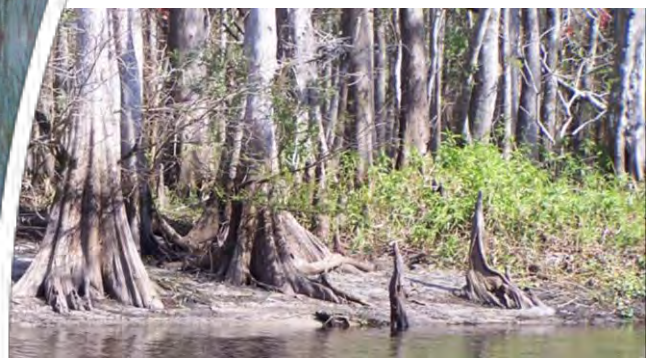
LAKE OKEECHOBEE WATERSHED RESTORATION

INTEGRATED FEASIBILITY STUDY & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT SCOPING MEETING

July 26, 2016



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MEETING AGENDA

LAKE OKEECHOBEE WATERSHED RESTORATION

INTEGRATED FEASIBILITY STUDY & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

- Welcome and Introductions
- Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan Overview
- Lake Okeechobee Watershed Overview
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- Project Planning Process
- Public Comment





MEETING PURPOSE

LAKE OKEECHOBEE WATERSHED

INTEGRATED FEASIBILITY STUDY & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

To involve the public in an inclusive, dynamic process designed to ensure an economically, ecologically and socially justified design for improvements to Lake Okeechobee





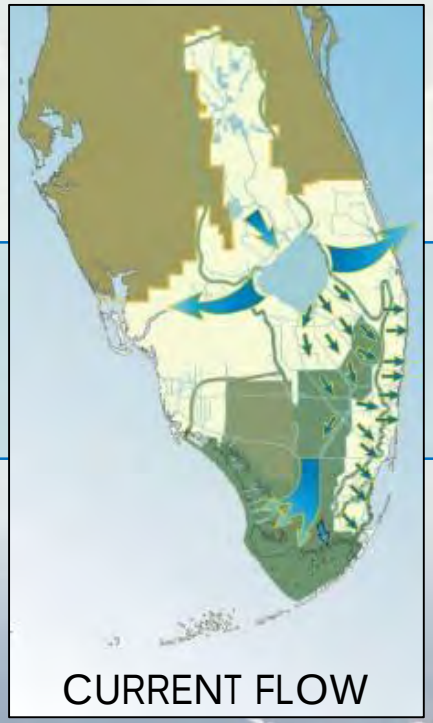
SOUTH FLORIDA ECOSYSTEM PROJECT OVERVIEW

Presenter:
Matt Morrison, Federal Policy Chief,
Everglades Policy & Coordination Chief
South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD)

SYSTEM-WIDE PERSPECTIVE

Increased Operational Flexibility = Relief to Estuaries and Restoration of Flows to Everglades

