

**Approved Minutes of the
 Joint Workshop of the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration
 Working Group and Science Coordination Group
 Coral Springs, FL 33076
 March 24, 2010**

Opening Remarks and Introductions

Dan Kimball called meeting to order at 10:00 AM. The agenda (Encl. 1) was reviewed and Dan reminded everyone to use microphones since the meeting is being recorded. He noted that because it was a workshop that it was not being webcast.

In Attendance:

Working Group (WG) Members

Alternates

Dan Kimball - Chair - NPS - ENP & Dry Tortugas	√	
Greg Knecht - Vice Chair - FL Dept of Environmental	√	
Ken Ammon - South Florida Water Management District	√	
Billy Causey - NOAA, FL Keys Nat'l Marine Sanctuary	-	Nancy Diersing
Sheri Coven - Department of Community Affairs	-	
Wayne Daltry – Lee County Local Planning Agency	-	
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 – U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	√	
Jon Mitchell - Office of the Governor of Florida	-	
Fred Noble - FL Dept. of Transportation	-	Barbara Culhane
COL Pantano - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	-	Stu Appelbaum
Bonnie Ponwith - NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Service	-	Theo Brainerd
Barry Rosen - United States Geological Survey	√	
W. Ray Scott - FL Dept of Agriculture and Consumer	-	
Paul Souza - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	√	
Craig Tepper - Seminole Tribe of Florida	-	
Kenneth Todd - Palm Beach County Water Resources	√	
Joe Walsh - Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation	√	
Vacant - Broward County Department of Natural Resource	-	
Ed Wright - U.S. Department of Agriculture	√	
Greg May - Special Advisor	√	

Science Coordination Group (SCG) Members

Susan Markley – Acting Chair – Miami Dade County	√
Vacant - Vice Chair – Science Coordination Group	-
Calvin Arnold - U.S. Department of Agriculture, ARS	√
John Baldwin - Florida Atlantic University	√

Lisa Beever – Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program	√	
Ronnie Best - United States Geological Survey	√	
Joan Browder - NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Service	√	
Susan Gray - South Florida Water Management District	-	Garth Redfield
Todd Hopkins - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	√	
Chris Kelble - NOAA, AOML	-	
Chad Kennedy - FL Dept of Environmental Protection	-	
Dan Kimball - NPS - ENP & Dry Tortugas	√	Bob Johnson
Cherise Maples - Seminole Tribe of Florida	-	
Gil McRae – Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Comm.	√	
Bill Reck - U.S. Department of Agriculture	√	
Terry Rice - Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of FL	-	
Dan Scheidt – U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	-	
David Tipple - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	√	

Ronnie Best noted that the concept for the 2010 GEER Conference originated with Aaron Higer. Aaron Higer retired from USGS in 2000 after over 40 years of federal service and he has now retired a second time after having spent over 50 years in the Everglades. In 1978 he came up with the concept of the Everglades Depth Estimation Network (EDEN) but at the time they did not have the technology and science to pull it off. Ronnie Best read a letter from Nathaniel Reed and presented Aaron with a memento from the Task Force for his contributions and dedication to Everglades restoration.

Aaron Higer thanked everyone noting that it seemed like it was only yesterday. He recognized some major successes and he is proud of getting all the agencies to integrate and work together because nowhere else in the world is this being done. They have ten years worth of data that is available to everyone and he encouraged the members to take advantage of this resource.

Dan Kimball noted that he met Aaron when he joined the NPS in 1984 and took his first trip to the Everglades. John Arthur Marshall noted that during Aaron’s first project he worked with Art Marshall. John noted that he also had the opportunity to work with Aaron when he volunteered at the first GEER Conference.

Member’s 2010 Restoration Priorities

Dan Kimball stated the purpose of this agenda item is for the members to summarize their restoration priorities and then they will spend some time discussing how those priorities relate to what the WG and SCG should be doing for the Task Force.

SFWMD

Ken Ammon said they will have a challenging year ahead mainly due to the economy and reduced ad valorem dollars. They are looking at \$100 million budget shortfall from last year. They will continue to look strategically at their ongoing commitments and the Governing Board will have to make some tough decisions as to what gets scaled back and what continues at the same level. Public health and safety is their number one concern, primarily flood control and water supply. They have \$60 million budgeted

for refurbishment and ongoing operation and maintenance of those facilities. They will be looking at optimization of the STAs and reducing phosphorus levels as well as expanding existing facilities. Lakeside Ranch STA is under construction and will serve two functions; treat local runoff and during the dry season, re-circulate Lake Okeechobee water and remove some phosphorus from the lake. There will be some implications with the nutrient criteria and they will look at their budget to be able to implement the criteria. They will continue to work on climate change issues and system monitoring which is the basis for everything they do. Construction of the C-111 Spreader Canal and Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands are both priorities. The River of Grass (ROG) acquisition includes 73,000 acres in the first phase with the possibility of a total of 180,000 acres.

He later added that they are working with the federal partners to try and resolve a violation that occurred at Loxahatchee NWR and they are working through a planning process to primarily address source control issues and potential STA expansion so that does not occur in the future. They are on a fast track and while discussions are privileged and confidential at this time, they are working behind the scenes with technical reps and policy makers to meet their obligation under the Everglades Forever Act of 10 ppb.

USGS

Ronnie Best noted the theme for GEER is *The Greater Everglades, A living laboratory of change*. USGS has been looking at the Everglades for over a decade and trying to understand the fundamentals and functioning of ecosystems from paleo-ecology to hydrology. USGS recently published a document that highlights the direction of USGS over the next decade dealing with changes such as degradation, Everglades as a carbon source/sink, and human influence. They are looking at the Snail Kite populations and developing a model. They are expanding some of their work on invasive exotics, particularly pythons and fish. They are also looking at climate change and sea level rise.

