

Biscayne Bay Regional Restoration Coordination Team
June 14, 2002 - Meeting #11
Biscayne National Park
9700 SW 328th St.
Homestead, FL 33033

Attendance:

Daniel Apt, FDEP	Theodora Long, BNC
Sarah Bellmund, BNP	Susan Markley, MD DERM
Fran Bohnsack, MRMG	MJ Matthews, Joint Center
Joan Browder, NOAA/NMFS	Paul Millar, SFWMD
Deborah Drum, SFWMD	Lloyd Miller, Izaak Walton League
Cindy Dwyer, MD P&Z	Rafaela Monchek, TF Office
Phil Everingham, Marine Council	John O'Brien, Joint Center
Cynthia Guerra, Tropical Audubon	Audrey Ordenes, CFABSF
Julio Fanjul, SFWMD	Keith Revell, FIU
Dave Friedrichs, Farm Bureau	David Score, NOAA/FKNMS
Rhonda Haag, SFWMD	Anitra Thorhaug
Peter Harlem	Harold Wanless, UM
John Hulsey, SFRPC	

The meeting was called to order at 10:06 a.m.

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes from Meeting #9 were approved with the following changes:

Under Attendance:

Phil Everingham was added to the minutes.

Humberto Alonso's name was corrected.

Under Discover Biscayne Bay Website:

The goal of this site is to generate interest in the Bay among members of the public and to serve as a clearinghouse for Biscayne Bay issues and projects.

The target date to have the site up by was June 13th, and is now revised to July 8th.

Biscayne Bay Website – John O'Brien, Joint Center

John provided a tour of the www.discoverbiscaynebay.org site, including a tour of the newsroom, which includes the latest news, events, and information on the Bay. The newsroom allows one to save events directly from the site into outlook calendar. Site security allows authorized users to immediately post or upload information onto the site on their own projects, but not on any others. MJ gave the example that Audrey Ordenes is able to add information to the education project, but not to the Science projects, and Joan Browder has access to her projects but not Audrey's education projects. John provided a demonstration on how to add events and upload files and the sites search capability. John will be able to provide telephone training for those having difficulties with the site. Julio suggested providing Rafaela Monchek with administrator privileges on the site, to add users and information. The team will discuss this matter in more detail in the future. MJ distributed a draft protocol for the website and membership, and requested the team provide her with feedback.

Updates:

Rhonda clarified recent incorrect reports by The Miami Herald that the \$8 million for land acquisition was vetoed. The Land Acquisition line item was part of a total \$25 million land acquisition item for Florida Forever that was granted to the SFWMD. This line item originally stated that \$8 million must be spent on acquiring Biscayne Bay land. Governor Bush vetoed the statement that specifies \$8 million must be spent on Biscayne Bay land acquisition, but did not veto any part of the \$25 million. Henry Dean, Executive Director of the SFWMD, said at a recent Task Force meeting, that the SFWMD would still endeavor to spend the \$8 million on Biscayne Bay land acquisition.

FY 2002 – Deborah Drum:

A meeting has been scheduled for next Tuesday afternoon with Wanda Caffee-Simpson to discuss Biscayne Bay land acquisition. Deborah will try to bring a current land acquisition map to the next meeting. She clarified that there is \$1 million from previous years and \$3.5 million from this year's funding for land acquisition (not including the new \$8 million).

Deborah distributed a draft FY 03 Project list. She reminded the team that the list is a work in progress, and the information may change. Preliminary work is being done on Biscayne Bay MFL's. Internal staff resources at the SFWMD are being identified. Rick Alleman has set up a meeting to work with BNP on these projects since they are the primary customer. Joan requested Barnes Sound, at the downstream end of the system, is not left out of the process. Sarah reminded the team of the distinction between a reservation, the *total* amount of water needed for restoration, and an MFL, the *minimum* amount of flow needed to prevent the Bay from suffering irreparable harm. Rhonda will try to bring someone from the SFWMD on water reservations to the July meeting. Cindy requested having the urban development boundary on the land acquisition map. She also requested showing the underlying land-use if possible.