PAST FLOW

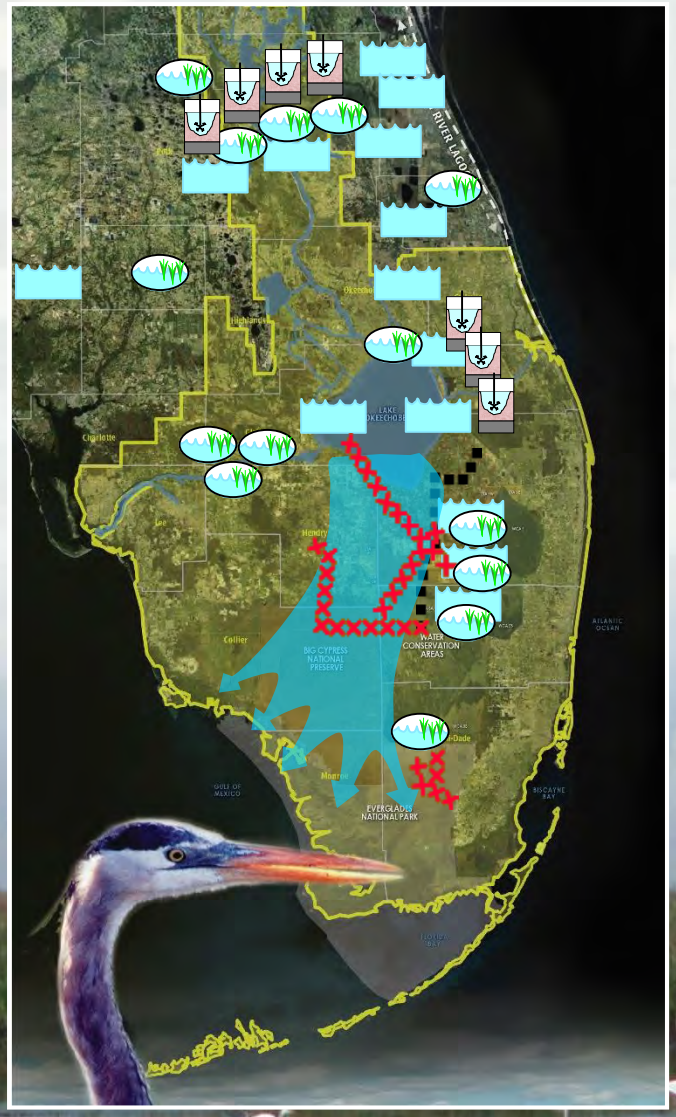


CURRENT FLOW

FUTURE FLOW

COMPREHENSIVE EVERGLADES RESTORATION PLAN

- Includes 68 components to be implemented over 30+ years
- Features include:
  - Aquifer Storage & Recovery
  - Surface Water Storage Reservoirs
  - STAs for Water Quality
  - Seepage Management
  - Removing Barriers to Flow
  - Revised Operations



SOUTH FLORIDA ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION

What's next?

Pre-CERP Foundation Projects

- Kissimmee River Restoration
- Modified Water Deliveries
- C-111 South Dade

} Significant Progress/ Nearing Completion

1st Generation CERP

- Melaleuca Eradication Facility — Completed
- IRL-South — Under Construction
- Picayune Strand — Design