Theo Brainerd asked whether they will be doing any work on lion fish. Barry Rosen said they have a group out of Gainesville that will look at populations here as well as in the Dry Tortugas and the Bahamas. Theo noted they have folks working on the biology and migration patterns and suggested they coordinate their efforts.

Barry Rosen added Interior is very interested in climate change and they are setting up regional Climate Change Centers with the first one designated for Alaska. They will be responsible for coordinating multi agency efforts and taking the climate change models and down scaling them as well as supporting the landscape cooperatives. Greg May asked whether they will be located at universities. Barry said that is the current thinking and they may end up with one in Florida.

FWC

Joe Walsh noted they will be holding an internal summit to evaluate their priorities this year. They are spending the most energy on the management of invasive exotics in south Florida, especially the reptiles of concern. They are working to involve the public in an active and managed way. They are also very involved in the Everglades Restoration Transition Plan (ERTP) with the FWS. Gil McRae reminded the

group that Ken Haddad retired and Nick Wiley is the new Executive Director and emphasized everyone's commitment to Everglades restoration. He said the leadership change is an opportunity for a fresh look at how everything interacts with CERP. They recognize that as a small agency it is difficult for them to be involved to the extent they need to be but they will be looking at ways to engage more. The Commission is open to exploring innovative management approaches to controlling invasive exotics. They sponsored a Climate Change workshop and produced a document entitled *Wildlife on the front line, Climate Change*. Two groups (the Keys Marine Sanctuary Steering Committee and Florida Oceans and Coastal Council) that need to be better connected to CERP activities.

Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program

Lisa Beever noted one of their goals is to see the SW Florida Feasibility Study finalized. On the numeric nutrient criteria, the three national Estuary Programs on the west coast are working together to establish estuarine numeric criteria based on seagrass and water clarity targets. They have a goal of 6,000 acres of land acquired for the past ten years which they have exceeded. They expect the land acquisition to continue through various efforts. They have a climate change vulnerability assessment for the Charlotte Harbor study area and have developed an adaptation plan for Punta Gorda and are looking at implementation. They have started developing climate change environmental indicators. The Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council has adopted four water quality resolutions to provide guidance to its local governments to address nutrient pollution such as the fertilizer ordinance and they are already starting to see drops in the nutrient pollution in urban areas. They want to improve the wastewater treatment facilities and reduce nutrient loads. The North Spreader Environmental Management Agreement in Cape Coral is looking at methods to reduce nutrient pollution and help restore more natural hydrologic flows back to the Caloosahatchee.

USDA

Bill Reck said implementation of Farm Bill programs and cost sharing on agricultural lands to implement conservation programs continue. Ed Wright reported EQUIP received about \$6 million for south Florida counties and approximately \$16 million statewide. Some of their funding is coming quarterly which is causing havoc on staffing and management. The WRP program had a record year last year with \$73 million which was more money than any other state in the country. More than half of the 60 applications this year are from the northern everglades area which covers 106,000 acres at an estimated cost of \$650 million and they hope to get \$75 - \$150 million this year. They are working with the Nature Conservancy, SFWMD and a group of landowners on a departmental landscape initiative, which will be unique, and not impact the WRP budget for NRCS in Florida. Joe Walsh asked about the ranking process which was reviewed by Ed Wright. He clarified that all applicants are ranked and they start allocations from the top until the money runs out.

Calvin Arnold noted the invasive exotic plant species continue to be a concern to everyone. They place a high priority on the research effort of Ted Center and his scientists at the lab in Ft. Lauderdale and he suggested they have Ted on a future agenda. They continue to work to refine and improve the BMPs of nursery operations for both field and container grown nurseries and the impact of the runoff of those nurseries. A new effort at their lab in Ft. Pierce with the only trained psychologist in the agency is

ramping up a new research program involving algal turf scrubbers, growing algae for clean-up and improvement of water quality as well as using the algae for bio-diesel production. They recently learned that the algae that comes out of these scrubbers makes an excellent medium for ornamental plants to be grown in containers instead of using fertilizers. The acreage of citrus in Florida is down from 900,000 acres to 520,000 acres and still declining largely because of bacterial diseases. The citrus growers are interested in the algae production and are looking for alternative crops.

USFWS

Todd Hopkins noted the ERTTP is the first and foremost priority and finding ways to maintain the protections and expand operational flexibilities. They are working to communicate and listen better throughout the process. They have a Strategic Plan for Climate Change and an Action Plan and are creating a network of Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs) from Alaska to the Caribbean. It will be a cooperative partnership based program for strategic conservation that will be bigger than the Everglades and allow them to work with others. The Florida Ranchlands Environmental Services Program is a payment for ecosystem services and is being worked on by FWS biologists. They have a unique partnership with MIT-USGS Science Impact Collaborative (MUSIC) and are creating several alternative future scenarios. Exotic species, compensation banking and statewide habitat plan for sea turtles are also other issues they are dealing with.

Paul Souza noted they have a lot of important issues and noted everyone's common priorities. They want to keep up the momentum and keep projects moving even in this economic climate. Invasive exotics are a major issue for all the refuges. The large constrictor snake issue is a hot issue and there was a congressional hearing the prior day in Washington. A proposed rule that would prohibit the importation and interstate transport of Burmese pythons and eight other large constrictor snakes is out for public comment until May 2010. The ERTTP is important and they are working closely with the tribe, SFWMD, Corps, and others to try and re-think water management in WCA 3 to think multi-species and to use the flexibilities they have today that they did not have a decade ago to protect snail kites, sparrows and tree islands. With about 100 panthers left, Florida Panther conservation and recovery is one of the hardest endangered species issues in the world. He is proud of the partnership that is brewing between private landowners and a number of environmental organizations in Collier County. They are embarking on an EIS for a 195,000 acre habitat conservation plan that would protect 150,000 acres of panther habitat forever and create a fund of up to \$150 million to take necessary conservation actions such as putting crossings in place. Climate change is a major priority and the landscape conservation cooperatives will be a major issue this year and they hope to have a plan created in partnership with many people by the end of this fiscal year. A workshop is planned for sometime this summer and they will have a robust effort to establish common wildlife priorities.

