

LOXAHATCHEE RIVER WATERSHED RESTORATION PROJECT

National Environmental Policy Act Scoping Meeting

January 12th, 2015



U.S. ARMY



US Army Corps
of Engineers®



MEETING PURPOSE AND AGENDA

- Welcome and Introductions
- Everglades Restoration Overview
- National Environmental Policy Act Overview
- Project Planning Process
- Project Scope Update
- Planning Step 1 -Problems and Opportunities/Goals and Objectives
- Next Steps



EVERGLADES RESTORATION OVERVIEW

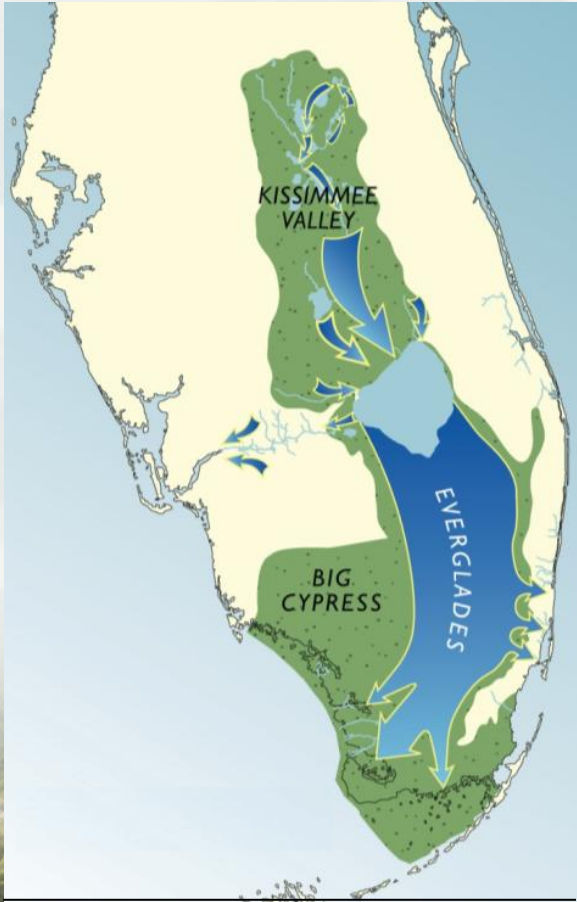


**Presenter: Matt Morrison
South Florida
Water Management
District (SFWMD)**

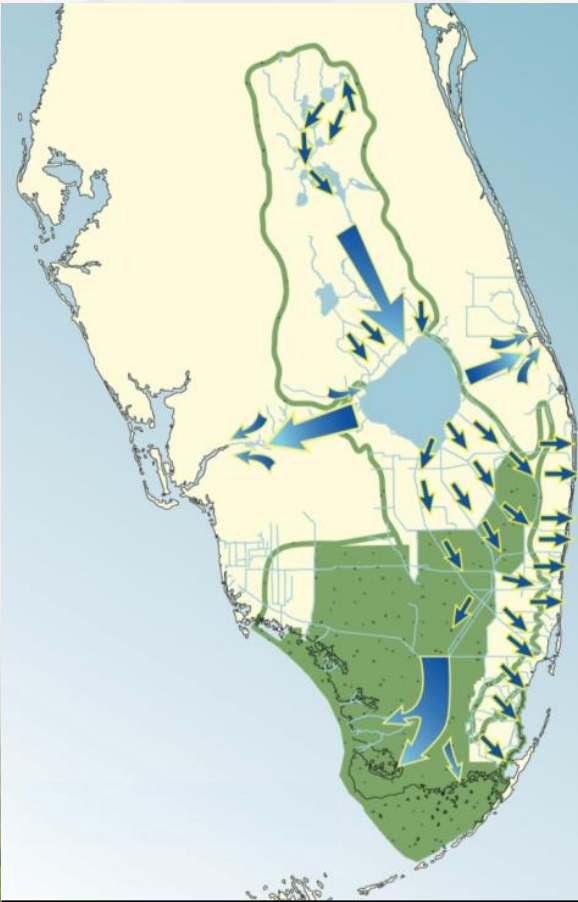


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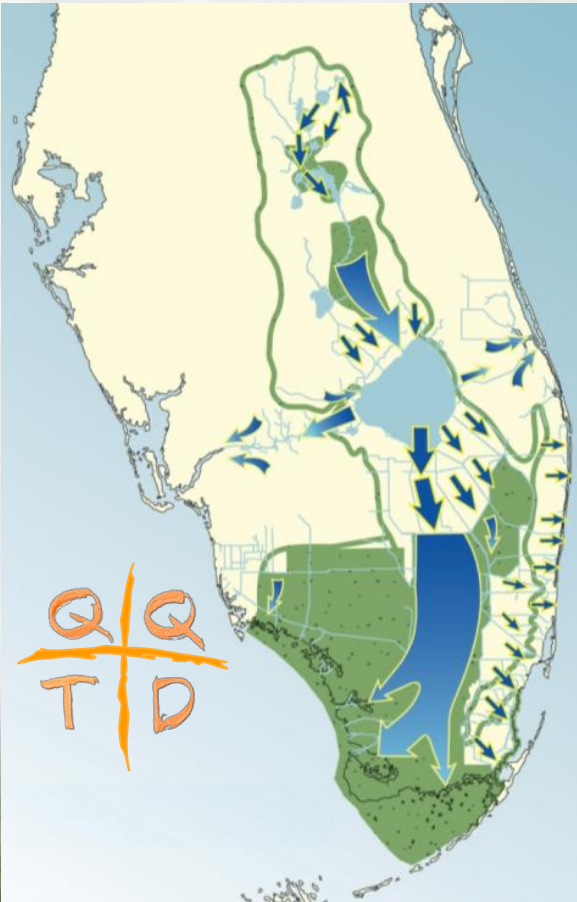
COMPREHENSIVE EVERGLADES COMPREHENSIVE RESTORATION PLAN (CERP) GOAL



HISTORIC FLOW



CURRENT FLOW



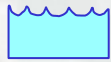
RESTORED FLOW



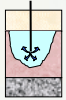
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COMPREHENSIVE EVERGLADES RESTORATION PLAN

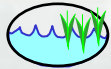
68 Components



Surface Storage



Aquifer Storage and Recovery



Stormwater Treatment Areas (water quality)

