Approved Minutes
South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Working Group Meeting
Naples, Florida
July 14, 2010

Opening Remarks and Introductions

Greg Knecht called meeting called to order at 10:10 am and reviewed the agenda (Encl. 1). Greg Knecht noted Dan Kimball has been pulled away to deal with the oil spill at the Command Center, and said that hopeful things will return to normal soon. Joe Walsh said it was great to have one of Florida's largest landowners present at the meeting. Stacy Foster, Florida Power and Light, was recognized.

Working Group Members in Attendance:

Greg Knecht, Vice Chair, Florida Dept of Environmental Protection
Veronica Harrell-James, U.S. Attorney's Office
Eric Hughes, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Barry Rosen, U.S. Geological Survey
Paul Souza, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Craig Tepper, Seminole Tribe of Florida
Dave Tipple for Col Pantano, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Joe Walsh, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation
Ed Wright, U.S. Department of Agriculture
Greg May, Special Advisor

Science Coordination Group Members in Attendance:

Susan Markley, Acting Chair, Miami Dade County
Todd Hopkins, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Bob Johnson, Everglades National Park
Bill Reck, Natural Resources Conservation Service

2010 Task Force Reporting Requirements

Greg May noted this meeting is a departure from the regular meeting format and more of a workshop to specifically go over the Biennial Report and Strategy for this year which are being combined and streamlined. The Task Force will vote to approve this report later in the year and then it will be sent to Congress, the Florida Legislature and the two Tribes. Ultimately the goal is to develop one report that addresses the Strategy, Biennial Report, Land Acquisition Strategy, and the Plan for Coordinating Science in one concise document that people on the Hill, in Tallahassee and on the Tribal leadership councils can quickly read while providing links to more detailed information. But as of now only the Strategy and Biennial Report have been combined. The approach today is to have Allyn Childress go through the draft document with

the group to make sure the most important points have been addressed and communicated in plain language.

Joe Walsh asked whether there will be a larger report. Greg May said that the traditional Biennial Report would be available online but that the combined and streamlined document is the report they will seek approval from the Task Force. Greg Knecht agreed they need to deliver a concise document to the Florida Legislature that conveys the message and delivers it in a way that will be read.

Allyn Childress noted the Strategy was originally developed anticipating restoration and lays out how they are going to get there and the Biennial Report reports on progress and activities every two years. She reviewed the draft (Encl. 2) explaining that there are placeholders for photos and graphics since they want to make sure they have the correct message and are open to suggestions.

Page 5 – currently a placeholder for the Executive Summary

Page 6 – Why Restoration – this text is working from existing document to start off. Greg May added that people would make up their minds on how much to read in the first paragraph or two so the intent is to balance how much background needs to be provided. Joe Walsh said audience needs to be expanded to include the state because he finds himself trying to convince staff to contribute to Task Force reports and that it will be time well spent. Greg May said that gets to the message that Everglades restoration is so important and challenging that no single agency can do it on their own and they have to work together to achieve their objectives and be successful. Joe Walsh noted there needs to be some pressure on the state and possibly pushed back to the Task Force that there is a challenge for the state players. Ed Wright said he would like to do the same for USDA noting the Everglades is not listed on all the Farm Bills. Greg May suggested dealing with this through providing track changes feedback. Greg May said they want to strive to communicate what is an ecosystem and intergovernmental approach. The challenges are so large and complex that they need to work together to achieve their goals. They are looking for any sharp recommendations to improve that message and the report in general. Patrick Hayes said the state's participation needs to be brought up adding it is important to let Congress know about the significant local government sponsorship and that this is being supported at the grass roots level. Greg Knecht said that if he is going to give something to the Governor and legislature, he wants them to say wow we need to be committed to Everglades restoration and not just the federal government that needs to do this. They have done a lot with WRDA and the legislature and there are a lot of new members that know very little about Everglades restoration. They need to explain why it is important. Joe Walsh said the vision has been communicated as a federal vision that the state is a party to and it is extremely difficult to keep state staff committed to the vision. Greg May asked for Joe

Walsh to help with the wording so they can communicate the necessity of a state-federal partnership.

Paul Souza applauded the work that has been done on this report adding that it is clear and obvious that a lot of work has gone into this. He liked the idea of focusing on the successes and re-emphasizing what has been done. He suggested they let them know what they will need from them over the next 12 months. Projects like Picayune Strand and the resources necessary to continue, new starts and possibly a WRDA 2011. Greg May said that could be in the closing paragraph of the Executive Summary and as well as in the document. Allyn suggested they could include it in the cover letter. Greg May agreed that the transmittal letter is yet another opportunity to have more messages.

