



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P. O. BOX 4970
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32232-0019

15 MAY 2006

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

Planning Division
Environmental Branch

To Whom It May Concern:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Jacksonville District, is requesting your assistance in gathering information that will help define issues and concerns to be addressed in an Environmental Assessment (EA) being prepared for the L-31 N (L-30) Seepage Management Pilot Project (SMPP) located along L-30 north of Everglades National Park (ENP) in Miami-Dade County, Florida. The EA document will be packaged with the Pilot Project Design Report (PPDR). Section 601(d) of the Water Resources Development Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-541) authorizes several ecosystem restoration activities recommended by the Central & South Florida (C&SF) Comprehensive Review Study (*Restudy*). The L-31N Seepage Management Pilot Project was one of the studies recommended in the *Restudy*.

The objective of the L-31 N (L-30) SMPP is to investigate seepage management technologies to control seepage from ENP and use the resulting data in the full-scale implementation of the proposed project features. Seepage management measures will be necessary along the L-30 and L-31 N canal boundary with WCA-3B and ENP to address seepage issues related to the onset of other Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Projects within the next five years. A seepage management feature located along L-31 N would reduce some seepage but the L-31 N site is located within an area that may be modified under the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), which could then render it less useful for long term effects. Therefore, the L-30 site would be available for potential long term use.

The project area for the Pilot will include portions of the western right-of-way for the L-30 Canal, downstream of structure S-335 (see enclosed figure). An initial scoping letter for the L-31 N Pilot site was sent out August 16, 2002. This new scoping letter is being sent to inform the resource agencies, stakeholders, and public of the relocated project area along a portion of the L-30 Canal. The pilot project will evaluate alternatives based on their ability to reduce water seepage from ENP while allowing sufficient freshwater flow to the Miami-Dade West Wellfield and Biscayne Bay. The alternatives will also be evaluated by additional performance criteria, which will be developed by the Project Delivery Team. Among the alternatives to be considered are reducing levee seepage flow across L-30 via a levee cutoff wall and reducing groundwater flows during the wet season by capturing the groundwater with a series of wells adjacent to L-30, then back-pumping the water to ENP.

The EA will address the following issues: socio-economic resources, flood protection, aesthetics, recreation, fish and wildlife resources, threatened and endangered species, cultural resources, water quality, and other impacts identified through scoping, public involvement, and interagency coordination. Additional considerations that will be taken into account are costs and compatibility with other projects included in the CERP, as well as non-CERP projects.

We welcome your views, comments, and information about the above project, as well as any plan options for consideration. If you know of others who may wish to comment on this activity, please advise them of this request for public comments. Letters should be addressed to the letterhead address to the attention of Planning Division, Environmental Branch, South Florida Section, within 30 days from the date of this letter. If you have questions, please contact Ms. Carrie Bond at 904-232-1061 or by email at Carrie.L.Bond@saj02.usace.army.mil.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marie G. Burns". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Marie G. Burns
Chief, Environmental Branch

Enclosure