Everglades Restoration Transition Plan – Phase 1

GEER 2010

Naples, Florida

July 15, 2010
Everglades Restoration Transition Plan (Phase I)

Goals

- Conserve multi-species in the transition to full Everglades restoration
- Modify the current operational regime in Water Conservation Area 3 with the latest science
- Use real-time information to improve conditions with the flexibility available today
- Take incremental steps toward restoration and monitor to improve future operational plans
Everglades Restoration Transition Plan (Phase I)

History

- 2006 Interim Operational Plan for the Protection of the Cape Sable Seaside Sparrow (IOP) Biological Opinion (BO) expires in November 2010
- Need a new BO and National Environmental Policy Act review
Sparrow Background and Status

Large Sparrow Populations, 1981-2006

- Sub-population A
- Sub-population B
- Sub-population E
Snail Kite Background and Status

- Wide Ranging Everglades Indicator
- Population Decline from Over 3,000 in the Year 2000 to Fewer than 700 Today
- Two-Year Droughts
- Degradation of Habitat from Water Infrastructure of the 20\textsuperscript{th} Century
- The Importance of Apple Snails
- Water Conservation Area 3
Sustainable Ecosystems Institute

- The Charge: 
  *Conduct an Independent Review of the Best Available Science*

- Key Question: 
  *How to Advance Restoration and Recovery and Address Uncertainty?*

- Multi-Faceted Approach: 
  - Create Independent Panel of Scientists
  - Open Forum – Species and Hydrology
  - Prepare Recommendations – Peer Review
Findings: Restoration Is Needed to Recover Imperiled Birds
• The Transition to Restoration Is Key
• Strategic Habitat Conservation Is Our Guide
**Goal:** Through water level management, optimize habitat suitability for tree islands and breeding snail kites, apple snails, wood storks, and other wading birds in WCA-3A, while also providing appropriate inter-annual variability.

*Interagency Meeting — Management decisions (targets) to be determined by an interagency team. The team should meet regularly throughout the year (minimum October, January, and May). The intent is to manage for inter-annual variation with seasonal targets based on an interagency assessment of species' needs (evaluated w/monitoring data), forecasted climatic conditions, and past years' hydrology.*
Current Status

- Team currently reviewing the full suite of operational flexibilities in order to recommend a plan
- Other ERTP phases may incorporate additional flexibilities
- On schedule to meet November 2010 deadline
Questions?

Everglades Restoration Transition Plan (Phase I)