

*Approved Meeting Minutes
South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Working Group
Marriott, Coral Springs, FL
July 20, 2006*

Welcome and Administrative Announcements

Ken Ammon called meeting called to order at 1:10 PM. Agenda (Encl. 1) presented and April minutes (Encl. 2) approved.

Working Group Members	Jul. 20	Jul. 21	Alternates attending
Ken Ammon, Chair – South Florida Water Management District	√	√	
Dan Kimball, Vice Chair NPS - Everglades National Park & Dry Tortugas	√	√	
Billy Causey – NOAA, FL Keys Nat'l Marine Sanctuary	-	-	Dave Score
Alex Chester – NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Service	-	-	Hollie Bamford
Bob Crim - FL Dept. of Transportation	√	√	
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, Miami Dade County	-	-	
George Hadley – U.S. Dept of Transportation			
Richard Harvey – Environmental Protection Agency	-	-	
Norman O. Hemming, III - U.S. Attorney's Office	√	√	
Kenneth B. Metcalf - Department of Community Affairs			
W. Ray Scott - FL Dept of Agriculture and Consumer Services	√	√	
Kim Shugar - FL Dept of Environmental Protection	√	√	
Paul Souza – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	√	√	
Craig Tepper – Seminole Tribe of Florida	√	√	
Kenneth S. Todd – Palm Beach County Water Resources Manager	√		
Anna Townsend – Bureau of Indian Affairs	-	-	Joe Frank
Joe Walsh – Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission	√	√	
Jess D. Weaver – U.S.G.S.	-		Barry Rosen
Rick Wilkins - Broward County Department of Natural Resource Protection	√		Patti Webster
Ed Wright – U.S. Department of Agriculture	√	√	
Greg May, Special Advisor	√	√	
Ken Haddad, Science Coordination Group Liaison	-	-	Rock Salt

Whiparound

Dan Kimball noted this is his first meeting as Vice Chair and commented on the progress being made with Modified Water Deliveries, 8.5 Square Mile Area (SMA) as well as on real estate issues with Tamiami Trail. Rock Salt reported he attended the GEER Conference and said he heard a lot more consensus on the tree island issue. Bob Crim reported the WMD has agreed to participate in DOT's decision-making process. Barry Rosen announced he will begin working with USGS and may serve as Jess Weaver's alternate at future meetings. Joe Walsh reported they received fifty applications for the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program for south Florida this year and targets pine flatwoods and tropical hardwood hammocks.

Ken Todd announced the Palm Beach County Commission voted to not allow any additional mining operations within the EAA for the next two years while a study is being done. He encouraged this group to participate and help in determining the appropriateness of mining in the EAA. He asked whether the group wanted to discuss the

issue today. Ken Ammon said this group does not bring ad hoc issues. The issue appears to be a Palm Beach County issue and the WMD has not taken a position until the study is done. The WMD has provided comments to protect the integrity of CERP and water supply projects. Once study is completed it might be appropriate to bring the draft report to this group. Ken Todd said the WG might be asked to comment at a future date.

Craig Tepper said the impact of rising land costs as mentioned by Carole Wehle is not on the agenda and the Seminole Tribe asks that it be included on a future agenda. Greg May said that the Wetlands Reserve Program agenda item would in part address the issue because this program puts land in conservation while keeping them in private ownership and on tax rolls. Craig Tepper reported the tribe is working with the WMD on easement issues. He said land values are having a big impact on costs and noted that less than fee simple acquisition is also a costly process. Ken Ammon echoed Craig's comments adding that they understand the escalation issues. They do explore less than fee simple whenever practicable. Craig noted the footprints are in flux. Ken said it will be inevitable because of the effort to purchase the lands early on that there will be some surplus of lands.

Patti Webster noted the Broward County WPA and expresses interest in making sure the final plan protects wetlands and carries forward all the goals of CERP. Wayne Daltry reported that since January discharges from Lake Okeechobee towards Caloosahatchee had been about what they have asked for. The American Rivers Organization declared the Caloosahatchee as one of the most endangered rivers in the U.S. The Southwest Feasibility team has been working hard. The RRCT scheduled their annual meeting today and he asked that future RRCT meetings not be scheduled on the same day as the Working Group. Dave Score reported this is the 10th year of the Coral Reef Monitoring Program and the 12th year of WQPP monitoring data downstream. The Sanctuary Advisory Council has asked for a restoration panel discussion at its August meeting.

