

**To:** Attendees

**From:** HDR Engineering, Inc.

**Date:** September 5, 2002

**Subject:** Indian River Lagoon – North Feasibility Study  
Meeting Summary - August 28, 2002

**Attendees:** See attached.

**Handouts:** Agenda  
Performance Measures  
Hard Copy of - Indian River Lagoon North Restoration Feasibility Study PDT  
Meeting Power Point Presentation

**Presentation:** Debbie Peterson  
Troy Rice

The first Indian River Lagoon – North Feasibility Study PDT meeting following the approval of the Project Management Plan (PMP) was held from 1:00-5:00 PM on August 28, 2002 at the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) Field Office in Palm Bay, Florida.

A team member from the SJRWMD made a quick announcement that the Indian River Swim Plan is available for downloading from [http://www.sjrwmd.com/irl\\_swim\\_plan.html](http://www.sjrwmd.com/irl_swim_plan.html) or <http://www.sfwmd.gov/or/wrp/wrp>. A 45-day review period is in effect and the team anticipates completing a final draft by December 2002.

## **INTRODUCTION, AGENDA, AND TEAM MEMBERS ROLES**

Debbie Peterson, of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Planning Technical Leader to the PDT, introduced herself and asked everyone present to sign the roster being passed around the room. She announced to the team that the Indian River Lagoon – North Feasibility Study (IRL-N FS) Project has been authorized and may begin preparing the study. She encouraged the team to look forward to a cooperative and collaborative interagency effort. Debbie also announced that Steve Robinson, former USACE Project Manager for the project, had stepped down on August 1<sup>st</sup>, and that Pete Milam is the new USACE Project Manager.

## **STATUS/UPDATE**

Debbie gave an overview of the meeting agenda and used a PowerPoint presentation to illustrate the project purpose, goals, authorization, and summarized project activities to date. She reminded the team that this was the first meeting since the PMP was approved, and that the PMP is a dynamic document that can be updated. She was not sure if the PMP was available on the public website yet, <http://www.evergladesplan.org>.

The meeting goals for today were identified as: 1) Update, 2) Performance Measures and, 3) Sub teams. Debbie stressed that she would like to see the team spend more time on a solid movement forward on the performance measures and the creation of sub teams. Debbie reminded the meeting attendees that the project team is subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). She presented a slide indicating that the PDT consisted of federal, state, local, and tribal government representatives and time has been allotted at each meeting to allow for public input and commentary. Speaker registration cards were provided at the entrance to the conference room.

Debbie informed the team that the study is authorized by Section 309 (I) of WRDA 1992, but that the Restudy did not permit thorough investigation of all regional water resource problems of the Central and Southern Florida (C&SF) Project. Therefore, Section 528 (b) (1) (C) of WRDA 1996 authorizes continuing the studies necessary to further the objectives of CERP and provide for water needs of the region served by the C&SF Project.

The primary study purpose is: *Ecosystem restoration while meeting water resource needs of area*. The project area is located in eastern central Florida. The Indian River Lagoon North project includes Indian River, Volusia, and Brevard Counties. The Indian River South Project includes St. Lucie and Martin Counties. Debbie then briefly described the Standard Corps Project Development Process and how the Feasibility Study fits into the process. The Feasibility Study is comprised of: 1) Plan Formulation, 2) Economic and Environmental Analysis, 3) Engineering Design, 4) Water Quality Analysis, 5) Real Estate Analysis, and 6) Supplemental NEPA activities. Debbie explained that the study would build upon previous and ongoing projects in the region.

Debbie gave the team a summary of the project goals. She asked the team to review the goals and identify how the performance measures refer back to the project goals.

*Goal: Enhance Ecological Values*

Objectives:

- 1) Reduce excessive freshwater inflows and pollutant loadings to the IRL.
- 2) Improve water quality in the IRL.
- 3) Improve habitat for IRL biota, with emphasis on seagrass.
- 4) Increase spatial extent and functional quality of SAV and watershed wetlands.
- 5) Increase functional quality of native upland habitat.
- 6) Maintain/improve diversity and abundance of native plant and animal species, including State, Federal and local listed species.

