

1
2 WESTERN EVERGLADES RESTORATION PROJECT (WERP)
3 NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT
4 PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING
5

6 Tuesday, August 16, 2016

7 John Boy Auditorium

8 1200 South WC Owen Avenue

9 Clewiston, Florida 33440
10

11
12 TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
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14 WESTERN EVERGLADES RESTORATION PROJECT

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1 MS. RALPH: Okay, everybody, if everybody
2 can hold up your hand if you can hear me.
3 Everybody. No, not yet. Okay. I feel like a
4 teacher with the one, two, three. I'm asking
5 for everybody's cooperation. We have a lot of
6 folks here tonight and we want to make sure that
7 everybody can hear. So if we can have everybody
8 put your cell phones on vibrate, that would be
9 most helpful.

10 Okay. So good evening, everybody. My name
11 is Gina Ralph the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,
12 Jacksonville District. I will be presiding over
13 tonight's public meeting for the Western
14 Everglades Restoration Project.

15 For those of you who don't know me, I am
16 the Chief of the Environmental branch for the
17 Planning Division, again, with the U.S. Army
18 Corps of Engineers in Jacksonville.

19 The Western Everglades Restoration Project
20 is a new Everglades restoration planning effort
21 that aims to improve the quality, quantity,
22 timing and distribution of water needed to
23 restore and reconnect the Western Everglades
24 ecosystem. Tonight is the first of many
25 meetings that will provide the opportunity for

1 public input into the development of this very
2 important restoration project.

3 Tonight we are here to provide information
4 and ask for your input on the National
5 Environmental Policy Act for the project.

6 Before we begin, I would like to thank you
7 all for taking time out of your busy schedule to
8 get involved in this planning process and be
9 with us here tonight. I would also like to
10 recognize and thank some elected officials that
11 are in attendance here tonight, so when I call
12 your name, if you can just raise your hand.

13 We do have the Mayor of Clewiston, Mr.
14 Phillip Roland. All right. Thank you. We have
15 Hendry County Commissioner Karson Turner. We
16 have Hendry County Commissioner Janet Taylor.
17 We have Clewiston City Commissioner K. Peterson,
18 and we have Clewiston City Commissioner Mali
19 Gardner. Thank you all for attending this
20 meeting again tonight.

21 This meeting is being held in accordance
22 with the National Environmental Policy Act for
23 the sole purpose of listening to you. I would
24 like to remind everybody of the importance of
25 filling out these cards. These cards serve two

1 purposes. First, they let us know that you're
2 interested in this project so we can keep you
3 informed; and second, to provide me with a list
4 of individuals who wish to speak tonight. If
5 you did not fill out one of these cards and
6 would like to speak tonight, I ask that you
7 please head to the registration table and fill
8 one out so that you can have an opportunity to
9 be heard this evening.

10 So before we begin the presentation, I want
11 to introduce you to some of the team members
12 here that are with us tonight from the Army
13 Corps of Engineers. First of all, we have Tim
14 Brown, who is Project Manager. Kelly Keefe, she
15 is our Planning Lead. Andy LoSchiavo, he's our
16 Environmental Lead. Meredith Moreno, she is an
17 archeologist. Amanda Lavigne, she is a
18 hydraulic engineer. There she is. Katherine
19 Rivers from real estate. We have Zulamet
20 Vega-Liriano, a civil engineer. Kim Taplin,
21 she's Program Supervisor. Jeff Couch, Ecosystem
22 Branch Chief. Dave Apple, our Watershed Section
23 Chief.

24 In the back when you came in, they're still
25 outside at the registration table, Jenn Miller,

1 John Campbell and Erika Skolte. We have Kevin
2 Wittman he is our Economics Branch Chief; and
3 finally, last but not least, Luis Alejandro,
4 Water Management.

5 Now, I'd like to turn and introduce our
6 partners at the South Florida Water Management
7 District. They are our cost-share partner in
8 this important federal project. So Matt
9 Morrison, he's the Federal Policy and
10 Coordination Chief. Megan Jacoby, she's a
11 Project Manager. Jenni Hisock, she's a Planning
12 Lead. She's all the way in the back. Martha
13 Nungesser, she's our environmental lead from the
14 District. There she is over there. Armando
15 Ramirez, he's our Tribal Liaison. Jon Madden,
16 our Water Quality Lead. Larry Brion, he's a
17 Lead Modeler. Larry, he's in the back over
18 there; and Jennifer Leeds, she's the Federal
19 Restoration Planning and Coordination Unit
20 Leader.

21 Okay. In a few minutes I will turn over
22 the floor to Matt Morrison, Kelly Keefe and Andy
23 LoSchiavo, who will provide you with a brief
24 overview of the project and the planning
25 process. Once the presentations are complete, I

1 will open the meeting to public comment. We
2 will receive comments through the end of the
3 meeting.

4 So, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to
5 introduce Matt Morrison from South Florida Water
6 Management District.

7 MR. MORRISON: Thank you. I would like to
8 welcome everybody tonight. I know everybody has
9 very busy schedules and it's often difficult to
10 get out and come to these --

11 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: We can't hear you.

12 MR. MORRISON: Is that any better?

13 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: No.

14 MR. MORRISON: Let me try a different mic.
15 Is that better?

16 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Yes.

17 MR. MORRISON: Okay, great. Let me run the
18 machine here, Megan.

19 So I just wanted to welcome everybody, I
20 know everybody has very busy schedules and it's
21 often very difficult to get out and come to
22 these kind of meetings, but on behalf of the
23 South Florida Water Management District, the
24 nonfederal -- federal sponsor in this Everglades
25 Restoration, we welcome you and we really look

1 forward to your input tonight.

2 I wanted to start by just giving a quick
3 overview on the overhead of really what we're
4 trying to do in the comprehensive Everglades
5 Restoration Program in general. There's three
6 graphical representations of the South Florida
7 peninsula, and on the left is one that depicts
8 the historical flows before we all lived here,
9 showing that when the rain fell, it hit north of
10 Lake Okeechobee and meandered very slowly down
11 into Lake Okeechobee, and as the water levels in
12 the lake rose from that rainfall that's derived
13 upstream of the lake, the lake kind of just
14 overtipped its southern boundary and moved water
15 down into Everglades National Park as we know it
16 today, and Florida Bay.

17 Now, with that said, we all live, work, go
18 to school and reside here, and in order for us
19 to do that, we work in a very managed system
20 today, and the graphic in the center there is a
21 good representation of how we manage water in
22 South Florida under the current flow regime.
23 And we all acknowledge that there's a system
24 that has been put in place over the last fifty
25 to sixty years that provides a very good level

1 of service for flood control, so we can live,
2 work and enjoy South Florida.

3 But with that said, we also recognize that
4 there are some unintended consequences
5 associated with that system. So what happens
6 today when it rains north of the lake, the water
7 moves very quickly into Lake Okeechobee, which
8 now has a dike around it where we manage water
9 levels within the lake, and when we can, we move
10 water out of the lake, down through storm water
11 treatment areas to Everglades National Park and
12 Florida Bay. But today, under the majority of
13 the operating regimes, when we have very high
14 lake levels, the lake comes up and we actually
15 discharge that water in an undesirable fashion
16 to the St. Lucie estuary to the east and the
17 Caloosahatchee to the west, which is not the way
18 the water used to go.

19 So in CERP, the Comprehensive Everglades
20 Restoration Program, we have a series of
21 projects, and I'll take a little bit of time to
22 talk through those, that gets us to a future
23 flow regime. Obviously it's not going to get us
24 back to where we were before we all came to
25 South Florida, prehuman existence, but we do

1 have opportunities through this program with
2 individual projects like the project that we're
3 going to be talking about today, to couple
4 together different components to improve the way
5 that we manage water within the system and
6 provide a better balance between the water
7 supply that we drink, the water supply that we
8 use for irrigation, the flood control that we
9 rely on to live and work in South Florida and
10 then try to reverse some of those unintended
11 consequences associated with the network of
12 canals that we put on the landscape.

13 And what I think is really important, we
14 talked about the quality, the quantity, the
15 timing and the distribution of flows. And the
16 project that we're talking about tonight is
17 going to focus on that quantity, quality, timing
18 and distribution. But in addition to that,
19 we're going to be looking at project features in
20 the Western Everglades Restoration Project that
21 will increase our operational flexibility of a
22 system-wide network of canals, lakes and levee
23 systems that we have in South Florida. And as
24 we move forward and we develop this project
25 plan, with the public input, we really want to

1 increase the regional operational flexibility of
2 water management and provide some relief to
3 those northern estuaries that often get
4 overburdened with those undesirable regulatory
5 releases, and then try to send more flow to the
6 natural areas, including the Western Everglades
7 area that we're going to be talking about
8 tonight.

