

*Approved Minutes
South Florida Ecosystem Restoration
Working Group Meeting
Miami, Florida
January 26, 2005*

Welcome and Administrative Announcements

Jay Slack called the meeting called to order at 9:10 AM. He presented the agenda (Encl. 1) and announced that Dan Kimball and Ken Ammon as interim and permanent representatives, respectively. October minutes (Encl. 2) presented for review and Veronica Harrell-James noted the spelling of her name was incorrect.

| Working Group Members | Jan. 26 | Alternates |
|--|---------|------------------------|
| Ken Ammon – South Florida Water Management District | √ | |
| Ernie Barnett – FL Dept of Environmental Protection | - | John Outland |
| Billy Causey – NOAA, FL Keys Nat'l Marine Sanctuary | - | Steve Beckwith |
| Alex Chester – NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Service | - | Essie Duffie |
| Wayne Daltry – Southwest FL Regional Planning Council | √ | |
| Dennis Duke - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers | √ | |
| Gene Duncan – Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of FL | √ | |
| Christopher M. Flack – Office of the Governor of Florida | - | |
| Roman Gastesi, Jr. – Miami Dade County | √ | |
| George Hadley – U.S. Dept of Transportation | - | |
| Richard Harvey – Environmental Protection Agency | √ | |
| Norman O. Hemming, III - U.S. Attorney's Office | - | Veronica Harrell-James |
| Dan Kimball – National Park Service, Everglades National Park | √ | |
| Kenneth B. Metcalf - Department of Community Affairs | √ | |
| Donna Pope - FL Dept. of Transportation | - | Marjorie Bixby |
| 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 | √ | |
| Craig Tepper - Seminole Tribe of Florida | - | Cherise Maples |
| Kenneth S. Todd – Palm Beach County Water Resources Manager | √ | |
| Anna Townsend – Bureau of Indian Affairs | - | Joe Frank |
| Vacant - Broward County Department of Natural Resource Protection | - | |
| Joe Walsh - Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission | - | |
| Jess D. Weaver – U.S.G.S. | - | Ronnie Best |
| Ed Wright – U.S. Department of Agriculture | √ | |
| Greg May, Special Advisor | √ | |
| Ken Haddad, Science Coordination Group Liaison | - | Bob Doren |

Whiparound

Ronnie Best announced that Pam Malam will replace Jess Weaver as the USGS representative on the group. He also introduced Jim Smoot who will be working in the south Florida office. Dan Kimball said Carol Clark was heading to Cape Canaveral and Pedro Ramos will serve as Acting Superintendent until a permanent replacement is announced. Linda Canzanelli from Biscayne National Park is also moving to Philadelphia. Ed Wright noted Mack Gray has retired and David Gagner will be representing USDA on the Task Force. Wayne Daltry reported he is still working with the local agencies to have the Lee Master Mitigation Plan in place and will be participating to address the water quality concerns associated with the West Reservoir. Gene Duncan reported there was a determination by EPA on the Everglades Forever Act (EFA), part of the review approved the EFA and another part of the review disapproved it, yet the issue is not on the agenda. Ken Ammon introduced himself and reviewed some of the work he has done while at the District. He also announced Tommy Strowd would be returning to the District and will be running Acceler8 on a day-to-day basis. Veronica Harrell-James noted she would be sitting in for Norman Hemming who had a trial that morning. Marjorie Bixby stated FDOT continues to be concerned with the integrity of Tamiami Trail once Modified Water Deliveries is implemented.

