

1 **FLORIDA’S CORAL REEF COORDINATION TEAM**

2 **Charter**

3 **1. AUTHORIZATION:** Section 528(f)(2)(E)(i) of Public Law 104-303, the Water Resources
4 Development Act of 1996, enacted October 12, 1996, authorizes the South Florida Ecosystem
5 Restoration Task Force (Task Force) and the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Working
6 Group (Working Group) to establish such advisory bodies as are necessary to assist the Task
7 Force in its duties, including public policy and scientific issues.

8
9 **2. BACKGROUND:** In response to the recent losses of large, framework-building corals due to
10 **Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease (SCTLD)**, which followed decades of concerning declines in
11 coral cover along Florida’s Coral Reef, an ad hoc Florida **SCLTD** Response effort led by the
12 State of Florida and federal agencies was launched in 2017 involving dozens of partners from
13 government, academic, non-profit, and private organizations. While the Florida **SCLTD**
14 Response focuses narrowly on establishing the cause of SCTLD, identifying effective
15 interventions, and conserving the genetic diversity of Florida’s corals, a formal mechanism for
16 effectively coordinating federal, state, and local interests in the complex task of restoring
17 Florida’s Coral Reef is lacking.

18
19 Consistent with Task Force Strategic Objective 2A2, which promotes the protection of
20 Florida’s Coral Reef, including through restoration of more natural timing and delivery of
21 freshwater flows to coastal estuaries, coral reef habitat and associated patch reef, hardbottom,
22 and seagrass resources are recognized as ecologically and economically important components
23 of the South Florida ecosystem~~As ecologically and economically important components of the~~
24 ~~South Florida ecosystem, Florida’s Coral Reef and associated patch reef, hardbottom, and~~
25 ~~seagrass resources should be restored, preserved, and protected consistent with Task Force~~
26 ~~Strategic Goal 2A2.~~ The implementation of Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan
27 (CERP) projects and other region-wide restoration activities may have significant impacts
28 (positive or negative) on Florida’s Coral Reef and its restoration potential, as well as the
29 efficacy of current management and SCTLD response interventions, through expected changes
30 in freshwater flow quality, quantity, distribution, and timing to nearshore coastal waters within
31 the South Florida ecosystem. Meanwhile, large-scale restoration of Florida’s Coral Reef may
32 provide an unparalleled opportunity to enhance the resilience of coastal wetlands and the
33 southern Everglades, and to insulate billions of dollars of state and federal investments in
34 Everglades restoration from future impacts associated with storm surge and sea level rise.
35 Ultimately, the successful restoration of these two interconnected national treasures within the
36 South Florida ecosystem can only be accomplished through focused, formal coordination
37 among local, state, and federal agencies, and must be informed by consultation and public
38 engagement with a diverse group of stakeholders.

39
40 **3. MISSION:** The mission of this Team is to regionally integrate and coordinate management
41 and restoration-related activities to conserve and restore Florida’s Coral Reef and associated
42 resources to protect, sustain, and enhance the South Florida ecosystem’s ecological and
43 aesthetic character, function, and resilience. This will be achieved in the context of ongoing
44 anthropogenic disturbance through the implementation and completion of South Florida
45 Ecosystem Restoration projects, programs, and related activities.

46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65
66
67
68
69
70
71
72
73
74
75
76
77
78
79
80
81
82
83
84
85
86
87
88
89

4. RESPONSIBILITIES: The Team shall serve as the principal advisory body to the Working Group and Science Coordination Group for issues impacting Florida’s Coral Reef and associated resources. Specifically, the Team shall:

- a. provide an open and inclusive forum for interagency coral reef ecosystem management coordination and communication.
- b. identify and evaluate opportunities to facilitate, integrate, and enhance monitoring and data collection efforts across Florida’s Coral Reef and adjacent coastal waters.
- c. enhance data accessibility to foster collaboration across agencies and improved decision-making.
- d. adopt and refine restoration goals specific to Florida’s Coral Reef and associated resources consistent with the strategic goals of the Task Force, and assess progress towards achieving those goals.
- e. identify and coordinate capabilities across agencies for coral reef management and restoration-related activities to conserve and restore Florida’s Coral Reef and associated resources.
- f. review components of CERP for impacts to Florida’s Coral Reef and offer recommendations to secure or enhance the delivery of project benefits to Florida’s Coral Reef and associated resources.
- g. coordinate as necessary with coral-related Technical Advisory Committees, the Florida SCTL D Response leadership, the Southeast Florida Coral Reef Initiative, and the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Water Quality Protection Program (WQPP) to avoid duplication of efforts.
- h. inform the development of statutorily-mandated Task Force reporting products.
- i. message the importance of Everglades restoration as a critical element of protecting, sustaining, and enhancing Florida’s Coral Reef and associated resources.
- j. assist the Office of Everglades Restoration Initiatives (OERI) in the development and maintenance of informational and educational web content on [Florida’s Coral Reef](#) and the activities of the Team.
- k. produce the following deliverables:
 - I. a collaborative framework for water quality monitoring along Florida’s Coral Reef.

90 II. recommendations for ecological indicators and RECOVER performance measures
91 specific to Florida’s Coral Reef and associated resources to be considered by the Science
92 Coordination Group.

93
94 III. any other items as requested by the Working Group or Science Coordination Group or
95 as deemed necessary or beneficial by the Team.

96
97 **5. MEMBERSHIP:** The Team consists of 9-10 voting members and 9-10 non-voting members.

98
99 a. The VOTING membership shall consist of (1) a sState member of the Working Group
100 designated as Chairperson, and 8-9 designated representatives from the following agencies and
101 governments authorized to represent that agency’s or government’s interest on matters
102 pertaining to the responsibilities of the Team:

103
104 **Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.**

105 (2) National Ocean Service, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, Florida Keys National
106 Marine Sanctuary.

