DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P. O. BOX 4970
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32232-0019

UNDATED Memo ± F

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

Planning Division
Environmental Branch

TO THE ADDRESSEES ON THE ENCLOSED LIST:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District, (Corps) is beginning preparation of a Supplement to the 1992 Final Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) on Modified Water Deliveries to Everglades National Park (Mod Waters project) to address new design features for water conveyance under the Tamiami Trail (U.S. Highway 41). A Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare the SEIS was published in the Federal Register on May 5, 2000. Authorized by Congress in 1989, the primary objective of the Mod Waters Project is to construct modifications to the Central and Southern Florida Project (C&SF Project) to improve water deliveries into the Everglades National Park (Park) and to the extent practicable, take steps to restore the natural hydrological conditions within the Park.

Restoration will require increased flows and water levels within the Shark River Slough basin of the Park. In 1992 the authorizing document for this project, the General Design Memorandum and Environmental Impact Statement for Modified Water Deliveries to Everglades National Park, Florida, indicated that the existing Tamiami Trail drainage infrastructure would be sufficient to pass the needed increase in water flows without adverse effects to the roadbed. Subsequent analysis has shown this not to be the case.

The Corps is considering several alternatives to pass the required water flows under the roadway while mitigating for the adverse impacts that may result. Currently there are four alternative plans being studied:

a. Construct four bridges and institute an increased maintenance program for the roadway.
b. Construct four bridges and raise the entire roadway 1 to 2 feet
c. Build a new roadway to the north of the existing Tamiami Trail
d. Build a new roadway to the south of the existing Tamiami Trail

This SEIS will evaluate the environmental effects of the alternatives and provide an analysis of significant issues associated with the alternative actions and may identify additional options for consideration. We invite the participation of Federal and State agencies, Indian tribes, local agencies and interested organizations and individuals in identifying these issues. The following issues have been identified for evaluation to date:

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a. Effects on Natural System and the Park. It is not expected that any of the alternatives will adversely impact ongoing progress to restore natural hydrological conditions within the Park to the maximum extent practicable.

b. Social, economic and environmental effects to the residential Indian community of TigerTail Camp

c. Social and economic effects to the various businesses located along the roadway

d. Environmental effects on wetlands of alternative detour and/or altered road alignments during construction

e. Disruptions to traffic along the roadway during construction.

We have scheduled a Scoping Meeting to explain and answer questions about the SEIS process and take further comment on significant issues and alternative plans to be analyzed. The meeting will be held as follows:

DATE/TIME: Thursday, June 8, 2000 at 6:30 PM

PLACE: Miami-Dade County Extension Office
18710 SW 288th Street
Homestead, Florida

Please share this letter with any interested party not included on the address list, and send any comments you may have to the attention of Mr. Elmar Kurzbach at the letterhead address by June 22, 2000. All individuals who respond with comments will be included in future mailings. Others may be included by making a request in writing (postcard) to the same address.

Sincerely,

James C. Duck

James C. Duck
Chief, Planning Division