9 So from the Comprehensive Everglades
10 Restoration Program, we use an acronym that you
11 often hear, it's called CERP, C-E-R-P, the
12 Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Program.
13 That program is well documented in a volume of
14 manuals, for lack of better words, that were
15 finished back in 1999 that laid out a series of
16 project components or project features that
17 would kind of reverse some of those unintended
18 consequences that I talked about from the
19 drainage perspective; and that document included
20 sixty-eight different components that were all
21 over the South Florida jurisdiction that were
22 put on the landscape to help us better manage
23 water resources and provide a better balance
24 between water supply, flood control and the
25 environment.

1 And those types of features are listed
2 here, and these are the types of features that
3 we'll be looking at in this particular planning
4 project to put on the landscape to improve the
5 water quality and the hydrology in the Western
6 Everglades. And they include things like
7 aquifer storage and recovery; in a nutshell,
8 that is a well that collects water when the
9 canal networks are full and it's raining, it
10 moves that water down into the upper part of the
11 aquifer, stores it underground, and then when it
12 gets dry, whether it's a dry season or whether
13 it's a drought, it brings that water back up,
14 puts it in the canal networks and moves it to
15 the environmental areas for environmental
16 restoration and environmental enhancement.

17 The same holds true for the surface water
18 storage reservoirs. We'll be evaluating and
19 looking at different combinations of storage
20 features, whether they be shallow; four feet
21 deep, or they be intermediate, eight feet deep,
22 or whether they be deep, at like fifteen or
23 eighteen feet, where we can build reservoirs and
24 actually capture that water when we don't want
25 it, when we're discharging it to tide, store it,

1 and then deliver it to the system when it needs
2 it as we transition into the dry year like we do
3 every single year.

4 And then storm water treatment areas, we
5 recognize that through development activities;
6 urban runoff, other land uses, there is a water
7 quality component that is essential to
8 Everglades restoration, and we'll be looking at
9 storm water treatment areas in this planning
10 area to capture and treat local runoff, as well
11 as look at opportunities to bring lake water
12 down into this area, treat it and deliver it to
13 the natural system.

14 And then just a couple more I want to touch
15 base on, seepage management and removing
16 barriers to flow. Obviously if we build
17 reservoirs that are above ground, we can't
18 adversely affect adjacent landowners or adjacent
19 agricultural operations or adjacent cities, we
20 have to be able to manage that seepage and
21 provide the same level of surface for flood
22 control, so seepage management is a component of
23 storage features and projects.

24 And then removing barriers to flow; we have
25 canals that turn left, they turn right, they

1 move water here, they move water there. We're
2 going to look at opportunities to remove some of
3 those canal networks, for example, and reproduce
4 some of the overlanding sheet flow that we
5 historically knew before those canals were
6 created.

7 And then with these projects and as these
8 components get put it on-line over a series of
9 years, it gives us a lot more operational
10 flexibility in the surface water management
11 system that we deal with today, and as a result
12 of that, we have more knobs we can turn to
13 control water for water supply, flood control
14 and the environment, and that's where the
15 revised operations come into play.

16 So as you start putting these features on
17 the landscape, you have more operational
18 flexibility within the system, so we acknowledge
19 that it's not only just the physical structures
20 out there, but it's also evaluating and looking
21 at the way that we operate the facilities that
22 exist and the new facilities that we'll be
23 putting on the landscape as part of the project.

24 So without going into too much detail, when
25 we talk about the Comprehensive Everglades

1 Restoration Plan or program, we've made a lot of
2 progress, and I think it's important for people
3 to recognize that. So what I have on the
4 overhead are really a series of all the project
5 plans that we've been developing for reversing
6 those unintended consequences, and if I start at
7 the top, I'll pick on the Kissimmee River
8 restoration. The Army Corps, with the Water
9 Management District, has actually taken the
10 channel that was the former Kissimmee River and
11 we backfilled it, and we purchased the land,
12 which is the flood plane. And that project is
13 actually nearing completion. So the once
14 meandering river was channelized, that water
15 short-circuited very quickly to the lake, we are
16 nearing completion with the Kissimmee River
17 restoration project which actually restores that
18 meandering flow of water in the head waters of
19 Lake Okeechobee.

20 A couple of other really big ones, the
21 Indian River Lagoon South. That is a series of
22 reservoirs and storm water treatment areas that
23 we have under construction that will capture
24 discharges from Lake Okeechobee that makes its
25 way to the St. Lucie estuary. In addition to

1 that, we have the C-43 reservoir which is under
2 construction. That's a similar type facility,
3 170,000 acre feet of storage on the
4 Caloosahatchee River to capture some of the
5 undesirable discharges that come from the lake
6 into the Caloosahatchee estuaries.

7 And then we have a number of projects that
8 we're currently planning, one which we're going
9 to talk about tonight. The Central Everglades
10 Planning Project that was recently completed,
11 it's waiting for congressional authorization, so
12 that's a really important next step. That is a
13 project that opens up the central part of the
14 greater Everglades system and provides the
15 necessary water quality treatment and storage
16 south of the lake to move an additional two
17 hundred thousand acre feet of water south, above
18 and beyond what we can currently do today.

19 And then I'll talk a little bit about the
20 Lake Okeechobee Watershed Project before I jump
21 to the Western, and the reason is that planning
22 effort is happening simultaneously to this
23 planning effort, and the Lake Okeechobee
24 Watershed Project has a very similar team of
25 Army Corps Jacksonville District staff and Water

1 Management District staff that are formulating
2 for storage north of Lake Okeechobee, and as we
3 move forward and look at opportunities here in
4 the Western Everglades Restoration Project to
5 put storage and treatment south of the lake,
6 we'll be coordinating and communicating very
7 closely with the same team of individuals that
8 are doing the project plans for storage north of
9 the lake, recognizing that it's a combination of
10 features; it's the solution to the unintended
11 consequences, not just one project is going to
12 fix it.

13 So we're building storage on the estuaries,
14 the northern estuaries. We're looking at
15 storage north of the lake and we're going to be
16 looking at storage south of the lake in this
17 particular project. So there will be a lot of
18 cross-communication between project teams to
19 make sure that at the end of the day we maximize
20 the efficiency and the benefits of those
21 individual projects for the entire system.

22 So without going into too much detail,
23 that's why we're here tonight. This project is
24 really the next important project that we're
25 moving toward and ultimately planning. We work

1 under the premise of our road map, it's known as
2 the integrated delivery schedule, and that's the
3 previous graphic that had the dots that showed
4 the Kissimmee River restoration and some of the
5 other projects that were on the landscape are
6 documented in this integrated different delivery
7 schedule, and they're in these different color
8 codes that are throughout the actual road map.

9 And it's important to recognize the two
10 we're watching now are the Lake Okeechobee
11 Watershed and Aquifer Storage and Recovery
12 Project that will provide storage north of the
13 lake, and then the Big Cypress L-28 interceptor
14 project, which is really the Western Everglades
15 Restoration Project that we're here to talk
16 about tonight. And those two projects, together
17 with the other projects that have been planned
18 and are currently either under design or
19 construction, will really provide the next
20 increment of treatment and storage on the
21 landscape to improve the system-wide operational
22 flexibility within the South Florida Water
23 Management System.

24 So with that, that's just a brief overview
25 of where we are in the Everglades restoration

1 program and why we're here tonight. So again, I
2 would like to welcome each and every one of you
3 and we look forward to working with you tonight.

4 MS. KEEFE: Hi, everyone. Good evening.
5 Can everyone hear me okay? Okay. I see some
6 nods. So we're really happy to see so many
7 faces here. Thank you for taking time to come
8 to the meeting, it's wonderful to see this much
9 engagement and interest by the public, so you're
10 welcome to be here and we're really happy to
11 have you here.

12 My name is Kelly Keefe. I've been involved
13 in ecosystem restoration projects for about
14 twenty years, eight of those have been with the
15 Army Corps. I'm very excited to be part of this
16 project, the Western Everglades Restoration
17 Project. I'll be the Planning Lead from the
18 Army Corps, and so part of my role is to
19 integrate all of these different points of view
20 and try to pull them all together into one
21 project that we can -- we can put forward for
22 Congress to consider and authorize and then
23 everybody can stand behind. So this is a --
24 this is a fun process that we're going through,
25 and part of the fun for us is hearing everything

1 that you have to say.

2 So let me give you a little introduction to
3 the project so you can get a sense of
4 preliminarily the scale of the project, the
5 preliminary scope of the project, kind of what
6 we think generally it's going to include, and
7 then we'll hear from you and we'll consider --
8 we'll continue our planning process to get down
9 into a lot more detail over the coming months
10 and the next year or two to really figure out in
11 detail what will be in the project.

12 So there's our project area map, and before
13 these presentations started I actually got
14 several questions about whether or not we would
15 have a connection to Lake Okeechobee, so I would
16 like to clarify that yes, we are having
17 potential canal connections to the lake, and you
18 can see them on the slide there, they may be a
19 little bit hard to see, but if you look closely,
20 you can see there's some dotted lines that go up
21 to the canals. So we are looking to relieve the
22 lake of some of those high water levels that
23 these days currently get discharged to the
24 estuaries, we're hoping to pull them south and
25 actually get good water quality, quantity,

1 timing and distribution, heading south the way
2 that it did naturally.