107 (3) Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research, Atlantic Oceanographic and
108 Meteorological Laboratory.

109 **Department of the Interior.**

110 ~~(43)~~ National Park Service, South Florida Natural Resources Center.

111 ~~(54)~~ Fish and Wildlife Service, Florida Keys National Wildlife Refuge Complex.

112 **Environmental Protection Agency.**

113 ~~(65)~~ Region 4, Water Division, South Florida & Everglades.

114 **Florida Department of Environmental Protection.**

115 ~~(76)~~ Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection.

116 ~~(87)~~ Division of Environmental Assessment and Restoration.

117 **Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.**

118 ~~(98)~~ Fish and Wildlife Research Institute.

119 ~~(109)~~ Division of Marine Fisheries Management.

120
121 b. The NON-VOTING membership shall consist of (1) the OERI Executive Director as a
122 Special Advisor, and 8-9 designated representatives from the following agencies and
123 governments authorized to represent that agency’s or government’s interest on matters
124 pertaining to the responsibilities of the Team:

125
126 **Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.**

127 (2) National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Fisheries Science Center.

128 **Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers.**

129 ~~(32)~~ Jacksonville District, Planning and Policy Division, Environmental Branch.

130 **United States Geological Survey.**

131 ~~(43)~~ Natural Hazards Mission Area, St. Petersburg Coastal and Marine Science Center.

132 **South Florida Water Management District.**

133 ~~(54)~~ Water Resources Division.

134 **County environmental resource agencies.**

135 ~~(65)~~ Broward County.

- 136 (76) Martin County.
- 137 (87) Miami-Dade County.
- 138 (98) Monroe County.
- 139 (109) Palm Beach County.

140

141 c. The listed subagency representation for federal and state agencies designated as (a) voting
142 and (b) non-voting members are optional recommendations for developing a well-rounded
143 Team.

144

145 ed. Designations for members shall be made by an appropriate authority within each agency to
146 the Executive Director in writing.

147

148 de. Designees may name an alternate in the event they are unable to attend a meeting, in full
149 or in part, by notifying the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson prior to or during that meeting.
150 Alternates in attendance are not proxies and may not vote on any matter before the group.

151

152 ef. The Working Group shall select one of its sState members to serve as Chairperson of the
153 Team. The voting members of the Team shall nominate and recommend one of its federal
154 members with voting responsibilities to serve as a Vice Chairperson subject to Working Group
155 approval. ~~The Vice Chairperson may not represent the same level of government (state or~~
156 ~~federal) as the Chairperson.~~ The terms of the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson shall not
157 exceed two years unless otherwise approved by the Working Group. The Vice Chairperson
158 shall serve as Chair in the absence of the designated Chairperson.

159

160 **6. ADMINISTRATION:**

161

162 a. The Team shall serve in an advisory role to the Working Group and Science Coordination
163 Group, and not as a direct granting or operation agency.

164

165 b. The Team shall not supplant agency authority or have any regulatory authority.

166

167 c. The work of the Team shall be consistent with the authorities of all managed areas across
168 Florida’s Coral Reef, including state parks, ecosystem conservation areas, aquatic preserves,
169 national parks, national marine sanctuaries, and national wildlife reserves.

170

171 d. A majority of the voting members then serving shall constitute a quorum provided that at
172 least three federal and three state designees are present.

173

174 e. The goal of the Team shall be to share information, coordinate activities, and build
175 consensus among its members. Where consensus is unattainable, a minimum two-thirds
176 majority vote is required for final Team action, and actions other than final actions may be
177 taken by a simple majority vote.

178

179 f. The Team may adopt additional principles, operational guidelines or procedures to facilitate
180 the accomplishment of the responsibilities described in this Charter, provided those protocols
181 are consistent with this charter and Working Group and Science Coordination Group guidance.

- 182
183 g. The Team shall meet at the call of the Chairperson or of a majority of the voting members,
184 but not less often than quarterly.
185
- 186 h. The Team may create, reorganize, or dissolve subgroups of its members to study specified
187 issues or work on tasks, and to report to the Team as a whole, subject to Working Group
188 concurrence.
189
- 190 i. If a voting member (either the designee or alternate) misses three consecutive meetings, their
191 status may be suspended from voting member to non-voting member, subject to Working
192 Group concurrence, and until such time as the organization they represent names another
193 designee or alternate, or the voting member subsequently attends three consecutive meetings
194 to reinstate voting privileges.
195
- 196 j. There is no term limit for designees. Each designee serves at the pleasure of the designating
197 authority.
198
- 199 k. Any vacancy on the Team shall be filled in the same manner in which the original
200 designation was made and subject to the terms of this charter and Working Group concurrence.
201
- 202 l. The Team shall ensure that all meetings and workshops, including those of its subgroups, are
203 open and accessible to the public, including by providing advance notice of meetings,
204 providing adequate opportunity and designated time slots for public input and comment,
205 maintaining appropriate records, and making a record of the proceedings of meetings available
206 for public inspection. As an advisory body established by the Working Group, the Team, like
207 the Working Group, is not considered an advisory committee subject to the Federal Advisory
208 Committee Act, and it may seek advice or input from interested, knowledgeable, or affected
209 parties without being subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act, pursuant to section
210 528(f)(3)(C) of the Water Resources Development Act of 1996.
211
- 212 m. The Team and its subgroups may seek the advice of any non-Team member through formal
213 invitations to present at meetings or participate in workshops.
214
- 215 n. The OERI will provide staff support to assist the Team and to maintain its records.
216
- 217 o. This Charter shall sunset 5 years after its effective date unless renewed by the Working
218 Group.