Gene Duncan reported EPA is proposing a rule that, if adopted, would eliminate the need for pollution discharge permits for water allocation. All across the country people are filing and winning lawsuits because discharges from point sources are causing pollution problems in the receiving waters. Locally they have the S-9 case which has already been to the Supreme Court. The S-2 and S-3 lawsuit is still pending. EPA has proposed to not require pollution discharge permits for any type of water allocations and the Tribe believes it is a bad idea. The public comment period will end in about a week and this is an important issue not just for the Everglades but across the nation. Paul Souza noted this is his first meeting and he is the Acting Field Supervisor for FWS. He acknowledged Barry Rosen who has done a great job leading his agency's Everglades restoration effort.

Dennis Duke reported they had the ground breaking ceremony for the ASR Pilot project and there is a lot of construction ongoing throughout the system. Greg May said that 2006 is a big reporting year for the Task Force and that updates and timelines will be provided on various reports. He said the Working Group will work offline, and schedule a special meeting or conference call if needed based on comments, to complete its work on the Strategy and Biennial Report prior to presenting the reports for approval at the

September Task Force meeting. Ken Ammon announced that they have received the 404 permit and the interim land use change concurrence from DOI and the Corps for construction of the A1 Reservoir. It is the largest reservoir in the Acceler8 package with 190,000 acre feet of storage or 90 billion gallons which is equivalent to 5 million typical single family swimming pools. A ground breaking ceremony is scheduled for August 2, 2006 and everyone is invited. Finally he said they had been directed by the Corps HQ, Executive Office and DOI to resolve problems with the development of the GMs and to streamline the documents to their best of their ability while still meeting the legal requirements in the pro regs and maintaining the integrity of the allocation authority at the district. He said they would be working on these in the next several weeks at a high policy level.

Consultation Workshop

Alternative Formulation – C-43 PIR

Dave Appel provided a presentation (Encl. 3) on the Tentatively Selected Plan Part (TSP) 1, Phase 1. He reviewed the project study area and purpose which includes addressing the declining health of the Caloosahatchee River and estuarine ecosystems as well as improving water deliveries to the estuary. The project is divided into two phases and Phase 1 would reaffirm the Yellow Book Plan while Phase 2 would include additional management measures in the upper basin that cannot be addressed by a reservoir at the Berry Groves site. He reviewed the array of alternatives and how they were evaluated by the team. The team selected Alternative 3C because it provides the most cost efficient plan that would achieve a majority of the goals and objectives. Issues still being looked at include water quality, wastewater superiority and water supply. Next steps include optimization of the pumps and trying to get a draft PIR by the end of the December – January timeframe.

Craig Tepper asked about the height of the dike. Dave acknowledged that safety was a concern with stacking that much water and the dike will be designed to the Corps' Dam Safety Standards as they looked at various options. Wayne Daltry said he is an advocate of buffering and this will be higher than the Herbert Hoover Dike and asked whether they would be affirming all the Yellow Book benefits. Dave said that would be with Phase 2 and they are working with the Acceler8 folks to see what loading is coming in. If problems are found and an STA is needed then it will be looked at as well. Dennis Duke said current design standards will be used which are different from the Herbert Hoover Dike. Ken Ammon stated the test cells are addressing the seepage issues and the semi final results looked good. Also surface water and ground water quality in and out of the reservoir will hopefully affirm there would be no additional degradation and improve the water quality to the extent they can. Greg May noted the general agreement with the plan which would be reported to the Task Force with the understanding there are outstanding issues.

Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands

Matt Morrison provided a presentation (Encl. 4) reviewing the project location, objectives and alternatives that were reviewed. The team selected alternative O as the TSP which is a hybrid of alternative M and Q. Alternative O optimizes use of existing

canals, redistributes canal discharge, has flow ways and moderate land acquisition. It will provide among other things, the lowest annual cost per unit of output for each ecological zone, a large degree of flexibility for operational changes and is close to meeting Yellow Book benefit levels. The risks and uncertainties associated with the project were reviewed and team has decided to build project in phases and will need to develop an alternative permitting strategy for a phased approach. The next added increment analysis still needs to be done and alternative formulation briefing has been postponed. He reviewed upcoming milestones noting they hope to have a final PIR/NEPA posted in the federal register in November 2007.