2nd Generation CERP

- C-43 Reservoir
- Broward County WPA

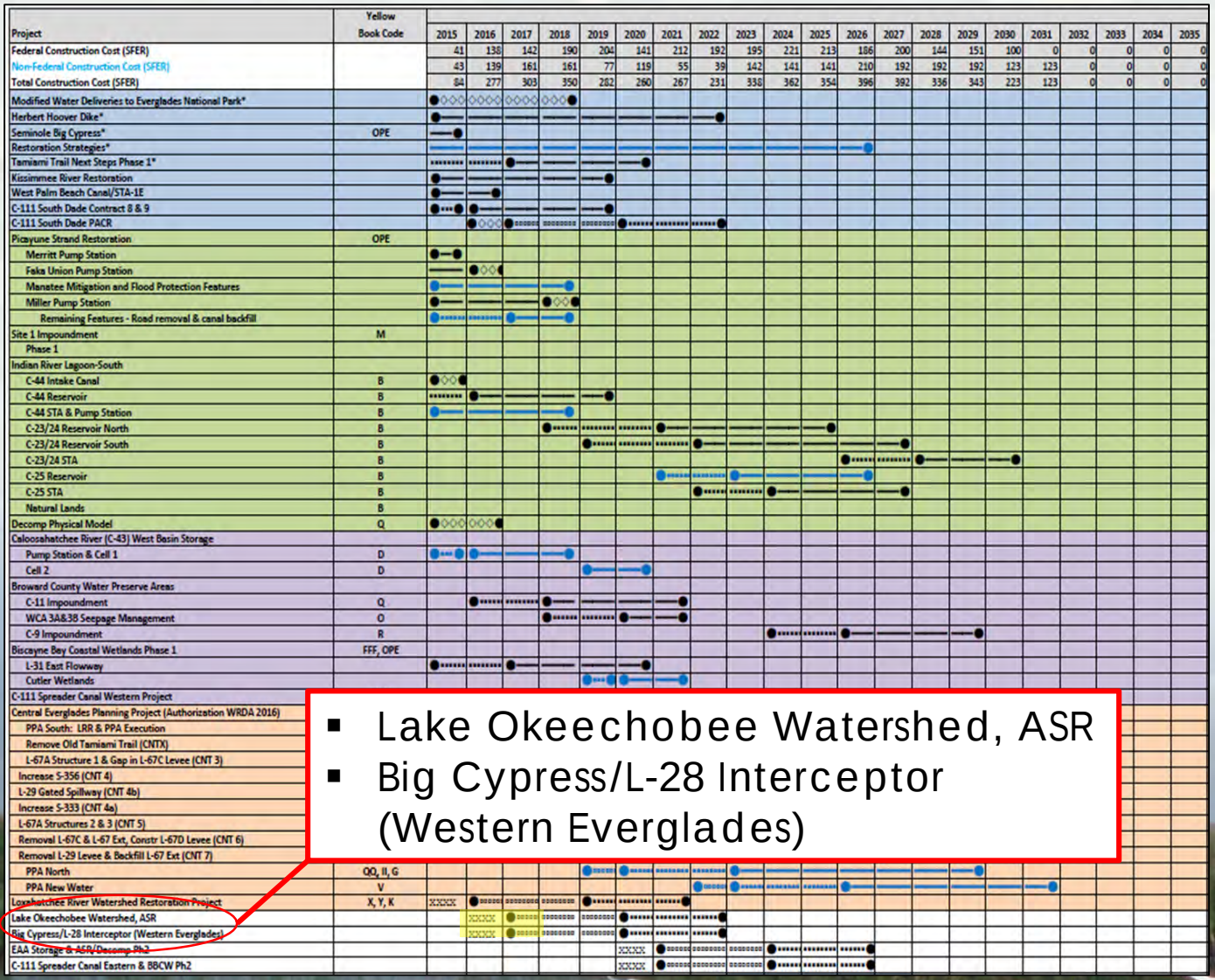
} Under Construction

- C-111 Spreader Canal Western Features — Operational
- Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands — Partially Constructed & Operational