Page 8 – Greg noted the important thing that they need to get across is not that there is a Task Force but why intergovernmental coordination is so important. It is important because of the way they are doing restoration in south Florida. It is literally hundreds of local, state, federal and tribal projects that are being planned and implemented within their own authorities and budgets. They need to have a long term process to integrate new information as it becomes available and address new challenges over time. This framework for restoration consists of strategic goals and ecological indicators that provide a feedback loop.

Paul Souza suggested they broaden the audience for this document and why this is important for many members of congress, provide a nexus to other efforts such as coastal Louisiana. Craig Tepper suggested they move the mission and vision up front and sell the message and challenge the reader. Greg Knecht said the Legislature will make some tough decisions but when people are asked whether they want a local library in north Florida versus Everglades restoration then they need to sell the message. Craig Tepper said he would like to see flexibility in the processes and science through adaptive management, reduction in bureaucratic paralysis and groundwater replenishment is needed to support the surface water flows and control and eradication of invasive exotics. There is room for wildlife and the state's programs, all equally important. Wayne Daltry noted that the tools and the ability to take the vision and know how it applies to 'your' part of the picture, bureaucratic paralysis, progress such as the River of Grass, adaptive assessment and political feedback as well as land acquisition should be shown, possibly a visual progress picture in the document. Allyn Childress asked for specific edits and said the vision would be moved further up front.

Pages 10 – 11 – Greg May noted that for each of the strategic goals the approach is to have a quick outline of the strategy and report the progress over the two years without duplicating or repeating. Allyn explained that for each subgoal area they have measurable objectives that vary in number. Bob Johnson said they are much more explicit on acres of surface water, reservoirs and alternative water sources and these numbers are the original restudy numbers.

There are specific numbers on locations and potential volumes of benefits for seepage management. It is valuable to talk about where they have projects in the Restudy process where seepage management is planned, where pilots are starting and something about what they think the volumetric benefits are because it helps people understand they are not going to stack all this water up in the Everglades and get to seepage management later. He suggested getting a little more technical on seepage management. He said he could work with the Corps to develop something more numeric since there should be an objective that talks about a volume of water they want to retain. Joe Walsh commented that on operational changes, they have made some accomplishments with the Lake Okeechobee water management schedule and that should be noted. Dave Tipple asked if there would be a section to capture the cumulative things that have been done in certain areas. Greg May clarified the goal for the Biennial Report where possible is to report for the objectives not only what has happened over the last two years but what has been accomplished to date in total.

Susan Markley noted the Miami Dade leadership that attends the Task Force is interested in assurance that the existing level of flood protection is maintained and suggested that issue should be addressed in the same section of the report where there is discussion of other aspects of water flow or volume. Miami Dade County is also an advocate of ecosystem restoration and they have wellfield re-charge issues they are concerned about and have their own competing goals. Susan noted that there are projects that provide multiple goals and that should be reflected either in a summary document or transmittal letter. Greg May said the Integrated Financial Plan (IFP) summary table identifies where projects contribute to multiple goals. Joe Walsh suggested having embedded links both online and in the hard copy.

Paul Souza said he liked the idea of infusing this document with 'what's new', 'what's hot' which he thinks will resonate with Congress. He also suggested they include a short discussion on climate change because they still get the question of why should we restore the Everglades in the face of sea level rise. Using the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) statement about how important restoration is in the face of climate change is powerful. There is legislation being considered in both the House and Senate on pythons and that issue should be addressed in the document. There is a huge effort underway to look for potential restoration efforts in the Gulf of Mexico and there are numerous projects such as the C-43 Reservoir, Lake Okeechobee and the SW Florida Feasibility Study and a model in place that could have a tie-in if resources do come. Barry Rosen agreed and said he had to turn to page 36 to see something on climate change and sea level rise and that should be addressed up front. Greg May agreed that is something that could be in the Executive Summary.

Page 13 - Allyn explained they are working to flesh out the status column. Patrick Hayes suggested they need to let people know what progress has been made. Dave Tipple said maybe

this is where they should show the cumulative progress. Greg Knecht said there is too much information. Allyn said she will work on simplifying the message. Greg May suggested using standard phrases/bullets for several categories of status to help the reader categorize and lump things rather than having a different description for every project.

Allyn said they have reviewed an entire sub-goal and the other sub-goals have similar a similar pattern. Greg May emphasized that the members have a feel for what types of information will be repeated for each of the goals, sub-goals and objectives. He noted the importance for everyone to provide their suggested edits to Allyn and Marsha Bansee.