Task Force Update

Greg May noted the consultation provisions document specifies that the Task Force will be provided with specific information, i.e., PIRs, at a minimum of two-weeks in advance. Consultation was initiated in December and concluded at the January 13th meeting on the Master Implementation Sequencing Plan (MISP), Guidance Memoranda and Pre-CERP baseline. Phase I of the Plan to Coordinate Science (PCS) and the Land Acquisition Strategy were both approved at the December meeting. The annual joint meeting with the Water Resources Advisory Commission (WRAC) also took place in December. He asked for feedback on having a one-day meeting versus two half day sessions. He announced that CROGEE had issued their final report on water storage entitled “Re-Engineering Water Storage in the Everglades: Risks and Opportunities.” The report is available via the links section of the Task Force website. The second meeting of the new NRC committee for CERP progress reporting is scheduled for February 3-5, 2005. The next Task Force meeting scheduled for February 15 – 16, 2005. The agenda will include a discussion of priorities for 2005 and a briefing by the Museum of Discovery and Science. Wayne Daltry asked whether the network of museums in will be tapped. Ronnie Best noted the museum has a national affiliation with a group of museums and participation with other museums is encouraged as part of the agreement. Wayne suggested that one of the 2005 priorities should be to reach out to museums in south Florida. Ken Ammon said he hoped this group would discuss the CROGEE Report on water storage. The SFWMD had two concerns: first, in some places it exceeds the scope of their original charge and second, it includes some factual errors and subjective items.

SCG Update

Bob Doren noted the SCG is working on implementation of Phase I of the PCS. Phase II of the PCS will be accomplished over the next several years and will include specifying the needs and gaps for all of the Conceptual Ecological Models (CEMs) including the Total System and looking at data sharing and gaps in science. The SCG is also working on the development of system-wide ecological indicators for inclusion in the 2006 Task Force Strategy. Wayne Daltry asked whether there was any participation from his area. Bob responded that they are working to get Dr. Beever appointed to the team, although she is currently participating during public comment.

Roman Gastesi asked how this was being coordinated with Acceler8. Bob noted one of their concerns was getting the science done in time to make the decisions and added he was not sure how Acceler8 would affect this. Greg noted that the PCS was at a strategic level and geared to identify the gaps and needs across the programs rather than with program specific. Ken clarified the Corps has modified the PIR schedule and the PIRs will serve as a basis for their NEPA requirements. A lot of this science could feed into the operational component. Roman said he was pleased that Tommy Strowd was returning to the District. Gene Duncan agreed that Tommy was very qualified and it was good news. He added that the Miccosukee Tribe is concerned that CERP is moving forward while MWDs was still not done. Ken noted that from the District’s perspective, A8 will move forward even if they receive zero federal cost crediting. Gene clarified he was not against the A8 projects but he was for completing MWDs. Richard Harvey asked Ken if the SFWMD wanted to make A8 projects eligible for federal credit after the projects are built. Ken said the approach was two-fold; one is to provide the maximum potential for cost crediting and to provide the basis for NEPA approvals through the PIR process prior to construction.

CSOP Update

Carol Rist reported the team has been meeting for over a year to assist the Task Force in providing recommendations to the Corps while increasing stakeholder participation. She noted the Corps had been extremely supportive of the team. The team reached agreement on their performance expectations, linked their efforts with the Project Delivery Team and developed consensus recommendations. Recently the team created a sub-team of technical experts to sift through the technical data from the PDT and provide the team with areas of concern. The next meeting is scheduled for the following day, January 27th at the same location. She read the CSOP Team resolution. Greg said the Task Force owes a lot to this team of diverse stakeholders who have devoted much of their time to work on issues that have been in conflict for many years.

Acceler8 Update

Ken Ammon provided a presentation (Encl. 3) reviewing the status of each of the projects. He reviewed the Basis of Design Report (BODR) which will include the project goals, objectives and key performance measures as well as the structural and operational intent. Once it has undergone public review the 30% design will be initiated. They will not go past the 30% design level until the Corps has identified a tentatively selected plan. He reviewed Phase I of the EAA Reservoir called the Georgia piece and described how the two temporary test cells would be constructed. The objective of the test cells is to obtain information on total seepage knowing they will never be able to recover all of it. They will also be looking at the suitability of onsite materials such as cap rock for slope protection and for drain materials.

