

# Draft Public Outreach Management Plan

## Executive Summary

### Overview

Public outreach is a process by which interested and affected individuals, organizations, agencies and other governmental entities are informed of a project and its goals, and have the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process. The purpose of this draft Public Outreach Management Plan is to provide a framework for the program-level public outreach activities that will accompany and support implementation of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP). This plan defines the general scope, schedules, costs, products and funding requirements necessary for the first 5 years of outreach activities. The proposed budget for this first phase of activities is \$9.2 million. Activities and budgets for future years will be determined before the end of the current planning horizon.

### Why the Public Needs to be Get Involved with the CERP

Implementation of the CERP has the potential to affect the lives of all South Floridians and represents a major investment of public funds in the future of the region. This \$7.8 billion effort is designed to restore, preserve and protect the world-famous South Florida ecosystem and meet other key water resource needs of the region. The comprehensive plan offers major benefits for the environment as well as agricultural and human users. It enhances water supplies and promotes a sustainable economy for the region.

The CERP outreach program is designed to provide the public with timely information and extensive opportunities to participate in the planning and implementation of Everglades restoration. The outreach program recognizes that special efforts will be required to reach the diverse communities that compose South Florida, ensuring that neither language nor socio-economic barriers are allowed to interfere with communications concerning the CERP.

### Public Outreach Processes and Goals

Public Outreach for CERP has a number of goals:

- Increase general public awareness and support for the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan with effective outreach activities, including environmental education.
- Involve stakeholders, agencies, Tribes and other interested communities in the CERP decision-making process to incorporate public values into the program.
- Develop and implement outreach strategies to better serve minority communities, persons with limited English proficiency and social-economically disadvantaged individuals.
- Provide focused outreach activities for traditionally underserved communities, especially those that may be affected by the project.

- Improve the substantive quality of decisions as a result of public participation.
- Increase trust in public institutions.
- Reduce conflict among interested and affected parties by building consensus on emerging issues.
- Provide effective internal communications and support for individual project teams to increase efficiency and provide support and guidance for project-level public participation activities.

### “Program-level” versus “Project level” Outreach

There are two levels of activities in CERP. There are project specific activities for each of the components, such as the construction of a reservoir or other site-specific facility, or the removal of a canal or levee. There is also a broader level of activities know as the program level that stretch across project lines and address the restoration effort in a broader sense, including system-wide issues.

This is the management plan for the program-level public outreach activities. These activities are those that tend to transcend individual project lines or features. They deal with informing the public about the CERP in general, including issues that occur across projects, such as social and economic equity or technical issues such as water quality. On the other hand, for each individual project component there will be a separate public outreach plan targeted at informing and engaging individuals, groups and governments that are interested in that particular project feature.

### The Scope of the Public Outreach Management Plans

The strategy for the public outreach program builds on the outreach activities that began with the C&S F Project Comprehensive Review Study (the “Restudy”). For the CERP, these activities have been organized into the following task groups:

- Public Information;
- Public, Stakeholder and Agency Involvement;
- Outreach to Minority Communities;
- Outreach to Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Individuals;
- Internal Management and Communication; and
- Evaluation and Assessment of Outreach Activities.

Within each major task group, a number of individual tasks have been described.

### Status of the Public Outreach Management Plan

This draft plan has already undergone extensive public review. Public comment was received through a series of eight focus group meetings and individual and small group briefings. This current draft incorporates revisions to the plan based on this input. This draft will be posted on the Internet, and will be presented at six public workshops in June 2001. The plan will be revised again, based on the public workshops. A final draft will be presented to the SFWMD and the Corps in July 2001 for final approval.