Gene Duncan asked about the alternative options for the wastewater reuse and for clarification about the statement that there would be restoration to some areas to the detriment of others. Matt Morrison clarified the BBCW PDT is not the group that will develop the project for reclaimed water as a separate initiative. They are assuming that that project will be in place and water quality will be at permitted levels. He noted the lateral canal networks release water to the bay and they tried to achieve good near shore salinity levels. They will be expanding the existing wastewater treatment plant rather than building another one. Ken Ammon said the other treatment plants are way north and it is problematic to relocate a plant or bring lines down to that location. He would hope the CERP project would consider future population growth in the area. Dennis Duke said there were two plants with tertiary treatment as opposed to deep well injection included in the plan in the southern part. Rock Salt said he was not clear whether they are part of the CERP project. Ken Ammon explained that the wastewater reuse from Miami Dade County as envisioned in Yellow Book would be a separate CERP project but noted that this project in order to work optimally would rely on reuse water coming online. Their dilemma is that until that reuse is online, there will be less benefit than will ultimately occur. Dennis noted this project was originally scheduled later but was moved up. Rock asked whether the Corps was proposing to include this treatment in the BBCW project. Dennis said no it would be a separate CERP project. Rock asked whether they would incorporate the advanced schedule for treatment. Dennis noted they are currently discussing this with Miami Dade. He noted the challenges with recommending a plan that is unable to achieve all the benefits because of the availability of water.

Public Comment

Betty Grizzle (Everglades Foundation) noted the Foundation submitted technical comments and presented copies (Encl. 5). She said she spent months working the natural mixing of fresh and saltwater and it was missing. She is concerned with how the alternatives were chosen noting they were not allowed to participate in the process. The team should have taken the best pieces of all the alternatives rather than looking at just two of them.

Cynthia Guerra (Tropical Audubon) stated that wastewater reuse is being driven by the county's need to get a consumptive use permit which is in limbo. She believes that the availability of this water will come online and she made a plea that there be good coordination.

Jamie Furgang (Audubon of Florida) said this could be really good or potentially not so good. She noted all the interest in Miami Dade to take wastewater reuse as a locally sponsored project but said that Audubon prefers for it to continue as a CERP project where the public can continue to engage in.

C-111 Spreader Canal Partial TSP

John Shaffer provided a presentation (Encl. 6) reviewing the Yellow Book purpose, project area and history associated with the project as well as the alternatives that were reviewed. Approval of the partial TSP was re-affirmed at the July Quarterly Review Board (QRB) meeting. The basis for the partial TSP include the anticipated ecological benefits, preservation of existing levels of flood protection, saltwater intrusion potential, real estate requirements and costs and schedule.

Rock Salt clarified that the scope of the partial TSP was only related to the alignment of the canal and the remainder - the backfill and the pumps - will be briefed at a later date. John agreed. Bob Crim asked about the capacity of the canal and John clarified it was not part of this TSP. Ken Ammon added that prior to finalizing the TSP they will have to make an assumption on the cross section of the canal in order to come up with a reasonable cost estimate. He reiterated the partial TSP only speaks to alignment and does not speak to other features such as cross section, profile or pump size. Before they have a full TSP it will come back to the group. Ken Ammon noted the district has committed to meeting with DOI to bring closure to the alignment west of US 1 and they believe they are close. They will also meet with the park to agree on the appropriate sizing for the pump station based on the agreements of CSOP and expected runoff. Dennis Duke clarified the TSP was for an alignment based on 500 csf pump. They do need some finalization on the pump size once they get better data.

Ken Ammon said they have heard water quality concerns that they will be re-introducing through the spreader canal, water to the model lands which may affect those pristine wetlands. They recognize this is an issue and noted the preliminary data he has received indicates the water quality going down the C-111 address is good. What may be a significant issue is runoff that is redirected from the Loveland slough area and that needs to be addressed. Dan Kimball said they need to know how much water they can pump and then they need to gradually restrict the current discharge by offsetting the amount that goes through the pump station. He was not sure what portion will be done through Acceler8. Paul Souza asked about the timetable for the final TSP. John reported they are looking at recommending a full TSP in November 2006 and Acceler8 would determine what portion they would build.

Public Comment

Audrey Ordines (Chair, BBRRCT) provided a letter (Encl. 7) on the C-111 BODR with recommendations and comments related to the project. The BBRRCT is concerned with the water quality in Loveland Slough, alignment issue, operational issues, mitigation and consistency with the PIR. She offered to provide assistance and/or a presentation to the Working Group related to these concerns.

