

WG/SCG Planning Session

1/24/2023

MEETING FORMAT

- 2-Day Format:
 - Would allow time to meet separately on specific issues in addition to joint discussions
 - Recognizes the benefits/value of joint sessions on communication/coordination among members
 - Would provide time for agencies to share their projects/products
 - Would provide time to develop short-term products and address long-term needs
 - Provides more time for feedback and discussion
 - Could enhance coordination and awareness of efforts, particularly non-CERP issues
 - Would require concrete outcomes/products for the extra time spent
 - Important to maintain information flow between groups if meeting separately
 - Can be difficult for members/staff to attend
- Access:
 - Rotate meeting locations
 - Provide virtual access, particularly for 2-day meetings, to enhance member participation
 - Transparent and inclusive for stakeholders (agriculture, Tribes, Lake Worth Lagoon, etc.) and all levels of government
- Agenda Development:
 - Determine priorities and desired outputs and outcomes; that effort will then inform meeting format, agendas, etc.
 - Identify experts to attend and/or provide briefings on specific subjects/topics
 - Cyclical format to tackle different topics
 - USACE/SFWMD briefings possibly not needed at each meeting
 - Include updates on non-CERP projects and programs
 - Address hot topics and develop recommendations for the Task Force
 - Keep agendas simple and yet robust

COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION

- Agency programs/tools that have been underutilized or not previously brought on agenda
- Identify what restoration managers need and who can provide it (identify gaps in research funding/resources)
- Address questions driven by restoration that managers need answered to make decisions; possible workshop to hear from managers re: needs over next 5 years
- FCRCT: updates on team's efforts; discuss how to incorporate their efforts into RECOVER, etc.
- Move vision forward and continue forward planning
- Build on current funding and momentum
- Recognize gaps in overall ecosystem restoration effort and think about what's next; perhaps a workshop and develop a product for the Task Force

- Recognize efforts and programs that supplement/complement usual topics being discussed; develop recommendations for the Task Force
- Do a better job of looking inward at agency capabilities and resources, there is a lot of funding for project construction; recognize that small projects and efforts can help move the whole restoration effort forward
- Education and communication and coordination not mutually exclusive with product development
- Connect Tribal members with restoration process and further those relationships and understand reasons for conflict
- Incorporate and learn from Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge (ITEK): translation of ITEK; capture inputs & outputs
- Work with champions on the ground

PRODUCTS

- Inventory of agencies/funding being spent on science/monitoring/etc.
- List of interagency groups/teams that focus on a topic or water body, etc. and what are their goals/objectives
- Inventory of ongoing science and research; would facilitate better coordination and communication
- Generate consensus documents on difficult issues (climate change, ITEK, social science, indicators still trending downward, etc.)

TOPICS BY GOAL AREA

- Goal 1:
 - Move water south
 - Water quality consistency with rules across the system (upstream and downstream)
 - Address changes in Lake Okeechobee (nitrogen limited)
 - Special use districts need to be included in CERP discussions
 - Recognize that operationally systems are being pitted against each other (e.g., Lake Worth Lagoon)
 - Water quality
 - Muck management: canal system accumulations impact water bodies downstream
 - New science, innovative technologies: how to get additional storage and water quality treatment needed especially if limited by land acquisition
 - Impacts of hurricane on modeling and timing of change; needs constant analysis due to change in baselines
 - Integration of CERP and non-CERP; could have a 2-day meeting to determine science planning on how to incorporate non-CERP projects/plans/activities with CERP
 - Have the SCG help RECOVER to extend to areas not currently covered (northern part of the system and impact on the coast)
 - CERP:
 - How can WG/SCG expedite USACE feasibility studies?
 - How can WG/SCG help work through difficult issues (WERP, LOWRP, BBSEER)

- The Southwest Feasibility Study had been put on backburner, look at what has come out of that (WERP) and identify what else is needed
- Goal 2:
 - Habitat restoration
 - Plant communities expertise to support native animal species
 - Land management and invasive species: follow through on TF directions
 - System-wide changes, plant community changes, short- or long-term impacts; look beyond water quality monitoring
- Goal 3:
 - Holistic view, ecosystem as a whole
 - Consider projects beyond engineering; need to enhance system functions for users, those dwelling in system
 - Restoration isn't occurring in a vacuum; the built environment keeps growing/expanding causing impacts on resources (FWC has a report that could be informative)
 - Economic benefit analyses by CHNEP
 - Goals and objectives for developed areas, including socioeconomic benefits; being aware of that interaction; bring in experts from developed/agricultural areas to see what they are seeing that would be relevant to this forum; recognize shared outcomes and benefits
 - Local government perspective: need to be part of the solution
 - Local land acquisition/conservation efforts: how do those dovetail with overall restoration effort
 - Provide expert/group opinion on land use issues and impacts on restoration project footprints

CLIMATE CHANGE

- How to capture climate change in modeling/evaluation tools beyond sea level rise
- Need to consider secondary effects inland
- C&SF Resiliency project: briefings and coordination
- Impacts on ecology and indicator species
- Plant communities: leading indicators as they are the first to change with climate change and sea level rise
- Opportunity to incorporate new climate change/sea level rise projects to leverage funding
- How to provide CERP benefits under changing climate; the restoration effort is based on storage, how is that impacted by climate change? How can restoration still provide benefits?
- Needs for further research and science
- Resilience needs to be thought about at all times (e.g., socioeconomic benefits to neighboring communities)

CISRERP RECOMMENDATIONS

- Science Plan
 - Important for the science to be the underpinnings of the decisions being made
 - A science plan could be a useful tool if everyone participates in the process

- Keep the document short; the briefer and more focused it could be on the core elements, the more successful it will be
- Should have a system-wide perspective
- Conduct science with an indigenous perspective; the perspective of someone who will be here when the project is over, who will live with the project and continue to nurture the ecological system upon which their life depends
- RECOVER already has a plan; already have positions across our agencies and already have coordination on science through the SCG
- Plan must be comprehensive; include RECOVER and non-RECOVER science
- Needs to incorporate non-CERP efforts into the process
- Recognize that the benefits of CERP will not be realized if non-CERP projects are not put in place correctly
- Learn from the RECOVER monitoring survey
- Look at what is already within RECOVER and can be utilized
- Answer questions driven by restoration that managers need to make decisions, possible workshop to hear from managers re: science needs over next 5 years
- Timeline with 5-year turnaround may not be realistic; perhaps 10 years
- Needs to be coordinated/feed into the IDS while recognizing that the science plan is not going to be a nimble document
- Recognize that science informs us in other ways, it is not just to build projects (peat collapse and keeping peat wet is important); science can influence daily decisions including operations
- Scientific needs document generated by pre-SCG group; can look to that for format and what questions remain 30 years later
- Science plan development will need to know who's doing what for best efficiency
- Keep it practical; focused on the near term
- Incorporate what we've learned since the last Plan for Coordinating Science: seepage management, invasive species (how they spread, how they behave); algae blooms
- New information needs to be incorporated into a programmatic science approach
- Lead Scientist Role
 - Discussed having a full-time person who would report to the WG/SCG
 - Look at other lead scientist models, such as the California Bay Delta