Everglades Restoration Problems, Remedies, Process 1988 – 2010

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Everglades Restoration Problems, Remedies, Process

- Setting & History
- Problems & Remedies
 - Water Quality
 - Hydrology
 - Integration
- Decision-Making Process
- Challenges



- Lake Okeechobee

• Everglades Agricultural Area

Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge

Everglades Water Conservation Areas

Everglades National Park

Florida Bay

Water Quality Problems

- Nutrient Enrichment (focus), Mercury, Pesticides
- Adverse Impacts on Water Quality, Vegetation, Wildlife Habitat Caused by Excessive Phosphorus Loads
 - Agricultural Runoff (500,000 acres)
 - Lake Okeechobee Outflow
 - Urban Runoff (Minor)
- Problem, Goals, Technology Realtively "Easily" Defined (vs. Hydrologic Restoration) Using Phosphorus as Surrogate & Simple Models
- Resource: Global Experience in Defining and Solving Nutrient Enrichment Problems in Wetlands, Lakes, Rivers, But:
 - Extreme Scale
 - Extreme Sensitivity of Ecosystem (Low Assimilative Capacity)
 - Potential Conflicts with Other Management Objectives & Restoration Goals

Water Quality Problems (ct.)

- Restoration Effort Triggered Largely by 1988 Lawsuit Settled in 1991
- Significant Progress Made over 1991-2010 Period
- Reasonably Functional but Controversial Decision-Making Process
- Challenging Goal: Reduce Inflow P from ~170 ppb to ~10 ppb.
- Further Remedies Being Developed Jointly (Another Settlement?)
 - Additional P Controls (Agric Practices, Treatment Wetlands)
 - Integration with Hydrologic Restoration (Finally!)
- Courtroom Battles Continue & Are Occasionally Productive

Hydrology Problems

- Adverse Impacts on Wildlife Habitat Caused Mainly by
 - Impoundment of Natural Marsh to Provide Flood Control
 - Drainage to Support Agriculture & Urban Development
 - Changes Inflow Volume and Timing
 - Changes in Water Depth and Hydroperiod (% Wet vs. Dry)
- Problems, Goals, & Remedies Relatively Difficult (vs. WQ)
 - "Natural" Conditions Estimated from Complex Hydrologic Models
 - "Flashy" Hydrology
 - Diverse Hydrologic Needs (WCAs, ENP, Florida Bay, Estuaries)
 - Flood Control and Water Supply for Agric & Urban Areas
 - Conflicts with WQ and Wildlife Management Objectives

Hydrology Problems (ct.)

- Reasonably Dysfunctional Decision-Making Process
- Lots of Big Ideas, but Limited Restoration Accomplished (Research, Water Level Regulation, Buffer Strips, Kissimmee River Wetland Restoration)
- New "River of Grass" Initiative Offers Some Hope
 - Opportunity to Purchase Large Tracts of Agricultural Land
 - Projects: Storage, Treatment, Flow Distribution, Operation
 - Integration with Water Quality Remedies
 - Improved Design & Decision-Making Process

Everglades History – the problems



The "River of Grass"

- Vast shallow wetlands
- "Ridge and Slough" landscape of water lily sloughs, sawgrass ridges & tree islands
- Sheetflow
- Low nutrients
- Relatively low species diversity with "hotspots"
- Abundant fish, birds, and reptiles



Ecological Diversity of Native Everglades Marsh







Central & Southern Florida Project (1948 – present)

Purposes:

- Flood control
- Water supply
- Navigation
- Prevent salt-water intrusion to Aquifers
- Fish & wildlife conservation
- Drain Marsh to Promote Agricultural Development
- "Everglades Reclamation"



Natural vs. Altered Flow Patterns



An Ecosystem in Trouble

- Too much/too little water
- Everglades half of original extent
 impoundments block flow
- Massive reductions in wading birds
 down 90-95%
- Degradation of water quality
- Extensive expansion of cattail
 and 1.5M acres exotics infestation
- Repetitive urban water shortages and salt water intrusion to aquifers
- Declining estuary health
- 67 Threatened & Endangered species