Media Event – Rhonda Haag:

The team has tentative confirmation from Rep. Lacasa to attend a media event to be held the same day as our July meeting (July 12), which will be held at the Biscayne Nature Center. We want to thank Rep. Lacasa for his previous efforts in securing the funds for Biscayne Bay projects.

Review of May 30th Meeting:

Rafaela distributed an updated project sheet showing the team's funding recommendations. Rhonda changed the word "Removed" under the recommended column for land acquisition to "Funded by Florida Forever, estimated at \$8 million." Miami River Dredging Project received funding as a separate line item.

License Plate Discussion – Paul Millar (St. Lucie Team)

Paul was a part of the creation of an Indian River Lagoon license plate. The St. Lucie Issue Team (which Paul chairs) paired up with McDonald's restaurant to get the 8,500 signatures required for permission for the plate. Almost \$2.7 million has been generated from tag sales. Specialty tag prices vary, but \$15 is received from each St. Lucie tag. Proceeds go to the SFWMD, then directly to funding projects. To encourage tag sales among the counties bordering the Lagoon, proceeds are distributed among the counties based on the amount of tags sold – if Martin County sells 20% of the tags, they get 20% of the proceeds for projects. The state requires 20% of the money received to go towards education and 80% towards "turn dirt" projects.

Since the founding of the St. Lucie tag, 15,000 signatures in favor of the tag are now required, 250 tags must be sold in the first year, a non-refundable \$60,000 application fee is assessed, and a marketing strategy must be submitted. The tag's appearance is very important in encouraging purchase, and Susan reminded the team that making the tag less expensive than some of the others will also help persuade the more financially conscious. Audrey offered to look into making this a part of the outreach program.

Evaluation and Selection Procedures – Paul Millar:

Paul Millar distributed handouts on the work of the St. Lucie River Issue Team. Both Biscayne Bay and St. Lucie River were a part of the SWIM Act. St. Lucie River has the highest species diversity of any area in the U.S. Five years ago, for 8 consecutive weeks, water needed to be released from Lake Okeechobee because of extremely high water levels, and the water in Indian River Lagoon nearly became fresh water. Fish were showing up with large lesions. The St. Lucie Issue Team was set up as part of the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force, after a public meeting presented intense anger and frustration over the degradation of the river. Local projects were identified to aid in the interim till the CERP projects come online. The work of the team helped identify about \$8 million for the area in the first year, and funding has been received every year since. The team recognizes the importance of research, but "turn dirt" projects are what receive funding. Money and projects are solicited from local and state agencies. 89 projects have been funded to date, 58-60% have been completed. He highly encouraged having groundbreakings and other publicity events whenever possible. The focus of their projects has been storm water since that has had the most dramatic effect.

A completed form and presentation are required for each project. Funding is received from the state and local counties. Funding is a 50/50 cost share between state and local dollars. A 1% sales tax in Martin County has also generated millions for the River. The estuary is in the best shape it has ever been in, and the Oceanographic Society's Report Card has been giving the River mainly A's and B's in the last few years. Oysters and sea grass are coming back, fisheries have increased, and water quality has improved.

An estuaries' program has also aided the lagoon. A lot of work on MFLs had already been done in the area as well. Sarah pointed out that sewage being dumped into the lagoon was the largest problem, which was easier to control than the problems in Biscayne Bay. Also, many of the "turn dirt" projects the St. Lucie River team has completed are projects that have already been done in Biscayne Bay. Julio added that there are 150,000 people to deal with versus the 1.5 million people around Biscayne Bay. This team owes a lot of its success to the fact that a lot of the work was done before they started. Government was persuaded to contribute to these programs by disseminating information to the local governments. Please visit the SFWMD Water Resource Advisory Committee (WRAC) web page of www.sfwmd.gov for more information on the St. Lucie River work. Julio will distribute a direct link to the site.

