

## CHARTER, South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Science Coordination Group

1. AUTHORIZATION. Section 528(f) of Public Law 104-303, the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1996 (hereinafter referred to as the Act), enacted October 12, 1996 and amended by WRDA 2020 and WRDA 2022, established the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force and assigned several duties, including the coordination of scientific research and other restoration activities. This charter establishes the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Science Coordination Group (Science Coordination Group) to assist the Task Force in carrying out those duties.

2. MISSION. The mission of the Science Coordination Group is to support the Task Force in its efforts to achieve, in cooperation with all interested parties, the restoration, preservation and protection of the ecosystem while promoting a sustainable South Florida.

3. DUTIES. The Science Coordination Group is established to support the Task Force in its efforts to coordinate the scientific aspects of policies, strategies, plans, programs, projects, activities, and priorities, pursuant to section 528(f)(2)(B) of the Act, as amended, and to coordinate scientific and other research associated with the restoration of the South Florida ecosystem, pursuant to section 528(f)(2)(G) of the Act, as amended.

a. To assist the Task Force in its duties the Science Coordination Group shall develop for Task Force approval:

(1) A draft science coordination plan that tracks and coordinates programmatic-level science and other research, identifies programmatic level priority science needs and gaps, and facilitates management decisions;

(2) Specific responses to priority work activities assigned by the Task Force.

b. To assist the Working Group in fulfilling its duties to the Task Force, the Science Coordination Group will provide the scientific related aspects of the draft biennial report, the draft strategic plan, draft integrated final plan and draft total cost report.

4. POWERS. The Science Coordination Group may, at the direction of the Task Force:

a. Establish advisory bodies necessary to assist the Science Coordination Group or the Task Force in their duties, including advisory bodies on scientific issues, in accordance with the intent of section 528(f)(2)(E)(i) of the Act, as amended.

b. Seek advice and input from any interested, knowledgeable, or affected party necessary to perform its duties.

5. MEMBERSHIP.

a. To enhance the integration of science and management the Science Coordination Group shall represent an appropriate balance of senior managers and scientists appointed by the Task Force member for their respective agencies. Membership shall consist of a senior representative from the following agencies and governments authorized to represent that agency's or government's interest on matters pertaining to the responsibilities of the Science Coordination Group:

Department of the Interior.

(1) National Park Service.

(2) Fish and Wildlife Service.

(3) United States Geological Survey.  
 Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.  
 (1) National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Fisheries Science Center.  
 (2) Ocean and Atmospheric Research, Atlantic Oceanographic and  
 Meteorological Laboratory.  
 Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers.  
 Environmental Protection Agency.  
 Department of Agriculture.  
 (1) Natural Resource Conservation Service.  
 (2) Agricultural Research Service.  
 Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida.  
 Seminole Tribe of Florida.  
 Florida Department of Environmental Protection.  
 Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.  
 Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.  
 Office of the Governor / State of Florida.  
 South Florida Water Management District.  
 Representatives of local governments or regional entities comprised of local  
 governments.  
 Chair, Working Group (non-voting).

b. The Executive Director, with the concurrence of the Science Coordination Group Chair and Vice Chair, may appoint additional non-voting representatives from agencies and Tribes to the Science Coordination Group. Non-voting members shall serve for an initial term not to exceed one year but may be reappointed for additional one-year terms.

c. Any vacancy on the Science Coordination Group shall be filled as specified below:

- (1) Each Federal member of the Task Force will appoint the Science Coordination Group representatives for that department or agency.
- (2) Each chairman of a Tribe represented on the Task Force shall appoint that Tribe's representative to the Science Coordination Group.
- (3) Each State member of the Task Force, including the member from the South Florida Water Management District, will appoint the Science Coordination Group representative for that department, agency, or district.
- (4) The Governor will appoint the Science Coordination Group representative for each State department or agency listed in subsection (a) not represented on the Task Force.
- (5) Each local government member of the Task Force may appoint one representative to the Science Coordination Group.
- (6) The Governor may appoint one representative of a local government or a regional entity comprised of local governments to the Science Coordination Group.
- (7) Appointments to the Science Coordination Group shall be made by notifying the Executive Director in writing. Upon receipt, the Executive Director shall forward the notification to the Task Force Chairperson and the Science Coordination Group Chairperson.

- d. Each member of the Science Coordination Group serves at the pleasure of the appointing authority.
- e. Any member of the Science Coordination Group may designate an alternate for a meeting by notifying the Chairperson or Executive Director prior to or during that meeting.
- f. A member or alternate shall receive no additional compensation for service on the Science Coordination Group, in accordance with section 528(f)(4) of the Act, as amended.

