



# SOUTH FLORIDA ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION TASK FORCE



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**Working Group/Science Coordination Group Meeting  
February 25, 2020**

**Draft Task Force Action Items**

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# Draft Task Force Action Items

- At their October 29, 2019 meeting, the Task Force requested a list of action items/obstacles where the Task Force could be useful in forging paths forward.
- The WG/SCG conducted a workshop session at their December 4, 2019 meeting to develop a draft list of near- and long-term action items.
- A final list will be brought to the Task Force in May 2020.

# Draft Task Force Action Items

- The December WG/SCG brainstorming session resulted in a list of items that have been categorized as follows:
  - Process Suggestions
  - Science/Technical Suggestions
  - Policy/Funding Suggestions
- **Today's goal:** Further refine list so a final “Top 5” can be brought to the Task Force at their May 2020 meeting.

# Process Suggestions

- Utilize the Task Force's problem-solving capacities to develop a list of action items.
- Look to Committee on Independent Scientific Review of Everglades Restoration Progress (CISRERP) reports.
- Action items should be at the appropriate level for the Task Force. Some may overlap with the current list of WG/SCG priorities, but the action items need to focus on the Task Force.
  - Note: Current WG/SCG priorities include Invasive Exotic Species and the System-wide Ecological Indicators that will be discussed later.

# Science/Technical Suggestions

- **Seepage management**, specifically what is not captured within existing projects. Accelerate S-356 expansion. Bringing more water to Everglades National Park requires better seepage management. Reduce gaps between related projects moving water south such as Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP) features that are not yet included on the Integrated Delivery Schedule (IDS).
- **Threatened and Endangered Species**: monitoring is project-specific, need to have a discussion regarding comprehensive monitoring throughout the South Florida Ecosystem. Would long-term monitoring keep projects moving? With over 70 listed species, it would be complex. The USFWS is still exploring a conservation strategy for snail kites; it could be a model for other species. Requires additional annual monitoring and flexibility. Each species is different and evaluated differently. Uncertainty as to fit for Task Force priority.

## Science/Technical Suggestions, Cont.

- **Project integration:** Linking the Combined Operational Plan (COP) to CEPP; CISRERP reports to where we are now; etc. CISRERP wants more integration.
- Highlight integral steps required for progress (**project linkages**).
- **Lake Okeechobee System Operating Manual (LOSOM)** analysis: it's critical for the health of Lake Okeechobee and the local economy, but impact is far greater than local impacts.
- WG/SCG need to consider **how we assess progress** on the ground beyond construction underway.

# Policy/Funding Suggestions

- Look at **programmatic-level funding** instead of project specific. Currently in O&M for each project, a Biological Opinion is required. The Corps would like to move to system-wide monitoring yet need to abide by specific authority to do so.
- **Invasive Exotic Species:** The Task Force could assist with 1) funding, e.g., interagency funding for Early Detection/Rapid Response (EDRR) team and 2) bolstering regulatory authorities, e.g., amendments to the Lacey Act.
- **Funding sources:** The Critical Ecosystem Studies Initiative (CESI) program is beneficial but resources are spread too thin. Perhaps what is needed is a companion program to this Department of Interior funding stream.

## Policy/Funding Suggestions, Cont.

- **Partnerships:** Seek opportunities for engagement with other groups/agencies. Ex. Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) partnership on Tamiami Trail. Local governments. Look to expedite projects through partnerships.
- **RECOVER** had a 58% cut in funding in 2011. Ask the Task Force to look at other resources to restore that funding. With more projects underway, need to get a system-wide perspective.



# Discussion

