

*Approved Meeting Minutes
South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Working Group
Coral Springs Marriott
April 28 – 29, 2008*

Welcome and Introductions

Ken Ammon called meeting to order at 1:10 PM and reminded everyone that the meeting is being webcast. The final agenda (Encl. 1) was provided and the October meeting minutes (Encl. 2) were presented with approval scheduled for the end of the day.

Working Group Members

	April 28	April 29	Alternates Attending
Ken Ammon, Chair – South Florida Water Management District	√	√	
Dan Kimball, Vice Chair NPS - Everglades National Park & Dry Tortugas	√	√	
Stu Appelbaum - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	√	√	
Billy Causey – NOAA, FL Keys Nat'l Marine Sanctuary	-	-	
Bonnie Ponwith, NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Service		√	
Sheri Coven - Department of Community Affairs	-	-	
Bob Crim - FL Dept. of Transportation	-	-	
Wayne Daltry – Southwest FL Regional Planning Council	√	√	
Gene Duncan – Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of FL	√	√	
Joe Frank – Bureau of Indian Affairs	√	√	
Roman Gastesi, Local Government	√		
George Hadley – U.S. Dept of Transportation	-	-	
Veronica Harrell-James - U.S. Attorney's Office	√	√	
Eric Hughes – Environmental Protection Agency	√		
Greg Knecht - FL Dept of Environmental Protection	√	√	
Barry Rosen – United States Geological Survey	√	√	
W. Ray Scott - FL Dept of Agriculture and Consumer Services	-	√	
Paul Souza – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	√	√	
Jon Steverson, Office of the Governor of Florida	-	-	
Craig Tepper – Seminole Tribe of Florida	√	√	
Kenneth S. Todd – Palm Beach County Water Resources Manager			
Joe Walsh – Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission	√	√	
Rick Wilkins - Broward County Department of Natural Resource Protection	-	-	
Ed Wright – U.S. Department of Agriculture	-	-	Jeff Schmidt
Greg May, Special Advisor	√	√	
Science Coordination Group Members – 2nd day only			
Ken Haddad, Chair – Science Coordination Group	-	√	
Calvin Arnold, U.S. Department of Agriculture	-	√	
John Baldwin, Florida Atlantic University	-	√	
Ronnie Best, United States Geological Survey	-	√	
Bob Doren, Department of Interior	√	√	
Todd Hopkins, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	-	√	
Cherise Maples, Seminole Tribe of Florida	-	√	
Susan Markley, Department of Environmental Resource Management	-	√	
Bill Reck, U.S. Department of Agriculture	-	√	
Garth Redfield, South Florida Water Management District	-	√	
Debra Shafer, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	-	√	
Rock Salt, Department of Interior	√	√	

Whiparound

Dan Kimball reported the Miami Dade Climate Change Advisory Task Force presented thirty five recommendations to the County Commission and ten were related to the natural systems with the first recommendation supporting Everglades Restoration. The

County Commission accepted the report unanimously and the next step is implementation. He offered a copy of a report prepared by Everglades National Park and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission on the natural research area in Dry Tortugas. Stu Appelbaum announced that the Tamiami Trail Limited Re-evaluation Report is out for public comment until May 9th and the next 3,000 foot increment of the Herbert Hoover Dike project has been awarded with two more task orders remaining to be awarded. Roman Gastesi announced he was recently selected as the County Administrator for Monroe County but would continue to serve on the Working Group.

Paul Souza reported an increase in numbers of the Florida panther since genetic restoration efforts were initiated. A total of 117 panthers were reported last year representing the highest number ever recorded, however, more panthers are being killed along roads. Greg Knecht reported there were four days left in the Legislative session and the House and Senate would be in conference all weekend. Regardless of the outcome, they should be thankful of the funding given that many vital programs will be affected by budget cuts. There are still Florida Forever dollars and the Legislature is working to pass the ability to bond Everglades trust fund dollars until 2020. He said he would provide a summary once the budget is printed. Barry Rosen announced he will replace Jess Weaver on the Working Group. Joe Walsh said the Governor has mandated that all state agencies develop a Climate Change Strategic Plan and Chuck Collins is the organizing chair for a Conference that is scheduled for August in Orlando, FL.