Jamie Furgang (Audubon of Florida) noted the biggest concern has been with the analysis done by a scientist of the Everglades Foundation that looked at the straight line alignment and found that flow patterns resulted in an unnatural distribution of water to Florida Bay. Even with a partial TSP she has not heard how that alignment will not produce a negative effect on the freshwater wetlands. She reiterated that if they cannot implement an environmentally beneficial alignment and backfill the C-111 canal then Audubon recommends the funding be dedicated to completely backfilling the C-110, lower L-31 west and the aerojet canals to provide immediate benefits to Florida Bay and the southern Everglades region. Dennis said this is part of the C-111 C&SF project and they would probably plug in the aerojet with a 2008 and 2009 timeframe for construction.

Water Storage Optimization Study and Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) Contingency Plan

Beth Turner presented a presentation (Encl. 8) noting there were concerns that reservoirs were not adequately optimized across basins; may not adequately meet CERP restoration goals in a cost effective manner; and do not take into account new information since the Restudy. ASR is a critical piece but there are uncertainties with regards to the performance of the technology at such a large scale. The study will not look at technical details but will look at what can be done if ASR does not work as planned. Phase I will be a reconnaissance level effort to determine if there are major issues that warrant detailed studies. New modeling, ecological benefit quantification and NEPA will not be required. Phase II, if needed, will include a more detailed study. The Reservoir Optimization Report is scheduled to begin in August 2006 and end in April 2007. The purpose is to verify the storage features in CERP are properly distributed throughout the system. The ASR Contingency Report is scheduled to begin in October 2006 and end in July 2007. The purpose will be to evaluate potential water storage and water supply options of reduced ASR capacity in CERP. John Morgan stressed the Contingency Plan's purpose is to answer the "what if" ASR does not perform as expected adding the two studies are on parallel tracks. Reservoir Optimization Study will be needed first to determine the questions to be addressed in the ASR Contingency Report.

Ray Scott said everyone has known that ASR at 50% will significantly reduce the benefits of CERP and said he couldn't understand why they would take a year to figure that out. John clarified they would work at a team level to look at what the options are for storage and future water supplies if they are not able to tap into as ASR as expected. Technical information from the pilot studies will also be available for consideration. Wayne Daltry asked whether the goal was the 1 in 10 level of service and clarification on the reservoir study. Dennis Duke explained it was important to understand that the purpose of the reservoir study is to determine whether the storage in CERP is in the right locations. Ken Ammon said the overall goal is to determine whether there is a way to optimize the storage over and above what CERP contemplated. Dennis Duke noted OMB directed the Corps to perform this optimization study to determine whether the storage is in the right locations.

Public Comment

Patrick Hayes (Martin County Soil and Water) noted the 36 years of record were dry years and they are now in a wet cycle. He asked what would happen if they don't need to pull any water out of the ASR wells. Dennis Duke said the ASR study is designed to answer whether there is breakpoint pressure at which you start to compromise the confining layers. They do not know the answer to what the long term impact of that storage will be.

Mark Perry (Everglades Coalition) said he hoped they were looking at potential future options to replace capacity functions if they are not able to achieve it with ASR. They need to integrate the science of the ASR contingency study and not look just as existing storage.

Chris Farrell (Audubon of Florida) said he was glad to see the long delayed study moving forward and asked to be informed of public involvement opportunities. Dennis Duke said Beth will be leading the PDT and meetings will be noticed on the calendar. There is no NEPA document associated with this initial effort.

John Marshall (Arthur R Marshall Foundation) said the need for ASR is because of a lack of dynamic storage and sheet flow as defined in CERP Section 2.1.

Gene Duncan asked about the recovery rates from the pilot wells. Ken Ammon explained that recovery is site specific and even adjacent wells could have different recovery rates because of the hydrogeology. Barry Groves ASR has some issues like sand encroaching in the intakes and restricting the recovery potential. CERP assumes 70% recovery. Dennis Duke added that some of the utilities have 85% recovery but it varies. The 50% was an arbitrary number of the 100% as envisioned in the Yellow Book.