Seepage Management

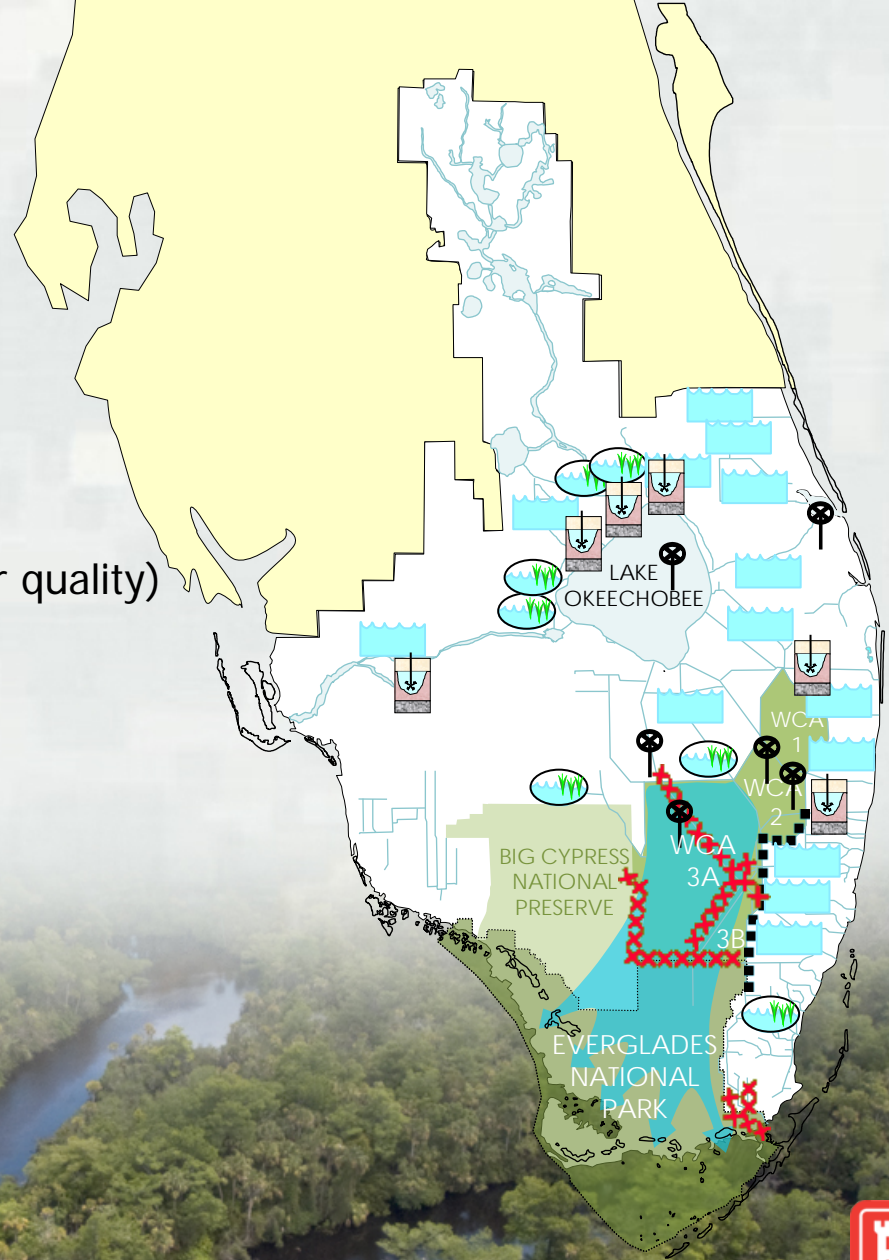


Removing barriers to flow



Revised operations

30+ year implementation

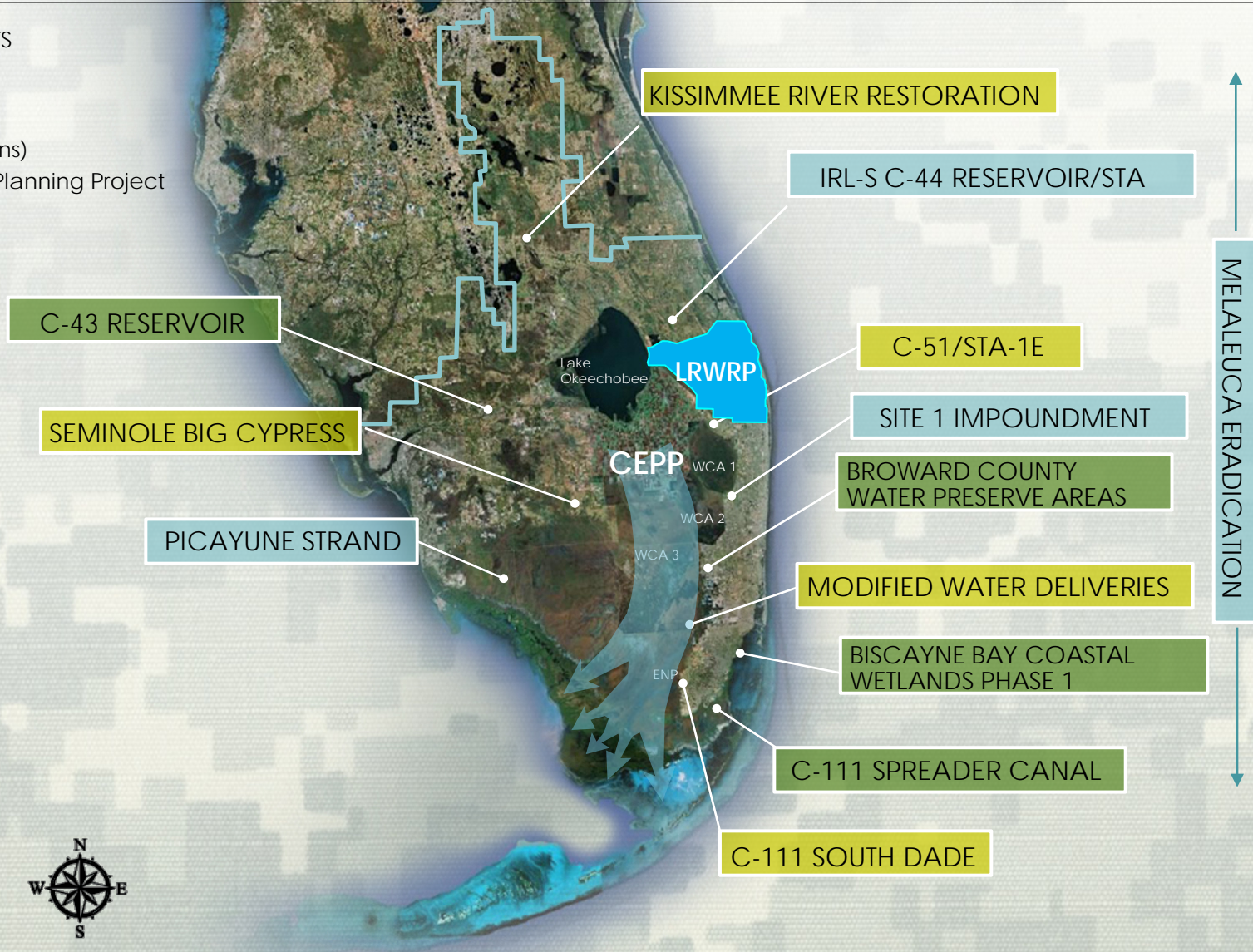


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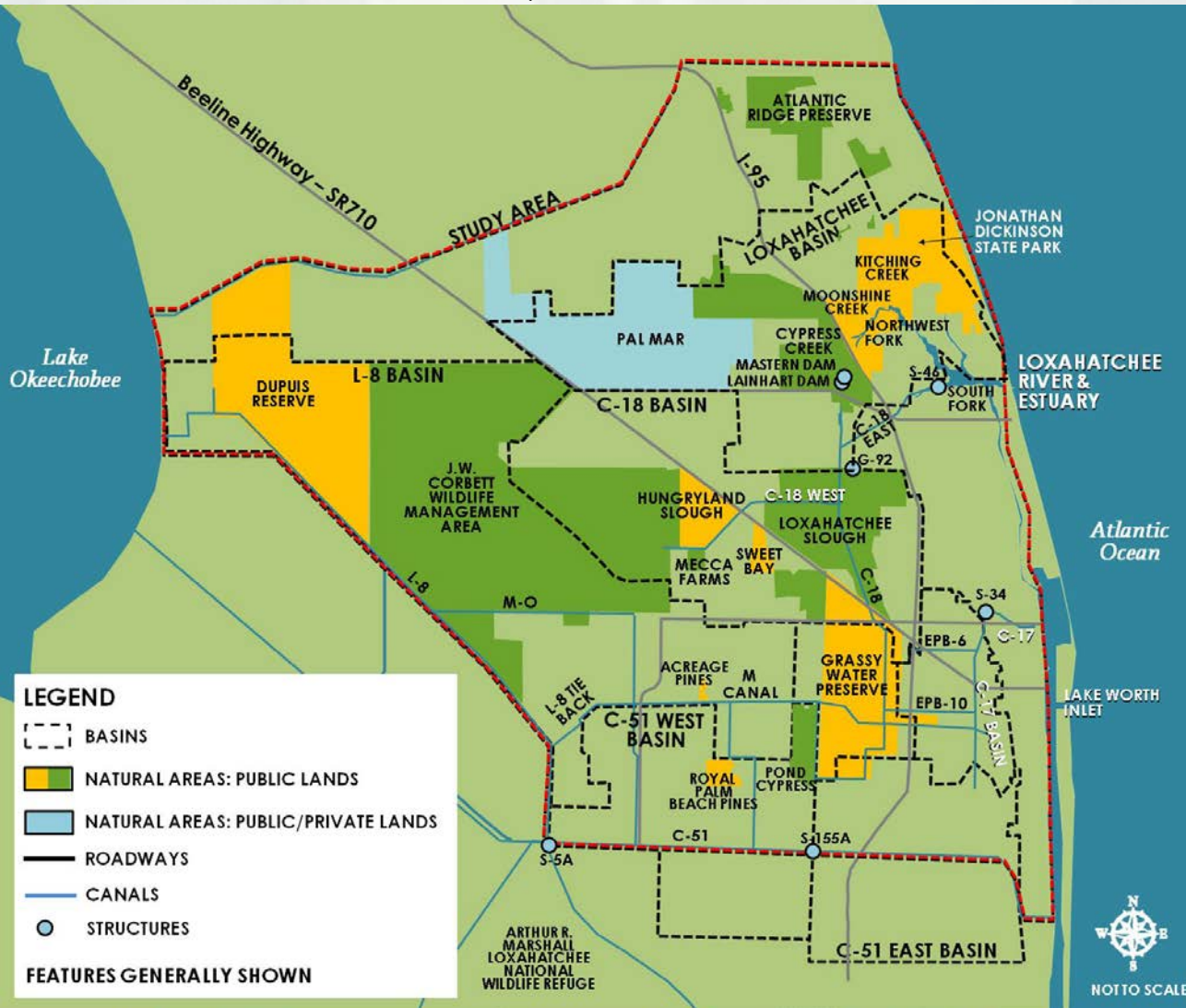
CERP IMPLEMENTATION

- FOUNDATION PROJECTS
- 1ST GENERATION CERP
- 2ND GENERATION CERP (awaiting appropriations)

CEPP: Central Everglades Planning Project



STUDY AREA (MARTIN & PALM BEACH COUNTIES)



NATURAL AREAS

- 1: Kitching Creek
- 2: Moonshine Creek
- 3: Cypress Creek
- 4: Lainhart Dam
- 5: Pal Mar
- 6: Hungryland Slough
- 7: J.W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area (WMA)
- 8: Dupuis Management Area
- 9: Loxahatchee Slough
- 10: Grassy Waters Preserve



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NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT AND PLANNING PROCESS



**Presenter: Andy LoSchiavo
U.S Army Corps of Engineers
(USACE)**



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NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA) GOALS