Eric Hughes reported they are working closely with FDEP and they will try to release the TMDL for Lake Okeechobee tributaries in August 2008. Jeff Schmidt reported USDA is still working to get a Farm Bill and there is currently another continuing resolution. He noted that in the FY08 Farm Bill about \$8.5 million was allocated to Florida through the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) and 60% came to the Everglades Watershed area. He announced that Carlos Suarez is the new State Conservationist and is planning to attend the next Task Force meeting.

Wayne Daltry reported on the Density Reduction Groundwater Resource Area, an 83,000 acre area they are planning to maintain for its natural resources which will provide a big enough scale to look at what can be done. He reported on numerous other ongoing projects in Southwest Florida which including the SW Florida Feasibility Study which is seeing additional delays. Veronica Harrell-James reported they are moving forward on land condemnation cases. A new magistrate has been assigned to handle all the East Everglades land cases.

Greg May noted the new approach for WG and SCG meetings to include a joint meeting with both groups. He highlighted the new agenda format which is now more detailed. He reminded everyone that the next Task Force meeting will be in West Palm Beach on May 21 – 22.

Ken Ammon reported that the stakeholder briefings for the C-111 Spreader Canal continue and they are trying to come to semi consensus on the elements of the Expedited Project. He said the goal of the expedited project is provide the most benefits possible

with limited budgets. He said the SFWMD has been meeting with Corps' Headquarters on outstanding WRDA 07 issues including the pre-project credit agreement which is necessary for ongoing work. They are also discussing the land crediting issues noting that construction costs were increasing to the point of doubling and tripling compared with the original estimates. Because these costs would go to the federal side of the equation, the state would have to make up the difference in cash and it's not available. He noted that these issues were holding up the Broward County WPA study and the C-43 Reservoir Project.

Rock Salt reported that Sylvia Pelizza will be the new Project Leader in Loxahatchee, and Karen Gustin will be going to Washington State and Pedro Ramos will be Acting Superintendent at the Big Cypress. He recognized Bob Ashworth from FWS in Washington, DC who is on a leadership detail with the Office of the Executive Director. Paul Souza announced that Paul Tritaik has accepted the Refuge Manager position at Ding Darling.

Modified Water Deliveries/Tamiami Trail

Stu Appelbaum provided a Power Point presentation (Encl. 3) reviewing the project background, purpose and the features which have been completed to date. He reviewed the schedule for initiating construction and the project costs noting that real estate and construction costs are declining while costs for materials continue to escalate. He reviewed the screening criteria used to evaluate the 27 different alternatives including a no action alternative. They are still on track to transmit the report by July 1st.

Ken Ammon commended the Corps for switching from 8.0 to 8.5 feet adding that it will provide a lot more benefit. If it is a sustained stage he said he hopes the Corps makes sure that the final road elevation can hold up to that elevation as well as handle storm events. Stu Appelbaum said he would check the analysis and provide additional information. Paul Souza encouraged folks to engage in this effort and said he is excited about the process noting it promises to provide much needed relief in this part of the system.

Bob Doren asked where the water would come from to maintain 8.5 feet at a sustained level. Stu Appelbaum explained that they are trying to move more flow to the east rather than the west and there will be periods of time when there will be reduced flow because the system is drier but they will have the ability to move the water.

Bob Johnson added if you look at the headwater at S-12 water levels are above 9.5 feet for about 26 weeks and above 10 feet for about 12 weeks of the year. So they are talking about taking a portion of that water that is already there and moving it to the east, relieving conditions in 3A and reducing the amount of water going to the S-12s. Stu noted that MWD is mostly about redistribution while CERP is about increasing the amount of flow which means more conveyance and that is the essential difference between the two. Dan Kimball reported they will be starting the NEPA process for the swale project and the tentative date for the scoping process is May 28th.

Public Comment

Jacque Weisblum (Audubon of Florida) thanked Stu Appelbaum and the Corps for taking the time to meet with the environmental community. She added that while this is a step in the right direction, climate change and sea level rise projections demand they increase the freshwater flows through ENP into Florida Bay and Audubon of Florida is looking for formal commitment to additional restoration and prioritizing projects such as DECOMP to ensure that restoration happens in a timely manner in the face of climate change.