3 And the purpose of this project is to
4 improve that quantity, quality, timing and
5 distribution of the water that we need to
6 restore the system. And we're thinking of that
7 in terms of reconnecting the Western Everglades,
8 so that means reconnecting areas within this
9 project area, so areas that now may be
10 disjointed, where water doesn't have sheet flow
11 anymore or it's not flowing the way it did
12 naturally, maybe we can make them flow more
13 naturally and also reconnect this area with the
14 greater Everglades, so you have more of the
15 natural connection that it used to have with the
16 greater ecosystem; we'll be looking to restore
17 that as well.

18 So, as I said, it's preliminary at this
19 point. Some people in the room have been
20 telling us for years what they think should be
21 included in this project, and other people are
22 brand new to the project as it's getting
23 started. So this is right now just a
24 preliminary kind of conglomeration of what we've
25 heard so far, and we'll adjust these as we hear

1 more from you and from our team members.

2 So right now the objectives of the project
3 are to restore and improve the seasonal
4 hydroperiods and fresh water distribution to
5 support that natural mosaic of uplands and lower
6 wetlands that you would naturally have in the
7 area. We want to restore that mixture as much
8 as we can and make sure that the water is on the
9 land when it should be, where it should be and
10 for as long as it should be. And we also want
11 to reestablish and improve that sheet flow, so
12 for anybody who doesn't already know that
13 vocabulary, sheet flow is when water is flowing
14 across the land. And sometimes in the past with
15 our projects we have tended to break up that
16 sheet flow, and then we realized that it was
17 really important to the ecosystem. So now we
18 want to restore the sheet flow as much as we can
19 and restore those patterns and the depth and
20 also the duration that the water stays on the
21 land in the study area so that we can reduce the
22 loss of soil; as soil subsides or the soil
23 either burns away or it kind of oxidizes away,
24 we want to make that stop happening as much as
25 we can, and also reduce the number of those

1 large, damaging peat fires that we have when the
2 areas get too dry and they're naturally dried
3 down and then you can have a spark and a big
4 fire that wouldn't have naturally happened.
5 We're going to try to reduce those with this
6 project as well.

7 And we want to reduce the loss of water out
8 of this system. Like Matt mentioned, we'll be
9 looking at areas where we may have seepage loss
10 or areas where we've tried to restore hydration
11 and those areas aren't getting enough -- as much
12 water as they should, or maybe they're losing
13 some of that water, so we'll see if we can make
14 those areas work better and improve the ground
15 and surface water elevations as well.

16 So here's a little bit more information
17 about our study area, and as you can see, we've
18 got this white boundary going around the study
19 area. That's not a hard limit on where we're
20 looking, but really, that just gives you a sense
21 of the area and the scale of the project. So
22 right now with that line drawn around this area,
23 that's about 920 square miles that we're looking
24 at to find all the restoration opportunities
25 that we can. So it's a large scale ecosystem

1 restoration project, we're going to do as much
2 good in the area as we can.

3 And you do see there the potential
4 connections to Lake Okeechobee, so we have a lot
5 to consider as we go through this planning
6 process.

7 This area was historically dominated by
8 wetlands and a mosaic of uplands and wetlands,
9 but the dominant landscape type was wetlands.
10 And currently we still have natural lands and
11 wetlands dominating the area, and we also have
12 agricultural and urban land uses and
13 infrastructure in the area.

14 So some of you -- maybe I can get people to
15 raise your hand. How many people have been
16 around since we originally formulated the yellow
17 book? I see Pete out there. So some of you may
18 remember this diagram, possibly. So this comes
19 right out of our yellow book, and for those of
20 you who weren't involved in that, the yellow
21 book is kind of our nickname for the plans,
22 that's we have that's called the Comprehensive
23 Everglades Restoration Program, or plan, and
24 that's the bigger CERP plan. And as you all
25 know and as Matt mentioned, that big CERP plan

1 contains a lot of projects that all work
2 together, they're all kind of like pieces of a
3 jigsaw puzzle, and each time we do a project,
4 it's like we're filling in another piece of that
5 jigsaw puzzle. And so this is what was proposed
6 to be in the L-28 area, this part of the jigsaw
7 puzzle was this plan here. And this is
8 conceptual, we're not bound to do this, but it's
9 a good place for us to start talking. And so
10 now our study area actually includes this area
11 and expands upon it, so we're actually taking on
12 more than this for this Western Everglades
13 Restoration Project.

14 So we have some opportunities here to
15 reconnect and restore those fragmented wetlands.
16 And also, as Matt mentioned a few times, we want
17 to improve the system-wide operational
18 flexibility. And what that means, when we're
19 talking about operations, we're basically
20 talking about moving water and being able to
21 move the water into the best place where it's
22 needed the most at the right time. And so every
23 time we put another piece into that jigsaw
24 puzzle, we're more able to move that water where
25 it needs to go and where it would go naturally.

1 So this project, by putting another piece
2 in that puzzle, this project will give us that
3 much more ability to avoid dumping water into
4 the estuaries or avoid putting water in places
5 where it wouldn't have gone naturally, and we
6 can put it into places where it should go
7 naturally.

8 And we also have the potential to help with
9 water supply and flood control benefits, that's
10 always important in Florida, and so it's part of
11 what we're considering. And then we're going to
12 coordinate with ongoing restoration activities,
13 especially with this being such a large area,
14 you can imagine there are a lot of people
15 already doing work in this area, and we heard
16 from some of them at an agency meeting earlier
17 today, and if any of you know about any
18 restoration work going on in this area already,
19 feel free to include that in your public
20 comments so that we're as aware as possible of
21 the things that we can compliment and support
22 and work together with.

23 So thank you all for your attention. I
24 hope that was a good introduction to the
25 project. Now Andy is going to tell you a little

1 bit more about NEPA, and then we'll get to your
2 comments.

3 MR. LOSCHIAVO: Thank you. My name is Andy
4 Loschiavo. I am the restoration resources
5 section chief here. I'm going to talk about the
6 Natural Environmental Policy Act process, NEPA.
7 No, it's not the filter in your vacuum cleaner,
8 it's a more important act where we consider a
9 lot of the environmental issues and
10 socioeconomic issues and why we're here tonight;
11 this is part of the NEPA process, the public
12 scoping meeting, so we're going to go through
13 this and sort of the things -- how this process
14 works and the opportunities for you to provide
15 input on this project.

16 NEPA is a federal law that mandates all
17 federal actions to consider the environmental
18 effects and socioeconomic effects of those
19 actions, and it's mostly focused on major
20 federal actions, and particularly focused on
21 those where we might have significant
22 environmental impacts. As part of the process
23 it requires, as part of this process tonight,
24 this is one part of it to consider -- solicit
25 public comment, consider those comments and

1 address those as part of the project that we're
2 putting forth. It's also a way where we're able
3 to integrate our consultation with tribal
4 governments, as well as our coordination and
5 consultation with federal, state and local
6 agencies. It's an important process to provide
7 a mechanism where a lot of different agencies
8 and issues that get brought up that overlap in
9 this area, we can look at it all in one
10 document, consider all those issues as we're
11 looking to formulate the best restoration plan
12 that can avoid, minimize and mitigate some of
13 those environmental effects.

14 And this is a detailed diagram here of the
15 process here is that what we're basically
16 talking about here is ultimately as part of this
17 process we prepared a detailed assessment to
18 consider what those effects are, and measures to
19 avoid, minimize and mitigate unavoidable
20 effects. And there's different types of
21 documents, but one that's most important with
22 this project, because we believe that there's
23 enough issues here already that's part of how we
24 look at CERP projects, it's a large scale
25 project, there's a lot of important resources

1 that we would prepare a more detailed
2 environmental assessment as part of an
3 environmental impact statement, and we consider
4 a lot of those environmental issues and document
5 them clearly and explain the analyses in that
6 report. There's a draft report that goes out
7 for public comment and a final that gets posted
8 as well.

9 Now, Kelly mentioned the planning process,
10 and there's also the NEPA process, we try to
11 integrate those, we try to make sure that we
12 make things as integrated as possible. As part
13 of the Corps' six step planning process, the
14 first step for any restoration project or any
15 water resources project is what are those
16 problems and opportunities that we're trying to
17 address and focus in on, what are the goals and
18 objectives. Some of you may have insights on
19 that or some views; you can express that tonight
20 as part of the open scoping process. It very
21 much feeds into clearly stating what is the
22 purpose of this federal project and why we need
23 it. We're going to make sure that it's clearly
24 stated ultimately in the documents so there's no
25 confusion over what is the purpose and need for

1 the project.