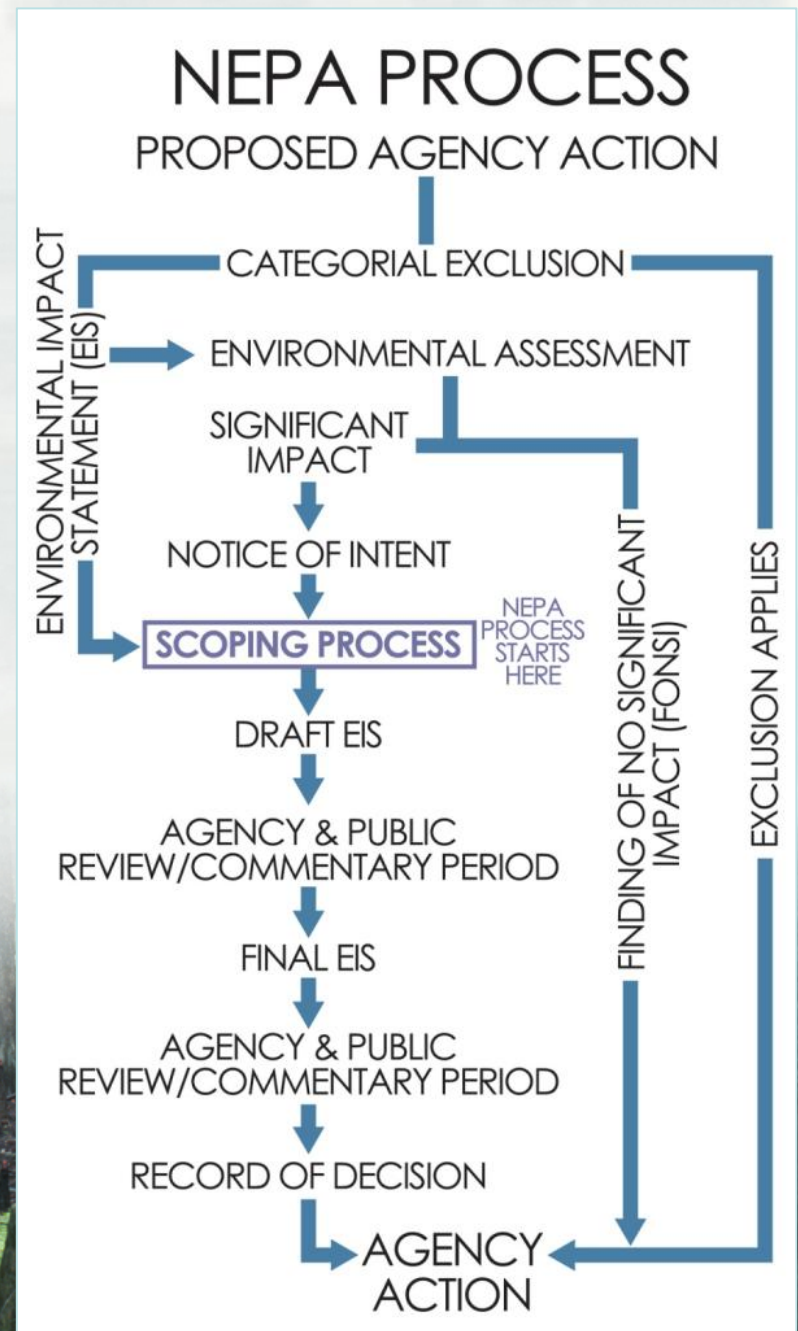
- Requires Federal agencies to consider environmental consequences of Federal actions before making final decisions
- Solicit and consider public views on proposals
- Consult with Tribal, state, and local governments concerning plans
- Provide agencies with a mechanism to coordinate overlapping, jurisdictional responsibilities



NEPA PROCESS AND ASSESSMENTS

Prepare detailed statements addressing the potential environmental impacts related to a major Federal action:

- Categorical Exclusion (CAT-EX)
- Environmental Assessment (EA)
- Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)



COMBINED NEPA AND PLANNING DOCUMENTS AND PROCESS

Six-Step Planning

Step 1: Problems and Opportunities; Goals and Objectives

Step 2: Forecast Existing and Future Conditions

Step 3: Develop Alternatives

Step 4: Evaluate Plans

Step 5: Compare Plans

Step 6: Select Plan

NEPA Assessment

- Purpose and Need
- Affected Environment & No Action Alternative
- Range of Alternatives
- Environmental Effects
- Conclusions: Consultation & Coordination