Consultation Briefing

Winsberg Farm Wetlands Restoration Draft PIR

Robert Medlock provided a Power Point presentation (Encl. 4) reviewing the project location, and authorization. Project objectives are: restore 150 acres of wetlands in Palm Beach County, increase the quantity of water in the natural system and increase the spatial extent of fish and wildlife habitat. He reviewed the Yellow Book components noting that Palm Beach County Water Utilities Department is the local sponsor. A total of 175 acres were purchased and 114 acres are to be hydrated using treated wastewater providing a constant inflow of water with levels fluctuating seasonally in response to rainfall. The project site includes a variety of emergent marsh, wet prairie and hardwood hammock habitats. The TSP control structures allow water to flow from Phase I to Phase II and re-circulate back into Phase I or into deep well injection during high rainfall events. In light of Hurricane Katrina an emergency spillway is planned for Phase II to meet Federal Dam safety requirements and project also capture a 100-year storm event without discharge into L-30 canal. He reviewed the current project status and the schedule noting the final PIR is scheduled to be completed by October 2008.

Greg May noted this project is scheduled for Task Force consultation at the May 2008 meeting. Paul Souza said they are looking at ways to use this project to measure benefits to resources such as migratory birds. Paul asked whether there were any pitfalls on the horizon. Robert Medlock replied the dam safety issue and some requirements for it to become a federal project since the county has constructed Phase I. Joe Walsh asked why the 50/50 could not be balanced across other tasks. Robert explained it is due to regulations noting that a lot of the imbalance is due to the boardwalk and although a great component for the public not a federal interest. Ken Ammon said they will find especially in the lower east coast of Florida, a much more widespread and intensive reuse of water. This tells us that reuse is a valuable tool and when they document these benefits they are grappling with how to ensure the water is going to be made available in perpetuity for that purpose. The WMD has rule-making authority on consumptive uses while the state has the authority to permit reuse but neither one has the ability to allocate at this point. It will be more and more important that once they identify areas that can be restored through reuse that they ensure that water can be continually used for that purpose. Rock Salt said they very much support this and are stymied as to how to sort this issue out. Ken Ammon added that the good news is that it is cheaper to put water here rather than to put in a deep well injection but there is nothing in place to restrict other users in the future such as a golf course who could pay for the reuse. Greg Knecht

said they have not looked at wastewater as a commodity and Ken Ammon added this is something to definitely think about for the future.

L-31 N (L30) Seepage Management Pilot Project Draft Report

Tiphannie Jinks provided a Power Point presentation (Encl. 5) reviewing the project purpose as envisioned in the Yellow Book which includes the primary purpose of investigating seepage management technologies to control seepage from Everglades National Park. The current project purpose is consistent with the Yellow Book and has been updated to include critical uncertainties associated with technologies that will likely be considered to control seepage from ENP and WCA 3B. Uncertainties include the reliability of materials and technology. She reviewed the selected Alternative Plan which includes a slurry wall and sheet pile which allows them to test the constructability and reliability of two structural technologies and extraction and injection wells which allow them to test the non-structural means of controlling seepage. She showed a side by side comparison of the Yellow Book and current costs and noted total project cost is estimated \$15.2 million.

Gene Duncan asked what would happen with the wetlands to the south if the seepage management system works. Tiphannie noted that entire area is one and a quarter mile and the modeling shows the water will come around the wall and they plan to monitor the seepage flow and information obtained from the pilot will be used for the full scale implementation. Tiphannie said they have a contract out to perform the drawdown tests to ensure the conductivity values are what they actually see in the field. Roman Gastesi asked whether this would be on the Task Force agenda. Greg confirmed that it is scheduled for consultation. Paul Souza noted the construction costs are lower than the costs in the Yellow Book. Tiphannie noted the Yellow Book assumed a cut-off wall and wells and they are proposing a slurry and sheet pile wall and injection wells. Rock Salt noted the group is supportive of both these projects presented.

C-111 Spreader Canal PIR Alternative Formulation Briefing

Michael Collis provided a Power Point presentation (Encl. 6) reviewing the project location and purpose and he reminded the group the project has been split into two PIRs to fully address restoration. The western PIR includes improving water deliveries to Florida Bay via Taylor Slough and reducing ecologically damaging flows. The Western PIR will be developed first and will address critical decision uncertainties through design tests. He reviewed the process used to screen the alternatives and the noted Alternative 2D has been selected as the Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP). Alternative 2D was considered to be both cost effective and the best buy. A draft PIR will be published in the federal register in September 2008. Greg May said the Working Group will report the results of this consultation to the Task Force and he suggested they have a short conversation as to how to best report back to the Task Force on this and future Working Group consultations.

