

**CERP – ACME Basin B Discharge Project
Pre-FSM Stakeholder Meeting (Environmental Groups)
September 19, 2003**

To: Attendees:

Ellen Underwood, South Florida Water Management District
Kathy Collins, South Florida Water Management District
Jerry Grubb, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers
Michael Davis, Keith and Schnars Consultant Team
Marie Ecton, Keith and Schnars Consultant Team
Rick Olson, Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge
Mindy Gautieaux, Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge
James Erskine, Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida
Rosa Durando, Audubon, Palm Beach County Chapter
Erin Deady, Audubon of Florida
Lisa Interlandi, Environmental Land Use Center
Cynthia Plockelman, Florida Native Plant Society

From: Keith and Schnars Consultant Team

Handouts: Agenda
Alternatives Considered from Previous Studies
Summary of alternatives Screening Process

An ACME Basin B Discharge Project (ABBDP) Stakeholder Meeting was held Friday, September 19, 2003 at the South Florida Water Management District Headquarters in West Palm Beach, Florida. The meeting focused on providing Environmental Groups in the ABBDP study area an update on the alternatives screening process as part of the Pre-Feasibility Scoping Meeting (FSM) schedule of project activities. An initial 21 alternative scenarios were screened to eight. Implementation of the expedited strategy paper further screened alternatives scenarios down to a set of three for evaluation in the Project Implementation Report (PIR).

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Jerry Grubb, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) project manager kicked off the meeting with introductions and stated the purpose of the meeting was to update the Environmental Groups on project activities and get their input on the three project alternatives remaining as a result of the initial screening process.

DISCUSSIONS

Kathy Collins, South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) project manager stated a great deal of information on the project is available to support the rationale used in the alternatives screening process. Jerry Grubb provided a clear description of water flow patterns and features of Alternatives 1A, 1B and 1C – the three remaining alternatives to be evaluated in the PIR.

Kathy Collins described the preparation for the FSM and asked for comments from stakeholder groups to be incorporated into the process.

Rosa Durando had questions about Alternative 2A, 2B and 2C. Jerry responded that these had been screened due to a need for flood attenuation in the project design. Jerry described the conceptual design for Section 24. Rosa questioned if there are many outlets to C-51 or the primary C-1 route to STA-1E. Kathy responded with a statement that the project team would have to model the three remaining alternatives to determine the optimized flow route.

A question was asked about conveyance in Alternatives 3A and 3B. Jerry stated that these two alternatives had been screened based on the economic feasibility of a small STA next to STA-1E (i.e. from an efficiency standpoint). James Erskine asked about whether it was an economics or water quality determination? Jerry responded both and the use of best professional judgment. James asked why 2A, 2B, and 2C were screened. Jerry responded a constructed wetland on Section 24 lands was needed to provide flood attenuation during peak events. Kathy added that the proposed wetland would also have partial water quality treatment in addition to habitat benefits.

Michael Davis described the flood protection level of service issue as described in the Water Resources Development Act of 2000. Rosa stated that ACME Basin B is in a state of flux i.e. experiencing a change in land use. How can you have a handle on flood protection needs? Michael Davis explained the level of service is based on existing conditions as of December 11, 2000.

Rosa asked whether the proposed design for Section 24 to handle flood storage would be enough to support future land use in the area. Jerry reiterated the level of service for CERP projects was established in WRDA 2000. Rosa said when that was established, there wasn't the amount of impacts in Basin B (currently very active); they were promised 13' control elevation, doesn't think Section 24 is big enough to satisfy flood protection. Rosa is also concerned about the amount of demand since December 2000, and wants to see more spatial extent of flood protection, 400 acres is not enough. Rosa asked whether the project alternatives included a dike around Section 24.