CERP Annual Report

Amanda Taylor provided a presentation (Encl. 9a) and a draft report (Encl. 9b) reminding everyone that it is a joint report between the Corps and SFWMD and is the first in a series of annual reports. It is intended to communicate to the general public what CERP is and why it needed. It is required by the Programmatic Regulations and requires that it include the CERP components; estimated cost; water budget; water reserve allocation for the natural system. Report will be translated into Spanish and Creole and has been made a visually appealing as possible.

Public Comment

Jamie Furgang (Audubon of Florida) suggested including the impact CERP will have on the economy and on recreation. She suggested removing program and project level information since it may not be understood by the public. She suggested adding more graphics, bullets and moving the graphics move forward in the document.

Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule

Dennis Duke provided a new presentation (Encl. 10) noting three workshops were held. He reviewed the background adding that they are under the WSE implemented in July

2000 and they have been under a temporary deviation for almost the entire period. The TSP is 1BS2-m and allows for quicker response to inflows; reduces high lake conditions and improves optimum flow to the estuaries. He reviewed the management band as well as the factors that were considered in selecting an alternative. As a result of Hurricane Wilma and the 1.5 foot rise in the lake it was decided that they cannot exceed an elevation of 17.25 in the interest of public safety. If the lake is at 18 feet and there is a category 3 or 4 storm then evacuation orders will be issued. They do show improvements to the estuaries with the TSP. The new schedule is anticipated to be in place from 2007 to 2010 which is when other projects such as the Kissimmee River Restoration and Modified Water Deliveries are expected to be online. He reminded everyone that the 45-day public comment period begins in August 2006. The final record of decision is expected in December 2006.

Wayne Daltry said the 17.25 is a “pretend roof on the lake” and asked if it would feed back into the reservoir storage effort. Dennis Duke it would not for the reconnaissance level. Wayne added there will be more water lost to tide until the Herbert Hoover Dike is rebuilt which could be forever. That will be water that disappears from storage and it needs to be looked at again. Wayne also suggested they look at what the emergency levels will be given what happened in 2003. Wayne added that for the plan to be effective it has to be coordinated with every structure and conveyance in the system and the job is only half done with the regulation schedule. Dennis agreed and added that the Corps is looking at options.

Public Comment

Mark Perry (Everglades Coalition) said the April to June period shows a lot of water being dumped and he would like to see more habitat management and get the water down at the right time. Dennis Duke replied they kept the discharge canals in the TSP as well as continuing to discharge water as needed.

Patrick Hayes (Martin County Soil and Water) noted there are a number of studies showing the fisheries are not looking at all good. Seagrass beds are being dropped as targets since there aren't any and the fisheries will be next to collapse. The IRL is the most biodiverse portion of North America and that would be the worst place to put dirty water. Drainage is not being adequately covered and there needs to be concurrency.

Chris Farrell (Audubon of Florida) said they would submit technical comments in writing and he asked for the WCAs and Caloosahatchee to be treated more equitably.

Interim Goals Agreement and Interim Targets Agreement

Dennis Duke reported they are working on revisions to the agreements and they will be provided for review and comment. Rock Salt added the intent to re-initiate consultation with the tribes and others and have it available at the September Task Force meeting.

Betty Grizzle (Everglades Foundation) noted her concern with what the Interim Goals Agreement will show. She said she was not sure how the agreement would help a planning team if there are no targets or incremental improvements.

Revised Draft Guidance for Consultation and Coordination

Dennis Duke reviewed a presentation (Encl. 11) reviewed the consultation requirements and reported the RPDT meetings will no longer be held prior to the Working Group meetings instead informal discussions will be held with the Project Managers of those projects listed on the Working Group agenda. Those informal discussions will continue to be held from 10:00 – 12:00. All PDT meetings will be posted on the web and the locations and call in numbers will be provide as well as an opportunity for public comment.

Public Comment

Jamie Furgang (Audubon of Florida) said she was happy to see many of their comments incorporated and hoped to see documents posted on the web.

Reporting Requirements

Strategic Plan and Biennial Report

Linda Friar presented the 2006 draft (Encl. 12) and thanked Joni Warner for all her assistance. She reviewed the process and noted the changes to the current draft are noted in parenthesis throughout the document. Indicators from the SCG were included and several of the objective measures have changed. Comments are due on August 10th to Marsha Bansee and the final draft will be presented to the Task Force for approval at the September meeting. She announced her new job was the Public Information Officer for ENP and Dry Tortugas. Greg May thanked Linda for her work and said he had been blessed to work with Linda over the last several years. He wished her well and noted that Marsha Bansee would step up a do a great job as well.

