

**Summary of Decisions and Action Items**  
**July 28, 2011 Land Conservation Task Team Meeting**  
**South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Land Conservation Task Team**  
**Thursday, July 28, 2011**  
**12:30 – 4:00 p.m.**  
**South Florida Water Management District Headquarters (SFWMD) B-1**  
**3301 Gun Club Road, West Palm Beach, FL 33406**

Read ahead material posted at:

[http://www.sfrestore.org/issueteams/latt/documents/handouts\\_latt\\_past\\_072811.html](http://www.sfrestore.org/issueteams/latt/documents/handouts_latt_past_072811.html)

**Attendees**

John Outland	FDEP, Co-Chair
Theresa Woody	Task Force
Wanda Caffie-Simpson	SFWMD
Frank Razem	SFWMD
Sally Jue	FNAI
Dave Gillings	Palm Beach County
Jim Muller	Muller and Associates, Inc
Jesse Markle	SFWMD
Lynn Cox	SFWMD
Martha Musgrove	Florida Wildlife Federation

**By phone:**

Sheryl Jones	FDEP
Cynthia Guerra	Miami-Dade County
Gary Cochran	FWC

**Welcome/Introductions**

John Outland opened the meeting and asked attendees to introduce themselves. Co-Chair Sylvia Pelizza could not attend because of her assignment to Atlanta to assist in the USFWS cost-reduction effort.

**SFWMD Dispersed Water Storage**

Jesse Markle and Lynn Cox gave a presentation on the SFWMD's Dispersed Water Management program, which included a series of maps produced by Lynn. This program creates opportunities to store water on the landscape in a shallow manner using minimal structures, primarily in Kissimmee River/northern Lake Okeechobee watershed. The Payment for Environmental Services (PES) is probably the largest component of the Dispersed Water Storage program (DWS). The DWS program enters into service agreements with private ranchers to store water on their property, but the property can still be used for ranching.

The SFWMD is now in a process to secure water retention capability without land ownerships. The initiative has two goals – store water as measured by acre feet, and increase nutrient retention, especially phosphorus. Twelve projects have been shortlisted, and district staff has the authority to negotiate with those landowners. It is a competitive process, with an objective tool to estimate costs. Criteria were set up in advance, and a selection committee is in place. The program is apparently unique in the nation; it uses a market-based rate, rather than a flat rate.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has set up a general permit for the initiative, and USFWS and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) have set up consultation processes. It is anticipated that landowners will be able to get an SFWMD Environmental Resource Permit for each project. Staff is analyzing recent legislative changes for potential impacts on the project.

Approximately \$7 million is available for this initiative this fiscal year. A project timeframe has not been established. Approximately one and one-half years will be needed to get the projects in place. Each project requires a 10-year commitment from the landowner, with an opt-out clause. If a landowner opts out before the 10 years is up, the landowner must reimburse SFWMD for capital improvements at an amortized rate.

There likely will be a once per year payment to the landowner. Operations and management costs will be part of the service fee. Wetlands will be delineated at the beginning of each project, and the landowner will not be impacted by any wetland expansion resulting from the water management agreement. This is a service agreement; the SFWMD will have no real estate interest in the property and no encumbrance on the property. The District has not decided how landowners can use the water that is being stored. The fate of the project (and stored nutrients) beyond 10 years has not been determined. Benita Whalen manages the DWM initiative.

The Florida Ranchlands Environmental Services Project (FRESP), led by the World Wildlife Fund, was a forerunner of the Dispersed Water Management Program. With the initiation of the Dispersed Water program, FRESP is anticipated to cease. Some FRESP contracts are phasing out, but the Lykes project in Glades County is still significant.

The SFWMD does not have a land easement program. The District is working with the NRCS on their easements, providing technical assistance at the request of NRCS.

Dave Gillings asked if local government projects were being considered for the DWS program, since their restoration efforts often result in increased water storage. Mr. Markle said that the staff is reviewing projects for contributions to water storage, but had not considered payment to local governments for water storage.

Mr. Markle said that the District is considering a fallow citrus lands initiative – storing water on these lands. The district is concerned about potential contaminants from agriculture operations. There is an east coast and two west coast pilot projects.

John Outland asked if the District is also looking at state-owned lands for the dispersed water initiative. Mr. Markle said just district-owned lands were being considered at this time.

The LCTT discussed how to address the Dispersed Water Management effort in the Land Conservation Strategy. Theresa Woody stated that the South Florida Environmental Report ([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)) includes a description of the effort in their online document, and that the Strategy would probably provide a link to that description.