USEPA

Eric Hughes said they are working closely with the state of Florida as federal partners and stakeholders on the numeric nutrient criteria. The dates are being driven by the Consent Decree and they just held three public meetings in Tallahassee, Orlando and West Palm Beach. They will be working closely with the partners, especially DEP in proposing the numeric nutrient criteria for Florida estuaries and coastal

water bodies. DEP has had a series of meetings over the last two months and it will continue to be an active period between now and November. They are also working closely with the state of Florida on TMDLs and once completed they will then move into the next phase which is the Basin Management Action Plans. Other ongoing activities include the Florida Keys Sanctuary work and trying to move forward on wastewater and stormwater retrofits. Congress has chosen some innovative ways to get money to that program. They continue to support and work closely with the south Florida National Estuary Programs (NEP). They have ongoing partnerships with some important regulatory programs and they work closely with the Corps of Engineers on wetlands and ocean disposal activities.

Corps of Engineers

Stu Appelbaum noted this is a time of transition and change and they have shifted focus from planning to design and construction. Budgets have been good and from the federal level they want to make the most of it for as long as it lasts. They broke ground on the one mile bridge for Tamiami Trail and the Merritt pump station (first CERP contract) for the Picayune Strand project. The Merritt pump station was partially funded with Stimulus or ARRA funds. They hope to expend some ARRA funds on the C-37, the annex facility in Davie for the Melaleuca eradication and other exotics, L-31 Seepage Pilot and Site 1 contract 1. There is approximately \$180 million this year for restoration and \$123 million for the rehabilitation of the Herbert Hoover Dike (HHD) which is not directly restoration but the health and ability to store water impacts the restoration program. They will award the second contract on Picayune Strand, Faka Union Pump Station and the contracts still remaining on the Kissimmee River Restoration. The President's Budget for FY 11 looks good for the Corps and they are looking at \$180 million for the restoration effort and \$105 million for HHD. They are looking at initiating construction on the C-44 Reservoir in FY11, the second contract on the Site 1 for the remaining features, more work on the C-111 south Dade project, continued work on contracts for KRR and then the DECOMP Physical Model. Beyond that they have to look at the PIRs and authorization documents and although they are not sure whether there will be a WRDA 2010 they are trying to do everything they can to prepare the next batch of projects to get them authorized (4 new CERP project authorizations: C-43 Western Basin, C-111 Spreader Canal, BBCW, and the BCWPAs).

David Tipple addressed some of the science and RECOVER related activities. He noted that there are a number of Climate change and sea level rise initiatives through RECOVER and they have a multi agency group working on CERP specific activities. The technical document is expected later this year. RECOVER's 2010 Shared Definition of Success effort is underway and will be a part of the discussion later in the day. They continue to support the PDTs as well as efforts to further performance measure activities and adaptive management integration.

Florida DEP

Greg Knecht reported they are looking to maintain the department's presence specifically in regards to south Florida ecosystem restoration. The Legislature is in session now and once they are finished DEP will evaluate where they stand and prioritize. Nutrient criteria is big on their list and they continue to work with EPA. They are also evaluating the designated uses of their water bodies. They along with the SFWMD are looking at nutrients, specifically Phosphorus, in the Everglades Protection Area.

Miami Dade County

Susan Markley stated the county along with several other local governments has tried to take a leadership role on climate change issues. Some of the members present have participated on the Advisory Task Force and the county has moved forward with drafting a sustainability plan which is targeted at across the board range of services that local governments provide to residents in trying to prepare for climate change and other long term planning scenarios. The sustainability plan is on the county's website and she encouraged everyone to look at it. It deals with water management and environmental resource issues as well as police services and public health. They are actively participating in the ongoing efforts related to the establishment of the nutrient criteria. Miami Dade County along with others has been monitoring water quality in Biscayne Bay, Florida Bay and in the canal system for more than two decades and has one of the most robust data sets that can be used to inform this process. Miami Dade County has not developed a specific recommendation yet for canals. Unlike other parts of the state where there is impairment for nutrients, in Miami Dade County, including the urban areas and agricultural watersheds, the typical concentration is 8 ppb which is lower than the proposed canal criterion. She stressed that she is not saying that 8 should be the number but it is important that all the data that is available is being used to inform the process and perhaps it is a good argument for looking at site specific or more sub-regionalized criteria. The County is interested in all restoration projects and is concerned with water quantity and quality from a wellfield protection perspective. The County is also interested in seepage management and flood protection. Continuing with its successful effort to purchase conservation lands and the economic situation in the community has opened up more willing sellers. Miami Dade County has added more than 1,000 acres in the model lands between ENP and Biscayne NP and the county may be the single largest public landowner in that area between two national parks.

NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Service

Joan Browder noted their priorities are to protect and help restore the natural ecosystems and resources of south Florida estuaries and other coastal waters and this includes fishery species, protected species and other species and habitats that make up these ecosystems. They plan to continue to conduct Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan monitoring and assessment projects in Florida Bay and Biscayne Bay in cooperation with the Corps, SFWMD and USGS. They are continuing to expand the information from the monitoring and assessment projects by expanding their data analysis and integrating within NOAA and across other agencies as well. They will be supporting Marine and Estuarine (MARES) goal setting which is being spearheaded by AOML. Kris Kelble will describe the program at a future SCG meeting. MARES will be looking at the Florida Keys, reef tract and some of the estuaries that haven't been well covered by comprehensive models and performance measures in the past. They will be carrying out workshops to develop conceptual ecosystem models and develop performance measures to fill in gaps. NOAA has proposed a new Climate Services Agency and that may provide a lot of information for south Florida as well as the rest of the country. NOAA has an invasive species expert that has been contributing to the various groups working on exotic animals. They are also promoting to HQ the importance of the southeast fisheries science center's efforts and involvement in CERP and they are working to augment the base funds that support their involvement.