Plan for Coordinating Science (PCS) and System-wide Indicators

Rock Salt provided a presentation (Encl. 13) noting the SCG is working on the system-wide indicators which were sent out for review and comments have been received and some have been incorporated. The SCG has decided to keep the original indicators and will consider the recommendations from the independent scientific review as part of their 2008 work schedule. The recommendation on the Dade County flooding was included and they acknowledge it is a sensitive issue the group is trying to deal with. The PCS was independently reviewed and the heart and soul of the document is the use of the conceptual ecological models as an effort to prioritize the key needs and gaps. The first draft is out for review and the final will be presented to the Task Force for approval at their meeting.

Public Comment

John Marshall (Arthur R. Marshall Foundation) noted the Everglades Coalition and Marshall Foundation has a resolution requesting the Task Force develop a Strategic Plan for the EAA and take on the request of the Palm Beach County Commission. He noted the Marshall Foundation's summer interns were in attendance and would also provide public comments.

Bob Cochran (Arthur R. Marshall Foundation) said the future of the EAA needs to be science based and sustainability is lacking in CERP. He referred to the recent CROGEE

report and the 1993 Science Subgroup report. The EAA is facing a growing list of problems and development is seen as the next step. The success and sustainability of CERP depends on what happens with the EAA and there is a lack of a clear plan for the area. He asked the Working Group to take this up with the Task Force in coordination with the SCG and come up with a comprehensive plan that is sustainable.

Salyna Dvorovy (Arthur R. Marshall Foundation) noted that the EAA is the missing link in the CERP footprint and there needs to be a study and long term plan for the future of the EAA. They would rather see agriculture stay rather than rooftops growing. She said the Task Force should be the driving force in the coordination and development of a plan for this area.

Drew Dietrich (Arthur R. Marshall Foundation) said he has noted several breakdowns in ecological policy as it relates to Everglades restoration. In the implementation of ecological policy something always seems to be either complex, zero sum, consequential or distorted. Four problems need to be addressed: construct an argument not an attack; walk the walk don't talk the talk; policy needs to reflect its original intent; and compromise is essential among all stakeholders noting that not everyone will be happy but through compromise policy makers can form a consistent policy and this is what they would like to see this for the EAA.

Christopher Patterson (Arthur R. Marshall Foundation) noted that CERP is based on the assumption that the EAA would remain in agriculture. A change in land use is taking place and this area plays a major role in the success of this plan. A recent CROGEE report recommended a re-evaluation of the EAA's future role. According to the Snyder Report organic soil is subsiding and land that is suitable for agriculture will decrease. They recognize the importance of the EAA from an ecologic and economic standpoint and their practices need to change. He requested the Working Group take this idea to the Task Force who should coordinate development of this plan.

John Arthur Marshall thanked the Working Group and noted mining is not an ad hoc issue and will go on for 50 years.

Meeting adjourned at 5:45 PM.

*Approved Meeting Minutes
South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Working Group
Coral Springs, Florida
July 21, 2006*

Welcome and Administrative Announcements

Meeting called to order and Peggy Kiser was recognized.

Executive Director's Update

Greg May announced that the CSOP Advisory Team completed their final consensus recommendations which were accepted by the Task Force and forwarded to the Army. He said this tailored approach for resolving conflict adopted by the Task Force in 2003 uses different approaches for different problems. He thanked the Chair and the team for their hard work. He reported that follow-on efforts to the Natural Lands Report are being developed for the Task Force. Ed Wright's presentation for example will provide an update on conservation easements. Finally he noted that WRDA 2000 required an independent review of CERP by a group like the National Academy of Sciences. A group called CISRERP has been formed to fulfill this requirement and their first report is due out in September.

CERP Update

Dennis Duke provided a presentation (Encl. 14) reviewing the overall program. Highlights included:

Selection of the TSP for the Lake Okeechobee Watershed project work is underway. The first contract for the rehabilitation of the Herbert Hoover Dike was suspended because of construction problems with the cut-off in the dike and they are working with the engineers. The contractor will commence work once problems have been worked out.

The ASR Pilot projects construction contract awarded for Lake Okeechobee sites and the Ground Breaking Ceremony was held. The C-43 site being modified and the SFWMD is constructing the Hillsboro site. Pilot projects will have a two year operational period and they will be looking at both injection and recovery rates. Those results will be applied to the Regional Study and extrapolated to consider 330 wells going into the ground.