**ACTION:** Theresa Woody will work with Benita Whelan to address the Dispersed Water Management program in the Land Conservation Strategy, and include text and links as appropriate.

### **Chesapeake State of the Program**

John Outland said that he and Col. Greg May, former Executive Director of the Task Force, had been in discussions about making changes to reporting on land conservation efforts related to the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration. John has been following the efforts of the Chesapeake Bay restoration, visiting their website for information.

Like the Everglades restoration, the Chesapeake restoration efforts are featured on multiple web sites. One of the main Chesapeake Bay websites, Chesapeake Stat (<http://stat.chesapeakebay.net/>) provides general information on restoration efforts, but with the capability for users to drill down to details. John stated this is a great way to share information. The Chesapeake program is revising their website, making sure to provide the information people want on the progress of the restoration. John stated that the Everglades and Chesapeake efforts are similar in many ways, including multi-jurisdictional, water quality, and strong federal involvement.

He believes that the Land Conservation Strategy can also be web-based, with information available to the degree that people want. He suggested using the Chesapeake State of the Program report as a template for a stand-alone Land Conservation Strategy document. It should emphasize what is new and exciting, and feature the land acquisition map. Photos should be included to make the document more appealing.

Mr. Outland said the Chesapeake team was internalizing the data previously, and is now trying to reach out with all of the information. Ms. Theresa Woody related

that Shannon Estenoz, Director of Everglades Restoration Initiatives, had a problem finding all of the information on the Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands project, trying to retrieve information from the Land Conservation Strategy, Integrated Financial Plan, and other restoration documents. The team needs to make the Strategy's information more usable to a wider audience.

Theresa stated that the Task Force reports on approximately 240 projects to Congress, and that the Task Force uses the Natural Habitat and Species Land Acquisition Update State/Federal/Local Cost-Share Table to report on the Goal 2 land acquisition projects.

The team discussed whether the US Army Corps of Engineers Five-Year Report to Congress includes information on the land acquisition funds spent for CERP.

**ACTION:** Wanda Caffie-Simpson and Theresa Woody will review the CERP Five-Year Report to Congress to determine where and how the report addresses information on the land acquisition funds spent for CERP.

### **Review Draft Land Conservation Strategy**

Theresa Woody presented a mockup of the summary 2011 Land Conservation Strategy modeled after the July 2011 State of the Chesapeake Bay Program Summary Report. She stressed that the 2011 Strategy, especially the summary report, will focus on those things that are tracked by the Task Force. John Outland stated that the Task Force and Working Group are focused on CERP, and that the Strategy would focus on CERP. Ms. Woody said it would be appropriate to include a summary of the DSL-produced land acquisition summary table and county programs in the Strategy summary.

**DECISION:** The 2012 Land Conservation Strategy will be integrated with the full Task Force Strategy; the 2011 LCS will work on formatting and web site.

**ACTION:** Theresa Woody will distribute the MSWord version of the first draft of the summary Land Conservation Strategy to team members early the week of August 1.

**ACTION:** By August 5, provide comments to T Woody on the first draft of the Land Conservation Strategy.

**ACTION:** Use the "leveraging limited funds" section in the full Strategy to highlight tools used in the past year. Provide a hyperlink from the Strategy summary to the full Strategy to provide more details.

**INFORMATION:** Palm Beach County has a photo gallery that is available to be used for photos for the Strategy.

**DECISION:** The team prefers the two-column format for the Summary and may adopt this format for the full report.

**ACTION:** On the back page of the Strategy summary report, provide a description of each county land conservation program (program name and primary purpose, dollars, acres, funding source) and a hyperlink to each program.

**DECISION:** The team will decide which highlights to include in the Strategy and summary after team members submit suggested highlights.

**ACTION:** John Outland will work with Theresa Woody to include a brief summary of the veto of the 2011 Legislative appropriation language that provided for funding of Florida Forever through the sale of surplus state lands. Many people are not aware of the final action.

**ACTION:** Sheryl Jones will update the Natural Habitat and Species Land Acquisition Update State/Federal/Local Cost-Share Table and include it in the full Land Conservation Strategy.

**DECISION:** Do not include the Natural Habitat and Species Land Acquisition Update State/Federal/Local Cost-Share Table in the stand-alone Land Conservation Strategy Summary.