Page 14 – Eric Hughes noted they are drawing attention to the Comprehensive Integrated Water Quality Feasibility Study (CIWQFS) and he suggested they consider replacing that. They are talking about the Tribe's approval of the tribal water quality standards. The state of Florida has gone through that process which is a significant issue. They might consider replacing that, if everyone is comfortable. Objective B-1 is good, talking about 96,000 acres of STAs but he asked whether they want to have a table that gives an explanation of how they get to 96,000 acres. Make it easier for the reader to figure out where the number comes from. Greg Knecht said he would have said that right now there are 60,000 acres in the EAA that are under construction. Greg Knecht added "what do I need to do and what is the distance to the goal line'.

Susan Markley said she thought this section needed the most re-focus from a strategy perspective. Water quality is a huge issue with a lot of uncertainty. They need to acknowledge that issue in a way that is different from past reports. A lot of progress has been made and a lot more needs to be done. It is currently missing some really strategic issues. Bob Johnson stated the numeric nutrient criteria (NNC) process is playing through and it is hard to ignore it in the document. The state will have to deal with it one way or another. They should mention it in a paragraph and in the future reports talk about potential new requirements. Greg May suggested, on the CIWQFS, that rather than dropping it address the underlying interest of the feasibility study. Greg Knecht said that they could say that it is no longer necessary because of the TMDL program, nutrient numeric criteria rather than deleting it.

Bill Reck suggested they add something on the BMPs such as the state and federal cost share programs. Paul Souza agreed and said they may want to talk about the Farm and Ranchlands Environmental Services Project (FRESP). Ed Wright said he would contact Ray Scott and provide some language.

Page 23 – Bill Reck suggested they add NRCS to objective 3.a.3. Craig Tepper noted the Seminole Tribe's concern with the Lake Okeechobee adaptive management for the regulation schedule adding that it affects flood control and water supply plans and could be added under either of those subgoals. Susan Gray would be a good person to contact about this.

Page 30 - Allyn noted they are going to include the ecological indicators stoplight report card and they currently have an excerpt. They start out by describing the process and the value of the system-wide indicators. Actual document will be longer since it will have all 11 indicators.

Page 33 – is an excerpt from the science report. Craig Tepper suggested explaining what it is in the document and linking the information to the web since it will make the report longer. Barry Rosen agreed. Patrick Hayes said they have been trying to have the dialogue include the coastal estuaries and there need to be more indicators for the estuaries. Greg May noted that oysters turned out to be a great indicator for estuaries and were one of the system-wide ecological indicators. He noted that the system-wide indicators are an elegant handful of indicators that represent the health of the entire ecosystem and that they had been independently and peer reviewed.

Bob Johnson said that in looking at the table for Shark River Slough and Taylor Slough it is hard not to notice the non-native fish. The park went from 8 to 16 non native fish in the freshwater marshes in a short period of time which is a consequence of restoration and he suggested that they explain why.

Page 34 - Allyn noted this is the legislative updates section and also where the ARRA funding is reflected. Greg May agreed this is probably not very comprehensive with the federal, state and tribal dollars. Bob Johnson added they don't even mention anything for the built environment. Greg Knecht said there are SRF dollars that came in, as an example.

Pages 35 - 36 – Allyn noted this is a condensed story of what is going on with CERP and acknowledged the message may have been lost and asked for feedback on this. Patrick Hayes said this has been a monumental activity that they have been engaged in. Greg May clarified that in the past they have highlighted CERP contributions and this is their attempt to do it in a streamlined and combined fashion. Dave Tipple suggested referencing the Five-year Report to Congress and the Report to Public with links to the sites. Greg Knecht agreed they do not need to say the same thing in every report and refer them to the other reports. Bob Johnson reminded the group that the interim goals, adaptive management and monitoring assessment are the same tools that are used to evaluate all the pre-CERP projects and there are a lot of non-CERP projects that have been implemented. The foundation projects have to get done first and they should not undermine it by saying no CERP projects have been done and suggested saying what has been done to include what has been done with seepage management. Paul Souza said it would be timely to reference Tamiami Trail 2.

Pages 37 – 39 – Task Force activities - Greg May recommended they include this in the detailed Biennial Report.

Public Comment

John Arthur Marshall (ARM Foundation) provided a handout (Encl. 3) said the Costanza Report is important and if you are comfortable with the report then you would be an advocate for Ecosystem Services Valuation. They are finally getting attention and he along with Rock Salt and Ronnie Best have scheduled a GEER breakout session the following day at noon. Guest speaker will be Richard Weisskof who wrote the book. The Costanza report is one of the greatest ecological synthesis that have ever been made. Their summer interns have done a poster paper on valuing ecosystem services for restoring the River of Grass. He encouraged the members to attend the breakout session and view the poster paper. Another thing that would make this a good decision support tool is once you do the total economic value of restoring an ecosystem and you get to the economic benefit in terms of big dollars and you relate that to the cost and the terms of a benefit to cost ratio, that in effect is the ultimate optimization tool because the more benefit you have at least cost the more optimum your approach. With optimum being defined as maximizing benefits at least cost long-term. They hope to get some of those concepts across during the conference.