The EAA PIR is underway and a TSP has been identified. Additional analysis is underway for the operating plan. One of the key challenges has been with the ability of the 2x2 model to incorporate a facility of that size. The Seminole Big Cypress Critical Project is underway and a new contract will be awarded in approximately one month.

The Indian River Lagoon PIR was transmitted to Congress and is included in both the House and Senate versions of WRDA. The draft legislation includes \$1.3 billion which has been adjusted for inflation. A dedication ceremony for the Ten Mile Creek project was held and start up operations are underway.

The ENP seepage management PIR is underway. The WCA Decomp Part 1, Damp Plan, an adaptive management plan, will be incorporated with physical models. The L-31 seepage pilot is underway.

The Guidance Memoranda (GM) have been completed with the exception of GM 4 dealing with the identification of water. They are currently working to finalize two remaining issues on the Comprehensive Water Quality Feasibility Study.

Hot issues included: The House version of the FY07 Budget reflected the Presidents Budget request with an increase due to Herbert Hoover Dike and Kissimmee. The Senate version deleted the \$35 million for Modified Water Deliveries which will affect the schedule. It also includes a reduction of \$10 million for Kissimmee which would delay the awarding of the third contract and a reduction from \$70 – 55 million for the C&SF project which will halt the planned construction for the C-111 and delay it for one year. This will also reduce RECOVER funds which will affect monitoring and base data collection as well as delay design for IRL-S. The Corps is currently using every dime it gets and any reduction will have a significant impact. A conference committee has not yet been scheduled.

Gene Duncan asked why the Corps doesn't take the position that after the 8.5 gets flood protection that they have delivered the flows to the extent practicable and declare it done and move on to Decomp adding Congress is not happy about the bridge. Dennis said that was not the message they got.

Acceler8 Update

Ken Ammon provided a presentation (Encl. 15) reviewing the progress made to date. The EAA A1 Reservoir, Phase I contract has been negotiated for the seepage canal on the outside of the levy. The Picayune Strand demolition contract was let. STAs 2, 5 and 6 are under construction as well as the Acme Basin B and the C-1 Canal and Pump Station. The C-43 and C-44 test cells are complete and monitoring is underway. The Site 1 Impoundment BODR is under public review. A total of \$100 million worth of work is underway with \$9.4 million completed.

Patti Webster asked about the status of the mitigation issue for the Broward County WPA. Ken said all the PIRs include an analysis of savings clause issues as well as water made available for the environment - the issue is with whether or not they are using the right methodology. The Pro Regs anticipated this problem and stated that until the GMs are finalized, the Corps and the SFWMD would use their best judgment to do the analysis. Once the GMs are completed they will go back and "true up" the analysis. Dennis Duke added there is an issue with existing mitigation banks and they are still working on that issue.

Craig Tepper asked about the planned height of the water and asked if there was a specific criteria being used. Ken said they have developed dam criteria and design criteria manuals. The most high profile and high risk reservoirs because of the proximity or depth and volume of water are C-43, C-44 and EAA. Dennis Duke added that

reservoirs classified as a high hazard structure mean there is no overtopping in any 10,000 plus year event. Otherwise it will be designed to fully contain rainfall.

Land Acquisition Strategy (LAS)

Theresa Woody reviewed the 2005 LAS (Encl. 16). She highlighted Appendix C which is a tracking matrix of all the projects that have a federal funding involvement. She noted that the Corps has authority to escalate costs based on OMB inflation factors and that would be reflected in the 2006 LAS. Lands that do not have a federal connection are found in Appendix D. All of the County programs that contribute to the land acquisition goals of the Task Force are found in Appendix E. A draft of the 2006 LAS will be provided in mid August. Greg May noted the document is available on the web and the next draft of the 2006 Strategy and Biennial Report will incorporate the updated land information. He recognized John Outland, Wanda Simpson and Joni Warner for their hard work. Joe Walsh noting the amount of information in the LAS asked whether the data layers could be provided to FDOT which would be useful. Wayne Daltry said this map represents a visual depiction of what they mean when they say “restore the Everglades” and reflects an enormous amount of commitment.