Theo Brainerd reported that NOAA has established a Climate Program Office which is now functional. They have produced a climate literacy brochure and a Climate Change 101 module. There is a climate change wildlife and wildlands toolkit for formal and informal educators, developed in cooperation with other federal partners and is available at: www.globalchange.gov/usimpacts. He announced that the new Assistant Administrator for Fisheries Eric Schwaab took office just over a month ago.

NOAA, FL Keys Nat'l Marine Sanctuary

Nancy Diersing said they are continuing to track progress being made on projects such as the C-111, Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands, Tamiami Trail bridge and DECOMP. On the climate change issue, they are working with the Nature Conservancy on the Florida Reef Resilience Program which builds climate change into the management of the corals and the coral reef tract along the southeast coast all the way down through the Keys. Work continues with EPA on the Water Quality Protection Program which is important for tracking progress as the restoration takes place. Along with the Corps they are making progress on Water Quality Improvement Program. They are tracking MARES and the ecological indicators. Sanctuary scientists will come out with a condition report this year which will summarize the state of the Sanctuary. They hope to release a zone monitoring report that will give the results of studies that have been taking place with a variety of academics. Lion fish continue to be an issue and they launched a campaign with local dive shops to educate folks on how to capture Lion fish.

Florida Atlantic University

John Baldwin noted the university is trying to be more involved with its partners and collaborators as well as internally and it has several initiatives ongoing to reach those goals. A 70,000 four story Environmental Science Research building is under construction in Davie with a move in date of Oct 2010. He highlighted two research ongoing initiatives, one on climate change led by Len Berry and the other is the Greater Everglades Research Initiative, which will bring together folks from different disciplines.

Bureau of Indian Affairs

Joe Frank noted they continue to work with the tribes to improve their community infrastructure and work with them on their agricultural and environmental practices.

Everglades National Park

Bob Johnson noted that back in 2008 Interior worked on its revised restoration vision and their general direction is to increase the amount of clean water flowing through a more open Everglades ecosystem and they have science programs throughout the system. There is a lot of progress in the southern end of the system and they have projects such as Tamiami Trail, MWD and C-111 South Dade project. Seepage management and wastewater re-use projects are important in the Miami Dade County area. They are involved in a number of land use initiatives. The NPS manages 2.5 million acres of lands and water in south Florida and deals with exotic species control programs and management of recreational activities.

Local Governments

Ken Todd reported that Palm Beach County is facing a major budget deficit for the second year in a row

due to lower property taxes. A number of new initiatives and rules being contemplated by a number of agencies such as the numeric nutrient criteria, statewide stormwater rule and climate change which will have a major impact on local governments. The county is evaluating what these programs mean from a financial standpoint and they want to continue to work with all the agencies to develop programs that will make improvements without bankrupting the county due to the requirements of these initiatives and rules.

Dan Kimball noted Wayne Daltry from Lee County was unable to attend but provided a written comment suggesting they look at local government plans and their forecasts for areas that are being restored and protected. What is absent is an assessment of how land alteration law works and he suggested an 'on the ground assessment' of what is and what will be local proposals for these areas.

Public Comment

None

2010 Task Force Reporting Requirements

Marsha Bansee provided a Power Point (Encl. 2) reviewing the reports (Tracking Success: Biennial Report; Coordinating Success: Strategic Plan; Integrated Financial Plan; Land Acquisition Strategy; and Plan for Coordinating Science) that will be developed in 2010. The purpose of these reports is to provide an overarching framework for coordinating individual efforts, document our collective and individual plans and efforts, and communicate information to key audiences. Some of the goals for 2010 are to enhance the communication of key objectives/findings and explore options for improving some of the less specific metrics. To accomplish the goals they may reorder/re-package reports, enhance summaries, produce supplements to highlight minor changes from previous full reports (which would be posted online), add graphics to improve communication where appropriate. A conference call is scheduled for the following Wednesday, March 31st with the POCs to discuss the Strategic Plan and Biennial Report. She reviewed the purpose for each of the various reports.

Theresa Woody reviewed the purpose of the Land Acquisition Strategy which is prepared in response to a GAO Report. It describes the land acquisition needs for projects with federal participation. In the appendices it provides a broad picture of all land acquisition initiatives (federal, state, regional and local). This report is updating annually and is posted on the web. Greg May explained the Plan for Coordinating Science (PCS) documents how the Task Force coordinates science. The initial needs and gaps assessment was completed in the 2004 report and in 2008 they produced a more sophisticated PCS which provides the framework for how the Task Force coordinates science at the strategic level and includes to use of ecological indicators to provide feedback on how the system is doing. Several people believe that the 2008 report represents the best framework for the Task Force coordination of science at this time.

Bob Doren reported they are working on getting the 2010 update for all the indicators that were done before and they have seen more of the indicators incorporating the use of the stoplight methodology of summary communication in the System Status Report (SSR). He has been able to talk to every indicator

scientist and they are on track. Every scientist has said that this has made their work easier and simpler and many have said that it made their writing up of the SSR summaries much easier. The publication of the peer reviewed journal was really important and he thanked Greg May for that. The Mares program has adopted the stoplight methodology and is using similar format and concepts.

Theresa reviewed the schedule for completing the various documents. Greg May said he was hoping to make the process better and easier and welcomed any thoughts or guidance.

Specific Agency Initiatives

Dave Tipple provided a RECOVER leadership paper 'Draft Crosswalk' (Encl. 3a) to the members for information. He reported that the Monitoring and Assessment Plan for 2009 is on the web at: www.evergladesplan.org and the System Status Report (SSR) will be out for review in April.