2 In addition to planning process, we try to
3 describe what the existing conditions are; what
4 is the vegetation that's out there, the geology,
5 the hydrology, the fish and wildlife that's out
6 there. What's the recreation that people use
7 these sites for? What are the communities that
8 are in this area? We want to make sure we
9 consider all those issues as part of the
10 affected environment. And we also try to
11 consider, ultimately, what if we didn't move
12 forward with this project, what would happen,
13 what is the future going to be like, and that's
14 the no action alternative that we consider.

15 As part of the planning process, ultimately
16 when you're considering these problems and
17 opportunities, you develop alternative plans to
18 address them; alternative restoration plans,
19 they aren't just focused on that restoration
20 action, they may look at opportunities for water
21 supply or flood control that can be done along
22 with this restoration plan, but also, if there's
23 environmental issues or effects to resources, we
24 want to consider measures to avoid, minimize and
25 mitigate those. We want to hear some of those

1 concerns tonight as well as part of this
2 process.

3 As part of the process to evaluate plans we
4 developed what are called performance measures;
5 we're trying to measure the benefits for
6 restoration; how much wetlands do we restore,
7 how much water are we able to move south, do we
8 know how much fire risk we can reduce. Those
9 are the performance measures that help evaluate
10 the plan's effects, as well as we look at
11 evaluation criteria to consider what the impacts
12 might be to threatened endangered species, as
13 well as trying to avoid sensitive cultural
14 areas.

15 We then take that information, it gets
16 compared in the document, that joint project
17 implementation report, the NEPA report, and as a
18 part of that we document what those
19 environmental effects are, and ultimately we
20 select a plan that's put forth, we tentatively
21 select a plan with the draft environmental
22 impact statement; basically describes this is
23 what we think is the best plan that considers
24 all the issues that got raised as part of this
25 project. It also documents ultimately the

1 conclusions in the end with the final report and
2 how those issues were addressed.

3 What's new with the planning process is
4 some of the feedback back a couple years ago
5 when they asked how was the Corps doing with the
6 planning process, the comments were you're too
7 slow, it costs a lot to get through the planning
8 process, and so there's a whole effort to revamp
9 the planning process, to speed it up, to try and
10 minimize the cost of going through the planning
11 process. So we're talking about three years to
12 get the study done, no more than three million
13 dollars to develop this, the project plan, and
14 also improved integration within the Corps of
15 Engineers, the Jacksonville District,
16 representatives on the ground. We have a
17 division level and ultimately at the national
18 level and headquarters, better coordination
19 between those groups to ultimately make sure we
20 address issues fully, get support ultimately at
21 headquarters for the plan.

22 The process is also focused on what are
23 those key decisions we need to make as we talk
24 about those six steps in the planning process,
25 what are the key decisions that we need to make

1 and what are the few risks that we might run
2 into, whether it's water quality or maybe it's
3 seepage issues or flood control or threatened
4 endangered species issues that we need to
5 address, getting the right information at the
6 right time to address those. And ultimately
7 we're trying to document what these issues are
8 at the beginning and get the right information
9 at the right time so that we can move through
10 the process as fast as we can, but appropriately
11 address those issues.

12 And here's sort of a schedule. This whole
13 process, again, takes about three years. As you
14 can see up here, we're starting in the scoping
15 process, that's where we're at, so the scoping
16 letter went out on July 11th and we're having a
17 scoping meeting tonight to hear comments from
18 everyone who is in this room, and you can also
19 send in writing the comments, or through e-mail;
20 I will have some information at the end how you
21 can do that. That information gets taken in by
22 the project team to develop alternatives to
23 basically come up with these are alternatives
24 we're going to consider for restoration in the
25 Western Everglades, and that's the first

1 decision milestone that we make.

2 When that process moves forward, we go
3 through an evaluation process to identify what
4 we think is the tentatively selected plan. It's
5 not the recommended plan because we still have
6 to hear from all the various agencies and public
7 and tribal governments on what we think are some
8 things that need to be considered with that plan
9 and have they all been considered correctly.
10 And that gets done as part of a draft
11 environmental impact statement, a draft EIR goes
12 out for public comment, so that's another
13 opportunity for folks to weigh in on what we
14 think -- what the agencies have come up as a
15 restoration plan, but also to provide your input
16 on that.

17 And we consider that, we consider what
18 changes we need to make to avoid, minimize or
19 mitigate some of those unavoidable impacts, and
20 it gets put into ultimately a final plan that
21 comes out and the decision for the final report
22 model, we have a final Environmental Impact
23 Statement, or EIS, they call it, gets released.
24 And ultimately in the end there's a final record
25 of decision of that on that project after a

1 final statement is reviewed.

2 Public participation is a big deal as part
3 of the NEPA process and the federal planning
4 process, there's many opportunities to do that
5 with this project. One, we're trying to use
6 existing forums that are out there, the South
7 Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force,
8 there's a meeting that's being held here in this
9 auditorium on August 23rd, and it's a good way
10 to get your thoughts -- a more interactive way,
11 talking through some of the technical
12 information that we may need that can help
13 improve the consideration of what are the best
14 plans to evaluate. And we're also going to use
15 our project delivery team meetings, they're
16 going to be -- those meetings are going to be
17 posted on the website; that, again, is going to
18 be in the presentation, you can write this down.
19 And those are held basically monthly, and
20 there's opportunities for public comment as part
21 of that process.

22 In addition, things are going to be brought
23 up at the Water Resource Advisory Committee to
24 the South Florida Water Management District, and
25 as part of the governing board there's

1 opportunity for public comment there. And
2 again, when we have a draft report comes out,
3 we'll have another public meeting to hear input
4 on those restoration plans. And so again,
5 there's a number of ways to get your input this
6 process.

7 There's public comment cards that we
8 mentioned, we have some up front here that Gina
9 is a going to call off names for people to come
10 up, and if you don't want to use that route, you
11 can send comments through an e-mail that's up on
12 the screen here,
13 Western.Everglades@USAC.Army.mil, or you can
14 write, the address is Melissa Nasuti, she's the
15 environmental technical lead, she couldn't be
16 here tonight, using this address here.

17 And again, the web address to keep up on
18 the public comments when things are going to be
19 addressed, when we address those comments they
20 will be posted on this website, as well as
21 project team meetings, upcoming events, use that
22 website. And we are accepting comments up
23 through August 24th, so you have another week
24 after today to get your input in on this
25 project.

1 MS. KEEFE: So some folks are trying to get
2 to that web page tonight and weren't able to get
3 through to it, for some reason. We know that it
4 works. It's case sensitive. If you can't get
5 through on that address, you can just go to
6 Google and type in Western Everglades
7 Restoration Project, and just Google it and it
8 will lead you to our web page.

9 MR. DESCHIAVO: All right. Thank you.

10 MS. RALPH: Okay. Thank you to Matt and
11 Kelly and Andy for the presentations tonight to
12 give everybody an overview of the Western
13 Everglades Restoration Project.

14 So now it's time for your say, it's time to
15 hear from the public, so it's extremely
16 important that everybody's voice is heard. As
17 you can see, we have a very large number of
18 participants here tonight, so therefore we are
19 asking that you keep your comments to two
20 minutes. On the very front table over here we
21 have a green, yellow, red light. When it gets
22 to the yellow light, start wrapping it up. When
23 it gets to the red light, I'm unfortunately
24 going to have to cut you off, because we do want
25 to hear from everybody this evening.

1 There will be a transcript of this public
2 meeting, it will be prepared, and as Andy said,
3 we will be taking your comments through one of
4 these avenues through August 24th. Does that
5 mean that you can't send us a comment after
6 August 24th? We are here to listen throughout
7 the planning process, but we ask that you get
8 your initial scoping comments in by the 24th of
9 this month. Written comments may be submitted
10 to the e-mail address and the mailing address
11 shown above, as Andy pointed out.

12 So what's going to happen, the protocol for
13 tonight is individuals who have signed up one of
14 these comment cards -- and your opportunity
15 still is out there if you want to sign up at the
16 registration table -- you will be called to the
17 microphone. So I'll call two names, the first
18 one will come to the microphone and the other
19 one will be standing, just waiting to make their
20 comments. Please state your full name, and if
21 applicable, what organization you may represent.

22 I ask that -- there are a variety of issues
23 going on in the world today in the greater
24 Everglades; I ask that you keep your comments
25 focused tonight on the Western Everglades

1 Restoration Project as was described. If you
2 have comments outside the scope of this meeting,
3 we'd be happy to discuss them with you
4 immediately after this meeting. There will be
5 several representatives from the Army Corps of
6 Engineers, South Florida Water Management
7 District around the room and at these posters,
8 so please keep your focus on the Western
9 Everglades Restoration Project.

10 I do apologize if I mispronounce your name,
11 so I'm going to try my best and hopefully I'll
12 get it right, and before we do the first
13 individual, we did have some other elected
14 officials that joined us, and I would just like
15 to briefly recognize the Fort Myers Mayor, Mr.
16 Randy Henderson.

17 MR. HENDERSON: Thank you.

18 MS. RALPH: Thank you. Belle Glade City
19 Commissioner, Larry Underwood. Belle Glade
20 Mayor, Steve Wilson and Belle Glade Vice Mayor,
21 Ross Wilkerson.