Restoration Challenges

Dennis Duke provided a presentation (Encl. 17) that reviewed the basin by basin challenges. Ken Ammon said the presentation would be provided to the Task Force in September since Carol Wehle requested this agenda item. The Task Force would then be asked to provide the Working Group with guidance on possible next steps.

Water Levels in WCA-3A and S-12D Maintenance

Paul Linton presented a presentation (Encl.18) and reported water levels are considerably lower than the prior year. He reviewed the water levels and noted that conditions are favorable for maintenance dredging. Contractors have completed the removal of exotic vegetation along the Tamiami Trail and have cleared the canal of obstructions. The notice to proceed will be contingent on water levels.

Preparation for Task Force Meeting

Wetlands Reserve Program

Ed Wright noted the purpose of the presentation (Encl. 19) was to provide an overview of the Wetland Reserve Program. He reviewed the program authority, operations, and the new appraisal procedure as well as the current status of the program in Florida. He noted they work closely with FWS and assist willing landowners restore wetlands that have had wetland functions reduced or eliminated by agricultural production practices. The NRCS will place enrollment priority on lands that will maximize wildlife values. The program’s main purpose is to provide habitat for migratory birds although water quality is a secondary benefit. Program barriers include the fact that the government does not share property title, funds obligated in one year cannot be used to fund applications in another year and unused money must be returned to HQ. Challenges include getting new applications into the system, seeking out new funding partners and exploring creative ways to fund new applications. There are 19,000 acres currently enrolled in the program in south Florida. Funding for this year was less than \$10 million and it was all obligated.

Paul Souza said he believed some of the acreage in the interior could be acquired for \$5,000 per acre and this could be an opportunity. The word needs to get out now to make this happen.

Biscayne Bay Access Plan

Amy Condon provided a presentation (Encl. 20) and noted the goal of the Access Plan which is to increase and improve public access to Biscayne Bay without hurting the resources. She reviewed the elements of the Access Plan, study boundaries and key recommendations.

Public Comment

Juanita Greene (Everglades Coalition) stated that for many years the Coalition has been trying to voice its concerns over the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) which is now under development pressure on its eastern boundary. There is general agreement among environmentalists that if the EAA is developed without a plan the chances for successfully restoring the Everglades will be greatly diminished. She asked that the Working Group develop a plan for the future of the EAA. She noted the Coalition had been everywhere else including Palm Beach County with no results. The Everglades Coalition passed a resolution and she hoped that if the WG can't develop the plan then perhaps the group could exert pressure so that it will be done by some entity that is qualified.

Joy Thomas (Nature Conservancy) suggested adding climate change to the restoration challenges. She stressed the importance of including all protected lands in the Natural Lands Report as well as the coastal lands on west coast. She asked that they continue to make this as comprehensive as possible. She requested they focus the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) efforts to make the most of the program adding that a series of wetlands north of Lake Okeechobee would be a good focus for the WRP. She reminded everyone that WRP is just one of many programs within USDA however they are hard to use together. Florida could benefit by thinking outside the box and pointed to CREP and WREP which are programs that allow different entities and programs to come together for a particular project. She urged the Task Force to consider how to focus federal efforts on these kinds of lands.

Open Discussion, Next Steps and Assignments

Wayne Daltry asked for an update on the EAA Study at the next meeting. Ken Ammon said the basic problem he has with land use is that they have no legal authority and land use decisions are up to the local governments. It would be difficult for the Task Force to take it up. The Board of County Commissioners in Palm Beach County heard the issue but did not take a stand one way or the other and the idea was forwarded up to DCA.

Meeting adjourned at 12:30 PM.

Enclosures:

1. Agenda
2. Meeting Minutes, April 2006

3. C-43 Alternative Formulation
4. Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands
5. Everglades Foundation Comments
6. C-111 Spreader Canal
7. Biscayne Bay Regional Restoration Coordination Team (BBRRCT) letter
8. ASR Contingency Plan and Water Storage Optimization
9. CERP Report to the Public
 - a. Power Point
 - b. Draft 2006 Report
10. Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule
11. Revised Guidance – Consultation and Coordination Power Point
12. Draft Strategic Plan and Biennial Report
13. SCG Briefing
14. CERP Update
15. Acceler8 Update
16. Land Acquisition Strategy
17. Restoration Challenges Power Point
18. Water Levels in Water Conservation Areas 3A and S-12 D Power Point
19. Wetlands Reserve Program Power Point
20. Biscayne Bay Access Plan Power Point