*Goal: Enhance Economic Values and Social Well Being*

Objectives:

- 1) Maintain or improve water supply.
- 2) Maintain or improve flood protection.
- 3) Improve opportunities for tourism, recreation, and environmental education.
- 4) Enhance commercial and recreational fisheries, and associated industries.

## **FOCUS AREAS**

Troy Rice, SJRWMD Project Manager, gave an overview of the focus areas in the project. He discussed the project preference for using land currently available, public lands, and lands in existing acquisition areas/projects. Troy explained that current concentrated acquisition efforts are ongoing in the Northern and Central IRL region. Modeling has begun in upland areas already acquired. Troy noted some restoration approaches the study would consider, e.g. reservoirs, stormwater treatment areas and restoring historical drainage patterns.

The study will also be looking at Causeways and removing some fill around the causeways in order to improve conditions in the IRL. The Florida Department of Transportation and Brevard County have recently completed a hurricane vulnerability study of the causeways.

Another component of the IRL-N FS will be to assess muck dredging in the IRL. Debbie displayed a slide illustrating the many muck areas that need to be dredged along the coastline and the barrier islands down to Vero Beach.

## **PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

Debbie asked the team to refer to the hardcopy of the performance measures she distributed and to comment on them.

A team member from the SJRWMD noted that some of the things listed on the handout are not really performance measures. In some cases, performance measures listed in the handout are also in the SWIM plan and efforts should be made to ensure that the measures are compatible. Another member from the SJWMD offered that in the SWIM plan, the measures were expressed in terms that included targets (numeric values) or indicated the intent to develop targets at a later date. He offered to find examples from the SWIM plan for the next meeting.

A team member agreed that the PDT should make sure to develop measures that can be quantified and analyzed. Many of the measures are not presently written that way.

A team member asked Debbie to define what a performance measure is in the USACE context. Debbie assigned the task to find the USACE definition and bring it to the next meeting. A team member reminded the PDT that there is a definition for performance measures in the CERP documentation. Debbie suggested that the team members from the SJRWMD and the DEP draft the language for the performance measure standards.

Joel Steward, SJRWMD, gave a brief synopsis on how the team arrived at performance measure targets. They used a basic model assumption that the water quality target was linked to a seagrass target. They used either water depth or light requirements to develop a seagrass target, and then they established the water quality target. He noted that the targets are basin specific on attenuation. Joel further explained that in order to relate it to concentrations there are new models under development.

Debbie suggested that the first sub team should be one to define performance measures. She suggested that Bob Ulevich, Joel Steward, and Greg Graves would be good members for that sub team.

A representative from the Merritt Island Wildlife Refuge (FWS) noted that some of the study goals listed in the presentation are not represented in the performance measures. She thought the team should address if they would or would not include those goals. For example, the last two goals listed under ecological values, and the second to last goal on social well being do not have performance measures directed at them. In addition, the team needs to define what “functional quality” is. She also noted that environmental education is not mentioned in the performance measures, but is a social component of the study.

A team member from Brevard County asked if there were any focus areas in the region that drains into the Eau Gallie River or Turkey Creek. She thought it was unfortunate that these areas were being left out.

Troy and Debbie explained that in order to access federal funding, there needs to be a USACE-made project (stemming back from flood control projects in the 1940s) to which is tied environmental problems that would not have occurred in the absence of the historical flood control project. Improvements in other areas in the lagoon are not necessarily tied to USACE projects. If there is Congressional interest, additional restoration can be done.

A team member suggested looking at the natural storage potential in the County lands and using the strategy of water storage to facilitate restoration in areas outside the project alternative areas.

The Brevard County representative did not feel that it was clearly stated to the stakeholders that a link to previous USACE projects was a requirement for consideration in the project area alternatives.

Greg Graves, of FDEP, suggested that a Water Quality Committee could draw from the recently completed Comprehensive Integrated Water Quality Study. Cynthia Irving is the USACE contact. This Study has explored some of the funding issues and may serve to assist the team.

A team member mentioned that some analysis on the salinity issues in the Banana River should be included in the study. He suggested looking for local and state level government cooperative agreements in helping to spur federal interest.