Predrainage landscape was a product of unimpeded flow





Source: Sklar et al., 1999



Landscape changes in the River of Grass Due to Impeded Flow



Intact ridge & slough

ridge &

slough

1940 Tree Island Map

22,000 acres of tree islands in WCA3



1995 Tree Island Map

More than 60% of the 1940 islands disappeared



The Central & Southern Florida Project



DETAILS:

- 10 locks
- 200 water control structures & pump stations
- 720 miles of levees
- 1,000 miles of canals
- 700,000-acre Everglades Agricultural Are
- Water Can Flow in Both Directions NOTE:
 - System designed for 2 million people
 - Currently there are <u>6.5 million</u> people in South Florida.

Wetlands Adjacent to Developed Areas Most Susceptible to Adverse Water Quality & Hydrologic Impacts





Landscape changes in the River of Grass Due to Nutrient Pollution

Cattail replacing sawgrass & slough (open-water) habitat in phosphorus-enriched areas



Native vs. Enriched Marsh Loxahatchee Refuge Visitor Center Exhibit







Structure Flows WY 1978 - 1991



Structure TP Loads WY 1978 - 1991

Flow-Weighted-Mean P Concentrations Water Years 1978-1991 vs. 1992-1996





Structure TP Loads

&

Marsh Frequencies TP > 10 ppb

WY 1978-1991

Water Quality Restoration

Water Quality Restoration Triggered By Federal vs. State Lawsuit, 1988-Today Settlement Agreement 1991

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, et al.,

Plaintiffs,

vø,

CASE NO. 88-1886-CIV-HOEVELER

SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT; TIMER E. POWERS, Interim Executive Director, South Florida Water Management District; FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION; and CAROL M. BROWNER, Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Regulation, et al.,

Defendants.

Agreement: "To restore, preserve and protect the unique flora and fauna of the Everglades National Park and the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, to maintain a cooperative relationship in accomplishing these goals, and to settle and resolve the disputes that have arisen between and among them without admitting or conceding liability"

1991 Settlement Agreement Research, Monitoring, Compliance

- Interim (2001-2003) and Long-Term (2006) Restoration Requirements
- Monitored by Technical Oversight Committee Reporting to Legal/Policy Team
- Establish Numerical Phosphorus Criterion (10 ppb)
- Restore Federal Waters to 1978-1979 Conditions
 - Loxahatchee National Refuge Marsh
 - Everglades National Park Inflows
- Achieve Compliance with P Criterion Throughout the Marsh (Long-Term)
- Develop Technology, Modeling, Data Analysis Tools
- Monitor Ecological Responses Balance Restored?
- Provide Clean Water to Allow Hydrologic Restoration without Adverse Water Quality Impacts

Ecological Changes along the WCA-2A Gradient



Statistical Models For Measuring Progress & Compliance



1991 Settlement Agreement Phosphorus Control Measures

- Phase I Phosphorus Controls to be Implemented by 2001-2003
 - Best Management Practices (BMPs) to Reduce Farm Runoff P Loads by 25%
 - Wetland Stormwater Treatment Areas (STAs) to Reduce Marsh Inflow TP Concentrations from 170 to 50 ppb (43,000 acres)
 - Achieve 80-85% Overall Reduction in P Load to Marsh
- Phase II P Controls to be Completed by Dec 2006 [Now ? >2016 ?]
 - Implement Additional Control Technology (BMPs, STAs, etc.)
 - Achieve Compliance with P Criterion Throughout Marsh
- Replace Reductions In Flow Caused by Implementation of BMPs

Phase I Control Program



Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs)

Regulatory Program 25% Reduction in Basin Runoff P Load ~250 Farms on ~500,000 acres Implemented 1995 Achieving ~50% Reduction Overall Varies from 0% to 70% by Basin

Stormwater Treatment Areas (STAs) 50 ppb Interim Target for Marsh Inflows ~43,000 acres, Constructed 1994 – 2006 Cost ~\$700 Million State/Private Cost Share Overall ~70% Load Reduction Achieving 20 – 80 ppb vs. Baseline 170 ppb Long-Term Requirement ~ 10 ppb Planned Expansion to Total 57,000 acres Additional Measures Needed to Achieve 10 ppb

