

## Meeting Summary

**South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Land Acquisition Task Team**

**Thursday, July 9, 2009**

**9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**

**South Florida Water Management District Headquarters (SFWMD) B-1**

**3301 Gun Club Road**

**West Palm Beach, FL**

**3-B Bridge Conference Room, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor**

**Call in number: 1-888-808-6959; conference code 0661984#**

All presentations are posted at:

[http://www.sfrestore.org/issueteams/latt/meetings/2009\\_meetings/070909](http://www.sfrestore.org/issueteams/latt/meetings/2009_meetings/070909)

### Attendees

Benita Whelan	SFWMD	By Phone: John Outland	FDEP
Wanda Caffie-Simpson	SFWMD	Ed Wright	NRCS
George Dennis	USFWS	Sarah Catala	Hendry County
Bob Pace	USFWS	Gary Cochran	FWC
Steve Schubert	USFWS		
Sheryl Jones	FDEP		
Sally Jue	FNAI		
Jim Muller	Muller & Associates		

### Welcome/Introductions

### Theresa Woody/Task Force Staff

Theresa Woody opened the meeting in John Outland's absence. John had a conflict with another meeting. Sylvia Pelizza/FWS Co-Chair is on vacation. Participants (including those on the phone) introduced themselves.

### Water Management Agreements on private lands & FRESP

Benita Whelan from the SFWMD provided an overview of various programs for keeping water on the landscape, known as Dispersed Water Storage. These efforts are to control water volume and quality; they provide habitat and recharge benefits to landowners and the public. Dispersed Water Storage includes all the programs that are landscape-based, but not regional stormwater treatment or storage areas.

Ms. Whelan provided a brief description of the Alternative Water Storage/Disposal, Alternative Water Supply and Pilot Stormwater Management Facilities programs. She also mentioned the Wetland Reserve Program and went into more detail on the Florida Ranchlands Environmental Services Program (FRESP). FRESP is a program to improve water quality and control by paying ranchers to store and treat water on their property. Eight pilot projects are underway.

**DECISION AND ACTION:** The team decided to use a Dispersed Water Storage heading in the Land Acquisition Strategy to group these programs for discussion. Theresa Woody will work with Benita Whelan to draft this text.

## **USFWS Conservation Easements**

George Dennis/USFWS-Vero Beach gave a power point presentation titled *Endangered Species and Wildlife Conservation in South Florida*.

The USFWS holds many easements, especially in the Midwest. In Florida, however, the Service has little easement land for which Service is the grantee and the manager. The USFWS is the grantee for some lands through the Section 7 consultation for the 404 process and through Section 10 consultations.

Mr. Dennis reviewed the LAS maps and presented information only on those projects without SFWMD involvement and that are not represented in the FNAI data base. In SW Florida, most of the lands under agreement are for panther compensation or mitigation. All the lands should have an easement placed on them as a condition of a permit. However, often there is no follow-up to ensure the easement has been put in place. Management plans are needed to guide needed restoration. Mr. Dennis also gave an overview of conservation banks. If a bank is phased, each phase must be able to stand on its own.

Some counties end up using lands bought with county conservation funds for mitigation; often the counties must pay their programs back to provide those funds for conservation, not mitigation. USFWS does have partnerships with some counties. During the LATT meeting, Sarah Catala from Hendry County expressed interest in a partnership.

The USFWS doesn't want to be the grantee on easements. They would like SFWMD or some other equally qualified entity to be the easement holder and monitor the easements.

**ACTION** – George Dennis will coordinate with FNAI to provide data and GIS coverage on relevant holdings and Sally Jue will add those lands to the FNAI data base and update the maps.

## **NRCS Easements on DSL Table**

The team discussed whether to add NRCS easements to the Natural Lands and Species Habitat table (Appendix D) as these lands contribute to Goal 2 of the Task Force.

**DECISION:** Do not add NRCS easement numbers to the Natural Lands and Species Habitat table because this table focuses on Goal 2 lands. Goal 3 has an objective specifically for the NRCS easements. For consistency between the Task Force's Strategic Plan, Integrated Financial Plan and the Land Acquisition Strategy, the NRCS project(s) should be reported under Goal 3.

## **Summary of Map and DSL table issues**

Sally Jue (FNAI), Wanda Caffie-Simpson, Frank Razem and Jude Muse (all SFWMD) and Sheryl Jones (FDEPP) participated in the sub-group meeting on July 8 at the SFWMD to review map and the Division of State Lands table in Appendix D. Below is a summary of the issues they reviewed and resolved regarding project size, names, acres, dollars and GIS data used by SFWMD and FNAI.

### **Maps**

Sally Jue has incorporated information for the period through the beginning of June into the maps, and will now incorporate information through June 30. No updated info has been received from NRCS regarding additional easements.

### Mitigation Map

Sally Jue has added the Florida Conservation Mitigation Bank to the map. No additional mitigation information is anticipated from the counties for this year's LAS.

**ACTION:** Wanda Caffie-Simpson, Frank Razem, Jude Muse, Sally Jue, and Jim Muller are to work together to determine the names of large un-named mitigation parcels, mostly in the northern everglades region (shown as green on the mitigation map)

**ACTION:** Sally Jue and Jim Muller will review Charlotte County mitigation data to see if additional lands need to be mapped as Theresa Woody just received files from Charlotte.

### Joint map of Federal and State Land Acquisition Projects

**DECISION and ACTION:** Change the map legend to “*Joint Federal/State Conservation Land Acquisition Projects*” to avoid confusion on non-conservation joint projects, such as the C-43 reservoir; also check 28A.

### Habitat and Species Table

The subgroup reviewed the project boundary sizes.

**ACTION:** Sheryl Jones, Wanda-Caffie Simpson, John Outland follow-up on unresolved projects, including Picayune Strand Plus.

**DECISION and ACTION:** add the column back in to the Habitat and Species table to show which lands are in CERP and CRP. Use the same footnote as the 2007 LAS. Sheryl Jones and Wanda Caffie-Simpson will work on identifying which projects should be identified as either CERP or CRP on the table.

**ACTION:** Marsha Bansee and Wanda Caffie-Simpson will review the Habitat and Species table to avoid double-reporting of dollars and acres in the Total Cost Estimate prepared for the Task Force.

**ACTION:** All GIS data from agencies and counties are due to Sally Jue by July 15.

**ACTION:** All Habitat and Species table land acquisition dollar and acres figures to Sheryl Jones by July 15.

**ACTION:** All project profiles and county summaries and maps to Theresa Woody by July 24.

### Review Draft Land Acquisition Strategy Text & Edits

The team did a page by page review of the Strategy.

**ACTION:** Team members and interested parties should provide additional comments and edits on version 2 of the LAS to Theresa Woody by July 30.

### Revised membership list

Theresa Woody provided a revised LATT membership list.

**ACTION:** Post the revised LATT membership list on the sfrestore.org web site.

### Benchmarks for Strategy-revisions

The Task Force meeting is still scheduled for September 23. The LAS read-ahead is to be delivered to the Task Force by September 9. A good version of the draft 2009 LAS will be available for LATT review before the August 12 meeting. No revisions to the benchmarks were suggested.

**ACTION:** Provide the Task Force with a read-ahead of the final version of the Land Acquisition Strategy by September 9.

**Logistics – next meeting**

The next meeting of the full Task Team will be Wed. Aug. 12 in West Palm Beach at the SFWMD, 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. in the B1 3B conference room. The major topic will be a review of the third draft of the LAS. Toll free number: 1-888-808-6959; conference code 0661984#

**Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1 p.m.