

**Science Coordination Group
Meeting Summary – Meeting #17
SFRPC
May 3, 2006**

Members Present

Cherise Maples	Peter Ortner	Greg May
Susan Markley	Terry Rice	Rock Salt
Joan Browder	Bob Johnson for Dan	Barry Rosen
John Volin	Kimball	Calvin Arnold
Ronnie Best	Bill Reck	Paul DuBow

Members Not Present

John Ogden	Greg Knecht	Richard Harvey
Ken Haddad	Lisa Beever	Dan Kimball

Staff, Speakers and Public

Bob Doren	Bob Cochran
Carrie Beeler	Vic Engle

ADMINISTRATIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS AND WHIPAROUND

The summary of the March 15, 2006 SCG meeting was approved by the group without objections.

Bill Reck explained that \$6 Million was funded to address emergency channel cleaning needed as a result of the 2005 hurricanes to reduce the possibility of flooding.

Barry Rosen explained the meeting mentioned in the March summary was now scheduled for May 15. The meeting will deal with seagrass responses in areas such as Ding Darling. After the meeting Governor Bush will be briefed. He said that the SFWMD hired an independent group who reported the dike around Lake Okeechobee had a 1 in 6 chance of failing. He noted that the Interim Regulation Schedule for the lake would be affected along with many other issues.

Paul DuBow announced that Colonel Grosskruger would be the next District Engineer. He has degrees from West Point and Iowa State.

Cherise Maples told the group that the tribe started a wildlife program. She noted that there was a lot of research started and that information will be available in the future. She also told the group that an ASR feasibility study was starting for the Indian Prairie Basin/Brighton Reservation.

Joan Browder recognized DERM and FWS for their participation on the team for the Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands TSP. She noted that the next step is to improve the cost of alternative "Q".

Peter Ortner told the group that the Vice Admiral of NOAA is committed to hurricane preparedness. He reported that approximately \$60 would be spent to quicken hurricane response times.

Greg announced the TF meeting would take place on May 17-18, 2006 at the Anne Kolb Nature Center. He reiterated that in 2004 the TF asked the SCG to develop recommended system-wide indicators for incorporation into the 2006 Strategy and Biennial Report. He said that Linda Friar would review the plan and discuss how the indicators will be incorporated. At some point in time he proposed that the SCG review the system-wide indicators, Interim Goals and Targets for CERP and performance measures. Bob said the indicator report was posted on the web. Rock reminded the group that the Task Force asked for the indicators to be developed in a public process and to be independently reviewed. He said the next step would be to track the indicators. Bob said the independent review was scheduled to be completed by May 15, 2006.

SYSTEM-WIDE INDICATORS

Bob reviewed the 14 proposed indicators for 2006 and reiterated the Indicator Report is on the web. He informed the group that Jeff Jordan is chairing the review (ISR). The new exotics indicator will be presented at the May 23 RECOVER meeting. This will help them to address concerns so that it can be incorporated into the RECOVER process. He said that work has started on the CEM. These will be published and a report card will be created. Bob gave an example of the stoplight tool they will use. John Volin explained to the group that he had handed it out to students in his class and they understood it. Joan asked about indicators for exotics in the Southern Estuaries and Bob said they will be doing an indicator for that region related to exotics. Joan said she will invite him to the Southern Estuaries team meeting on May 16. Bob said he would come and present the idea.

Rock asked how items could be added to the list noting that for 2006 exotics was the only non-RECOVER indicator. Bob said that the Roseate Spoonbill is on the list because Audubon made the recommendation to the SCG. Rock said that the goal was to understand who is responsible for each indicator. Susan explained that there are many things that we depend on for measurement that may or may not continue. Rock agreed but explained that if the indicator comes from a group involved in the TF, the SCG can go to the member and say we need this measurement to continue. He said that approach does not really apply to Audubon. Peter reminded the group that the list should not be too expansive. Joan was concerned that the SCG was not supposed to parrot CERP, but encompass the work already done. She explained that some indicators outside of CERP monitoring should be picked to add value. Rock noted that the group had a good process to screen out indicators and he suggested that rather than capping the list, to watch

growth instead and reevaluate when necessary. Joan agreed and noted that there were numerous regions and she didn't want to misrepresent them.