EVERGLADES Best Management Practices P R O G R A M South Florida water management district

- Basin Area ~500,000 Acres
- Objectives
 - Implement BMP's!
 - 25% Reduction in Basin P Load
 - 1979-1988 Baseline
- Regulatory Rule Effective 1995
- Monitoring Program
 - •Farm Inspections
 - Weekly Composite Sampling
 - Basin-Scale ~35 Sites
 - Farm-Scale ~200 Sites



Tracking EAA Total P Loads



TP Loads Adjusted to Average Rainfall Objective: 25% Load Reduction vs. 1979-88

Monthly Outflows & TP Concentrations at 4 Major EAA Pump Stations, 2000-2009


TP Concentrations & Trends in Runoff from Individual Farms



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

Background – Existing Treatment Areas

- Existing STAs: 44,900 acres, including 16,500 ac in STA-3/4
- Under construction: 11,500 ac
- Total: 56,500 ac Forecast flow ~1.7 million AF/yr into the Everglades (900,000 – 3 million AF/yr; with EAA Reservoir A1)
- Comp A ~34,000 ac

sfwmd.gov/riverofgrass



Stormwater Treatment Area 1 West Constructed 1994-1999 Area 6,670 acres



South Florida Water Management District Regional Hydrologic & Water Quality Database

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Complex Ecological Models for Research & Forecasting System-Wide Responses to Changes in WQ & Hydrology But Not for Design of P Remedies



Simple P Mass Balance Models Have Been Useful For Designing STAs & Predicting Marsh Responses



Number of Calibration Parameters

3

5

7+

1

Treatment Area Model



Solid arrows are water and phosphorus fluxes. Dashed arrows are phosphorus fluxes only.

> 80 Platforms Used in Calibration & Testing Daily Water & P Balances, .01-150 km², 1-30yrs











Treatment Area Vegetation Types

Emergent / Cattail

K ~ 10-15 m/yr



K= First-Order P Removal Rate

Enhanced P Removal



Submersed Aquatic Vegetation "SAV" K ~ 30-60 m/yr



Periphyton / "PSTA" K ~ 20-30 m/yr

State's Long-Term Plan for Achieving Compliance with Phosphorus Criterion



- Time Frame 2003 2016+
- Adaptive Management Framework
- Integration with Hydrologic Restoration
- Monitoring / Research Components
- Modeling / Engineering Components
- Current Plans Not Projected to Meet Goals
- No Clear "Completion" Date
- The Legal Dispute Continues...

Long-Term Trends in Structure TP Concentrations Flow-Weighted-Means, 1980-2009



Long-Term Goal for Entire Marsh ~ 10 ppb

TP Concentrations & Trends at Long-Term Monitoring Sites, 2000-2009





Treatment Area Performance Thru June 2007



Tracking Responses to Everglades Phosphorus Controls, 2000-2009 Data Adjusted for Hydrologic Variations

Data Shown vs. Target Zones (10th to 90th Percentiles) for Achievement of Management Goals Target Zones Vary with Hydrologic Conditions (Rainfall, Flow, Water Level)

C139 Basin Farm Runoff Loads Goal: No Change



EAA Basin Farm Runoff Loads Goal: 25% Reduction vs 1979-1988



WCA Inflow P Load Goal: 80% Reduction





Exceeded Limits Triggered Rounds of Courtroom Drama



Loxahatchee Refuge P Load Goal: 85% Reduction

Lox Refuge Marsh P Conc Goal: 1978-1979 Condition

ENP Shark Slough Inflow P Goal: 1978-1979 Conditions

ENP Taylor Slough Inflow TP Goal: 1983-1984 Conditions

Settlement Agreement Current Status

- Despite Substantial Progress, Consent Decree Requirements Not Met
 - Refuge Marsh TP Limits Exceeded on Several Occasions, 2003-2008
 - Refuge TP Load Reduction (85%) not Achieved by 2003
 - ENP Inflow Limits Barely Achieved (90th vs. 50th percentile)
 - Existing & Planned P Controls Inadequate to Restore Entire Marsh
- State Admits to Violation of Consent Decree in Federal Court (Dec 2009)
- Federal Push with New Administration
- Joint State-Federal Effort Ongoing to Develop Technical Plans for Additional Remedies within 6 months
- Judge is Impatient & Sometimes Confused
- Hearings Scheduled in May-July 2010
- May Foster or Derail Cooperative Technical Process to Develop New Plan