Craig Tepper asked which protocol was used to calculate habitat units. Michael noted there were numerous performance measures and he offered to provide them in detail. Bob Doren, referring to the groundwater benefits maps, asked how a 1-mile spreader

canal adds benefits to this entire basin. Michael explained the changes in hydropattern are based on the Frog Pond Detention Area, Aeroject Canal and the plugs in the lower C-111 and the design spreader feature benefits are not detailed in the maps provided because it was not necessary for the document at the time. Ken Ammon noted this will be the first major test of the NAS Incremental Adaptive Restoration recommendation and a lot of things are being built into this. Bob Doren noted they don't need to do the Spreader Canal to get these benefits. Michael Collis said this is something they need to look at.

Eric Hughes asked about the source control for the buffer area in Loveland Slough and wondered if they are stopping agricultural practices for some period of time. Michael Collis said that they may pay the farmers not to farm through some type of subsidy so that they will be able to watch what is happening. Ken Ammon added they are looking at other options versus a subsidy. He hoped they do not have to pay them and will request they give them a buffer area.

Paul Souza asked whether there have been significant changes over the past three to six months. Michael Collis said there had been none since the past October. Rock Salt noted they have been open to making it wetter while smartly working their way through the Cape Sable Seaside Sparrow issues.

Public Comment

None

Expedited C-111 Spreader Canal Project

Dewey Worth provided a Power Point presentation (Encl. 7) reviewing the expedited effort. They are trying to further refine design elements associated with Alternative 2D, the TSP, noting they are not re-formulating or trying to re-design the project. They have gone out through a stakeholder process to reach out to everyone attempting to define what the sidebars would be and evaluate proposed design refinements. He noted there are some components with this project that overlap with the Spreader Canal project. They are looking at how to best manage those overlap areas. They will be prioritizing the needed refinements in areas such as pump sizes and pump locations and are hoping to complete the pump capacity and location issue by June 2008 in order to meet the construction schedule. Funding of the Expedited C-111 SC Project has been capped and limited to \$70 million including pilot project tests. They are proposing to do as much of the pilot as they can and are expecting the PIR to provide the necessary 404 permit conditions that will enable them to move forward with their construction schedule. The WMD will provide the majority of the design elements with the normal requirements of the PIR and they expect to have all the design documents ready and the final draft PIR in May 2009. Based on current schedules they expect to see the 404 design document in August 2009 and a Groundbreaking Ceremony in September 2009 with construction completed in August 2011.

Dan Kimball asked about the sensitivity runs. Dewey Worth noted that Aerojet is where they will be looking based on the model runs. Bob Doren said he is assuming that it is

just to keep head and prevent too much water from going out of Everglades National Park. Dewey noted that it extends almost down to the same area as the S-18C canal and provides a good opportunity to utilize an existing feature in the landscape. Bob Doren added they would lose a lot less water and a lot less pumping would be required. Dewey Worth said they think they have elements to build a win-win all the way around and with some tweaking they can protect the sparrows and other sensitive wetlands. Ken Ammon noted that due to some delays this project would go to the WRAC after the Task Force meeting.

Public Comment

Jacqui Weisblum (Audubon of Florida) said they are grateful to the SFWMD for expediting this project. Audubon advocates restored flows to Taylor Slough and ask that they be at the higher end of the range. She provided two handouts, the first is an Everglades Florida Bay Fact Sheet (Enclosure 8) highlighting the issues facing Florida Bay and the second is a Florida Naturalist article (Enclosure 9).

Consultation Schedule

Brian Files provided a Power Point (Encl. 10) reviewing the tentative schedule for the upcoming Task Force and Working Group meetings.