Susan thought that the group was supposed to have success indicators, not necessarily ecosystem-specific. Rock said the question is, "what are the things our bosses need to pay attention to as it relates to the built and natural systems during restoration?" Rock added that things that threaten restoration, i.e. exotics and contaminants need attention. Greg noted that the TF needs to be mindful of things beyond CERP and focus on all three goals. Bob explained that we don't know how to measure multiple things that we think are important as of yet.

Rock asked if there was the need for a workshop to try to develop additional indicators for goal 3. Some projects might be re-exposing contaminants and subjecting them to rehydration. Ronnie said that contaminants will be discussed at the GEER conference on Thursday. Joan Browder and Susan Markley were asked to be team leaders on contaminants and Susan said yes, but noted they will need bigger participation.

Ronnie explained that USGS has a new effort called portfolio modeling. It maximizes the function of the natural system and its contributions to community wealth. Land use is part of it, and how land use choices bring different things to the community. It is not just schools and roads that need to be built, but choices that effect flood control, water supply, etc. This process brings in economics and the "willingness to pay" concept.

Rock clarified that the current task is about identifying indicator that are vital to the success of restoration. Rock proposed he set up a meeting with Jim Murley to come up with a methodology for the compatibility indicators.

RECOVER LANDSCAPE SUBGROUP AND VEGETATION INDICATOR

John Volin explained that he used to be the chair of landscape module for MAP 2. The biggest challenge was to bring people from all over and get the communication started. The group was re-called in January 2006 and most recently met last week to develop a sampling plan and design for an indicator. Joan noted that this is larger than exotics. Rock asked if this will be an indicator for SCG. John said that it was not clear but ultimately he would like to develop one. Rock asked for a timeline guess. John replied that maybe by early 2007 and noted that he isn't the current chair so doesn't have power over the direction of team. John believes the smaller group and the new direction will make it possible.

Rock said that the ISR will be completed and then sent to the SCG, comments from the ISR will be incorporated and the final will go back to the SCG, and Linda will incorporate them into the Strategy and Biennial Report. He said that work on several indicators needs to be done the Vegetative Mosaic (John Volin), Contaminants (Susan and Joan), and (Rock and Jim Murley) for the Compatibility indicators.

STRATEGIC PLAN AND BIENNIAL REPORT

Linda referenced the report and the strategic plan. The Strategic Plan outlines how we are going to achieve restoration, while the Biennial Report tells what was accomplished in last two years. The Indicators were pulled out of the strategic plan because they were not current or peer reviewed. The SCG will be able to comment on a couple of drafts. Peter asked if we were planning to use the indicators to measure success in 2006. Linda believes that we will talk about the process that was used and present them with a reference to the documents the SCG came up with. Peter said the logical thing is to do the report card. Bob noted that they just designed the report card and it doesn't exactly fit for each one. Bob explained that they would have to make each one fit, then review, and then test. Linda said that she doesn't know what information would be available in time for the Biennial Report. Greg said that they will report on what is available. Linda is going to have a write up by the end of May and then back to the SCG by early June. Rock anticipated that the SCG would get comments back quickly and then meet in July to finalize.

TREE ISLAND PM

Vic Engle from Everglades National Park came as a guest speaker on Tree Islands. He discussed the following: 2-foot depth criteria background in tree communities; why it is important; new analyses: and the ENP PM.

Vic explained that the current depth constraints in 3B do not allow for equalization of depths across the landscape. This results in discontinuities in the water depths and flow patterns that do not match the ridge and slough landscape directionality. Depth constraints and potential harm to tree islands in WCA3B may preclude the restoration of historic flow patterns across the system.

He told the group that the PM is a depth envelope, but the ENP PM was used to evaluate hydrologic conditions around tree islands with different levels of species richness. He reported that the islands with the most species richness are in WCA 3A. Species richness is highest on islands with average high water conditions above those occurring in ENP, but only up to a point. It was noted that when talking about species richness in the tropical/temperate dominant species line you have to be cautious.

Vic went over the equation used for the RECOVER PM and how it was converted to the PM across the landscape. He stated that the water levels of the park compared to species richness didn't jive with the equation because the park had levels over 2 feet. The data suggest species richness is at its maximum when water levels are within 1 ft of the tree island surface for 25-40% of the time.