Regular WG Business

Greg May provided the members with a letter from the Biscayne Bay Regional Restoration Coordination Team (BBRRCT) (Encl. 4) and due to the limited time encouraged everyone to read it for future discussion. Bob Johnson provided a handout (Encl. 5) that summarized the three ongoing science synthesis efforts in south Florida as well as the River of Grass (ROG) which integrates a lot of those efforts. The 2010 Shared Definition of Everglades Restoration session is scheduled from 1:30 – 3:00 and the Synthesis of Everglades Restoration and Ecosystem Services (SERES) session is scheduled from 3:30 – 5:00. The members were asked to participate in these two sessions and discuss it when they reconvene in the evening.

Meeting adjourned at 12:03PM.

Meeting reconvened at 5:08 PM

Working Group Members in Attendance:
Greg Knecht, Vice Chair, Florida Dept of Environmental Protection
Veronica Harrell-James, U.S. Attorney's Office
Eric Hughes, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Barry Rosen, U.S. Geological Survey
Paul Souza, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Dave Tipple for Col Pantano, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Joe Walsh, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation
Ed Wright, U.S. Department of Agriculture
Greg May, Special Advisor
Science Coordination Group Members in Attendance:
Susan Markley, Acting Chair, Miami Dade County
Lisa Beever, Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program
Joan Browder, NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Service
Todd Hopkins, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Bob Johnson, Everglades National Park
Chris Kelble, NOAA, AOML
Bill Reck, *U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Task Force Assignments
Greg May reviewed the follow-on actions from the June 24th Task Force mtg.

Lake Okeechobee – He noted that COL Pantano has been attending a lot of public meetings regarding concerns over releases from Lake Okeechobee into the northern estuaries. At the Task Force meeting COL Pantano suggested they hold a Lake Okeechobee Summit to try and address these issues. Tom Strickland asked Greg May and Don Jodrey to bring some recommendations to the next Task Force meeting. Greg May asked the members who had suggestions to see him.

WG and SCG specific assignments:

- Climate Change Conceptual Model – the SCG is developing a conceptual model for climate change related to Everglades restoration as a systematic way of coordinating and organizing our thinking on this topic. Barry Rosen is the internal POC and he is moving forward with putting together a team to develop a draft conceptual model to bring to the WG and SCG for comment and further development.
- Invasive Exotics Response – The WG is preparing targeted recommendations for improving our coordinated response to invasive exotics. The SCG had an excellent

presentation by the ECISMA which provided the catalyst for this effort. There are four themes. First – develop a national screening policy. Second - early detection and rapid response. Third – develop a cross-cut budget to better define what resources they are and need to devote for invasive exotics. Fourth – identify specific policy changes they would like to see that would improve our inter-agency response.

- Integrated Delivery Scheduled (IDS) - analyze the IDS and bring back recommendations to the TF in October. Stu Appelbaum has talked about the challenges and opportunities many of which were discussed at the GEER Conference. Three themes have been identified. First – develop a simple graphic that illustrates Everglades restoration what it is that they want to accomplish. Second - provide the suite of cost sharing issues from the crediting issue that the SFWMD is facing, or cost share policy for water quality improvements, to mitigation for STAs. Third - discuss decompartmentalization and how they can work together to get DECOMP moving forward.
- Financial Assistance - Carol Wehle said the SFWMD had been asked to identify financial assistance or economic development tools available for the communities affected by the River of Grass (ROG) process. Greg Knecht is going to help provide a paragraph that will be sent out to the members asking them for information that fits the criteria. Greg Knecht added it would be a list of programs, grants or loans such as the state revolving loan funds or economic programs, whether state or federal. Greg May said they would work offline to tee up these issues in order to have draft presentations ready for the Oct TF meeting.
- Draft Task Force Reports - need to be finalized for presentation at the Oct TF meeting.

All assignments will be discussed at the Sep WG/SCG meeting in preparation for the Oct TF meeting. Future meeting dates: Sep 15/16 at Coral Springs area WG/SCG and Oct 28 TF meeting in conjunction with Site 1 GB on the 29th.