Ken Ammon reviewed the results of the Consultation Workshop which will be reported to the Task Force at its May meeting. He noted that on Winsberg Farm there was a suggestion that they pay close attention to measuring the wildlife and habitat benefits of this project and recognize there may be regulatory limitations that need to be addressed by the state. There was general support for the project. He noted that for the L-31 North Seepage Management Pilot there were comments relating to protection of wetlands when implemented and also protection of wellfields which will be done as part of the savings clause. A third issue may be related to cost. Rock Salt noted that Gene Duncan raised the issue of wetlands east of the levee and drying out of wetlands. Ken noted that on the C-111 Spreader Canal Alternative Formulation Briefing there was a question about habitat unit calculations and how they were calculated. Paul Souza said he has heard a lot of good things about the public meetings and bringing stakeholders into the process. The C-111 is the best case for an incremental adaptive restoration approach and it lends itself to them lending as much flexibility as they can so that they can test and monitor as they move to the broader effort in order to maximize benefits. Ken added that with the C-111 there is an Incremental Adaptive Restoration (IAR) issue and Loveland Slough water quality issue and the concern that they do not transfer contamination from soils downstream into Florida Bay. How they work with individual landowners will be important. On the expedited project they talked about wetland impacts versus Taylor Slough restoration and at some point there will be trade-offs noting the modeling efforts are not finished and they will try to minimize impacts. The information from this project needs to be brought into subsequent planning efforts. He also heard a general statement about conserving water in the C-111 system and keeping water higher.

Strategic Coordination and Documentation for 2008

Greg May provided a Power Point presentation (Encl. 11) reviewing the purpose as well as a status update on each of the reports which are to be updated in 2008. He provided an in depth overview of the Strategy and the changes which will be incorporated into the 2008 document. He emphasized that this is an opportunity to not only report what's happened over the last two years but to also think about how our individual contributions relate to the bigger picture. He reviewed the proposed schedule noting that a draft will be provided in late June prior to the July Working Group meeting. The intent will be to concentrate on philosophical issues or differences.

General Public Comment

None

Administrative Items

Wayne Daltry made a motion to approve the October meeting minutes which was seconded by Paul Souza and the minutes were approved. Ken Ammon reviewed the upcoming C-111 stakeholder meetings: workshop scheduled for May 7; May 23 WRAC Issues Workshop in West Palm Beach; June 17 WRAC Issues Workshop in Homestead.

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 PM.

*Approved Joint Meeting Minutes
South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Working Group
and Science Coordination Group
Coral Springs Marriott
April 29, 2008*

Welcome and Introductions

Ken Ammon and Ken Haddad called the joint meeting to order at 8:40 AM. Garth Redfield was introduced as the new SCG member representing the SFWMD now that John Ogden is working for Audubon. Greg Knecht reported the budget was finalized and the Legislature has provided \$50 million that can be used for CERP and Northern Everglades. Barry Rosen reported USGS has recently funded an effort to understand the baseline conditions of carbon dioxide in the waters of Florida and how it may affect the calcifying organisms such as corals. This climate change effort is in addition to the sea level rise work that is ongoing. Ronnie Best reviewed the proposed topics planned for the GEER Conference being planned for the end of July.

Integrated Delivery Schedule (IDS)

Stu Appelbaum provided a Power Point presentation (Encl. 12) providing a preview of what will be provided to the Task Force at its May meeting. He reviewed the initial IDS Workshop held at the February Task Force meeting which addressed Guiding Principles, the Project Matrix and discussed issues, concerns and priorities. A lot of information was gleaned from the February Workshop and the team has revised the Guiding Principles. He provided an in depth review of the Project Matrix noting it uses a colored band concept representing various commitments. He noted the list is extensive but not exhaustive and efforts such as the Herbert Hoover Dike rehabilitation is not on the matrix since it is funded separately under the flood damage reduction category. He noted that the ball park estimate on all the outstanding commitments total approximately \$1.9 billion federal and \$1.8 billion non federal. Questions remain as to whether they should “finish what’s on our plate”, fund fewer projects versus spreading funds over more projects at a slower rate or develop other approaches such as a hybrid or two tiered approach. The Task Force was leaning towards a hybrid approach and suggested using a \$200 million and \$300 million funding scenario. He reviewed the planning, design and annual costs for FY 09 to include \$64 million in program costs. Stu reviewed the Splash Charts and emphasized that this is a work in progress. He noted they used the Guiding Principles as a way to organize the projects recognizing the commitments. Team was concerned that everyone understood this is a preliminary draft. He reviewed the two Splash Charts at the \$200 million and \$300 million funding scenarios. Stu Appelbaum clarified the \$300 million schedule’s intent is to use the first \$200 million towards the backlog and to use the remainder of the money nibble at the white band. There is a conscious effort to work on the green colored band followed by the blue band projects.

