

**Summary of Decisions and Action Items  
South Florida Land Conservation Task Team**

**Wednesday April 20, 2011**

**12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

**South Florida Water Management District Headquarters (SFWMD)  
Building B-2 Third Floor Caloosahatchee Conference Room  
3301 Gun Club Road  
West Palm Beach, FL 33406**

**Attendees**

Theresa Woody	Task Force	By Phone:	
Marsha Bansee	Task Force	Sally Jue	FNAI
Carrie Beeler	Task Force	Cynthia Guerra	Miami-Dade
Wanda Caffie-Simpson	SFWMD	Paula Allen	DEP
Frank Razem	SFWMD	Rob Hudson	PhotoScience
Stacey Ollis	SFWMD		
Jeff Schmidt	NRCS		
Jim Muller	Muller and Associates, Inc.		

**Welcome/Introductions**

The meeting commenced at noon. There were some issues with some participants accessing the web conference link, so business was delayed until approximately 12:20 p.m. Theresa Woody welcomed all participants. John Outland, FDEP and Sylvia Pelizza, US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), co-chairs, could not participate.

**Status of Land Conservation Strategy**

Theresa Woody stated that the Land Acquisition Strategy was accepted by the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force at their October 2010 meeting. At the suggestion of Tom Strickland, Task Force Chair, the Task Force renamed the report to the Land Conservation Strategy, in recognition that the Strategy addressed much more than acquisition of land. The Strategy is posted as a PDF (19MB) on the web site at [http://www.sfrestore.org/issueteams/latt/documents/LCS\\_final\\_accepted\\_October\\_2010.pdf](http://www.sfrestore.org/issueteams/latt/documents/LCS_final_accepted_October_2010.pdf)

The team discussed renaming our team to the Land Conservation Task Team, to mirror the name of the Strategy. Theresa Woody stated that the name change could be done administratively, that it did not require action by the Task Force, since they had already renamed the Strategy.

**DECISION:** Rename our task team to the Land Conservation Task Team.

### **New topics for the 2011 Land Conservation Strategy**

Theresa Woody led the team in a discussion of anticipated major updates to the 2011 Strategy. While not much fee simple land acquisition occurred last year and little is anticipated this year, there are other land-related efforts that contribute to South Florida Ecosystem Restoration. The Greater Everglades Partnership Initiative/Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area Study Area will be a new entry in the Strategy. The NRCS continues to be a major partner in land conservation and will be prominently mentioned. If the Fisheating Creek and other Okeechobee Watershed NRCS projects close before June 30, the project boundaries will be represented on relevant Strategy maps. Ms. Woody recognized Ed Wright's role in obtaining GIS boundaries of NRCS easements for the Strategy maps. She also recognized Jeff Schmidt's participation in the team meeting, and expressed hope that he will be able to facilitate transfer of NRCS boundary information.

Ms. Woody also mentioned the Cooperative Conservation Blueprint Regional Pilot Projects – Northern Everglades and Southwest Florida. This is part of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's statewide Cooperative Conservation Blueprint effort to encourage voluntary protection of resources through use of incentives and other means. The pilot projects are cooperating with other efforts, such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Peninsular Florida Landscape Conservation Cooperative (LCC) and Greater Everglades National Wildlife Refuge, Everglades Foundation plans for water storage scenarios for Lake O, and The Nature Conservancy's Northern Everglades Initiative. All of these efforts will be described in the Strategy.

**ACTION:** Include information on the following in the 2011 Strategy

- Greater Everglades Partnership Initiative/Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area Study Area
- Fisheating Creek and other Okeechobee Watershed NRCS projects
- Cooperative Conservation Blueprint Regional Pilot Projects – Northern Everglades and Southwest Florida
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Peninsular Florida Landscape Conservation Cooperative (LCC)
- Greater Everglades National Wildlife Refuge
- Everglades Foundation plans for water storage scenarios for Lake Okeechobee
- The Nature Conservancy's Northern Everglades Initiative

Wanda Caffie-Simpson expressed concern that the term "conservation" too narrowly describes the Strategy and the information presented by the team. The team deals with all land acquisition (including easements and agreements) related to the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration. This includes land purchased for facilities, water quality and water supply, not just protection of land directly for conservation purposes. Wanda suggested outlining the scope of the land-related activities at the very beginning of the Strategy, to ensure that the breadth of the Strategy was understood. It should be clear that the Strategy addresses all the tools for land acquisition and protection, for habitat protection as well as water supply.

**DECISION:** Describe the full breadth of land acquisition and conservation purposes and activities at the beginning of the Strategy.