Gene Duncan said it would be useful to include completion dates in future presentations. He also asked about the status of water levels on public lands such as Holey Land and Rotenberger. Ken said they have the targets for both and those were agreed upon schedules with the FWCC and the stage targets are being considered. Gene asked whether treatment was taking place. Ken said there is some water quality improvement as it goes through those areas. Gene asked whether they were putting water on to the Holey Land. Ken and Dennis were not sure. Wayne Daltry asked if there was a way to control the rate of seepage in the C-43 Reservoir since seepage improves water quality. Ken said seepage rates depend on the configuration of the reservoir. The question is whether you can design enough seepage so you can recover the storage when it is needed and provide enough discharge when the estuary needs it. Jay Slack asked about the linkage between flows and the Caloosahatchee and the availability of the reservoir to deal with those peak flows. Ken said the intent was for the west reservoir in Caloosahatchee to first capture local basin runoff and the water during the wet season which will then be released for environmental purposes during the dry season. There will also be opportunity to help manage the lake stages.

Richard Harvey asked whether the C-43 reservoir will need a NPDES permit. Some of his folks working in the PDT process are concerned that the folks dealing with the water quality do not have an understanding of what will or will not happen to the water as it is stored in the reservoir. His agency is in favor of the Acceler8 process but did not want to see something built that they won't be able to operate. Ken replied it would be primarily for storage and it will have secondary and ancillary water quality benefit. Richard said that would be a Category B project. Dennis added that if ASR is linked in the future there would be some additional treatment required for the injection. Richard Harvey said he has told his folks that this needs to be consistent with the yellow book and the water quality guidance memo and he wants to make sure the right people are looking at this. Storing water could have some effects on water quality such as dissolved oxygen. Dennis Duke acknowledged this was a concern. Wayne said this was why the feasibility study needs to be kept on track. Richard asked what was expected from the Working Group when these updates are scheduled. Jay Slack said the briefing was scheduled to keep everyone informed. Richard asked whether the Working Group would be asked to take some position on Acceler8. All the agencies will participate in the process, will the group be asked to do something specifically. Jay said the Task Force may or may not ask the Working Group to work on this. Kenneth Todd asked whether there would be water quality monitoring in the EAA test cells. Ken said he would look into this. Jay announced he has reorganized his office to help staff the A8 teams and added that FWS and DOI support Acceler8. Greg noted that Carol Wehle explained at the last meeting that much of what had been done to date dealt with the state's internal funding mechanism. Now that the framework for the financing and permitting has been developed the Task Force and the Working Group will receive regular briefings.

CERP Update

Dennis Duke provided a presentation (Encl. 4). Real estate acquisition for the 8.5 square mile area is ongoing for the Modified Water Deliveries (MWD) project. A total of 454 tracts have been acquired out of 843 tracts. Many of the remaining tracts are in closing and Miami Dade will be transferring approximately 80 tracts. They anticipate in excess of 50 condemnations but noted that many of them would be to address defects in title and only a few due to unwilling sellers. They have initiated revision of the Tamiami Trail General Re-Evaluation Report (GRR) to be completed this fall. Three primary alternatives are being examined: 3,000 foot bridge; four mile bridge; and sky-way bridge. The construction contract for the levee, canal and pump station is scheduled to be awarded later this year. He provided a status update on Kissimmee River Restoration, Critical Projects and the C&SF projects. The Indian River Lagoon PIR is undergoing review prior to transmittal to Congress. The Corps is preparing the Chief's Report for the

Picayune Strand and has launched a cultural resources survey for those items identified during the PIR process. He reviewed the construction start dates for the accelerated projects and noted that the dates will put them back on track. ASR pilot projects, received no construction start funding and the WMD is assessing their capability to move out on at least two of them. The Regional PDT is looking at construction alternatives for the EAA Reservoirs including the use of roller compacted concrete.