Completed and Active Planning Studies

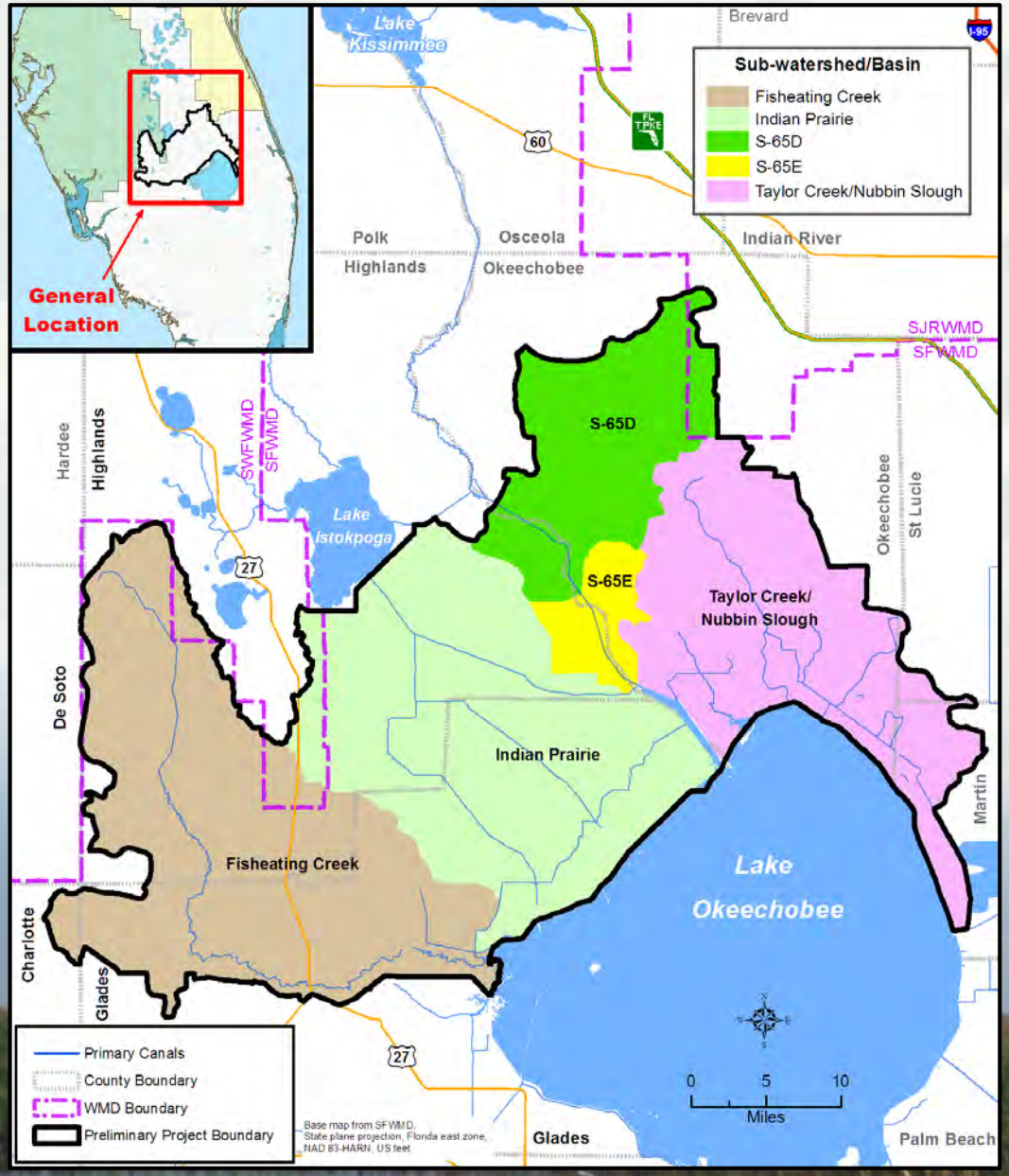
- Central Everglades Planning Project — Authorization Pending
- Loxahatchee River Watershed Restoration — Planning Underway

SYNCHRONIZING PRIORITIES
INTEGRATED DELIVERY SCHEDULE (IDS)



- Lake Okeechobee Watershed, ASR
- Big Cypress/L-28 Interceptor (Western Everglades)

- Developed through a public process
- Based on technical information
- Integrated Delivery Schedule (IDS) was completed in November 2015
- Identifies two upcoming CERP planning efforts



