

SOUTH FLORIDA ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION TASK FORCE

Public Outreach Steering and Support Team (POSST) Directive

October 1, 1997

BACKGROUND: In 1993, six federal agencies established an Interagency Task Force "to coordinate the development of consistent policies, strategies, plans, programs and priorities for addressing the environmental concerns of the South Florida Ecosystem." The Water Resources Development Act (WRDA, dated October 21, 1996) codified the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force and Florida-based Working Group, broadened its mission, role and membership to include state, local and tribal governments, defined "South Florida ecosystem" as "the area consisting of the lands and waters within the boundary of the South Florida Water Management District, including the Everglades, the Florida Keys, and the contiguous near-shore coastal waters of South Florida," and provided guidance related to public participation, etc..

From 1995 to 1996, the Working Group utilized a Public Information and Education (PIE) Subgroup which developed a communications strategy and drafted several tools for a public affairs "tool kit." In November 1996, the Working Group met in a strategic planning session and reached consensus on a mission statement and proposed charter and organizational structure that replaced the infrastructure and management subgroups with seven subregional project coordination teams and restructured the Science and PIE Subgroups. Subsequently, a conceptual "Connecting Strategy" was approved by the Working Group. In March 1997, the PIE Subgroup proposed an organization for a new Public Outreach Steering and Support Team (POSST) to provide better linkage between public affairs strategy and projects and the Working Group. A Public Outreach Partnership (POP) Issue Team to develop partnerships and funding sources with non-government organizations was also discussed and subsequently initiated by the Working Group. At the May 7, 1997 Working Group meeting, Pilot Public Affairs Procedures were finalized which delineate policy, operations and tactics to ensure compliance with the public participation requirements of WRDA.

PURPOSE: The connection between government agencies and the public forms a vital cornerstone in ecosystem restoration in South Florida and our success is dependent upon the understanding, involvement and support from a multitude of groups and interests. The Public Outreach Steering and Support Team will coordinate the development of public affairs plans, programs, projects, and activities that meet management objectives as defined by WRDA and the Task Force, and described in the Working Group's mission statement, and subsequent policy directives.

Members:

Bonnie Kranzer, GCSSF, Co-Chair

Billy Causey, FKNMS, Co-Chair

John Renfrow, Local Government (DERM)

Joe Miller, USACE

Rick Smith, Governor's Office

Rock Salt, Executive Director (non-voting)

Project Coordination Team Public Affairs Members:

Greg Fuderer, Kissimmee Team

Missie Barletto, Greater Lake Okeechobee Team

Christina Plunkett, Central Everglades Team

Representative to be named for Southeast Coast Team

Lisa Douglass, Southwest/Big Cypress Team

Alyson Simmons-Matley, Florida Keys Team

Mary Plumb, Total System Team

Joanne Delaney, Science Team Public Affairs representative

Mary Plumb, SFERTF, Public Affairs representative

Any Working Group member may designate one or more additional representatives of their agency either on a semi-permanent or ad hoc basis as required by technical issues under consideration. Brad Brown, NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service, appoints Essie Duffie.

GUIDANCE:

a. The goal of the team is to develop and implement an integrated comprehensive public outreach strategy by August 1998 for public affairs projects addressing the restoration, preservation, or protection of the entire South Florida ecosystem. This strategy will incorporate appropriate input from the Ecosystem Restoration Planning initiative and the Public Outreach Partnership Issue Team and incorporate the principles of the Connecting Strategy approved by the Working Group in March 1997.

b. The team should focus initially on working with the project coordination teams to ensure ongoing and appropriate new public outreach projects are identified and should develop a course of action that will lead to integrated coordination of projects that are part of the Working Group's Integrated Financial Plan.

c. The team should schedule its first meeting within 60 days and plan to meet as often as needed thereafter. As appropriate, the team co-chairs should coordinate with the Working Group chair or the OED to schedule the necessary time at Working Group meetings to resolve issues.

d. As issues develop that impede the restoration effort, these issues should be presented to the Working Group for assistance. The presentation of these issues will normally be included in one of the Working Group's regularly scheduled meetings.

e. All team meetings will be open to the public and will include opportunity for public comment.

f. Deliverables:

1. The team will present its proposed comprehensive Public Outreach Strategy to the Working Group by March 1998.
2. The team will review the project coordination teams' proposed public affairs project sheets as prepared for inclusion in the Integrated Financial Plan and provide feedback to the PCT's.
3. Working with the Working Group Chair and PCT's, the team will prepare the draft Annual Report and present it to the Working Group in November of each year.
4. The team will provide assistance to the Project Coordination Teams, the Ecosystem Restoration Plan Team, and other Working Group teams as needed.
5. The team is encouraged to establish subordinate technical groups to assist it in its work, such as Internal Coordination, Public Information and Education Products Task Team, or other technical coordination groups.

ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTIONS:

- a. The team will include a Science and a Public Affairs member on the team. The science member should coordinate with the Chair of the Science Coordination Team for technical support that the Science Coordination Team needs.
- b. The team will provide adequate public notice of its meetings, facilitate public comment, and provide a summary of meetings suitable for publication on the Task Force Home Page.
- c. If the team desires to establish an advisory group, the team co-chairs should notify the Working Group Chair and coordinate with the Office of the Executive Director for additional guidance.
- d. The team co-chair should coordinate with the office of the Executive Director, (Sandy Soto, (305) 348-1665) to receive additional administrative instructions or to arrange for any additional support needs for the team.

SIGNED BY:

Ron Smola, Chairman

South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Working Group

October 30, 1997