The East and West Bookend model runs for CSOP are being looked at to determine the benefits and adverse impacts. He reviewed the comments received on the draft MISP noting many comments were received with regards to projects that should be added. The Corps will examine the impacts on funding and resources with adding these additional projects. They will also examine the impact on performance of the recommended changes and will then publish the notice of availability. The Corps had a consultation meeting with the Seminole Tribe and a meeting is scheduled with the Miccosukee Tribe on February 16th. Majority of the comments received focused on GM 3 and GM 4. Documents will be revised and next steps include a formal notice of availability, public comment and concurrence from the Secretary of Interior and the Governor. The RECOVER document on Interim Goals and Interim Targets is undergoing internal review. A draft document will be posted by mid February. Dennis reviewed organizational changes made at the Jacksonville District Restoration Program Division. Richard Harvey asked about ASR pilot project funding. Ken noted that the limited budget that remains will result in a delay in some of the ASR construction and testing with the exception of the Hillsboro. They are out of money for that technology and are hoping the Corps will get money in their FY06 appropriations. Dennis added there is still a lot of work ongoing with ASR, such as the pre-injection treatment analysis. There will be a 6-9 month delay with the other two ASR pilots.

Working Group, 2004 Year in Review

Jay Slack reviewed the 2004 accomplishments (Encl. 5) which included both discretionary and non discretionary activities such as the IFP and the Land Acquisition Strategy. The Working Group was responsible for activities listed in blue. He reviewed the activities that were undertaken in 2004 on three Task Force priorities: CERP Implementation; CSOP/MWD Implementation and Multi Species Management. Wayne Daltry suggested this may be the year to determine further refine Goal 3 and suggested they have a realistic appraisal of what was happening in south Florida. Jay posed the following questions to the members to help them frame specific issues for the year ahead. *What does the Working Group have the power to do to help the issue? How does that mesh with the Task Force priorities? Can they add value to the situation?* Greg May noted the growth management briefings were helpful, however, he learned that each county has a different approach and the issue was not as simple as he envisioned. Wayne said this was going to be the year of Growth Management legislation and they need to make sure the bill reflects these regional programs such as Everglades Restoration. The current draft starts out with a build out analysis. Ed Wright asked whether they know what was happening in the other counties. Wayne Daltry said the Regional Councils assembled a south Florida picture to show what the comprehensive picture looks like from counties and cities. Jay Slack said he was not sure if they were the right group but it was important to overlay the two maps and work those areas of conflict as well as those areas of agreement. Ken Ammon cautioned the group against using plans that were five or six years old. Ken Todd echoed Wayne's comments and said it would be helpful for local governments to see what the future has in making their planning efforts for a particular area. **Wayne noted FDOT is overseeing the update of the transportation element of the Comprehensive Plans for Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, Lee and others to 2030 and suggested they schedule a briefing at the next meeting from FDOT on the Metropolitan Planning Organization process.**

Working Group Initiatives

Active Teams

Biscayne Bay Regional Restoration Coordination Team (BBRRCT), Rafaela Monchek provided an update on the team's current activities. The team is working on the Action Plan which focuses on three major categories: 1) ecological and physical restoration; 2) readily accessible and appreciated; and 3) economic sustainability. In addition, an overarching section will be included to focus on issues such as coordination, funding and future tracking and evaluation efforts that span across all three focus areas. An executive summary will be drafted upon completion of this process. Completion of the plan is expected this summer. Susan Markley added that there have been discussions over the years as to membership and whether there

was an appropriate balance of stakeholder groups represented. A lot of effort has been made to add additional members to address these concerns, they are not entirely resolved and there are members that are not active. Jay noted his concern that the perceived imbalance could lead to an Action Plan that may not be a consensus plan. Susan replied that there was recognition that a lot of work had been done on the management plans. There was a shared view that what was needed was a more coordinated approach to getting these objectives in the existing plans implemented. It would be helpful to receive feedback from the Working Group on what the team could be working on that would be helpful. **Working Group asked for a briefing on the next agenda noting the concerns with the membership, chair's departure and direction issues.**

Florida Invasive Animal Task Team (FIATT), Bob Doren reviewed those items the team is working on a sub-goal for inclusion in the next version of the Biennial Report. The team is working to blend their web page into the new Task Force website format. The team is also looking at pathways to determine how these species are getting into the U.S. The Working Group may be able to help with the population of the database. Jay Slack noted they may need endorsement, funding and direction from the Working Group over the course of the year.