LAKE OKEECHOBEE WATERSHED PROJECT PLANNING BOUNDARY

LAKE OKEECHOBEE WATERSHED PROJECT OVERVIEW

Presenter:
Lisa Aley
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

LAKE OKEECHOBEE WATERSHED
STUDY PURPOSE

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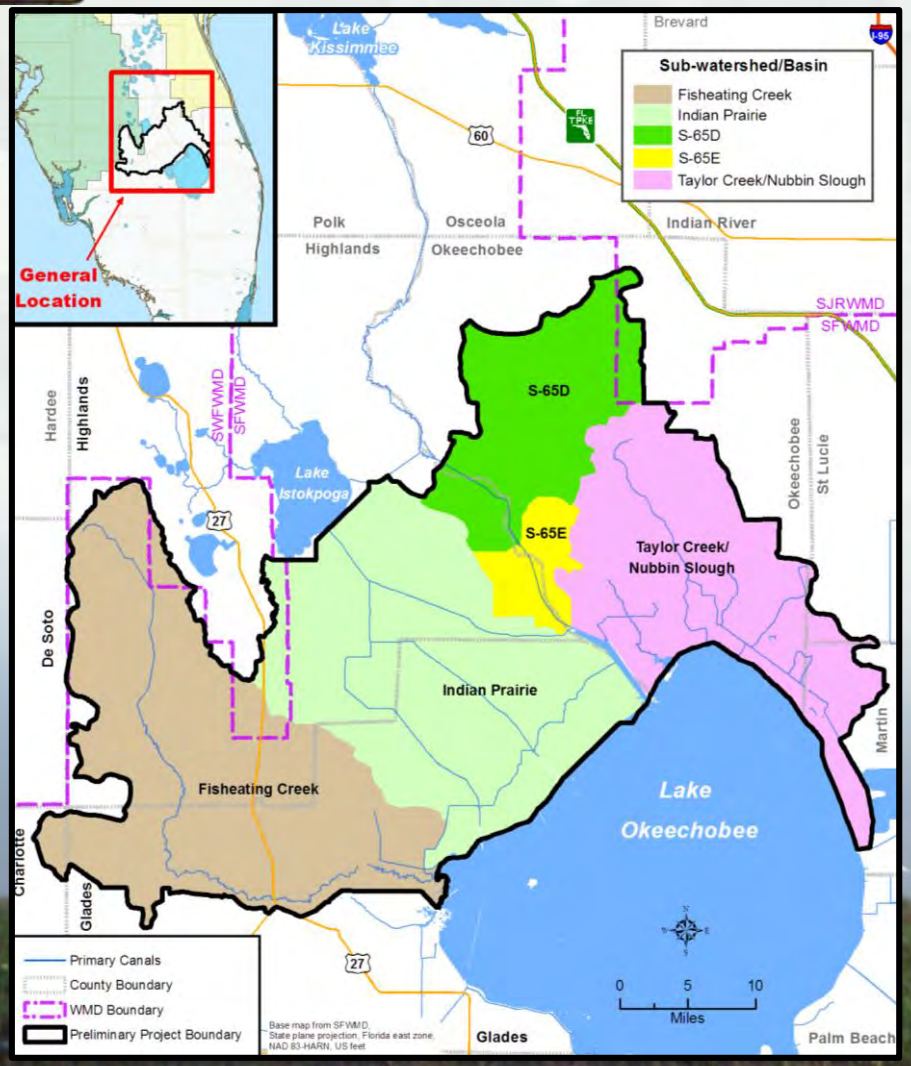

The purpose of the LOW project is to improve the quality, quantity, timing and distribution of water to Lake Okeechobee

LAKE OKEECHOBEE WATERSHED

- Fisheating Creek
- Indian Prairie
- S-65D
- S-65E
- Taylor Creek/Nubbin Slough

LOW Project Preliminary Footprint:

- 922,108 acres (~1,441 square miles)
- Historically dominated by wetlands
- Dominant current land use
  - Agriculture
  - Natural/Open Land and Water
  - Urban/Infrastructure

PROBLEMS

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- Degraded water quality in Lake Okeechobee and the watershed
- Inflows to Lake Okeechobee greatly exceed outflow capacity
- Extreme high & low water levels in Lake Okeechobee
- Undesirable high volume discharges to the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie Estuaries
- Substantial reduction in the spatial extent and functionality of wetlands and other wildlife habitat
- Adverse impacts to threatened and endangered species




OPPORTUNITIES

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- Improve system-wide operational water management flexibility
- Increase water storage north of Lake Okeechobee
- Improve the quality of water entering Lake Okeechobee
- Reconnect and restore fragmented wetlands
- Potential ancillary water supply and flood control benefits
- Increase recreational opportunities
- Coordinate with ongoing restoration activities in watershed