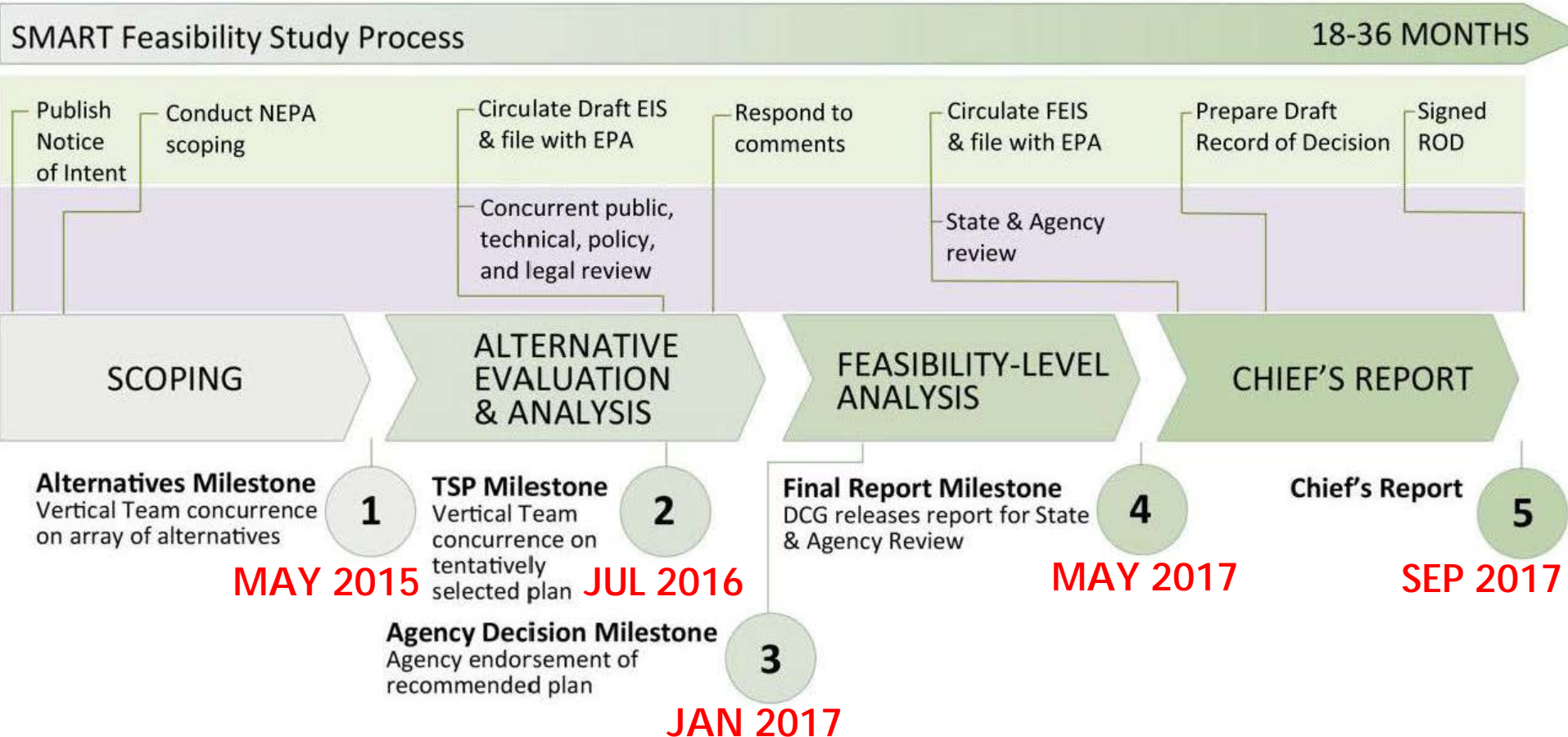


WHAT IS NEW IN THE PLANNING PROCESS?

- Process and outputs are decision focused, and within the 6-step planning process
- Risk and uncertainty for each decision is acknowledged and appropriate level of details is managed
- Report developed from the beginning of the study, documenting the decisions



NEPA PROCESS AND ESTIMATED PLANNING SCHEDULE



OTHER PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES

Enhance opportunities for meaningful public engagement:

- Corps hosted public meetings
- Draft NEPA Assessment public meeting
- Regularly scheduled Project Delivery Team Meetings
- Use of existing forums to engage stakeholders
 - South Florida Water Management District Governing Board
 - Water Resources Advisory Commission
- Topic meetings to address particular issues
- Others



PROJECT PURPOSE AND SCOPE UPDATE



Presenter:

**Dr. Bradley Foster
U.S Army Corps of Engineers, USACE**



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PROJECT PURPOSE

- **Improve the Quality, Quantity, Timing and Distribution of water deliveries from watershed to the Loxahatchee River and Estuary**
- **Improve hydrologic connections between the protected natural areas at the headwaters to the 'National Wild and Scenic' Loxahatchee River North-West Fork and its tributaries**