The team discussed potential ways to reduce the cost of producing the Land Conservation Strategy. Some restoration-related reports are produced every other year. The team did not think this would be a good approach for the Strategy. We rely on numerous partners to participate and provide information for the report. Changing to a biennial production schedule would likely result in partners being less engaged and the Strategy being less comprehensive because of a decrease in participation. The Strategy already uses an updating approach. Data sheet formats change minimally from year to year, and partners can use the previous year's sheets, add new data, and make the minor format changes.

**DECISION:** The team believes that the Strategy should be produced each year, not every two years.

The team discussed the possibility of setting a threshold for the amount of changes to data represented on a map before the map would be updated. This may be possible for some maps, such as the mitigation lands maps. However, the team also recognized that the maps are one of the most popular and valuable aspects of the Strategy.

**DECISION:** The map revision threshold proposal should be considered on a map by map basis, as the maps are being reviewed.

### **Progress on animated map requested by Task Force**

Frank Razem and Sally Jue led this discussion. In response to a presentation by the US Army Corps of Engineers with an animated map illustrating water flow in the southern part of the Everglades, the Task Force expressed interest in an animated map regarding land acquisition, such as an animated "Graham map" (the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Land Acquisition Update map). Sally Jue reported that after initial discussions, the project for a true animated map was put on hold. Frank Razem prepared a "faux animation" map, using SnagIt screen shots of various ARC GIS layers, converted into PowerPoint format. By sequencing through the PowerPoint slides, the map appears to be animated. However, the PowerPoint slides content cannot be manipulated just re-ordered.

The team discussed the sequence in which the GIS layers should be presented in PowerPoint. Generally, layers with smaller, less obvious parcels, such as county lands, should be presented first so that they are noticed when they are displayed. Then additional layers could be added, such as SFWMD lands, conservation lands, and then CERP boundaries. The layers used would be those on the Graham map. The team discussed whether to proceed using the 2010 Graham map, or wait until the 2011 Graham map is produced. Sally Jue noted that it would be less costly to prepare the slides once than twice from two versions of the map. It is anticipated that the only major change to the 2010 map will be the addition of the Fisheating Creek NRCS project. The team decided that the "faux animation" technique should be the initial approach, with guidance provided by the Task Force Executive Director.

**DECISION:** The "faux animation" approach using the Graham map should be the initial animated map product.

**ACTION:** Theresa Woody will confer with Greg May, Task Force Executive Director, about whether to use the 2010 Graham map or the 2011 Graham map for the faux animation. This will depend in part on the Task Force's meeting schedule and when the animated map will be presented to them.

**ACTION:** The core Task Team members will decide on the sequence of displaying the layers on the animated map.

### **Communicating the Land Conservation Strategy to a Broader Audience**

Jim Muller presented this item because John Outland was unable to participate in the meeting. Mr. Outland is interested in ways to present the Land Conservation Strategy to a broader audience. By making the information available to more people, in more accessible formats, the public will have a greater understanding of the restoration efforts and will likely be more supportive of the efforts. One potential approach is that used by the Chesapeake Bay group.

- **Chesapeake Bay Partnership**

The Chesapeake Bay restoration program is similar to the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration in several ways; it involves a distinct, ecologically important, large geographic area that spans numerous governmental jurisdictions. Both restoration efforts are national priorities. While the Chesapeake effort spans multiple states, the South Florida effort includes tribal participants. Both programs involve national, state, and local governments.

The State of Maryland developed a data portal web site to make the Maryland restoration information more available to its citizens. The Chesapeake team was impressed with the results and developed a similar web site for the entire Chesapeake effort, Chesapeake State, <http://stat.chesapeakebay.net/>. This is "A public website that promotes improved accountability, fosters coordination, and promotes transparency by sharing performance information on goals, indicators, strategies, and funding." The site also provides "A systematic process within the Partnership of analyzing information and data to continually assess progress towards goals and adapt strategies and tactics when needed."

Mr. Muller walked through some of the features of the web site, which allows users to interactively view information by topic and by geographic area. The site provides summary information on subjects such as watersheds, water quality and fisheries, but also allows a user to access detailed information by "drilling down" through various layers of information. The site provides measurements of progress on various goals, and the amount of funding spent on the different efforts. It combines information from numerous sources, not on a report-by-report basis.

Mr. Muller said the Chesapeake Stat site represented the pinnacle of what could be done – it integrates information and results of all Chesapeake efforts and allows the user to access detailed, geographic-specific information as well. This type of site requires much time and expertise to build and maintain.