Bob Johnson said the MARES project is another initiative and suggested the SCG look at all of these and see how they can be coordinated better.

Everglades Freshwater Synthesis

Bob Johnson provided a Power Point (Encl. 3b) and explained this initiative is funded through the Critical Ecosystems Studies Initiative (CESI). For background he noted that all the projects that were funded by CESI used to be brought before the SCG for their blessing. It showed that the science being done by the federal government was complementary to the science the state was doing. There are four large scale science review efforts underway and all involve review of new information since the RESTUDY. Each one has a different purpose, scope and cover different geographic areas with different schedules but in general they are complementary to each other. CESI came out when WRDA was passed in 1996 and formally established the Task Force, Working Group and the Science Subgroup. The goals of CESI are tied to the goals of the Science Subgroup to guide restoration actions by determining the relationship between ecosystem function and hydrologic regime. There are two major programs that are the Department of Interior's contribution to Everglades science, one being CESI which the NPS manages and the other is the Priority Ecosystems Studies (PES) Program managed by USGS. They work hard every year to match up projects.

Bob reviewed the ongoing projects within this initiative that fall into four broad programs and noted that CESI has expended \$80 million on roughly 300 science projects spanning a 14 year period.

CESI is funding the work on the ecological indicators for Everglades restoration and is being used to support all of our agencies' mission. Every two years they do a broad agency announcement which is an equivalent of a request for proposals jointly with USGS' PES and they put a request in to have people submit proposals for a synthesis of freshwater science in the Everglades. The Everglades Foundation's proposal was selected and they signed a task agreement in December 2009. It is a two year effort with the first phase being a literature review dealing with key science management questions and the second phase is an analysis of restoration options looking at end states that they think will come out of different approaches. He asked Joel Trexler a committee member to talk about the workshop they had on Freshwater Synthesis.

Joe Trexler said that the goal is to reach out to managers and ask them what questions come up in their daily work and what science would help them. He said that he would like to get feedback from the Working Group and Science Coordination Group. He discussed the goals of the synthesis project. He talked about co-production of knowledge-critical components including credibility, legitimacy, and saliency. He said that there was a plan to help achieve co-production including key science questions, feedback from managers, and peer review. They are looking for an external advisor to give feedback on the process and to also interface with managers and scientists as a part of their job. He explained the basic diagram they are using as a starting point as well as the five topical areas related to hydrologic restoration. He reviewed the five topical areas in detail and also went over the timeline. They will discuss at what point the project is at the upcoming GEER meeting. He explained that they are trying to reach out to managers and put together alternative scenarios and describe the effects of each scenario on the natural system. Bob said there would be a website to track and to discuss the project. Jerry Krueger was introduced as the project manager from ENP.

Public Comment

John Marshall said he would provide written comment on the synthesis project. He said he didn't see ecosystem services included as part of the project. He pointed to the example of the Catskills in NYC to build a water treatment versus reverse osmosis and the difference then was only \$1 million dollars and it is now cost prohibitive. He added that his group proposed the use of ecosystem services in the ROG planning evolution. He acknowledged the suggestion to use ecosystem services is controversial. He suggested getting a graduate student or a Post Doc involved to figure it out, or give it to the SCG or WG to take on. He said he would leave it to Ronnie Best to bring it forward.

Bob Johnson said there were some questions from the workshop such as; where are the economists and social scientist?

Joe Walsh asked when and how CESI proposals go out. Bob explained that it was dependent on when the budget was complete and the amount of funding available for new starts, but added that they try to do a BAA/ RFP every 2 or 3 years in the October–December timeframe. Joe asked if partner agencies can be made aware of the proposals and Bob said that is one of the reasons that it is great to have the SCG. Bob indicated that the next BAA/RFP will be in FY 12/13 and that they have been announced at this forum in the past.

Shared Definition of Restoration

Kelly Keefe discussed that AM was specified in the yellow book as a tool to reduce uncertainty. She explained the goal of the initiative. She went over the steps on how they plan to achieve the goals. Step 1) capture new science; step 2) have discussions to better define attributes, such as; how do we use what we learned to make things more measurable; and step 3) look at Interim Goals and Targets and see if we can bring them along with the new information gathered and finalize them. The paper is an effort to compile a lot of good science that has been done. They would like to pull together all the new science and put it into a compilation of about 50, 2-3 page papers and make them readable to anyone. She said the plan is to address CISRERP recommendations and restoration dilemmas. She said there

will be both internal and external reviews. She explained that RECOVER would have a chance to review and then they would plan 2 workshops to get participants perspectives on the implications of the new science. She said that as scientist they cannot get into the implications. She said that they planned to deliver the document to the TF or some other entity to take up the implications piece. The 3rd step is to give the document back to RECOVER to incorporate into the Performance Measure and the goals and targets. She went through the timeline including that the piece they thought the thought the TF could help with “Step 2” would be ready by the end of 2011. She talked about the results anticipated and the role of recover. Ronnie Best said the projects discussed today will be presented at the GEER. He mentioned the AM and climate change workshops, Eco –services workshops and invasive species.

Public Comment

John Marshall talked about the Yellow Book and said he had wanted to reduce it to 10 pages of the most important aspects for his use. He said there are a magnificent set of goals and objectives in section 5.1 that talks about increasing the availability of freshwater.

Susan Markley said that she would like it if future SCG meetings could allow time to provide feedback in some of the synthesis reports. She said it seems like a lot of the synthesis and thought is happening in the 2 projects we just heard about. Susan said she was glad to hear that there would be other workshops available to discuss these initiatives, along with GEER because travel will be restricted.