Rock Salt asked if the cost share issue has been worked out. Ken Ammon said they are comfortable with the sequence and cautioned that there is a danger that everyone expects this to be static when in fact it will need to be reviewed given financial constraints. Stu said that they will need to ground truth what they have laid out in several months once

they know what the funding will be. Rock Salt noted they need to have the mechanism to credit the state for the contributions they have already made. Ken Ammon said they are looking at a pre-project credit agreement for 2007, legislative agreements and Partnership Agreements but he agreed they could very easily be in a situation where they move ahead with zero crediting and depending on the sequence may have to come up with cash out of pocket. Stu added they need more of a programmatic effort and are looking at a Master Partnership Agreement.

Paul Souza applauded this effort and suggested they think about how to move up Phase I of DECOMP. He also suggested they think about how they bring the WRAC discussions into this forum and that they create a mechanism to discuss this over time. Stu Appelbaum explained that DECOMP is not authorized and it is partially dependent on other projects in the system. There is a certain amount of storage and seepage management needed to make DECOMP effective. Gene Duncan noted his disappointment that the Everglades is not even on the \$200 million scenario. He said he was astonished to learn that it costs \$64 million to maintain the program. Rock Salt noted that this figure includes design and construction costs for pilot projects as well as monitoring and assessment costs. Joe Walsh noted there are communities at risk of losing their economic engines if we do not do some of these projects. Port Salerno is dependent on marine fisheries and the IRL is the project that is supposed to revitalize the industry along with the Lake Okeechobee watershed. He urged everyone to remember that there are people whose livelihood depends on some of these projects being done. Bob Doren suggested they revamp the planning process to make it more efficient noting that it takes five to six years to release bugs to control exotics.

Stu said the Programmatic Regulations (pro regs) will be reviewed this year and there will be an opportunity to look at the process and determine what can be streamlined or eliminated. Ken Ammon noted that no one at the table believes the current planning process is efficient and he suggested they could schedule something for this joint group to discuss and get some significant expert input as to how the process could be improved. He pointed to modeling as a great example noting the tremendous amount of time they take to develop. Stu said they will kick off the pro regs effort in the next few months and the federal register notice/scoping request letting folks know this effort is underway. Ronnie Best added that someone needs to look out on behalf of the wading birds, tree frogs, etc. adding it is not their livelihood but their lives. If they are going to restore the natural system they need to start on DECOMP immediately and they need to recognize that sea level rise is a reality in south Florida. The only way to offset the rate at which salt water intrudes is by building more land and restoring the freshwater.

Craig Tepper suggested they inform the Task Force of their concerns and make a strong plea to start this process as soon as possible and formally made a motion to take their concerns over the planning process to the Task Force. Rock Salt seconded motion. Susan Markley said she agreed the delays are resulting in increased construction and fuel costs. The existing PDT process does not deal well with uncertainties or trying to break projects down into phases because the tools don't recognize restoration benefits since the benefits are dependent on linking of all of them together. She suggested they figure out a

process on how to address uncertainties and further suggested they include people who are experienced with the PDT process. Gene Duncan said they heard about a project the prior day that will take waste water to restore wetlands and asked where it will discharge noting it is meant to be a no discharge facility. It does not contribute to Everglades restoration as a stand alone project but yet it is in the blue band and although it may be important they are re-hydrating with waste water. He said he wonders who sets the priorities and determines what gets done first. **Craig Tepper's motion carries, none opposed.** Ken Ammon said the take away message is that there are some projects or priorities in the heart of the Everglades such as DECOMP that should be moved up.

Assessing and Communicating System-wide Indicators

Bob Doren provided a Power Point presentation (Encl. 13) and noted the Task Force will report on the status of the system-wide indicators included in the 2006 Strategy for the first time in the 2008 Biennial Report. The purpose of the briefing is to review the approach approved by the Task Force. He reviewed the process used to evaluate and select the indicators which were presented to the Task Force in 2006. He reviewed how they need to communicate these indicators noting it includes having scientific consensus on ecosystem structure and function. He reviewed the Restoration Spotlight Report Card as an example of a tool that will be used to communicate to the Task Force and Congress. The first draft of the Science Indicator Report is planned for May/June 2008 and it will be incorporated into the Task Force's Biennial Report in July and presented to the Task Force in September 2008.