## 6. ADMINISTRATION.

- a. The Task Force will appoint one of the Science Coordination Group members as Chairperson and one as Vice Chairperson, for such terms as the Task Force may select. The Vice Chairperson will serve as Chairperson in the absence of the Chairperson.
- b. The Chairperson of the Science Coordination Group, with the assistance of the Task Force Executive Director, is responsible to the Task Force for the management of the affairs of the Science Coordination Group and for reporting to the Task Force on Science Coordination Group activities.
- c. The Science Coordination Group may create, reorganize, or dissolve subgroups of its members to study specified issues or work on tasks, and to report to the Science Coordination Group as a whole.
- d. The Chairperson of the Science Coordination Group will normally brief the Task Force on its activities at each Task Force meeting. The Chairperson shall bring to the Task Force for its consideration matters the group believes are relevant to the Task Force mission, including problems or differing agency positions that have a material and substantial impact on the implementation of shared ecosystem goals or programs.
- e. The Science Coordination Group shall implement procedures to facilitate public participation in its meetings or functions and those of its subgroups. Those procedures shall include providing advance notice of meetings, providing adequate opportunity for public input and comment, maintaining appropriate records, and making a record of the proceedings of meetings available for public inspection, as required by section 528(f)(3)(A)(i) of the Act, as amended.
- f. The Science Coordination Group will follow the adopted Task Force Protocol regarding Consensus and Voting. The goal of the Science Coordination Group will be to build consensus among its members. Where complete consensus is unattainable, a two-thirds majority vote of the members present will suffice for final Science Coordination Group action, and actions other than final actions may be taken by a simple majority vote of the members present.
- g. The Science Coordination Group may adopt additional principles, operational guidelines or procedures to facilitate the accomplishment of the duties described in section 3 of this Charter, provided those protocols are consistent with the Act, as amended, and Task Force guidance.
- h. The Science Coordination Group shall meet at the call of the Chair or of a majority of the members, but not less often than quarterly.
- i. A majority of the members or alternate members then serving will constitute a quorum.
- j. Travel expenses incurred by a member of the Science Coordination Group in the performance of services for the Science Coordination Group shall be paid by the agency,

Tribe, or government that the member represents, as provided in section 528(f)(5) of the Act, as amended.

k. The Science Coordination Group is not considered an advisory committee subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act, and it may seek advice or input from interested, knowledgeable, or affected parties without being subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act, pursuant to section 528(f)(3)(C) of the Act, as amended.

l. Any advisory body selected or established by the Task Force, and any individual advisor recognized by the Task Force, may also render advice to the Science Coordination Group without further action by the Science Coordination Group.

m. The Executive Director of the Task Force shall advise the Science Coordination Group on behalf of the Task Force and will assist the group in carrying out its administrative and procedural duties, including the requirements in section 528(f)(3)(A)(i) of the Act, as amended. The Executive Director of the Task Force will advise the Science Coordination Group on behalf of the Secretary of the Interior regarding those responsibilities of the Secretary specified in the Act, as amended.

n. Actions, recommendations, votes, or discussions by the Science Coordination Group shall not be construed to limit the discretion or to override the decisions of any government or agency represented on the Science Coordination Group. Nothing in this charter compromises or restricts the authority or power of any government or agency.

7. **COORDINATION WITH THE WORKING GROUP.** To assist the Task Force in its duties to coordinate the development of consistent policies, strategies, plans, programs, projects, activities, and priorities for addressing the restoration, preservation, and protection of the South Florida ecosystem, pursuant to section 528(f)(2)(B) of the Act, as amended, the Science Coordination Group will communicate and coordinate with the Working Group to identify and provide to the Task Force and Working Group recommendations pertaining to science as it affects policy and management activities in support of Everglades restoration.

8. **PERSONNEL.** The Executive Director of the Task Force shall provide staff support to the Science Coordination Group, and may request the assistance of any member or the staff of such member.

9. **AMENDMENT.** This Charter may be amended by the Task Force. Any member of the Task Force may propose an amendment by submitting the proposed changes in writing to the Executive Director. All members of the Task Force shall be notified of the proposed amendment, and adoption of the amendment by vote may be held at least thirty days after notification. The approval process will adhere to the Task Force Protocol on Consensus and Voting, which requires a two-thirds majority vote of the Task Force.

10. **TERMINATION.** The Science Coordination Group shall continue to exist only for so long as it is authorized by Federal law.

By the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force: Shannon Estenoz, Chair

Attest: Adam Gelber, Director

Date: April 19, 2024