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HISTORY OF LOXAHATCHEE RIVER WATERSHED RESTORATION PROJECT

2000

- Congress approved the Restudy (Yellow Book)

2003-2005

- North Palm Beach County Phase 1 Project Management Plan
- Substantial Hydrologic and Hydraulic and Geotechnical analyses
- USACE HQ Guidance Feasibility Scoping Meeting Guidance – benefits formulation approach, constraints, project assumptions

2006-2011

- Working on finalizing draft Alternative Formulation Briefing documents
- Management directed hold (2011)

2011-2013

- L-8 Reservoir component re-purposed as Flow Equalization Basin for Restoration Strategies
- Purchase of Mecca Farms by the SFWMD



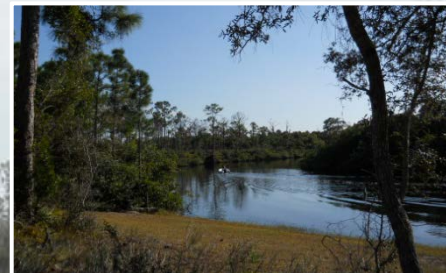
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LOXAHATCHEE RIVER WATERSHED RESTORATION PROJECT

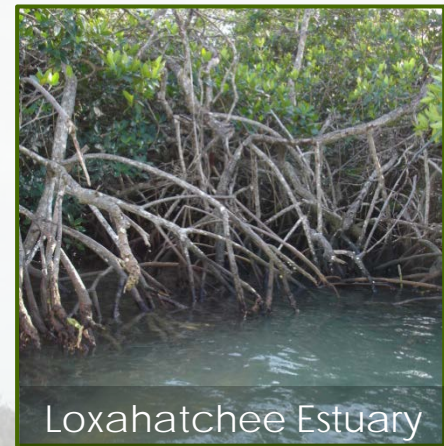
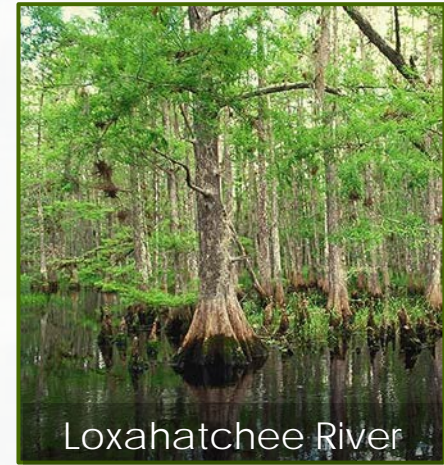
STEP 1: Problems and Opportunities Goals and Objectives



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LOXAHATCHEE RIVER WATERSHED RESTORATION PROJECT PROBLEMS

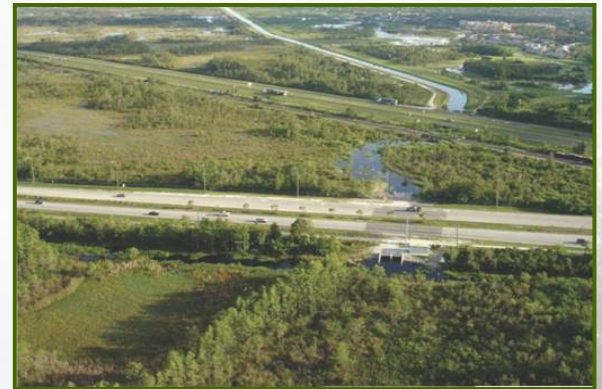
- Altered timing and distribution of headwater base flows to the Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River
- Increased salinity effects on formerly freshwater reaches of the Loxahatchee River
- Increased wet season flows to Southwest Fork and Loxahatchee Estuary
- Loss of freshwater cypress floodplain adjacent to Loxahatchee River



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LOXAHATCHEE RIVER WATERSHED RESTORATION PROJECT PROBLEMS CONTINUED

- Degraded natural area structure and function from altered hydrology
- Conversion of natural areas to agricultural, residential and industrial uses
- Loss of connectivity and barriers to flow between natural areas, river, and estuary
- Reduced native floral and faunal populations and diversity
- Degraded water quality in natural areas



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CERP PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Consistent with CERP Goals and Objectives (Table 5-1)



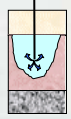
1. Enhance Ecological Values
 - A. Increase the total spatial extent of natural areas
 - B. Improve habitat and functional quality
 - C. Improve native plant and animal species abundance and diversity