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

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- Reduce undesirable discharges from Lake Okeechobee to the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie estuaries
- Improve the quality, quantity, timing, and duration of water entering Lake Okeechobee Improve system-wide operational flexibility
- Improve system-wide operational flexibility
- Restore isolated wetlands in the watershed

CONSTRAINTS

- Maintain existing levels of flood protection and water supply
- Cultural, historical, and archaeological resources
- Environmental Justice
- Applicable laws, regulations, and standards
- Navigation
- Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule (LORS)

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT AND PLANNING PROCESS

Presenter:
Gretchen Ehlinger, Ph.D.,
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Goals

- NEPA is a Federal law requiring Federal agencies to consider the environmental impacts of a proposed project that are:
  - Major Federal Actions that may have a significant affect on the quality of the human environment
- 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 & ASSESSMENTS

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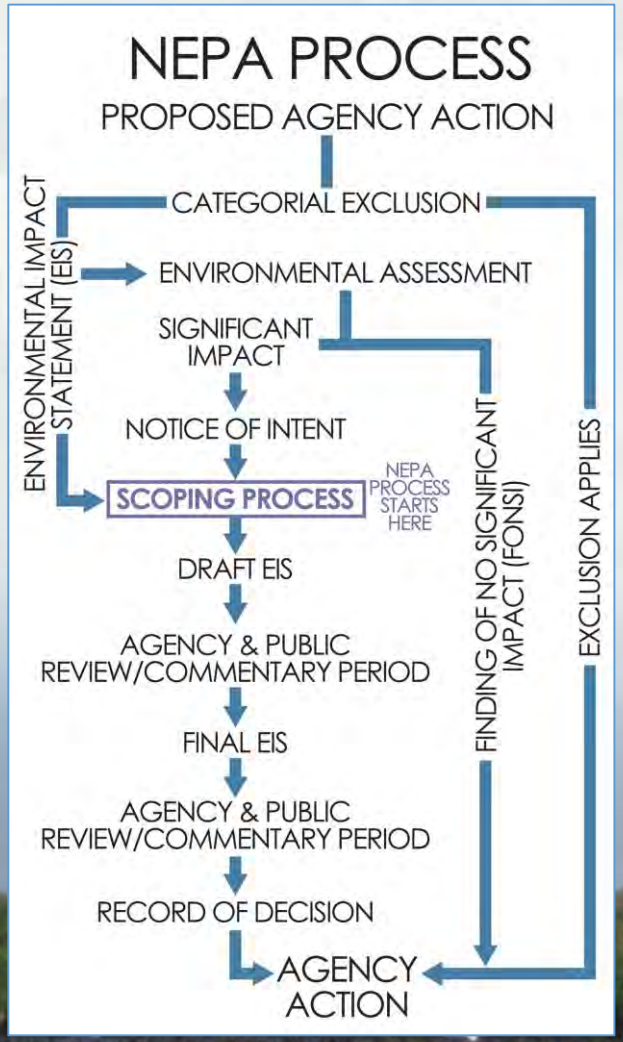

- Prepare detailed statements addressing the potential environmental impacts related to a major Federal action:
  - Categorical Exclusion (CAT-EX)
  - Environmental Assessment (EA)
  - Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

COMBINED NEPA & PLANNING DOCUMENTS AND PROCESS

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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 and Coordination

WHAT IS NEW IN THE PLANNING PROCESS?