22 So the first speaker will be Commissioner
23 Janet Taylor, followed by Mali Gardner.

24 MS. TAYLOR: Can you hear me now?

25 We appreciate the opportunity for members

1 of the Glades Community to have a seat at the
2 table. Our community unite behind the idea that
3 the Army Corps must be guided by science and
4 complete the projects that are approved and
5 technically proven to bring relief to Lake
6 Okeechobee and St. Lucie and the Caloosahatchee
7 estuaries We support finishing the Comprehensive
8 Everglades Restoration Plan, which was started
9 nearly two decades ago and includes the Western
10 Everglades Restoration Project. Combined, these
11 projects will achieve the original stated goal
12 of restoring the Everglades. Unfortunately,
13 activists have threatened progress through
14 attempts to force the sale of land south of the
15 lake. Our communities are not for sale, and we
16 encourage the Army Corps to continue serving as
17 a partner in advocating for the completion of
18 CERP, and we look forward to the day when
19 frequent discharges become a thing of the past.

20 Thank you all for coming to us tonight.

21 MS. GARDNER: Good evening. Thank you. I
22 really have one point, and I want to get
23 clarification, and I think it was on your slide,
24 that there was five hundred and eighty-nine
25 thousand acres in this project. Is that the

1 total project area?

2 MS. KEEFE: That's the total area that we
3 have preliminarily outlined, that number of
4 acres is about nine hundred and twenty --

5 MS. GARDNER: And how many acres of that is
6 owned already by the state or federal
7 government?

8 MS. RALPH: I think that's a question that
9 we can look into, I'm not sure that we are
10 prepared --

11 MS. GARDNER: I'd like to look into that,
12 because I saw that target area and I was
13 concerned that the amount of acreage they were
14 talking about. And I agree with Commissioner
15 Taylor that I believe, you know, the project,
16 CERP project should be completed and funded.
17 Particularly my concern is Herbert Hoover dike,
18 and that's the safety issue that that project
19 needs to be done, but I'm concerned 578,000
20 acres that I saw on the little map tonight, how
21 much of that is already owned by state and
22 federal, so I really would appreciate that
23 information.

24 Thank you.

25 MS. RALPH: Thank you. Okay, so next up we

1 have Mayor Phillip Roland, followed by Patty
2 Whitehead.

3 MAYOR ROLAND: Phillip Roland, Mayor of
4 Clewiston. I'm not going to talk about Western
5 right this second. The Kissimmee Valley covers
6 5500 square miles, and you all dump water into
7 Lake Okeechobee, which is 700 square miles, and
8 that's the reason that the mayor from Fort Myers
9 is here, and people from Stuart are here, is
10 because of the green algae. I saw algae the
11 first time when I was thirty years old, after I
12 come out of the service, after at the Kissimmee
13 was straightened in 1960. First time I saw
14 green algae, and it was right out in the middle
15 of the lake. And until you -- until you control
16 the water, the ninety-five percent of the water
17 that comes into Lake Okeechobee, you cannot
18 control what's in the south. And I think your
19 plan, the Western, is right, but you're going to
20 fill it up in one year, and then where do you go
21 from there? If you don't store water north of
22 the lake -- and let's talk about shared
23 adversity. Let Orlando and everything south of
24 there share in the adversity, the Fort Myers,
25 Stuart, us and everybody else in the south

1 shares. Thank you.

2 MS. RALPH: Okay. We have Patty Whitehead,
3 followed by Catherine Backos.

4 MS. WHITEHEAD: Hi, good evening. I'm
5 representing the Responsible Growth Management
6 Coalition out of Lee County and the Cypress Cove
7 Conservancy out of Collier County, and I want to
8 preface my main remarks about this project with
9 something that I think we can all agree on, I
10 think it's foundational to our understanding of
11 the Everglades. The presence of humans in south
12 and central Florida has displaced and in some
13 cases permanently destroyed the rich, unique and
14 highly biodiverse and irreplaceable natural
15 values of the Everglades. So that takes in all
16 impacts, not just southern impacts, but central
17 impacts.

18 So my main question is for the agencies
19 that are here, how will this project interface
20 with another NEPA planning process currently
21 underway also in the Western Everglades called
22 the Eastern Collier County Habitat Conservation
23 Plan, which sounds nice and environmentally
24 friendly, but is in fact a plan to urbanize
25 Eastern Collier County to the tune of 45,000

1 acres of residential, commercial, high density
2 intensity. Also, to be served by hundreds of
3 miles of new roads, many of them multilane
4 highways. How will panthers and other large
5 mammals that require large swaths of natural
6 native lands that are interconnected that in
7 most cases need to be uplands, but can be
8 seasonally restricted wetlands. How will these
9 animals breathe, feed, find mates, be restricted
10 from impacts, not only from humans, but from
11 their own species. As we know, male panthers
12 have panther on panther impacts, they fight each
13 other for territory.

14 Is this project aimed to serve that other
15 project? Is the water for the humans, or, you
16 know, you're going to be sheet flowing new water
17 through the Western Everglades, this is the
18 place where panthers rely on now for their
19 survival. So many questions to be answered, and
20 I hope that there's going to be an interface
21 between this NEPA planning process and that one,
22 it raises so many questions.

23 Thank you.

24 MS. RALPH: Thank you. All right.

25 Catherine Backos.

1 MS. BACKOS: I don't know if I can reach
2 this. Can everybody hear me? My name is
3 Catherine Backos, I'm a realtor from the Naples
4 area, Fort Myers, Lee County, and I have to say
5 that the efforts made here are -- how shall I
6 put it -- sorely needed in our area. We pride
7 ourselves on having some of the finest beaches
8 in Florida, and yet the estuaries are polluted,
9 our river is polluted, our beaches are polluted.
10 This has had a serious impact on our industry,
11 and I realize that the man-made creation of
12 damming up the lake and having the water --
13 straightening the Kissimmee not only impacted
14 the people in Clewiston and in our areas, the
15 question is how much money is needed to really
16 arrive at a program, and do we have help from
17 the federal government, and is the state bought
18 into actually doing something to keep the
19 environment of Florida healthy.

20 And if we can get answers to that and a
21 time line and a budget and who is going to put
22 what money in, I know we all voted for Amendment
23 One, but we haven't really seen much result from
24 that.

25 So I think those are the answers I'm

1 seeking on behalf of people in our area and on
2 behalf of everybody in this room.

3 Thank you.

4 MS. RALPH: Thank you. All right. Next up
5 I have Anna Littles, followed by Leslie
6 Alderman.

7 MR. ALDERMAN: Man. I don't have a
8 (inaudible).

9 MS. RALPH: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Alderman.
10 Anna Littles here. Anna does not want to speak.
11 Okay, thank you. I apologize for this one.
12 Pete Quasius.

13 MR. QUASIUS: Spot on. I'm Pete Quasius
14 I'm the advocacy director for Audubon of the
15 Western Everglades. We all know we need to move
16 water south. We need to move clean water south.
17 We need to move lots of water south. I'm
18 pleased to see that we've expanded the
19 conceptual scope of this project to include the
20 connections with the lake. I think we also need
21 to expand the opportunity to move more water
22 into the Big Cypress. Nobody wants to have
23 water, polluted water, in their streets, on
24 their farm fields, on their beaches and their
25 homes, but the answer is to find ways to convey

1 clean water south, huge quantities of clean
2 water south.

3 250,000 acres of storage is six inches off
4 the lake. We all know how fast the lake can
5 rise if we have a big storm. We need to provide
6 the opportunity to treat, clean and move water
7 to appropriate places that allows us all to have
8 the prosperity of our economy and continued
9 quality of life.

10 So I look forward with this process. I'll
11 see you here on the 23rd.

12 MS. RALPH: Thank you. Okay. Our next two
13 speakers are Thomas Van Lent, followed by Paul
14 McGehee.

15 MR. VAN LENT: My name is Tom Van Lent.
16 I'm here representing the Everglades Foundation.
17 Our main purpose in tonight here is to listen
18 and to learn, understand what the scope of the
19 project is. We understand that you're going
20 through a scoping process to define what that
21 is, and we also know you're on a very
22 compressed, streamlined planning timeline;
23 therefore, I urge you to focus as quickly as
24 possible and tell the public what you're
25 planning.

1 The scope here ranged from all possible
2 projects in CERP are on the table to the very
3 limited description from the Yellow Book about
4 what the L-28 and what's kind of in between sort
5 of is left up -- is what is left to be decided.
6 So please focus and let us know as soon as
7 possible what your plans are, what is possible.

8 Now, the Everglades Foundation clearly
9 believes that the Yellow Book efforts certainly
10 do need to be addressed, there's two major
11 problems in this basin that we see inside the
12 basin design. One is the heavy nutrient
13 pollution coming off the L-28 I and into water
14 conservation area 3-A accounts for about a third
15 of the total pollutant load to the Everglades
16 and has a general negative effect, but
17 specifically it has a huge detrimental effect to
18 the Miccosukee tribal homeland. You're
19 depriving them of the use of their homeland, and
20 that is unconscionable, and that problem does in
21 fact need to be addressed.