Coordinating Synthesis Efforts

Bob Johnson said the SCG has spent some time looking at the crosswalk table and noted there are significant differences as to how the synthesis projects are moving forward. The scientific knowledge gained process on the Corps side that is a part of the shared definition of restoration is similar to the synthesis process for SERES and MARES. Compiling the science, trying to figure out what it means, how it relates back to setting restoration targets and how it relates back to refining performance measures is a common theme for all of them. They start diverging in terms of how they go forward from there. The Corps approach for the shared definition of restoration is going back to the RECOVER process - going back to the agencies and stakeholders and saying this is what we know here is new information, here are the changed circumstances, what will our vision of restoration be today.

SERES is much closer to being joined with the ROG process and they are looking at some of the alternatives that the ROG has put on the table and looking at viable options. They are getting into some trade-off issues and asking some tough questions. These three efforts are moving and at a minimum the WG and SCG need to decide how they want to be involved. Is it just tracking them and then have a bigger role by possibly sponsoring some workshops which will help get around the FACA issue. They could set up an issue team and make the process easier with everyone sitting at the table with the goal of being as transparent as possible.

Dave Tipple said it would be an opportunity to have a broader stakeholder involvement that the TF and WG enjoy and leverage that to have the open dialogue along the way. The broader stakeholder groups would appreciate them coming together for efficiency. Greg May noted they have two different processes. The knowledge gained where they need to make sure they are coordinating and the shared definition of success. Looking back at the model for the RESTUDY, the Governor's Commission and the Task Force were instrumental to that process. Although they don't have to repeat that approach they do have to repeat the magic ingredients that resulted in success. They need to make sure it is the right time and they have a seat at the table for everybody. That will be a huge effort.

Bob Johnson noted that the schedules overlap and in late 2010 and 2011 all of the projects will be running simultaneously. They need to make sure they are using similar approaches so there is compatibility. He said he would like to see the WG and SCG get involved to make sure there is consistency in approaches and serve as a clearinghouse for agencies to get information. Chris Kelble suggested they do this quickly since MARES is already in progress.

Susan Markley said it is clear that the scientific knowledge gained is a technical, literature review where most of the audience would be scientists and they may be able to provide a way of helping to continue to take these technical things and think about how to put them in a way that is most helpful for decision makers. Paul Souza said he liked all the concepts but was struggling with what exactly they want to do. He is not sure they have a shared vision of success anymore. Need to have guidance that is clear and not embark on an effort that won't provide something valuable at the end of the day. Specifics of what they are launching into. He said he also sees a real growing need on the climate change issue with it becoming more important than ever and along with the explosion of science out there.

Greg May reminded everyone that one of the stated roles of the WG and SCG is to share information and at a minimum they need to begin with an understanding of what these three efforts are doing. He said he is interested in exploring other opportunities to find out more about each of these activities. Once they do that they will have the foundation for the coordination role. He noted the shared definition of success will unfold in the future but for

now the focus is on the knowledge gained. On climate change, they are hoping the development of the conceptual model helps to improve our understanding and coordination.

Paul Souza suggested they invite a small team on all three issues to provide an in depth briefing at the next meeting. Greg May said they will target that opportunity at a future meeting because of the full agenda for the next meeting. He also suggested they could meet jointly with some of the synthesis workshops. The value added would be to better link science and managers which is difficult because it merges two very different concepts. The scientific process is one of discovery while the management process is about efficiently coming up with the information, the resources and the policy needed to be able to complete a project. They are really talking about combining these two processes over a long period of time for Everglades restoration. The format for the development of the system-wide ecological indicators, the stoplight report tool and incorporating that into the Biennial Report are examples of how to merge the two. They helped coordinate a communication tool - the stoplight report - which is easily understood and linked to a management report. Chris Kelble said that MARES is going along the same lines and added it is useful to know if they can get specific examples from managers on how they used the stoplight report. Greg May clarified that right now they have the communication established between the managers and the scientists and have assessed the current state of the ecosystem. Assessing the ecological response to the suite of projects and operational changes over time is a long term effort. Greg Knecht said that from a management standpoint, many managers want the predictive tool to make the right decision. Greg May noted they have pockets of those predictive tools such as the oyster habitat suitability index.

Matt Harwell suggested they think about engaging in a more strategic approach to help establish the governance mechanisms that RECOVER is struggling with. Example, stop light indicators provides the prognosis and maybe they can develop a mechanism to identify what they need to see for thresholds or triggers to make a management decision.

Meeting adjourned at 5:57 PM

Enclosures:

1. Agenda
2. DRAFT Combined Report
3. John Arthur Marshall handout - Economic Valuation as a decision support in River of Grass Planning
4. Biscayne Bay RRCT Letter
5. Draft Crosswalk