Michael Davis replied that the USACE has no authority under CERP to provide additional flood protection (i.e. protection beyond that in existence on December 11, 2000). Rosa asked what the future holds. Lisa Interlandi stated it was not the ABBDP responsibility to provide flood protection for future land use changes. Rosa commented

on the extended length of horse season in the future – floor and road elevations (want to see cooperation with VOW and project) re: future land uses, what will happen in emergency condition (failing septic); jeopardize health of people, can't lower control elevation fast enough operationally. Kathy said that she understands Rosa's concerns; however, these issues are outside of the scope of the ABBDP. It is possible that the ABBDP will have incidental flood benefits as currently proposed.

Michael Davis described the concept of a "locally preferred option" provision by the USACE. Lisa Interlandi stated the VOW hasn't indicated their intent to exercise this option.

Rosa asked if the ABBDP includes a proposal to dismantle pumps 1 and 2. Kathy responded to say this is a regulatory/permitting issue and would be addressed in the operational plan component of the ABBDP. Rosa was disappointed when SFWMD approved Section 34 permit last week; concerns about after-the-fact permitting pattern in Basin B. Kathy stated her appreciation for Rosa's concerns. Lisa Interlandi doesn't want CERP project to pay for an increase in flood protection level of service.

Kathy asked Rosa if she liked the plans (3 alternatives carried forward). Rosa said yes, but thinks Section 24 isn't big enough. Lisa Interlandi asked if the project would stack the water if needed and Kathy said we are looking at options and Keith Jones thinks it may hold 4 feet, if needed. Rosa asked if previous studies were looked at and Kathy said yes they were the original studies reviewed. Rosa asked how much land was needed and Kathy replied that they are looking at extended duration within the existing footprint only.

James Erskine asked about the future of pumps 1 and 2? Kathy responded that this is not a part of the project plan. Is there a clear statement in project documents to support a goal of not having pumps 1 and 2 operational? Lisa and James suggest that it needs to be written into the plan because the contingency is still there. Kathy stated that there is a need to make assumptions clear. Kathy and Jerry agree to clearly state assumptions of pump 1 and 2 not being operational as part of the PIR.

James Erskine had a question about STA-1E. Jerry said originally the Burns and McDonald conceptual plan for STA-1E proposed land acquisition between C-1 and STA-1E (i.e., expanded distribution cell, STA-1E is now larger than was designed and therefore should have more treatment).

James Erskine also asked what the water quality is when it exits from ACME Basin B. Kathy replied that in coordination with Damon Meiers (SFWMD) they will have to update the DMSTA model on the tentatively selected plan based on all current information available through monitoring of BMPs and the STA-1E performance. James Erskine had concerns on water quality and whether Section 24 is designed for water quality treatment? Jerry and Kathy responded that Section 24 would not be designed as a treatment area. James had concerns about water quality going into the Refuge downstream and saturation in Section 24. Jerry stated that the majority of the time

Section 24 would have 2-3 feet of water including littoral zones. Jerry described the meeting on September 15th with the Refuge and agrees with their concerns to look at monitoring data on STA-1E.

James addressed pumps 1 and 2 and asked what the real purpose of Section 24 is? Kathy stated its purpose was flood attenuation and ecological benefits. If it is determined the ABBDP has to provide additional flood control, Lisa recommended the ABBDP project managers look at other lands to acquire for flood storage and then use Section 24 as wetland. Lisa asked about the status of the project? Kathy described the FSM plan formulation/track and upcoming January 2004 meeting. Project documentation for the FSM is being undertaken concurrently with the alternative modeling and evaluation tasks. The project would commence design prior to the completion of the PIR. Kathy could not determine at this time if project build out is on the fast track for 2006 and they are using the current PMP schedule for the PIR phase. No changes to the schedule will be done until the tentatively selected plan is identified.

Kathy said that once they have the tentatively selected plan, she and Jerry would start writing PMP for the design. Jerry said they have an early work letter to begin PIR work ahead of the normal process. James Erskine asked at the final alternative selection stage, who makes the decision? Kathy said Project Delivery Team recommends to SFWMD and USACE and will also have stakeholders and public outreach input.