Florida Invasive Animal Task Team (FIATT) Update

Art Roybal provided a Power Point (Encl. 14) reviewing the original guidance given to the team noting they were tasked with coming up with a comprehensive assessment of the status of invasive exotic animals in south Florida as well as a comprehensive strategy for management of the priority species. He highlighted some of the problematic non-native species in south Florida which include 19 mammal species, 11 bird species and 46 reptile species. The python is of special concern because of its predatory nature and possible disease transmission to native species. There is indication the python could spread outside of Florida if they work their way north. Bob Doren noted that the distribution level could change quickly because people release animals. Wayne Daltry said he moves that a course of action be undertaken to support the team. Greg May said he did not see a problem with Art and the team further developing this information but additional discussion may be needed on the initial guidance to FIATT. He suggested they may need to have a clear delineation of the role of FIATT versus the roles of the agencies.

Gene Duncan said he would like us to engage the public adding that if they make it worth people's time to kill these species, people would respond to this. Bob Doren stated that this is a very complex and political problem and the cheapest way to eradicate these species is to have them never to come here. They need to worry about this as a suite of problems not just a python issue. Joe Walsh asked if the Ecosystems data base is a south Florida based tracking system or national. Bob Doren said it is Florida based and tracks whom is doing what, where and how much it is costing. Greg May referred to the original FIATT guidance and asked whether the team had completed that list of tasks.

Art said they wanted to take elements of the Weeds Won't Wait relating to public awareness and education which could be adapted for animals and it would not take the team very long to do this. Bob Doren said this action could help answer the last question on his next steps slide. Ken Ammon said they could have an integrated strategy noting there are many agencies working on this. They need to have everything documented in one place and suggested it include the total list of invasive species and those that are a priority for control and capture as well as the criteria used to consider a species a priority. Wayne Daltry noted there are several local efforts that are currently ongoing and stressed the importance of getting the locals engaged early on. Paul Souza said it is a great idea to develop a 'Weeds Can't Wait' type of document and recommended they make a presentation at the next Task Force meeting and create a mechanism to engage local governments after the document is in place. Gene Duncan added that putting a bounty on these critters' head should be added to the list. Bob Doren said anytime you have a profit motive you will have other problems. Only the FWS can prevent things from entering the country and prevention is the key. They need to make sure that they let the Task Force know they are only able to do so much and that at a certain level it will take influence and politics. Canada, Australia and New Zealand are doing this successfully and have high exclusion rates.

Biscayne Bay Regional Restoration Coordination Team Membership

Evan Skornick provided a Power Point (Encl. 15) reviewing the member list. He noted the purpose is to make the team more manageable. The team is seeking Working Group approval of the stakeholder groups which included four voting environmental members, two non-voting environmental members and five business/user stakeholder groups. Barry Rosen made a motion to approve the stakeholder groups which was seconded by Greg Knecht. The motion passed unanimously.

Next Steps and Closing Comments

Ken Haddad noted the exotic animal issue is a big issue noting funding is essential for rapid response. He recognized the tremendous amount of integration between the Working Group and Science Coordination Group and thanked everyone for their participation.

Meeting adjourned at 12:30 PM.

Enclosures:

1. Agenda
2. Draft Meeting Minutes, October 2007
3. Modified Water Deliveries (MWD) / Tamiami Trail Power Point
4. Winsberg Farm Wetlands Restoration
 - a. Power Point
 - b. DRAFT PIR
5. L-31 N (L30) Seepage Management Power Point
6. C-111 Spreader Canal Power Point
7. Expedited C-111 Spreader Canal Power Point
8. Everglades Florida Bay Fact Sheet

9. Florida Naturalist article
10. Consultation Schedule Power Point
11. Strategic Coordination and Documentation Power Point
12. Integrated Delivery Schedule
 - a. Power Point
 - b. Guiding Principles
 - c. Project Matrix
 - d. Sample Splash Chart
13. System-wide Indicators Power Point
14. FIATT Power Point
15. Biscayne Bay RRCT Power Point