Today: Back to the Checkerboard Framework for Evaluating Additional P Control Options Probability of Achieving Objective vs. Treatment Area Expansion &. Additional Farm BMPs

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	liti	4.5	0.78	0.39	0.12	0.02	0.00	0.00	010	0.00
onal' 100	on	6.0	0.92	0.68	.36	0.14	0.04	0.01	010	0.00
		7.5	0.97	0.86	0.63	0.37	0.17	0.06	01 <mark>2</mark>	0.01
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	rea	1 6.5	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.99	0.97	0.94	0.88	0.81
•	<u> </u>	1 8.0	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.99	0.98	0.97	0.93	0.89

Farm Runoff TP Conc. ppb

Options Focused on 1 - Farm Controls 2 - STA Expansion

Probability of Achieving Objective





Hydrologic Restoration

? Hydrologic Restoration ? CERP Components, Conceived 1995 - ???



Aquifer Storage & Recovery

- Surface Water Storage Reservoir
 - (STAs) Stormwater Treatment Areas



Reuse Wastewater



xxxxxx Removing Barriers
to Sheetflow



Operational Changes



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

Wet period flows Restored System (Additional storage)

Ere all 68.61

2004-05 SEWMD Astilat Photography 005 Charlotte County Astilat Photography 07 Palm Brach County Astilat Photography 2007 Collier County Astilat Photography Streaming ||||||||| 1005

sfwmd.gov/riverofgrass

ointer 22-0555.08"N 81-2520.51"W

Potential State Purchase of U.S. Sugar Lands Initially187 K Acres Restoration Opportunities & Obstacles – "River of Grass" Initiative For Starters: Land is Generally in Wrong Place – Requires "Swaps"



Restoration Plans Developed by Stakeholders Phase I ROG Design Process













Achieving Long-Term Water Quality & Quantity Goals

- Integration with Hydrologic Restoration
 - Increases in Mean Flow
 - Changes in Seasonal & Annual Flow Variability
 - Reservoirs
- Additional Source Controls (BMPs)
- Additional Treatment Area
- Flow Equalization to Reduce Runoff Pulses
- Treatment Area Optimization
 - Internal Flow Distribution
 - Operation in Design Ranges
 - Vegetation Management
- Research, Monitoring, & Modeling
- Economics May Constrain Timeline Not Goal ?

Engineering of Alternatives to Achieve Hydrologic & Water Quality Objectives





Littoral Zone

Caloosahatchee Estuary

Current Outflows

Restoration Targets

Everglades

Open Water

"Mud" Zone

St Lucie Estuary



Long-Term Trends in TP Concentration



Factors Contributing to Increasing Lake P •Excessive P Loads from Watershed

- •Loss of PAssimilative Capacity
 - •Sediment Enrichment
 - •Decrease in Calcium Loads
 - •Loss of Vegetation
 - •High Water Levels & Fluctuations
 - •Hurricanes High Winds

Hydrologic Restoration Targets Call For Significant Increases in Inter-Annual Variations in Everglades Inflow Pose Special Problems for Design of Treatment Areas



Planning & Decision-Making Process

Players in Everglades Restoration, 1991-(in no order)

<u>Federal:</u>	State:	Others .			
USACE	SFWMD	<u>Miccosukee</u> Tribe Seminole Tribe			
FWS NPS	DACS				
USGS	DCA DEP	Audubon FL Wildlife			
NOAA	FDOT	NGOs			
	FFWCC	Academia			
EPA	County				
F KINIVIS NIMES					
NOS					
USDOJ					

"No Restoration Plan Projects Have Been Completed" National Academy of Science, 2008

Conducting Ecosystem Restoration



*Disclaimer: The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of DOI.