**ACTION:** Jim Muller and Theresa Woody will work with Task Force staff to review Appendix G of the Strategy (potential funding sources) and delete those that no longer exist; provide hyperlinks to existing programs. Programs that still exist but are not currently funded will remain in the appendix. Add new programs as appropriate.

**ACTION:** Theresa Woody will update Appendix G with the hyperlinks for the four new funding mentioned in the draft Strategy summary.

### **Process to update CERP Zone**

The CERP Zone web site provides a link to the 2008 Land Acquisition Strategy. The team wishes to have the link connect to the 2010 Land Conservation Strategy. This has to be done by a staff person with the authority to modify CERP Zone documents. This topic was covered in sidebar discussions by team members.

### **Summary of Sub-group meeting on July 27**

Ms. Sally Jue briefly summarized the issues addressed the previous day by a subgroup of the team. The issues mostly related to GIS analysis of project boundaries and acres acquired and those reported in the Natural Habitat and Species Land Acquisition Update State/Federal/Local Cost-Share Table. Frank Razem, Wanda Caffie-Simpson, Jim Muller, Theresa Woody, John Outland, and Sheryl Jones participated in this sub-group meeting.

The subgroup agreed to revisit the issues towards the end of August to make sure that all team members were in agreement.

Ms. Jue also stated that the subgroup decided to produce the FNAI federal/joint project map again this year. The labels will be changed to feature the CERP projects with hyperlinks to information pages.

The subgroup also decided to produce the overall land acquisition update map (the "Graham map") and hyperlink as many labels as possible to other pages, such as project information in the Florida Forever Board of Trustees Five-Year Plan, and SFWMD sites.

John Outland stated that a “value added” from this process is to increase accuracy regarding land projects and costs.

### **Project Profile Sheets Status**

Jim Muller reported that the National Park Service has completed their project profiles. Wanda Caffie-Simpson stated that she plans to have the SFWMD profiles completed by August 11.

**ACTION:** Theresa Woody and Jim Muller will follow up with USFWS, NRCS and USACE on updating their project profiles.

### **County Data submission**

Theresa Woody stated that the counties have been more responsive in providing their data this year than in any other year. She has four counties left to contact. Sally Jue stated that FNAI has received GIS files from many counties; files are still needed for Palm Beach County and Miami-Dade County. Cynthia Guerra reported that Miami-Dade is working on their boundaries, and the information will be sent to FNAI soon. Lee County may be delayed in providing their data due to Lynda Riley’s shoulder surgery.

John Outland said that is wonderful having the local governments involved with the data sharing. The various programs have been working together, making sure to keep the numbers accurate. Sally Jue said this effort also benefits FNAI in building its statewide data base on county-owned lands.

### **Revised Benchmarks for LCS**

The Working Group meeting was not held in July; it likely will be held September 20-22. Due to the expansion of the Strategy to include a stand-alone summary document and an enhanced web presence in addition to the normal document, it was agreed that the Working Group meeting delay would mesh well with completion of the Strategy. Most of the existing benchmarks for the Strategy will remain the same.

**ACTION:** The table of contents of the 2010 posted version of the Land Conservation Strategy was incorrect after page 56. The table will be redone.

**DECISION:** Maintain the August 19 benchmark for the draft maps, Land Acquisition Table (DSL table), and project profile summaries.

**ACTION:** Theresa Woody will distribute the second draft of the Strategy by August 31, at least the summary, and perhaps the full document.

**ACTION:** Team members will provide source of potential photos for the Strategy to T Woody.

**ACTION:** Theresa Woody will present the faux animated map to the Working Group at their next meeting, and discuss the possibility of more sophisticated animation with USACE.

**ACTION:** Theresa Woody and Sylvia Pelizza will work together to present the Land Conservation Strategy to the Task Force at their next meeting, tentatively scheduled for the end of November.

### **Other unresolved issues**

Jim Muller mentioned the team's previous decision that a South Florida restoration primer describing the numerous reports produced related to the south Florida restoration efforts was needed. For each report, the primer should

- list the name of the report
- the reporting cycle
- the URL to access the report
- 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. The primer would be featured on the Strategy main web page, and would not be a part of the Strategy itself.

**ACTION:** Work on the primer and circulate a description of the names and function of the different bodies involved in the restoration and how they relate to each other. Include this information in the primer as well. (T Woody, team)

### **Logistics – next meeting**

John Outland reminded the team that the next Land Conservation Task Team meeting will be Wednesday, August 24, in West Palm Beach. The meeting will be in Building B-1 in the B-3 Bridge Conference Room.

### **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:30 p.m.