- RECOVER: 2009 System Status Report interactive web page

Carrie Beeler from the Task Force led this discussion as she provides staff support for the Working Group's Science Coordination Group. Jim Muller assisted Ms. Beeler. The team examined and discussed the RECOVER: 2009 System Status Report interactive web page, [http://www.evergladesplan.org/pm/ssr\\_2009/ssr\\_main.aspx](http://www.evergladesplan.org/pm/ssr_2009/ssr_main.aspx). This site is an accounting of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) Monitoring and Assessment Plan (MAP) program. Unlike the Chesapeake Stat site, this site focuses on presenting the information from one report, although it links to other reports used to build the summary information. It does allow the user to look at information on a region-by-region basis. The web pages provide summary information, and also provide links to more detailed information. The web pages content took a content editor almost 1000 hours to prepare for the web site; this does not include the time spent by the web designer. The RECOVER web site is set up with multiple pages. Only those pages/sections that contain information that changes will have to be update annually; much of the site will not have to be updated.

- South Florida Environmental Report

Stacey Ollis from SFWMD attended the meeting to provide relevant information from her experience as part of the team that produces the annual South Florida Environmental Report (SFER), including the web pages ([http://my.sfwmd.gov/portal/page/portal/pg\\_grp\\_sfwmd\\_sfer/portlet\\_prevreport/2011\\_sfer/v1/vol1\\_table\\_of\\_contents.html](http://my.sfwmd.gov/portal/page/portal/pg_grp_sfwmd_sfer/portlet_prevreport/2011_sfer/v1/vol1_table_of_contents.html)). The web page is basically the table of contents of the report, with links to PDF files of the individual chapters and appendices. The PDFfiles each have a sidebar table of contents/bookmarks with links to provide rapid access to the different sections of each chapter. This web-based approach takes much less effort to set up than the RECOVER web site, but only provides links to the PDF documents. It does not provide web-page based summaries.

The South Florida Environmental Report is a massive document that is produced annually. Recently, the team has focused on going back to the basics, to core objectives. The size of the document was reduced from 4000 to 2700 pages. The report looks at the past, current status, and the future; it needs to be updated on an annual basis.

The team discussed how these web site efforts relate to development of a site for the Land Conservation Strategy. Wanda Caffie-Simpson said the challenge is to have a meaningful template for the Strategy's information. The team discussed staying focused on what the Strategy is supposed to report on, and providing links to other documents rather than trying to incorporate all information into the Strategy. Regarding goals and objectives, the Strategy reports within the framework of Task Force goals; the Strategy does not set goals or objectives. Wanda Caffie-Simpson thinks it is important to make the information in the Strategy's appendices easily accessible, such as the information on potential funding sources.

Wanda Caffie-Simpson revisited the task team's continuing discussion of the need for a primer of the numerous reports produced related to the south Florida restoration efforts. For each report, the primer should list the name of the report, the reporting cycle, the URL to access the report, and the topic of each report. Also consider indicating which agency produces the report,

and contact information for the lead person on the report. The primer would assist in letting the public know which documents are being prepared covering which topics, and how the documents relate to each other.

**DECISION:** The team believes a primer of the reports related to south Florida restoration is needed. The primer should be a stand-alone document.

- CERP Projects PDF map with links to web-based documents

Frank Razem led this discussion of the previously produced PDF map of CERP projects. The project name labels are hyperlinked so that when a reader clicks on the project label, it opens up a web page at [www.evergladesplan.org](http://www.evergladesplan.org) in a browser with information on that project. This is a low tech approach to providing additional information to users. Anyone with a PDF reader (such as Adobe) and an internet browser can access the information. Multiple web pages can be linked to the label, so that multiple pages are opened with a click.

Team members discussed the potential producing the Graham map with hyperlinks. The amount of time it will take to insert hyperlinks to the large number of labeled projects on the Graham has not been estimated. Potential data sources to link to include SFWMD/CERP project descriptions, FDEP Florida Forever project descriptions, the FNAI managed areas data base, the Florida Communities Trust parks data base, and the individual county's parks descriptions. The map could be posted on the web or emailed.

The team discussed whether it was necessary to continue to produce a CERP project map for the Strategy, or if the SFWMD had a suitable map that could be used. This question was not resolved.

**ACTION:** Provide a rough estimate of the amount of time and cost to produce a hyperlinked Graham map.

**ACTION:** Determine if the SFWMD produces a CERP map that could be used in the Strategy in place of the CERP map produced for the Strategy by FNAI. Determine the disadvantages of ceasing production of the joint projects map.