Schedule of meetings for remainder of 2002 – Rhonda Haag:

July 12th – Biscayne Nature Center

Fran brought up the concern that it is hard for people in industry to meet for a whole day, especially in a place that is not centrally located. Distant locations also prevent input from the public. Dave Friedrichs agreed with not having full day meetings, and added he would rather meet more often for a half day, then a full day once a month, he also

expressed a concern over the lack of public comment. Sarah suggested rotating the meeting locations throughout the area. Daniel suggested using this media event to launch evening meetings. Susan added for the evening meetings there needs to be a specific topic that is being discussed. Audrey suggested having the next set of project presentations at the special night meetings. Susan reminded the team that there are a number of public meetings related to this team for other projects.

Julio added that the location should coincide with the topic. Lloyd reminded the team that it is very hard to get people to show up to a public meeting. Dave agreed with Lloyd's comments, and added to his concerns that if a controversy arises, the team can respond that the public was informed on how to participate. Audrey suggested trying this model in the beginning of January when her outreach program will begin and a facilitator can be provided. She also agreed with having shorter meetings. Daniel said the first priority must be accomplishing the team's goals, regardless of how long the meetings take. He suggested having the meetings in the afternoon, with an evening meeting later the same evening.

Motion: Phil Everingham motioned the meetings be from 10a.m. – 1 p.m. with a working lunch on the third Friday of each month.

Cindy seconded the motion.

Lloyd voted against the motion

The motion passed

A friendly amendment was added that longer meetings will be held when needed, as determined by the Chair.

The motion then passed unanimously.

Future Meetings:

August 16, September 20, October 18, November 15, to be held at the SFWMD Miami Field Station.

The selection process will involve a public meeting. Rhonda requested that other BBRRCT members attend CERP and SFWMD meetings, and present issues important to the BBRRCT, so that Rhonda isn't the only spokesperson for the team.

The team will have representation at the September SFWMD Governing Board meeting and at the October WRAC meeting.

Evaluation and Selection Procedures for Next Year:

Lloyd requested having a fixed item for outreach and education. MJ reminded the team of Frank's advice that the legislature does not like to fund outreach programs, but Susan was unclear on whether he meant team outreach or public outreach. Rhonda reviewed the restrictions St. Lucie had, including a 50% match requirement and only allowing agencies and non-profits to present projects. They had a point system, with questions corresponding with 1 – 3 points.

Keith argued the St. Lucie River team's situation can't be compared to the Bay because most of their work was already done. Susan added that most of the obvious, cost-effective shoreline projects have already been done here. St. Lucie is a stage behind Biscayne Bay. Unfortunately, the Bay does not have the same resources as St. Lucie.

The following items were chosen for point determination:

1. Does it fit into the Charter or Action Plan (or B.B.P.I.)?

2. Are matching funds available (more points, but not a requirement) ?
3. Is there readiness to proceed (1 year funding – more points, but not eliminated if more than 1 year)?
4. Is the project a continuation of a previous year project?

The team discussed their ability to select a vendor. Deborah explained that this team isn't allowed to select which vendor each project is contracted out to unless the vendor is the only one that can provide the service. Theo said it would be next to impossible for a non-profit group to determine a project and find a 50% match over a year in advance

Susan added that she would prefer not to choose the vendor, rather that this team should decide which projects are necessary, and the SFWMD should choose the vendor. Daniel agreed that the purpose of the project presentations last year was to see which type of projects were needed, not to decide who the vendor would be for each project.

Process:

A Standardized form was accepted as a good idea, and will need to be developed.

Deborah explained the balance between Cooperative Agreements with federal, local, and non-profit agencies, and with competitive projects. Sarah expressed a concern that outreach and coordination, not funding, would be the focus of this team.

Rhonda requested forming a subcommittee, who would establish a selection process. This draft process would then be emailed out to the team before the next meeting. The report will be sent to Rafaela by July 3rd.

The subcommittee will be composed of the following team members:

Phil Everingham– chair; Daniel; Susan Markley; Deborah Drum; John Hulseley and Joan Browder will be members.

Action Plan:

Susan revised the draft based on the discussions of Meeting #9, but it still needs a lot of work. Please send all comments to Rafaela by July 3rd.

Announcements:

June 20th – Briefing on the Agricultural Study – University of Florida; Agricultural Center at 7 p.m. Cindy will send the website to Rafaela to distribute to the team.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:28p.m.