issues and Corps is to immediately implemented alternative 6-D. People impacted by 6-D will have to be offered comparable property within the 8.5 SMA. Working with SFWMD and the county to work through zoning issues. Corps is looking at property already acquired by the state and SFWMD. He said the Corps would normally offer the homeowner the appraised value and let them build their home. C-111 GRR at headquarters for review.
- Florida Bay/Florida Keys: Final report on Keys Carrying Capacity Study complete. Working on the Water Quality Improvement Initiative, Corps working through the language that directs them to provide technical assistance. FY03 budget was \$18 million less than the President's budget request. Based on the new numbers, Corps is reworking their plan but CERP will not be reduced.
- Lower West Coast: Southern Golden Gate Estates working on draft PIR. Because of the number of issues, Corps is focusing on the specific requirements of the savings and assurance clauses. Alternative formulation briefing underway and guidance expected from headquarters soon. Myth: Corps of Engineers is providing 100-year flood protection. Fact: Corps of Engineers is designing a plan to meet the requirements of the savings clause regarding flood protection, i.e., maintain existing levels of service within the areas, primarily to the north of SGGE, not adversely impact. Modeling results to date indicate potential adverse impacts as far north as 10 miles north of I-75. The Corps will not make the 100-year flood any worse with the project than without the project. Ernie Barnett said that seems to be a major policy decision. When CERP formulated it used a 50-year planning horizon and asked why a 50-year flood event was not considered instead of a 100-year. Dennis agreed it is a policy issue, however, the Corps has precedence in terms of the National Flood Insurance Act. A 100-year standard is their analysis point and there are issues regarding taking and adverse condemnations that will need to be worked through. Ernie said an analysis is needed of what incremental increase results in someone's diminishment in level of service and a guidance memorandum is needed. Terry said the policy is to maintain flood protection and increase flood protection when it is possible. Dennis said this is related to the savings clause. Rock said that Ernie is saying that you may have some expensive consequences for some minor impacts and you need to look at it in a level of service context. Lake Trafford Critical Project construction bid withdrawn since all came in too expensive, however, design is underway.
- Other CERP Items: Draft Water Quality Feasibility Study Recon should be available by April. Working on the data problems for the Initial CERP Update. Contingency planning for ASR delayed pending completion of the ICU update. Interagency Modeling Center underway. Terry asked about the status of land in the footprint whose project is not yet authorized and whether it was different from the Bird Drive Basin. Ernie explained the project may not be approved but the footprint may be within a vetted land acquisition list. Terry asked why Biscayne Bay less important than the Bird Drive Basin. A lot of the footprint now has houses and more are coming, he could not understand why this is being allowed to happen. Rick said from his perspective, they are working the plan. The market place is a driving factor of what they will be able to accomplish. Terry said the issue is that if they have plans and all these projects fit together and part start leaving, what happens to the plan. He asked whether it was significant or whether there are alternatives. He suggested this be looked at over the long term, noting there is a difference between buying lands for projects versus buying lands for conservation. Ernie noted the state is moving ahead on those acquisitions that they are able to.

CERP Outreach Update

Nanciann Regalado reported that the program, project and community level outreach efforts continues. Heard from people that an identity for CERP needs to be developed. The logo is moving along and now working on getting it trademarked. There is also a need to develop a slogan to convey ideas to people. The proposed slogan is *we've got the Plan have you got the guts*. This is a work in progress and she encouraged feedback. She emphasized that this is about both CERP and non-CERP projects. Working to get the

public to understand that the effort is bigger than CERP and it is about restoring the south Florida ecosystem. She asked the group to submit requests for future presentations.

Working Group Priority Discussion

Rick suggested talking about this item in a more general way. Julio Fanjul proposed using the same process used by WRAC. Craig Tepper said he wanted to see meetings streamlined. Much research and work remains to be done on forested wetlands sciences in the middle of the state. He suggested thinking about the impacts to CERP from either a meteorological or manmade catastrophe. Kathy proposed that all Working Group and Task Force meetings be combined and an issue would be assigned to this group if a greater level of detail is needed. Working Group would function to support rather than as a separate body. She said this would increase consistency of what's happening at the state and federal level. Rick noted the legislation establishing the Task Force to advise the Corps on the Restudy. It would be good to now revisit the structure and find how to add value in the process. Kathy said it was recognized that people at the agency level were needed to get into the issue and the Working Group was never intended to be a separate body. Rick instructed the members to provide their most critical issues. Julio Fanjul facilitated this session of the meeting. Working Group members then voted on their top issues. The Working Group identifies the following priorities:

1. Identify and frames current issues in need of resolution related to restoration for decision makers
2. Water quality components of restoration
3. Support implementation of restoration projects that expedite Modified Water Deliveries and CSOP
4. Support implementation and tracking of CERP project success to ensure there is movement forward and appropriate modifications made in a timely fashion
5. Provide opportunities for the Working Group and members' restoration activities for more meaningful stakeholder involvement

Rock suggested the Working Group ask their Chair to draft up the document for presentation to the Task Force at the next meeting that will be a joint meeting with the Working Group.

Executive Director's Report

Kevin Burger said information still needed from some agencies on the FY05 Coordinated Budget Request (Encl. 17). Those key items that need funding such as ASR pilot projects also need to be identified. Kathy Copeland suggested it would be helpful to identify the problem areas and determine who needs to make the call on how to make it happen. Rick Smith said it would help to know how much has been spent to date. Rock explained that this is an opportunity to identify requirements in advance of Conference call will be scheduled at the end of March to approve the Coordinated Budget Request document. OEEECT draft (Encl. 18) presented and comments should be provided to Carrie Beeler by March 15. Rock Salt reviewed the key discussion items (Encl. 19) for the Task Force meeting. He noted that Brenda Chalifour has asked to make a presentation on coastal issues and he asked if any of the agencies wanted to make a presentation.

Meeting adjourned at 1:05 PM.

Follow-Up Items:

1. Future agendas will provide a current events section
2. Members were asked to read the flows paper which will be scheduled for discussion at the next meeting, will be presented to the TF at their July meeting
3. Comments due by April 15 on the draft Land Acquisition directive and the CSOP Charter
4. Follow-up with Ron Smola on the Coral Reef Task Force linkage
5. Conference call would be scheduled to approve the priority items and fy05 coordinated budget request

Enclosures

1. Agenda
2. Draft Meeting Minutes, January 9, 2003
3. Independent Science Review Concept Paper
4. Avian Ecology Workshop
5. Avian Ecology Workshop Proposed Agenda

6. Summary of Comments for 2003 Priorities
7. Draft Land Acquisition Charter
8. RECOVER Power Point presentation
9. SCT Flows Paper
10. Great Barrier Reef article
11. Coral Reef Task Force
12. Draft CSOP Advisory Team Charter
13. Everglades National Park Survey
14. ENP Newsletter
15. WRAC Priority Plan (rev. Nov. 15, 2002)
16. Corps Power Point Presentation
17. FY 2005 Coordinated Budget Information Request
18. OEEECT Draft Strategy
19. Proposed Key Discussion Items, Task Force Meeting April 1-2, 2003
20. Consent Agenda Items (presented without discussion)
 - a. Action/Issues Tracking Chart
 - b. Issue Team Tracking Chart
 - c. Biscayne Bay Issue Team Annual Report
 - d. 2003 Working Group Workplan
 - e. Field Trip Information