James Erskine asked would the DMSTA model be used. Kathy responded that H/H modeling would be performed at the project-level and DMSTA model results would be used for modeling the tentatively selected plan. Is there water quality monitoring? Kathy described the three PDT subteams, including water quality. James asked if there was any consideration of the 21 original scenarios for adding Section 24 to STA-1E. Jerry said one of the original alternatives included a bolt-on option to add acreage to STA-1W. James said he thought having a wetland was a great idea, but not sure how the public would have use of a constructed wetland. Kathy stated that the VOW would like to have access and the USACE can consider 10 percent of project cost for parks and recreation. Kathy said Section 24 might be more appropriate for recreation. James suggested adding a feature into the Section 24 design for a recreational, multi-use wetland of benefit to the community.

Jerry said that ABBDP cannot “diminish capacity of STA-1E” as made clear in the Interagency Meeting on September 15, 2003. James stated that moving water in a reverse flow route could potentially be an issue when current legal matters concerning the Everglades Forever Act are challenged. Rosa concurs and has concerns similar to James regarding the bolt-on and PSTA operations.

Lisa asked what the time frame for the modeling of alternatives is. Kathy replied the modeling tasks could possibly commence prior to the end of 2003. Erin asked when will there be a draft PIR? Kathy responded April or May of 2004. Erin asked if that would include 30 percent of the design and specifications at the same time. Kathy replied only the draft PIR would be available and they would be working on the design after the draft

PIR. Erin said the design would have a faster turn around and asked why not get final approval of the PIR before going to the design phase? Both Kathy and Jerry said it was to expedite to project completion date, but will make sure everyone is informed on when that part of the project is undertaken.

Rosa says the existing canals are ACME Improvement District (AID) and asked who was responsible for the canal improvements and who will pay? James asked if there was information available on C-1. Kathy replied that a survey of the C-1 canal would be completed. Jerry added that SFWMD and VOW would have maintenance and control responsibilities once the project was completed. Lisa said VOW will need to have cost-share once the tentatively selected plan is decided; potentially 25 percent of total project. Lisa asked what if VOW doesn't pay. Kathy said that SFWMD has an agreement to partner with VOW.

Erin asked when they would see answers to questions on impacts to STA-1E. Jerry replied after H/H modeling they would perform DMSTA on the tentatively selected plan. Kathy stated the project would not go forward if they have a negative impact on the performance of STA-1E. Erin asked how she defines "negative" and when will they see an evaluation of alternatives on STA-1E? Jerry said they would only do once since the tentatively selected plan and all alternatives have the same effect. Lisa stated that due to the funding constraint of the project it would seem best to want to determine the affect of all 3 alternatives on STA-1E. It may be a waste of time if you have not evaluated other options to STA-1E.

Jerry reiterated that based on the level of confidence in the results of the BSFS, the ABBDP would move forward with evaluation of the three remaining alternatives as proposed. Kathy added that current monitoring data would be available; STA-1E will come on line in 2005 and information would be available; and the DMSTA model would be available for the tentatively selected plan with recent information. Erin didn't understand why you wouldn't model ACME impact on STA-1E up front. Were Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 modeled? Jerry said they were only going forward with 1A, 1B and 1C. Kathy stated the BSFS looked at 1A, 1B, and 1C. James asked if BSFS made a clear statement of results. Jerry and Kathy replied the BSFA assumed higher loads than they are actually seeing.

Lisa asked what assumptions are made before you model the affect of ACME Basin B in STA-1E? Jerry stated that sampling data in the canals i.e. the load from Basin B and partial treatment benefits from Section 24. Rosa asked what the predicted ppb goal is. Kathy responded it won't be designed for treatment and that they will first do H/H modeling before you know water quality to determine reduction in loads. Rosa asked if existing canals could handle the 1B or 1C alternative flow routes. Would you use CERP money to improve canal system in the VOW? Kathy responded that the specifics of optimizing the existing canal system would be coordinated with the VOW. Jerry added that the flood protection level of service issue and required canal improvements is part of

the project cost. James asked about the land use on Section 24. Kathy described it as agricultural lands.
Jerry and Kathy adjourned the meeting.