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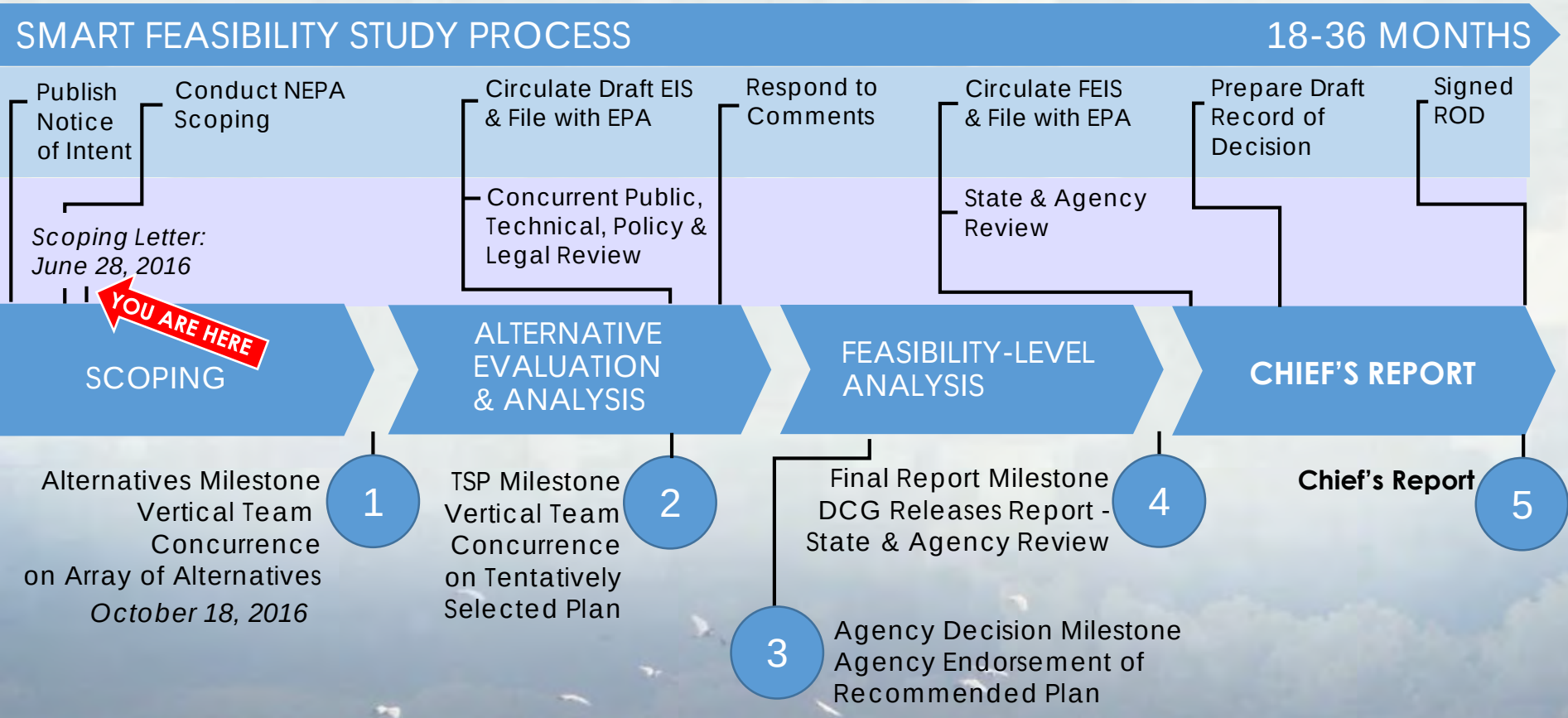
- 3x3x3 Planning Process: No more than 3 years, 3 million dollars, and efficient/effective coordination among 3 levels of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers governance
- Process and outputs are decision focused, and within the 6-step planning process
- Risk and uncertainty for each decision is acknowledged and appropriate level of details is managed
- Report developed from the beginning of the study, documenting the decisions

NEPA PROCESS & ESTIMATED PLANNING SCHEDULE



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

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ADDITIONAL COMMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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- Public Comment Cards
- Email: OkeechobeeWatershedRestoration@usace.army.mil

  Dr. Gretchen Ehlinger
  U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
  P.O. Box 4970
  Jacksonville, FL 32232-0019

- Scoping Comment Period Ends August 12, 2016
- Additional Information Available at: http://bit.ly/LakeOWatershed