Noxious Exotic Weeds Task Team (NEWTT), Bob Doren reported both FIATT and NEWTT participated in an Everglades Invasive Species Summit held in November in an attempt to re-invigorate the local programs dealing with invasive species (plants and animals). Members of both teams are working with other formal and informal organizations to develop individual actions plans for invasive species. They are also developing a MOU among the agencies and have the heads of the agencies sign off on methodologies on how they are all going to work together. This would include pooling resources and coordinate agency priorities. He noted the Quarantine facility received final approval and the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony is being planned.

Kissimmee Valley Regional Restoration Coordination Team (KVRRCCT), Theresa Woody noted the team's purpose is to integrate and make recommendations as appropriate. The team was to serve as the principal advisory body to the Working Group body for that region. The report card and conference were two tasks that were not completed. Team has not held a "face to face" meeting since August 2003 but members have continued to share information and communicate through electronic correspondence. There is no formal Chair and OED facilitates the efforts of the team. If the team is to continue then the charter, membership and Chair needs to be revisited. Ken Todd said the Working Group needs to get this group some help. The Kissimmee Valley area is very important and had impacts from the four hurricanes last year. Richard Harvey asked whether the hurricanes undid the work done to draw down the lake. Theresa and Ken Ammon both responded that neither of them had heard of anything. **Working Group asked for an update on the Long Term Plan Chain of Lakes at the next meeting.**

Land Acquisition Task Team (LATT), Theresa Woody noted this was a successful team co-chaired by John Outland and Mark Musaus. The team develops annual updates to the Land Acquisition Strategy. The new edition integrated county level information in the text and appendices and the individual project sheets now reflect the counties' contributions. They have helped identify the high priority lands that need to be acquired and look for opportunity to leverage their resources. John Outland added that they have improved upon the data year after year. Wayne Daltry commented that he keeps hearing that there was not enough money and that a lot of in-kind decision-making will be needed since they will never have all the resources needed. Theresa added that the team directive and schedule of deliverables needs to be updated. Jay Slack noted the counties have provided information and this has the potential to work as a part of the Goal 3 issue. John Outland noted the local governments are providing the data to be used in the LAS and that coordination was occurring. **Working Group asked the team to provide the county information and next steps could then be discussed.**

Southwest Florida Regional Restoration Coordination Team (SWFRRCCT), Carrie Beeler noted an update was provided at the October 2004 meeting. Team meets annually and has two sub-teams that meet more often. Wayne Daltry added the work is being done on the science side and the feasibility team is filling the gaps. **Working Group agreed for the team to continue.**

Inactive Teams

Dispute Resolution, Joan Lawrence noted she was the Chair of the team formed to develop protocols to facilitate intergovernmental conflicts. Protocols were developed and approved by the Working Group in 2001 and later provided to the Task Force. **As their task was completed the Working Group dissolved the team without objection.**

Aquifer Storage and Recovery, Carrie Beeler reported there were two renditions of this team. First one formed in 1998 and completed their Action Plan and Strategy in 1999 to address the uncertainties related to regional ASRs. The team reformed in 2001 and has been inactive since. Richard Harvey noted there was a CROGEE Report on ASR and the issue team came up with seven specific issues that need to be addressed in the pilot projects. It could have significant impacts on how water is stored, but a lot of the information will not be available for a number of years especially if the pilot projects are languishing because of funding. There are specific important issues that are supposed to be tracked and no team is tracking it other than some of the individual agencies. John Outland said he did not think a team was needed at this point but that they need to receive regular status updates. Richard Harvey said he was concerned that folks will charge ahead and do things they think they are supposed to be doing. Ronnie Best said this was an important team. The use of ASR is dependent on the results of the research which will be completed in 8 – 10 years. Whether there is work going on now or not, the issue team can help to make sure the big picture issues are being looked at. Jay Slack suggested looking to the member agencies for briefings. Richard Harvey requested a briefing from the Corps, WMD and a discussion from DEP which has delegated that authority under the UIC Program to make sure they are addressing the issues identified by the ASR Issue Team and CROGEE and make sure they are doing so in a way where they “won’t end up in a regulatory quagmire”. Ken Ammon stated that construction and testing of these pilot projects should look at these issues. Richard Harvey said the testing of the microbial die off issue was an example of an issue that still needs to be done. Dennis Duke said that if they do not have the money in the President’s Budget then it would be critical to have a unified voice. **Working Group asked to review ASR issues (possibly with the SCG). No decision on the team will be made until after the review.**