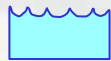
2. Enhance Economic Values and Social Well Being
 - A. Increase availability of fresh water (agricultural/municipal and industrial)
 - B. Reduce flood damages (agricultural/urban)
 - C. Provide recreational opportunities
 - D. Protect cultural and archeological resources and values



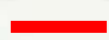
MANAGEMENT MEASURES UNDER CONSIDERATION



Aquifer Storage and Recovery



Storage



Conveyance



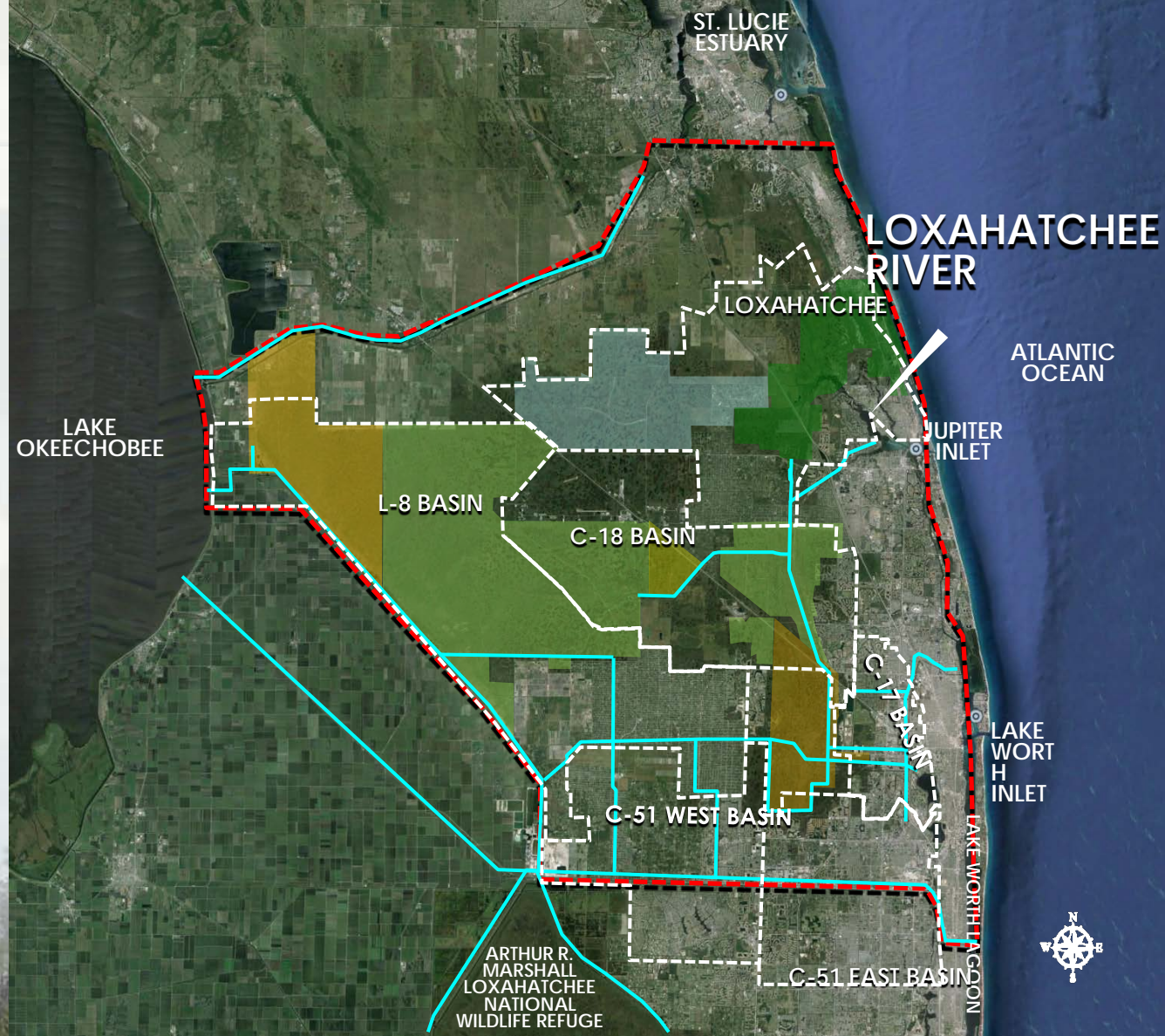
Sheetflow enhancement



Operational changes



Vegetation Management



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NEPA SCOPING COMMENTS

- Comments Due by February 5, 2015
- Mail To:
Attention: Andrew LoSchiavo
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Jacksonville District
701 San Marco Blvd
Jacksonville, FL 32207
- Email Comments to: Andrew.J.LoSchiavo@usace.army.mil



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QUESTIONS AND FOLLOW-UP

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Project Website:

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