A team member added that if building retention areas was one of the project’s goals, then the term “functional quality” needs to address how impacting a native upland area does not meet this goal. Putting a reservoir in pasture is not related to this. In that case, using native to describe pasture is using the wrong word.

Debbie reminded the team that unfortunately, the USACE could not buy land for purposes of conservation. It must be used for restoration projects by building on it, using for storage, but cannot remain as a preserve.

A team member representing the NOAA noted that nothing was stated in the goals or performance measures about the relationship of the lagoon to the coastal ocean, only how the uplands are affecting the lagoon. NOAA has 3 years of data on natural fluctuations of sedimentation in the project area and has a data collection site at the entrance to the IRL, another off Ft. Pierce, and in Miami-Dade County. These data could supplement a base data set. The team member from the SJRWMD added that they have baseline data for 12-20 years on the IRL but is not sure if it's comparable.

There was some discussion concerning the inclusion of listed species. A team member said that RECOVER has developed plans for species such as migratory birds, non-game birds, and kites. Some guidance on numerical species targets would be offered with these plans. Debbie added that a species related measure could be incorporated in the wetlands performance measures.

Troy Rice (SJRWMD) suggested that an ecology sub team could best address species measures.

## **SUBTEAMS**

On that note, Debbie pointed out the sample performance measure lists that were distributed earlier. The sub teams suggested on the handout were:

- 1) Water Quality
- 2) Ecology
- 3) Water Control (Flood protection)

The team decided to add a Modeling sub team as well. Debbie mentioned that a Water Control District sub team should be created and convened to coordinate efforts and alternatives as well as performance measures. Debbie asked the team how they feel about the proposed sub teams. Were there any to add? Troy offered adding a Local Government sub team. Debbie asked for volunteers for the sub teams. Debbie asked if there are team members with expertise on ecology, and other disciplines to comment on measures. Individuals from SFWMD and SJRWMD could offer experts and would assign these tasks.

A team member brought attention to the fact that there are two types of items to illustrate performance; there are performance measures and performance indicators. Measures are what you make decisions on but indicators are descriptive, such as “we don't know how to model X”. Greg Graves, FDEP, suggested that everyone send in their ideas and they would discuss them at a performance measure sub team meeting and sort through them.

Troy listed the following proposed sub teams on the board:

- 1) Modeling
- 2) Water Quality
- 3) Ecology
- 4) Water Control Districts
- 5) Water Supply/ Flood Control/ Recreation
- 6) Local Government

## 7) Performance Measures

A team member asked if Water Control Districts could be combined with Local Government? Troy said no, but Bob said at some point there would need to be coordination. Debbie stressed that to convene the Water District sub team, was the next most important priority.

Debbie asked the team to send their performance measures to Troy by September 13<sup>th</sup>.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

Time was allotted to give the public attendees a chance to participate and comment. A representative from the Nature Conservancy offered suggestions on how this was offered at meetings. He said that although he knows that there is a limitation as to how public can provide input, the team might want to offer public comment at the end of each agenda item. With reference to land acquisition he suggested that the team consider broadening the search for currently acquired lands parcels to other public and conservation lands, not just to SJRWMD lands. There are many kinds of acquisition programs. With reference to the modeling of nutrient and muck sources he heard some discussion about limits or boundaries provided in the plan. He suggests trying to identify the whole range of sources. With reference to biological performance measures and listed species, are there important keystone species or communities that can be included in the measures that can serve as indicators?

A team member representing the Fish & Wildlife Commission (FWC) noted that care could be taken to identify the impacts that restoration will have on other species and their habitat. For example, once you flood areas where you put the loading of contaminants into the treatment areas – how will it affect waterfowl? There may exist information to address this. Debbie added that the NEPA process would also address issues of this nature.

## **FUTURE ACTIONS / NEXT MEETING**

The team scheduled a performance measure meeting for September 24<sup>th</sup> at 9AM to convene at the same location.

## **ADJOURN**

### **Attachments**

- Sign-in Sheet
- Presentation
- Handouts
  - Performance Measures
  - Agenda