22 Secondly, the L-28 interceptor has a
23 massive hydrologic disruption to the whole
24 northeast Big Cypress, and that is the very
25 heart of your -- your project, that does need to

1 be addressed.

2 While we welcome any opportunity to do more
3 with this project, we would like to see what's
4 on the table. We don't think the project can be
5 successful unless those two problems, at least,
6 are addressed and solved. So thank you.

7 MS. RALPH: Thank you.

8 MR. MCGEHEE: Hi. I'm Paul McGehee, I'm
9 here for Glades Electric Cooperative, and my
10 questions have already been somewhat answered,
11 but I would stress that as the plans move
12 forward in any of the planning phases, that as
13 we have electrical infrastructure extensively
14 through that area, which our members are
15 invested in, that we would be brought into the
16 planning sessions and anything that may have to
17 be rerouted or moved or retired, that the
18 members of Glades Electric Cooperative are not
19 going to be on the hook financially for those
20 costs, but I want to know which agency plans to
21 actually pay those expenses.

22 So please keep us in the loop early. There
23 may be two different plans that just the cost of
24 mitigating those infrastructure costs may swing
25 the choice between any of those plans, so just

1 please keep us in the loop early.

2 Thank you.

3 MS. RALPH: Thank you. Okay. Next up I
4 have Shannon Larsen, followed by Denzil Alleyne.

5 MS. LARSEN: First of all, I have a little
6 giggle in me, um, talked about when Lake
7 Okeechobee tripped over or tipped over its
8 boundaries. Lake Okeechobee doesn't have a
9 boundary, lakes don't have a boundary, rivers
10 don't have a boundary. We created it when we
11 moved into their boundary.

12 When and where the water needs to be. I
13 really do hope that the Army Corps and water
14 management district really will pay attention to
15 that, because you haven't been very good about
16 that yet, in all the years you've been managing.
17 I'm glad to see that you're thinking continuity
18 rather than fragmentation, it's been fragmented
19 too long.

20 And in closing, I just have a few
21 suggestions. That you dig grade to type S to an
22 elevation of eight feet, so more water -- excuse
23 me -- may be diverted towards Big Cypress.
24 Right now it's being diverted to the water
25 conservation 3-A. That's Big Cypress Preserve's

1 water, let's get it back to them. Fill in L-28
2 so water can overflow towards the west of Big
3 Cypress. Take measures to improve water quality
4 from L-28 interceptor because the north feeder
5 is providing dirty water and that needs to be
6 taken care of.

7 We need to allow releases through S-344,
8 and I would like you to use something I noticed
9 in your plan you have 2 SPA pictures, and I
10 would like -- and over 7,000 acres of land for
11 those two SPA. If you use something like the
12 managed aquatic plant system, you'd only be
13 using about thirty-four acres per system, and I
14 encourage you to start looking into different
15 ways other than the SPA. There are things less
16 land, disturbing less of the environment, and
17 actually do a better job.

18 And we need to get rid of the legacy
19 phosphate in Okeechobee or nothing is going to
20 work. Thank you.

21 MS. RALPH: Thank you, Miss Larsen. Denzil
22 Alleyne. No, he does not wish to speak any
23 longer? Okay. Next we have Mary Ann Martin,
24 followed by Vivian Haney.

25 Sir, can you just state your name so we

1 can clarify?

2 MR. IGLESIAS: Yeah, because I'm not Mary
3 Ann Martin. I'm Ramon Iglesias from Mary Ann
4 Martin's Marina.

5 You know, I've heard a lot about the
6 Everglades today, but we've got to remember that
7 Lake Okeechobee is the liquid heart of the
8 Everglades, and my question is when we were in
9 drought conditions will the aquifers have enough
10 water to replenish the sheet flow that you were
11 talking about, or is your intention to drain
12 that lake that we survive off, that we need?
13 Could you answer that question?

14 MS. RALPH: Is our intention to drain Lake
15 Okeechobee? That is not our intention.

16 MR. IGLESIAS: Are the aquifers --

17 MS. RALPH: Aquifers?

18 MR. IGLESIAS: Okay.

19 MS. RALPH: Okay.

20 MR. IGLESIAS: When we're in a drought,
21 will the aquifers be able to replenish the sheet
22 flow that you were talking about going into the
23 Everglades?

24 MS. RALPH: Well, what we have, as part of
25 our process is what we call (inaudible), in

1 which we ensure that there is adequate water as
2 there was in 2000, before this CERP was
3 formulated, so there is a system of checks and
4 balances to ensure that we are meeting those
5 demands.

6 MR. IGLESIAS: Okay. So when we get into
7 drought conditions and you need that sheet flow
8 and you're running out of water from the
9 aquifers, are you going to pull the water out of
10 Lake Okeechobee?

11 MS. RALPH: I'm not sure I'm prepared to
12 answer that question, but we will take all of
13 your comments as part of our scoping period, and
14 if one of your concerns is taking too much water
15 from Lake Okeechobee, please put that in your
16 comments.

17 MR. IGLESIAS: Okay. Since I've got
18 thirty-eight seconds on the clock, I'm going to
19 talk about the Kissimmee. Can you tell me that
20 with the straightening of the Kissimmee and
21 putting it back to the way it was, how much tax
22 dollars were spent, or will be spent when it's
23 all final?

24 MS. RALPH: I wish I could tell you that,
25 but I can't, but we can certainly find out for

1 you.

2 MR. IGLESIAS: Okay. Thank you.

3 MS. RALPH: Thank you. Miss Haney.

4 MS. HANEY: Hi. Okay. Hi. My name is
5 Vivian Haney and I'm the reigning Miss Sugar
6 here in Clewiston, and I am very proud to
7 represent the sugar industry at this time.

8 The board of the sugar industry represents
9 32 billion dollars a year and over twelve
10 thousand dollars job to our economy. It is
11 important to everyone to understand that taking
12 more farm land out of production will destroy
13 jobs and destroy future communities without
14 solving the problems of large Lake Okeechobee
15 discharges.

16 We support moving forward with the
17 science-based comprehensive Everglades
18 restoration plan that will benefit all our
19 waterways and communities, not just the coastal
20 estuaries. Thank you for protecting the
21 (inaudible).

22 MS. RALPH: Thank you. All right. We have
23 Teddy Gardner, followed by Brad Cornell.

24 MR. GARDNER: I am not Mary Ann Martin, but
25 I will refer to her comment. I've heard a lot

1 of good information here this evening, but I
2 haven't heard one that I consider to be critical
3 before you start on any project: What's the
4 acceptance criteria? What are you looking for?
5 How much sheet flow in each area? How are you
6 going to maintain it? As Ramon points out,
7 during a drought period, how will you maintain
8 the required sheet flows, or are there periods
9 when you need no sheet flow? I'd like to see
10 that acceptance criteria that you're working to
11 in order to size everything you're doing.

12 That's it.

13 MS. RALPH: Thank you for your comment.

14 MR. CORNELL: Good evening. I'm Brad
15 Cornell, and I'm here on behalf of Audubon of
16 the Western Everglades and Audubon Florida.
17 Really appreciate the opportunity to have public
18 this comment and to hear from all of our -- our
19 citizen friends and colleagues and other
20 organizations.

21 We certainly welcome the focus that this is
22 bringing to opportunities to restore the
23 overdrained Big Cypress swamp and its watershed,
24 this is a great thing, and overdue.

25 Audubon is especially looking forward to

1 learning more about the specifics of the
2 planning effort. I know this is a scoping
3 process, so that's kind of part of the public
4 tonight, but we're looking for more details,
5 obviously. We're going to participate.

6 In particular, we do recommend the scope of
7 the study be expanded to include more of the Big
8 Cypress Preserve. This is to allow us to
9 consider more opportunities to rehydrate and
10 restore the overdrainage that comes from L-28,
11 Tamiami Trail and other canals throughout the
12 system. To us this seems like really low
13 (inaudible) and it seems really relatively low
14 cost, so we recommend that solution.

15 Thank you.

16 MS. RALPH: Thank you. Next up we have Ted
17 Fisherman, followed by Nicole Williams.

18 MR. FISHERMAN: No questions.

19 MS. RALPH: Okay. Thank you, sir. Nicole
20 Williams, followed by David Urich.

21 MS. WILLIAMS: Hello. My name is Nicole
22 Williams. I represent Florida Environmental
23 Coalition and EPAC, the Environmental Peace and
24 Education Center.