Information Briefs

Dan Kimball explained the process for the information briefs. He references the TF meeting in June 2009 and noted that they gave direction to prepare the 3 information briefs. He informed the group that the climate change and invasive exotics briefs are basically complete. He said some still have lingering concerns over the new science brief. He explained that there were comments from the Miccosukee Tribe and Susan Markley will try to summarize the comments. She said at the October joint meeting we looked at all 3 briefs in detail and went line by line and had a really good discussion on the October draft of the new science brief. She explained that the goal is to end up with a document that looks like the other 2 briefs. She said that after the October meeting, all the comments were incorporated and then sent out as a draft for review in early November. Comments were received from a number of participants most felt that the spirit of discussion was incorporated, but Miccosukee Tribe representatives continued to have concerns. Most significantly their concerns were around the information from paleo-data that gave us an understanding that marshes were wetter than thought when the Yellow Book (YB) was completed. The tribe was concerned about being more specific about which areas were studied and which areas the findings represent. She said that the 1st page of the handout, in red, is the attempt to address the tribe’s issue. She also said there was change to the conclusion section to address the concerns. In order to make this fit into 4 pages we are going to have a link to a web site where the complete references are listed. She explained that the changes making them slightly more specific and makes it better but hasn’t changed conclusions or summary of the information.

Ronnie Best said that Susan and team did a great job and that Page 1 it is ok, but not as clear as the original. He added that freshwater flows will not delay sea level rise just its impacts. Susan explained it was a very collaborative process and recognized all the people that helped. Along the way each agency wanted more detail in specific area and everyone's input was summarized, but at end there had been acceptance of level of detail except from the tribe. Bob Johnson said he wanted to give credit to this effort in particular this briefing paper. He added that it really shows science even if it is controversial. He said that it does not look at the information from restoration implications, but instead it is a look at the historic Everglades. He said that the previous language had "some" areas were wetter and that was a better description then what is in there now. Bob said he does see the tribe's issue and it is a legitimate point. Susan Markley said the intent of the edits was to show specifically where it is wetter. If it doesn't say that then it needs another tweak. She added that if there was room to put in maps it would be clear. Stu Appelbaum said a disclaimer should be added stating that policy is a separate issue. Lisa Beever felt that the briefing was laid out really well, but noted that the scales on the Biscayne Bay maps were not the same. Susan acknowledged this and explained that NOAA had used the different scales because *Chlorophyll a* was so low before then bloom. Lisa asked if there was an opportunity to get consistent maps. John asked if there is a website for this information and noted that phosphorous is spelled wrong twice. Joe Walsh agreed with putting in some qualifying language. Greg May added that this is an information paper designed to give the essence of what has been learned and is not a technical paper. Joe Walsh asked if the language of concern could just include the specific areas for clarity. Joe added that his agency may have issues with generalizing depth statements. Ken Ammon said that if all the experiments occur inside the EPA then use term. Gil asked if the photos are needed or if one can be removed? Susan explained the evolution of the document and said maybe one photo could be removed. Gil asked about including a map of the area in question. Ronnie said there is not a single map of all the study areas because the information came from separate science. Kelly Keefe suggested including a link to a map. Susan agreed. Greg summarized the next steps and said the document would be sent one more time.

Public Comment

Barry Heimlich commented on page 4 of the Climate Change Brief noting there was new information on hurricanes with the conclusion that a slight reduction in frequency may occur but there would be an increase in wind speed that would equate to 50 to 60 percent in damage.

Dan explained that the brief is a slice in time. Bob Johnson suggested adding the new information to the references on web.

Logical Next Steps on Information Briefs

Dan Kimball reminded the members that they need to discuss next steps and where they want to go on these three papers. Invasive Exotic Animals and Climate Change Information briefs can be transmitted to the Task Force now. Tom Strickland has asked that they set aside some serious time at the next meeting to discuss climate change. Once the papers have been transmitted, the Task Force will ask what will be done with this great information.

Joe Walsh noted he has asked Bob Johnson about the funding cycle for CESI so they can identify when it is time to start developing those proposals. He said Florida has the State Wildlife Grant Program which focuses on the priority habitats and conservation measures of the state's wildlife action plan. Quite a few of those priority habitats are south Florida centric and they have a yearly schedule that could be brought before this group to identify scopes of work directly related to this. Climate change is also a priority for his agency so he noted there are opportunities.

Greg May noted that almost everyone listed climate change as a priority. He proposed the WG and SCG serve as a clearinghouse for all the activities that are ongoing on climate change. Ken Todd stated that WRAC has also decided to be a clearinghouse. Greg May noted he talked to Shannon Estenoz and clarified the WRAC is primarily exploring issues related to water management for the sixteen counties in south Florida. In terms of the research and adaptation activities, for example in the wildlife refuges, he is not sure if the WRAC and SFWMD will be the clearinghouse for those activities. He thought the WRAC will be more narrowly focused.

Todd Hopkins said there are a couple of agencies that have put out climate change guidance and he suggested they could be the interagency place for that guidance so that everyone can find them rather than go to each agency's website. Dan Kimball asked whether this will be part of the role and function of the Peninsula Florida Landscape Conservation Cooperative (LCC). Todd explained the LCCs are operated by a management board so if they decide that it is an important thing to do then they will do it. Ken Ammon suggested that before they define a function of this group on climate change that they organize a significant portion of a future meeting to get reports from the different groups working on climate change to get a better idea of scope and involvement of other agencies and counties. There are a lot of different agendas and data collection and they need to get a concise overview before they are able to forge their role. Dan Kimball added that there are universities involved as well. Greg May noted that back in July when they asked all the groups to submit their input they received more input on climate change than any other topic. He recommended they take the same approach and give people to submit a short paragraph. Barry Rosen said a short paragraph won't capture what it being done and agreed with Ken Ammon to have people come in and talk.