Vic summarized that water depths must increase in WCA 3B in order to achieve natural flow patterns; The currently applied Tree Island Performance Measures are a fundamental constraint on raising water levels in this area; A linear decline in species richness with water levels exceeding 2-ft (ABOVE2FT) is the basis for these PMs. New analyses showed optimum conditions for species richness occur when water levels are within 1 ft of the tree island surface for 25-40% of the time. Lower values of species richness are associated with high water conditions less than or exceeding this range and

these results agree with what is known about species' responses to environmental stressors. Joan suggested that in future research tropical and temperate species be divided to get the true richness. Rock noted that this was only one side of discussions going on and that additional discussions would be occurring at GEER.

PCS UPDATE AND SCHEDULE

Rafael and Bob plan to send something out the week after the May SCG meeting. The TF has asked to see draft and will be provided a copy. Susan noted that each module group participated in this and what we have is a merging of these discussions. Susan said she couldn't answer questions because she could not reconcile the needs, gaps and action. John Volin said that he discussed this issue at the last meeting. Bob explained the process. He said that Rafael went through and consolidated the list of needs, gaps and actions. Bob agreed to send Peter, Susan and Joan the Southern Estuaries sections and John will coordinate for Greater Everglades. Bob Johnson would like the information for the total systems. Rock said that right now the focus is on getting the text right. Susan thought there was a need for a non-RECOVER review of the needs and gaps. Rock is wants the list of actions to be a workable list. Rock stated that the actions don't currently provide a sense of what fixes the needs and gaps.

USING THE INFORMATION SHARING TOOL

Bob summarized that at the previous meeting he was tasked to develop an implementation team. He wanted to know if the group wanted them to approve action for development. Peter thought that RECOVER's data base might be duplicative. He said that the information tool could be viewed as redundant with map track. Bob explained that he and others have had detailed conversation with District, RECOVER and the Corps' IT people and they confirmed that this tool is not duplicative. Bob clarified that this tool is not a data base. All this tool does is go out and search existing database, then it puts the information into a transparent and user-friendly format. Rock asked Paul to go back to Jim Cobb and Jim Boone and see if the Corps would be interested in doing this. Peter suggested that Bob send the list of people he coordinated with to Paul.

QUALITY SCIENCE

Rock reviewed the previous SCG meeting request to drop the Quality Science from the PCS II. He noted that he saw quality assurances related to research, some monitoring, but not sure about modeling. Peter said that monitoring is hardly ever peer reviewed. Rock noted that having way too many performance measures is an example of the need for peer review in a collective way.

NEXT STEPS

Bob Doren is going to continue to work on the information sharing tool, finish the exotics indicator, and work to integrate any suggestions from the ISR.

Bob went over the potential list of SCG priorities for 06 and 07. Rock noted that there may possibly be a new list and asked the team if there were any other possibilities. Greg said the current focus should be to complete the current list of priorities and then

additional priorities could be proposed to the Task Force. Greg noted that the WG is using the same process and that it might be a good topic for a joint meeting.

Rock asked the group if there were any tasks from the list or not listed that they felt they should take on. Joan said to add waste water reuse to the list. Susan commented that she believed reuse would be solved as part of the county CUP and soon. Rock noted that the SCG mission is not restoration management; the question is, “are there bad things in reuse water”? Susan said there were but that current regulations don’t really address them. Rock said that the SCG should raise a flag on this issue then. Barry noted that the SCG has a full plate currently, but should revisit priority topic in 6 months.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Bob Cochran from the Art Marshall foundation posed questions to the SCG regarding what the SCG’s position of developing Northern Everglades CEM and for the Loxahatchee River. Bob said that this is more of a discussion that relates to the future of EAA. Peter commented that due to subsidence restoration of the EAA was found to be not viable however, there were discussions related to using the EAA for flow ways that may need to be revisited. Bob Johnson explained that doing a CEM for the EAA would be like doing a CEM for coastal ridge. Susan believes that there is a misunderstanding of what CEMs are. CEMs are tools that show how a system is working now, stresses on it, and consequences of the stresses. Bob Cochran said he was concerned with the whole idea of CEM as they related to the recognition of the EAA as a natural area. Peter explained that this group did not create CEMs, the group decided to use them to see if change going in predicted path. Bob said that if the EAA is developed CERP will fail. John Volin said that is the take home point - if the EAA doesn’t get some sort of protection from development then CERP is in jeopardy. Bob Johnson explained that Maximum Ecosystem Restoration Initiative. is looking at sugar industry. Rock made an announcement that the Corps is doing an analysis of storage and they are looking at the EAA as a possibility.

ADJOURN