25 I'm definitely behind the plan as far as we

1 do need to move water south. In your plan that
2 I heard you present this evening, I did not hear
3 very much in the way of what type of research
4 you plan to do with the water and the
5 environmental impact that moving dirty water
6 into the area will have. Overflow, sheet flow
7 that is not treated. I always (inaudible) the
8 DEP for the water quality mayhem up in
9 Tallahassee, if you, you know, allow me to say
10 that. What they deemed was that if you weigh
11 177 pounds, a human being, and you only eat 22
12 ounces of fish from Lake Okeechobee a month, you
13 more than likely will not get cancer, but only
14 on those two criteria did they use their Monte
15 Carlo method to figure out that they would
16 higher the amount of pollution allowed into the
17 water. We were all worried that the only
18 research they did was the uptake of pollution in
19 the fish in the water. There was absolutely
20 zero study done on the uptake of hogs, deer,
21 turkey and everything else that a lot of people,
22 Glades County Hunt Club, a lot of other people
23 here, we live off the land. Several of my own
24 family members living off the land, working for
25 Lykes Brothers, died of cancer. A lot of my own

1 family has died of cancer because of water
2 quality issues coming from north of the lake and
3 out of the lake, both in Lee County and in the
4 Everglades.

5 So my question and my plea to you, to add
6 into what you're doing, is definitely become
7 part of the water quality demand to make sure --
8 right now the water quality is entering at 1700
9 parts per billion of pollution coming into the
10 Everglades; that's supposedly legal. Allowable
11 amount allowed to flow into the Everglades is
12 ten parts per billion and we are off by some ten
13 parts per billion to 1700 parts per billion.

14 I'm really happy to see that you guys are
15 including the plans much further north of Lake
16 Okeechobee, because obviously we need to clean
17 the water coming into the lake before any water
18 would be clean to the Caloosahatchee or to the
19 St. Lucy.

20 MS. RALPH: Thank you, Ms. Williams.

21 MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

22 MS. RALPH: Okay. Mr. Urich, followed by
23 Mr. Ramon Iglesias.

24 MR. IGLESIAS: I've already spoken.

25 MS. RALPH: Okay. Thank you. Followed by

1 John Heim.

2 MR. URICH: I'm Dave Urich, and I'm
3 speaking also for RGMC, but as well as the
4 Southwest Florida Clean Water Movement. I made
5 the chart, I'll just leave it there and I'll be
6 available to discuss it afterwards, but this
7 chart shows one of the things -- my wife says I
8 shouldn't tell people my age, but I am two
9 months short of being 83, and believe me, I
10 think it's wonderful what we've heard what
11 people are planning. I'm fully supportive of
12 it. I won't be here.

13 What I want to know is what we're going to
14 do in the next two years, which I hope I'm here,
15 because what's happening, every time I look at
16 the charts on what's happening and the gates the
17 flow ways and what's happening in the water
18 conservation area, I don't like the WCA, I
19 prefer to say the words, I'm sorry, I'm not an
20 alphabet soup person. But we have the water
21 conservation areas are loaded with water. Water
22 in those conservation areas is much better than
23 the water that's in Lake O. It may not quite
24 meet Nicole's standards -- and she and I are
25 friends, by the way, and we don't always agree,

1 but we are trying to see something happen.

2 And to me we have a plug at the bottom of
3 this whole area, and I've prepared a sheet and I
4 have a few copies here, and if anyone gives me
5 their e-mail address, I'll be happy to send it
6 to you electronically. But the fact is that as
7 the water comes down, the water conservation
8 areas are full, and they have to close the gates
9 at the bottom. And that's not because of the
10 sparrow, it's because the whole area is full.
11 Sparrow is part of the issue, but we need the
12 study.

13 I will be here on the 23rd, I've asked
14 attendance on the 23rd. I understand my time is
15 up. I was hoping for three minutes, but I'll
16 take it. Thank you.

17 MS. RALPH: Thank you. We have John Heim.
18 I may be mispronouncing it.

19 MR. HEIM: I'm good.

20 MS. RALPH: You're good. Okay, thank you,
21 sir. I have Bobby Billy, followed by Sandra
22 Hare.

23 MS. HARE: I'm good.

24 MS. RALPH: Sandra is good?

25 MS. HARE: Pass.

1 MS. RALPH: Okay, thank you. So Raoul
2 Bataller will be up after Mr. Billy.

3 MR. BILLY: Thank you. Miccosukee is my
4 nation, we still holding our regional rights of
5 this land. Seminole Tribe break from us in
6 1959, Miccosukee Tribe break from us for 1962,
7 and we independent, we still holding in the
8 belief the way that God has gave us.

9 I'm glad you're waking up. It's about time
10 you're waking up. It's pollution been making by
11 the people living here. Early 1800s, it wasn't
12 like that, not like this at all. The way God
13 had gave us living, his creation, respect it,
14 which means respect yourself. If you don't
15 respect the nature, you're not respecting
16 yourself. You waking up, but it's too late.

17 What we need is clean water. And cover up
18 those ditches, because whole State of Florida,
19 entire wetland, almost ninety percent State of
20 Florida, when they create the canals, which
21 leads drain to Florida, develop. That'a a
22 mistake that the Army Corps and Water Management
23 did, almost end to clean water. The garbage and
24 poison we talking about.

25 We need to respect our future generation.

1 Our young people, we need to respect our young
2 people. What we going to give to next twenty
3 years or ten years, because lot of farmers
4 moving in, the sugars, development, cities,
5 encroachment, natural area disappeared. We are
6 responsible, taking the weight of future of our
7 people generation and natural generation because
8 you don't have no voice with just animals, fish,
9 deer, bear, all of those things do have a right
10 to live, drink the water, eat the food, raise
11 the family like we do. We do need to respect
12 that.

13 So y'all need to cover up those ditches,
14 simple as that, because that's causing the
15 problems. Just like you cutting up your body of
16 the body and then they bleed, that's what's
17 happening. The way the creator has gave us,
18 blood vein feeds our body, all over our body,
19 but when they cut it, it bleed out. So that's
20 what's happening.

21 So if you want to the live in God's
22 creation of the earth, cover those ditches up as
23 fast as you can, protect the nature and your
24 future of life. Thank you.

25 MR. BATALLER: Your basic job with the Army

1 is to read the land and deploy your assets in
2 the best way that uses all the advantages of the
3 land, and that's your business. And that's
4 pretty much simplified, but if I was in private
5 business doing this instead of a military man, I
6 would say what's the problem, because if I'm
7 going to be responsible for the consequences, I
8 want to have some control over every single
9 source of the problem.

10 I don't see how this, which is really
11 you're working the land for about half the area,
12 actually goes to the problem. You haven't
13 quantified anything. What happens when increase
14 in population comes in? What happens when all
15 the stuff from -- from effluent, all the
16 industrial stuff goes right onto the ground, and
17 in this sand, which is nothing like the
18 mountains of Colorado or the granite state of --
19 or the rocks of Connecticut, this stuff goes
20 right into the ground water and is transmitted
21 around. What allowance have you got for
22 quantification of the problem as it evolves over
23 the years? How about in the next fifty years?
24 All this work has no time line, apparently.

25 We're going to have extra population, we're

1 going to have bigger problems, but you're making
2 no effort. It's as if you're deploying soldiers
3 in a field without any regard. In this thing
4 you have biological considerations and
5 chemicals. That's a big part of moving water
6 around, you have to know what's in it. We
7 learned that this year, and this year all the
8 plans before got put into history because all of
9 a sudden we had a science project the size of
10 Lake Okeechobee that you could see from space,
11 it was so colorful. We cannot have that any
12 longer.

13 And this is not just about the Everglades,
14 we also learned that the estuaries, both of
15 them, are every bit as important and valuable as
16 the Everglades. We have had a problem here with
17 communication (inaudible). I run a newspaper, I
18 started here twenty years ago. I have been
19 involved in every aspect of these people's life.
20 But I came from Connecticut, where Paul Tooter
21 Jones also came from.

22 I'm out of time.

23 And I think that the entire kind of
24 Woodstock atmosphere out there on the tolerance
25 and craziness, green was imported directly here

1 and we have had the effects of that intolerance
2 and the pile on one company and one town for
3 twenty years. That's why these people got into
4 church two weeks ago and said they don't care
5 about us. We have a problem here where the
6 public relations thing that was set in motion
7 because erroneously United States Sugar was
8 picked as the only evil in this thing, and now
9 that they've cleaned up for 21 consecutive
10 years, the problem is still here. That
11 erroneous judgement has got to be put aside.

12 MS. RALPH: Sir, thank you for your
13 comments tonight. Next up I have Dennis Duke,
14 followed by Rae Ann Wessel, followed by Marissa
15 Carrozzo.

16 MR. DUKE: Good evening. I'm Dennis Duke
17 with the United States Department of the
18 Interior. I'm here on behalf to basically
19 inform you that obviously the Department is
20 keenly interested in this effort. Glad to see
21 and applaud the efforts of the Army and the
22 South Florida Water Management District in
23 moving forward with this effort.