Ken Todd noted that there is a climate change session being scheduled for GEER. Greg May asked whether they may want to schedule a WG/SCG meeting before or after GEER. Ronnie Best said there will be a weeklong session focusing on climate change and sea level rise and the overarching challenges the resource managers are facing as well as next steps with regards to the research component and policy planning implications. Susan Markley said she recalled when Obey talked to her group and he said that one of the first thing decision makers need to do is find out what the shared planning scenario is that they are working towards.

Greg May noted that on the invasive exotics paper there is an agency group called ECISMA that talks about common planning and implementation scenarios. He suggested they invite ECISMA to talk to this group about their current planning efforts and where they are having some challenges that could use this group's feedback.

Working Group/Science Coordination Group Priorities

Dan Kimball said they need to identify priorities for the WG and SCG based on the discussion that morning. Greg May said a lot of the priorities are related to the subjects covered in the information briefs. In addition, he said earlier comments concerning better communication and better listening were important and he asked that they put special emphasis on that. Other priorities could include next steps for Tamiami Trail (TT), DECOMP, seepage management, the Corps' Integrated Delivery Schedule (IDS) and the shared definition of success.

Dan Kimball suggested the WG possibly have a subgroup look at the IDS and how this all fits together and report back to the WG. Case in point, MWD and TT next steps, proposal for additional bridging and thing such as the River of Grass (ROG) bringing more water in, the question is how to time certain things so they can actually bring water in. There are a lot of moving pieces but things need to come together in a smart and sequential way.

Stu Appelbaum said they have been talking about updating the IDS which was last updated in September 2008 and they have moved ahead with certain projects due to ARRA funding. He agreed it is the right time to start updating the IDS. Ken Ammon said he has mixed feelings about that, in the past, the IDS has been driven by the status of the PIRs. The IDS has been absent recognition of their cost crediting obligations. With the economic downturn they are going to have to be very smart in how they implement and sequence projects in the future. The federal government can never spend more money in any one year than the state can. If in any one year the federal government gets way ahead of them, then the SFWMD will have to come up with a cash contribution because of the 50/50 cost share. As it stands they have a billion dollars that they can't get credit for until they are authorized. Some things may need to be shifted in an IDS revision in order for the state and feds to move on with their initiatives without slowing things down. Some projects may be money driven versus ecosystem driven. He is hesitant with this group driving the process but the final decision will have to be with the state and Corps. Stu Appelbaum reminded everyone the IDS is not an absolute and it has a technical layer, critical needs of the ecosystem layer as well as fiscal realities layer that all need to be considered. Greg May said he would report this back to the Task Force. He also reminded everyone that they need to allocate time for review and approval of the Biennial Report, Strategic Plan, Integrated Financial Plan (IFP), Land Acquisition Strategy (LAS) and the Plan for Coordinating Science (PCS).

Ken Ammon added they need to better understand the implications of the nutrient criteria, when the time is right. Knowing and living with federal policy on water quality projects and where they will and will not cost share is an issue this group needs to understand. Ken Todd agreed with Ken Ammon and noted that this could have huge implications on moving water around south Florida. Eric Hughes said he would be glad to help out and there will be a lot of concern until they know what the final rule is. Susan Markley said the process is not understood very well by most people and the perception of what it is, what it will mean and how it will work is mischaracterized by different interests. It might be helpful to provide an explanation how it will work and will it in fact have consequences. Ken Ammon said he is interested in understanding the cause and effect of these rules being established and how they will affect the big scheme of things. Greg Knecht said that whatever the number is they need to know how it

will affect restoration. They can have generic discussion on criteria and how it is implemented rather than specific numbers or dollars.

Eric Hughes thought the process and what happens after the number is set and how long it will take was appropriate at this time. Ultimately down the road they will discuss the possible ramifications to CERP projects. They could have a factual presentation on how they got here and there is a lot of value in people understanding how they got to where they are. Susan Markley said they don't need to discuss dollars or what the number should be, but they need to talk about how compliance would be assessed and the resulting activities that will be necessary. Ken Todd clarified there will be financial implications and they need to be aware of that and they should discuss not the specific dollars but in the general planning arena.

Dan Kimball reported that there is a Hometown Democracy referendum on the ballot and there seems to be some action with developments of regional impact and other developments headed their way. They need to provide some information and education to people who will make decisions and this is the intergovernmental body that could the best and latest thinking on Everglades restoration and footprint of projects. Greg May said that because of an update to the Task Force objectives for Goal 3 in 2007, Sheri Coven has hired an intern to do a land use analysis for land around certain CERP project footprints and they should start receiving feedback from that effort. Joe Walsh said that would be very helpful and noted that his agency provides technical assistance on land use planning decisions, he is able to make decision makers aware when they are about to make a decision that is in very close proximity to a CERP footprint or major water issue. He said they need to get the information into a format that can be used by Regional Planning Councils (RPCs), Public Service Commission (PSC), DCA and the public.

Ken Ammon reminded everyone the SFWMD has no land use authority and they can provide input on comp plan changes but they have no veto power. In many cases they have condemnation attorneys running to landowners in or adjacent to CERP footprints and they are claiming that we are de-valuing their property and they are demanding for compensation for over and beyond the appraised value. In a recent decision, a 200 acre parcel in Biscayne Bay cost them \$24.5 million. They have to be careful of the implications of a document that identifies a CERP footprint. Greg May said the document Sheri Coven is working on would not identify parcels but would be looking at trends. Dan Kimball asked Greg May to follow-up with Sheri Coven on this.