Everglades Restoration Planning What Doesn't Seem to Work

- Science Confused with Policy
- Uncertain & Conflicting Goals
- Unwieldy Forums & Fuzzy Boundaries
 - Too Many Chefs
 - Too Many Chiefs
 - Too May Chefs Who Act Like Chiefs
 - Too Many Chiefs Who Act Like Chefs
 - Too Many Topics at Once
- Unnecessary Complexity
- Agreements with Fuzzy Language + Short Institutional Memory
- "Predictably Irrational" Decisions (Ariely, 2008)

Everglades Restoration Planning What Seems to Work

- Legal Clout & Political Will
- Reasonably Separate Technical vs. Policy Arenas
- Small Technical Workgroups
 - Define Problems in Simple Terms
 - Agree on Technical Assumptions & Methods
 - Develop & Evaluate Alternatives
 - Define Monitoring Needs & Performance Measures
- Air Out & Refine Options with Broad Stakeholder Input
- Decision-Makers Make Decisions
- Clear Milestones & Performance Measures
- Adaptive Implementation Framework

Synthesis of Freshwater Everglades Research

A Proposal Submitted to the

Critical Ecosystem Studies Initiative

"Analysis and synthesis ordinarily clarify matters for us about as much as taking a Swiss watch apart and dumping its wheels, springs, hands, threads, pivots, screws and gears into a layman's hands for reassembling, clarifies a watch to a layman."9

November 4, 2009





Challenges

Challenges for Ecosystem Management

- Lack of data on reference condition
- Identifying cause-effect linkages
- Implementing adaptive assessment when recovery times are long
- Separating "signal from noise"
- Technological challenges
- Maintaining political and public support when recovery times are long
Some Current Science and Policy Issues

- (1) How do you handle "flashiness" of ecosystem?
- (2) Tradeoffs between water quality vs. restoring flow?
- (3) Conflicts with Endangered Species Habitat
- (4) How do you use "Adaptive Management"?
- (5) What do you do with Climate Change?



Adaptive Management?

- (1) Is there enough engagement to implement Adaptive Management?
- (2) Even if a plan exists, how do you ensure all parties agree/enforce?
- (3) If a project is a failure, what is the technical and policy level of comfort to kill a project?

Differing Forms of Adaptive Management

Active AM management experiments

Passive AM

hypothesis-based monitoring

Not just "trial and error" or "flexible management," but a <u>deliberate</u>, <u>formalized</u> approach to "learn by doing."



Kissimmee River Restoration (Floodplain restoration)

Sea Level Rise – Problem or Red Herring?

Inundation from the Ice Sheets

If today's ice sheets disappear, the resulting rise in global sea level would transform coastlines around the world; the effects on the Florida coastline are shown below. Actually, if climate change caused one ice sheet to disappear, parts of others would do so as well, and the effects on sea level would be even greater than what is depicted here.



Scientific American, ~2008

Climate Change?

(1) Do you throw up your hands at Climate Change?

(2) If pending Climate Change argues for continued restoration, how does this work?

(3) Should variability in Climate Change paralyze a process; push it forward with no changes; or something else?

Potentially Useful References

http://www.nps.gov/ever/index.htm

http://www.nps.gov/ever/naturescience/sfnrcpublications.htm http://www.fws.gov/loxahatchee/ http://www.evergladesplan.org./index.aspx http://www.fws.gov/verobeach/ http://www.sofia.usgs.gov/ http://www.sfwmd.gov/portal/page/portal/levelthree/Americas%20Everglades https://my.sfwmd.gov/portal/page/portal/pg grp sfwmd koe/pg sfwmd koe riverofgrass https://my.sfwmd.gov/portal/page/portal/pg_grp_sfwmd_koe/public%20workshops%20-%20phase%20ii https://my.sfwmd.gov/portal/page/portal/PG_GRP_SFWMD_SFER/PG_SFWMD_SFER_HOME http://www.dep.state.fl.us/evergladesforever/ http://www.evergladeshub.com/ http://www.evergladesfoundation.org/ http://www.wwwalker.net/doi