- S Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force documents

Marsha Bansee and Carrie Beeler, Task Force staff, made presentations on other Task Force documents, including the Integrated Financial Plan, Strategy and Biennial Report, and System-wide Ecological Indicators. These reports are posted at <http://www.sfrestore.org/documents/index.html>.

The team discussed how the various reports relate to each other, and streamlining efforts. The Integrated Financial Plan only addresses lands for design and construction; the Land Conservation Strategy addresses all lands. Various reports have differing reporting periods and differing project descriptions. Staff strives to avoid duplication, and provide links to information in other documents. Stacey Ollis said the S Florida Environmental Report team faced the issue of project descriptions not matching. They set up a project data base. The data base links to the project descriptions and the descriptions are updated as needed. The Integrated Financial

Plan and project sheets are updated every year; the SFER Strategy and Biennial Report are updated every two years. The end reporting dates for these reports are June 30<sup>th</sup>.

**ACTION:** Work to establish more links between documents and avoid duplication of efforts.

**DECISION:** The 2011 Land Conservation Strategy will be produced as a PDF document. The document will be available as a download, and the Task Force office will not print any hard copies.

**ACTION:** Review Land Conservation Strategy project profiles with USACE involvement to ensure that the objectives cited by the SFWMD are in agreement with USACE objectives for those projects.

### Presenting the Land Conservation Strategy in a more accessible and integrated manner

Team members discussed what progress can be achieved on making the 2011 Land Conservation Strategy more accessible this year with current budget and staffing. A major addition to the team is Greg May's offer for José Cabaleiro to help in developing an increased web presence for the Strategy. Mr. Cabaleiro maintains the Task Force's web pages. A list of enhancements that can be made without actions related to the web site is below.

**ACTION:** Make the following enhancements to the Land Acquisition Strategy (not reliant on web-page based enhancements)

- Provide additional links in the executive summary, including links to maps
- Update the PDF CERP map from Frank Razem to include links to project profiles produced by Wanda Caffie-Simpson
- Provide hyperlinks from the DSL-produced Natural Habitat and Species Land Acquisition Update table to Marsha Bansee's project sheets
- Provide hyperlinks from the project profile summary table entries to all project profiles; include a hyperlink to the project profile summary table in the executive summary
- Include text on the Tools to Identify Strategic Acquisitions in the executive summary
- On the Graham map, provide hyperlinks to web pages for individual conservation lands (

**ACTION:** Bookmark the sections of the PDF file of the 2010 Land Conservation Strategy so that users can rapidly access different sections of the report. Repost the bookmarked Strategy.

The team discussed the use of hyperlinks between products related to the Strategy. It was suggested that in certain cases, such as the Project Profile Summary Table, the URLs be kept transparent so that if a user did not have the electronic version of the table, they could still type in the URL to access the information. This may not be easily accomplished for products, such as the Project Profile Summary Table, which already have a very tight layout.

The team discussed how much flexibility there will be in the type of web page layout for the Strategy. Theresa Woody and Jim Muller will discuss the options with Jose Cabaleiro. The team would like to know if the site could be set up with features similar to the RECOVER site, or must it be laid out like the SFRESTORE pages.

**ACTION:** Determine how much flexibility there is in the design of a web page for the Strategy.

As a starting point, the Strategy's table of contents can be considered for layout of the web site, and links to other reports and sites can be provided. Wanda Caffie-Simpson suggested starting out with a well-done front page, then capitalizing on existing information for other pages. She suggested stratifying the information by joint projects and natural land projects – start with those pages – then perhaps four or five other pages organized by type. Frank Razem noted that if the original document is set up well, it will translate to web pages pretty well. Stacey Ollis noted that Trudy Stein did the html for the SFER report.

It was also suggested to include a map of the counties, hyperlinked to the county accounts in the Strategy's appendices.

### **Set Benchmarks for 2011 Strategy**

Theresa Woody will set up benchmarks later, after consulting the Task Force and Working Group schedules. The next Task Team will likely be in June; it is anticipated that tasks during May can be coordinated via conference calls and emails.

The Benchmarks for the 2011 Land Conservation will be similar to those for the 2010 edition.

The 2010 benchmarks can be downloaded from

[http://www.sfrestore.org/issueteams/latt/meetings/2010\\_meetings/071410/LATT%20Benchmarks%202010.pdf](http://www.sfrestore.org/issueteams/latt/meetings/2010_meetings/071410/LATT%20Benchmarks%202010.pdf)

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:35 pm