Outreach, Environmental and Economic Equity Task Team (OEEECT), Carrie Beeler reported the team was tasked to develop a comprehensive interagency strategy for a system-wide approach for outreach and environmental justice. The team provided an inventory of member agency outreach initiatives and programs. They presented a draft of the strategy on March 2003 to the Working Group and the team has been inactive ever since due to low participation and lack of a Chair. Wayne Daltry said he would like to see these things done, regardless of whether they have a team or not. Ken Ammon said these issues are a charge of the Corps and the WMD, required by WRDA. There are plans and analysis ongoing in conjunction with CERP and Acceler8 and the Working Group should first determine how this is being addressed and then look to see whether there are gaps in how it is being addressed. Veronica Harrell-James asked about the data, who was involved and what was their input. Ken Ammon noted they have radio spots, brochures throughout the sixteen county area as well as newspapers and television spots. Veronica said they may be targeting people but do they have data as to whether it was producing results. Darlene Guinto, Outreach Specialist for the Corps stated that WRDA requires a five-year report to Congress on their outreach activities. The first report is due in October. Dan Kimball offered to share the results of the Clemson University phone survey conducted in five south Florida counties regarding how people feel about National Parks. **Working Group asked for a update of outreach activities from the Corps, WMD and others.**

Sustainable Agriculture Task Team, Carrie Beeler reported the team completed A New Look at Agriculture Report which was provided to the Working Group and is now available on the Task Force website. It was not known whether the report was forwarded to any other agency or entity. **Working Group dissolved the team without objection.**

2005 Working Group Priorities

Jay Slack noted that in addition to the two non-discretionary items (Integrated Financial Plan and Land Acquisition Strategy) they will review ASR and outreach. They will also look at the Goal 3 local land use

planning as well as the OEEECT and exotics issue. Greg encouraged the group to keep in mind what the end product will be and the intended usage of that product. He also said they need to ensure they are not duplicating an agency's effort, but adding value. Greg May said it would be helpful to map out the agency activities under each of the priorities identified for Multi Species Management identified by the Working Group. Perhaps a workshop would be the best way to accomplish this task. This would delineate for the Working Group and the Task Force what issues were being addressed and if there were any gaps. Jay noted his agency has funded \$9 million to address those items identified by the Avian Ecology Workshop. Ken Todd said maybe there was a process this group could do.

Ed Wright asked what happens to the product/recommendations produced by the team once it is presented to the Task Force. For example what was done with the Agriculture Report? Greg noted that the group should be very clear when assigning a task for 2005 and specify what we want the group to do and how their effort will be used. Jay said that each task may have a different product. Greg noted that the Strategy, for example, was updated every two years as a Congressional mandate. He wants to continue to leverage that Congressional requirement as a tool to help them coordinate their individual efforts.

Public Comment

None

Preparation for Task Force Meeting

Next meeting is on February 15 – 16, 2005 and Jay and Greg will provide a presentation.

Next Steps and Assignments

October minutes were approved without objection. An update will be scheduled from the WRAC at the next meeting in response to Dan Kimball's question regarding recreational opportunities. Richard Harvey renewed his request for this group to be briefed by Chantal Collier, DEP and others on the Local Action Strategy. Richard Harvey urged they don't let last year's priorities get away since they are they are still important. Essie Duffie asked whether they still had a workplan. Greg explained they are using a new format. Essie asked for the inclusion of outcomes and measurements. Members were asked for feedback on whether they prefer the one-day or two-day meeting format. Jay noted most of the members prefer the two-day. Upcoming meeting dates are as follows: February 16 and April 19-20.

Meeting adjourned at 5:03 P.M.

Enclosures:

1. Agenda
2. Draft meeting minutes, October 2004
3. Acceler8 power point
4. Corps power point
5. 2004 Accomplishments