Fisheating Creek Watershed Project

Keith Fountain from the Nature Conservancy provided a Power Point (Encl. 5a) and reviewed the Conservancy's historical involvement in the greater Everglades watershed. The Nature Conservancy has been active in working north of Lake Okeechobee and has assisted with the protection of over 360,000 acres of land. They have worked with many landowners to propose projects to programs such as the Florida Forever. Through this process TNC developed a long-standing relationship with the landowners many of which are ranchers. Ten years ago they started looking at what they had accomplished and realized that to really contribute they needed to start contributing to the restoration of the hydrology. They launched a program ten years ago that would perpetually protect high quality conservation lands

using conservation easements. They were able to use donor money and partner with the Farm and Ranchland Protection Program to do conservation easements on three ranches. Recently they have been focusing on the upper Kissimmee River basin they have owned and managed the Disney Wilderness Preserve for 17 years and realized that once rural preserve was becoming urban and Poinciana was one of the fastest growing areas in Florida and they were threatened by the loss of connectivity between that preserve and the remaining landscape coming down the east and west sides of the Kissimmee River Basin. Today they are now managing four properties and have a significant investment in this region and are trying to realize a connection between the Disney Wilderness Preserve and the Avon Park Air Force Range. Properties just on the west side of the Disney Preserve and just north of the Hatchineha Ranch project are for sale and if acquired will ensure the landscape connectivity in this region.

The Conservancy's Hatchineha Ranch project is about 5,000 acres was at the tail end of the DRI process and they could not see 5,000 units, canals and golf courses put on this ecological treasure. They bought a partial interest in the property and are engaging with their co-owner in the creation of mitigation and conservation banks as a strategy to use private equity to try to pay for the purchase of this property with the ultimate desire that this property be in public ownership. There is a broad diversity of natural communities and species and has a number of ecological communities.

Today the Conservancy is focusing their resources in five major terrestrial landscapes. Those in north Florida target properties with long leaf pine and sea level rise implications. In the southern part of the state they have their northern Everglades project (starting at Disney's Wilderness Preserve ranging east over to the St John's River Basin, down south to the Kissimmee River basin, capturing Fisheating Creek, passing over the Caloosahatchee in the panther dispersal zone and landing and capturing the primary and secondary panther habitat north of Panther NWR). At least 25% of the 4 million acres are restorable wetlands and will contribute to hydrologic restoration. The FWS, NRCS and the Department of Defense want to help protect this landscape. A number of FWS staff were out touring the area and the question came from the group as to whether they were talking about a new national wildlife refuge. FWS is in the process of doing a preliminary project proposal for what would probably be an Everglades headwaters National Wildlife Refuge in the upper part of this basin. This is the first time that he is aware of where they are openly talking about climate change implications and the migration of species.

He reviewed the history of allocations of NRCS' Wetland Reserve Program Florida which is providing hydrological restoration. Today they have an opportunity to preserve Fisheating Creek and substantially protect an entire ecosystem. There are some 17 ranchers, 100,000 acres and 16 miles of frontage on Fisheating Creek. They have an opportunity to make a significant and lasting impact on this basin and contribute through WRP to hydrological restoration in the Everglades. They will have to bring in money at unprecedented levels and tap into previously untapped programs. The Reserve Rights Pilot Program (RRPP) which allows ranchers to retain in the conservation easements the right to graze cattle and that program needs to be rolled out. They are talking about hydrological restoration and the effects and benefits can be quantified over and over again, preserving the biodiversity on this landscape and working together to sustain the cattle ranching industry.

Benita Whalen provided a Power Point (Encl. 5b) on the SFWMD's Fisheating Creek effort including dispersed water management and treatment and the feasibility study. This is a great opportunity show how the Nature Conservancy's project is complementary to the District watershed restoration efforts. Dispersed water management and treatment is trying to put water back on the landscape like it was historically using simple structures to keep more water on the landscape in a shallow manner. Approaches to working with landowners include payment for services, easements and cost share. The more recent method is the payment for services where landowners would provide above and beyond the existing requirements and there would be an opportunity for them to be paid for those services. They have made good progress on all of these efforts and to date about 120,000 acre feet of bathtub type water management has been provided through all those programs.

Benita Whalen reviewed the Northern Everglades Planning process noting the Lake Okeechobee Phase II Technical Plan was delivered to the Legislature in February 2008. A conceptual plan for storage and water quality targets for the nine sub watersheds. It recognized that additional detailed studies would still need to be done. Fisheating Creek Study is currently underway and the objective is to improve hydrology and water quality in the sub watershed through storage and treatment features. She noted that there is an opportunity to keep the hydrology in the Fisheating Creek watershed.

Todd Hopkins asked whether the payment for ecosystems services was similar to the Florida Ranchlands Environmental Services Program (FRESP). Benita explained that FRESP is the 8 pilot ranches that have been implemented and that information is feeding into a model payment and that effort needs to be coupled with the easement and cost share efforts to cover what the landowner needs are.

Ronnie Best said there will be a session at the GEER Conference on ecosystem services. Greg Knecht said these kinds of presentations and discussions show him the potential for everyone to partner on these projects and doing a lot of good. He said he appreciated the presentation. Dan Kimball said it reminded him of when the Collier family came before the group with some of their activities for panther protection. He thanked them for all their efforts in that area.

General Public Comment

None

Closing Comments

Dan Kimball thanked the presenters and the participants. Ed Wright thanked Greg May and the staff on one of the best agendas to date. Calvin Arnold said it is unfortunate that they do not have more money to move on some of these areas adding that this is an opportune time to purchase land. Greg May said he would provide everyone with potential future TF meeting dates.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:50 PM.

Enclosures:

1. Agenda

2. 2010 TF Reporting Requirements Power Point
3. Specific Agency Initiatives
 - a. Draft Crosswalk for 2010 Shared Definition of Everglades Restoration
 - b. Everglades Freshwater Synthesis, Jerry Krueger/Bob Johnson
 - c. Everglades Freshwater Synthesis, Joel Trexler
 - d. 2010 Shared Definition of Everglades Restoration Power Point
4. Information Briefs
 - a. Science
 - b. Invasive exotic animals
 - c. Climate change
5. Fisheating Creek
 - a. Nature Conservancy Power Point
 - b. Dispersed Water Management/Treatment and Feasibility Study Presentation