24 We're keenly interested because of the fact
25 not only hopefully to estuary by allowing us to

1 send -- the opportunity to send more water to
2 the south to better improve the management of
3 water levels in Lake Okeechobee, improve water
4 conditions, both inflow and outflow, quality and
5 timing and distribution of water to the two
6 Native American tribes that have reservations in
7 this area, and get all the way down in the water
8 conservation areas, improve the water there as
9 well as the Big Cypress National Preserve and
10 the Everglades National Park.

11 As you're aware, the South Florida
12 Ecosystem Restoration Task Force has been
13 hosting collaborative workshops on identifying
14 the data and information that's available in
15 this area, and we're pleased and thankful that
16 you've chosen to move this study up on the
17 integrated delivery schedule and perform it now
18 rather than later, and we look forward to
19 working with you on that.

20 Mentioned earlier, we are hosting -- the
21 task force is hosting a workshop next week, next
22 Tuesday, the 23rd, it'll be in this room from
23 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M., and at that point
24 you're all invited. It will be a different
25 format; we'll have tables, you will be asked to

1 sit at the table with representatives from the
2 Corps, Water Management District, Interior and
3 other agencies to give us your ideas directly,
4 okay, to look at maps, tell us where you think
5 the problems are, what do you think needs to be
6 done about it, and we'll then take -- collect
7 those maps up, that information up, consolidate
8 it and send it to the Army Corps of Engineers
9 for their consideration in furtherance of this
10 effort. It is a very open and collaborative
11 process, different than here. We will not be
12 taking public comments, per se, because you will
13 be there giving us your comments firsthand, so
14 we invite you all to come next week and join us.

15 Thank you.

16 MS. WESSEL: Good evening. Rae Ann Wessel,
17 Sanibel Captiva Conservation Foundation. Thank
18 you for having this meeting this evening,
19 allowing us to have an initial look at the
20 proposal. I think you're hearing very clearly
21 that we need some clarification about the
22 details of the proposal. To the extent that
23 what the magnitude of the problem is, I haven't
24 been able to really get my arms around that,
25 what the target goals and performance measures

1 are, both for flow volumes that are trying to be
2 rectified, equalized, the timing and the
3 seasonality of those flows, what targets we have
4 for water quality; clearly there are significant
5 challenges that were identified in the formation
6 of the project, but we don't really have an idea
7 about what it is we're dealing with, and I think
8 that needs to be very clearly articulated up
9 front.

10 What volume of water is coming from the
11 lake and what percent -- for the project, and
12 what percent of the project water need is that
13 supplying? What is the capacity of this
14 discharge from the lake to the -- to the project
15 connection? In terms of operational
16 flexibility, I'm curious as to what the specific
17 operational flexibility options are. I'd like
18 to know about east-west connectivity for
19 equalizing flows; as we know, rainfall can be
20 very, very spatially diverse.

21 Zooming out a little bit, how do the lands
22 north and east of the project boundary influence
23 the in-flow to the project? And finally, what
24 is the flow south out of -- flow capacity south
25 out of the lake?

1 Thank you.

2 MS. RALPH: After Marissa we have Cara
3 Capp.

4 MS. CARROZZO: Good evening. My name is
5 Marissa Carrozzo. I'm here on behalf of the
6 Conservancy of Southwest Florida.

7 Thank you for the opportunity to be here
8 tonight to provide comments. Like others here
9 tonight, I need clarity to better understand
10 more of the details of this project, better
11 understand the performance measures and the
12 criteria that will be used to evaluate this
13 project and the project alternatives as we move
14 forward.

15 We'd like to better understand how this
16 project will -- how much storage this project
17 will provide, how many acres of wetlands are
18 going to be restored with the project, how water
19 quality will be integrated and what is the
20 intended flows throughout.

21 And we understand that this is, you know,
22 part -- this is the initial scoping meeting;
23 however, to better provide more detailed
24 comments we would like to understand the project
25 better, so we look forward to our many

1 engagements when specifics of this project are
2 further explored.

3 Thank you.

4 MS. RALPH: Thank you. Okay. After Cara
5 Capp, we will have Lynwood Bishop, followed by
6 Taylor Bishop.

7 MS. CAPP: Hello. Cara Capp for the
8 National Parks Conservation Association.

9 We are certainly excited and supportive of
10 this project moving forward, as we are with all
11 CERP projects, we look forward to seeing each of
12 them completed in different phases, especially
13 the expedited time frame, which gives us not
14 only a more narrow window for progress, but also
15 the type of frequency in these meetings that
16 allows people to be fully engaged. We saw that
17 happen in (inaudible) and we look forward to
18 that happening again.

19 I know that there was a lot of support for
20 focusing on the Western region in the IBS
21 process, so this is certainly a project area
22 where there's a lot of interest and a lot of
23 people are looking to see restoration progress,
24 certainly me among them. We know that this
25 project can bring important benefits to two

1 national parks, Big Cypress and Everglades
2 National Park.

3 In terms of something that was mentioned
4 previously earlier, relieving the high lake
5 levels through canal connections, and thereby
6 relieving the estuaries and getting water to the
7 park, I would ask in the early phases that the
8 agencies, sooner than later, spell out some
9 goals and measureables so we have some
10 understanding of volume, what kind of percentage
11 of benefit we could see in terms of relieving
12 the estuary discharges and if we're going to get
13 that water down to Everglades National Park, how
14 much that flow would benefit the ecosystem.

15 I heard a question earlier as well, and I
16 want to reiterate an understanding of how much
17 land for this project is already owned and if
18 buying more land is an opportunity or if it's a
19 constraint moving forward. I think that would
20 be important information as we gather next week
21 for the workshop to give people an idea of what
22 we're working with.

23 So again, just look forward to supporting
24 this process, continuing to come to these
25 meetings, make sure we maximize the ecosystem

1 benefits as outlined.

2 Thank you.

3 MS. RALPH: Thank you. Mr. Bishop.

4 MR. BISHOP: My name is Lynwood Bishop.

5 I'm a sixth generation Floridian. I've lived in
6 this area all my life. I currently live in West
7 Palm Beach.

8 And it seems to me that we have spent so
9 much time, effort and money trying to
10 accommodate the situation and all this water,
11 you don't know where to put it, you're working
12 on all these other projects without focusing on
13 what you should be, and that is to hold the
14 water to the north where it's coming from, clean
15 it up up there, let it settle into the lake in a
16 natural flow. And we also need to do the same
17 thing on the estuaries, both in Martin County
18 and over in Lee County. These people, for
19 instance, Martin County, over seventy percent of
20 the water that goes into the St. Lucie River is
21 coming from their own county, their own
22 agriculture, all the cesspools, everything else
23 around there, and you're wanting this area to
24 pay the price for it. I think enough is enough.

25 It's got to come to the point of where the

1 people that are polluting this area and bringing
2 it down here need to start paying, and that
3 starts with Disney World and coming south.

4 MS. RALPH: I have Taylor Bishop, followed
5 by Karson Turner.

6 MR. BISHOP: Taylor Bishop. I didn't have
7 any prepared remarks, but I'm the 7th
8 generation.

9 I just wanted to talk about a few things.
10 How many acres of farm land will you be taking
11 out of the production within the Western
12 Everglades Restoration Project? When you do
13 that, you're going to affect jobs in the Glades
14 communities, which is then going to indirectly
15 affect not just farmers, but everybody else down
16 here. What are then going to be the costs to
17 these communities, the indirect costs to those
18 people losing jobs?

19 If you're going to put a flowway over the
20 town, then hey, where we going to move everybody
21 and, you know, how much are you going to pay
22 them to move? You know, I just -- some of it's
23 just a little frustrating to me here.

24 I didn't have enough time to plan any more
25 remarks, I apologize, I was listening to what

1 you guys had to say. I think everybody else in
2 this room will be interested to hear what those
3 plans are, and thank you for your time.

4 MS. RALPH: Thank you, sir. So after
5 Karson Turner we have Rhonda Roff and Roger
6 Plouffe.

7 MR. TURNER: Karson Turner, Commissioner
8 for Hendry County.

9 I just want to point out to y'all -- first
10 off, thank you for having the meeting here
11 tonight, I appreciate you starting this thing
12 off here in Hendry County. We want to make you
13 cognizant of the fact that we would love to host
14 this as many times as we can. We feel that this
15 is the definition of ground zero for this
16 discussion. It's an easy commute for both of
17 the coastal communities, come on over, our TDC
18 dollars love to see you, try to make it a two
19 day event, it will help us out.

20 The other thing is when you -- please,
21 please be mindful. When you draw a circle
22 around anything like this, it's not ironic that
23 I'm following the young man who just spoke,
24 that's the first thing that rings to our ears is
25 that there's land being taken off of the rolls,

1 it's taking direct and indirect jobs out of
2 existence, and we're already behind the
3 eight-ball as it relates to that. So please be
4 cognizant of that thought process every time
5 you're doing that.

6 Another thing, too, I've heard this time
7 and time again today about dirty water. Dirty
8 water, you know, and I take offense anytime I
9 hear, you know, Ag being blamed for that. I
10 think we're the best conservationists as it
11 comes to preservation of the way of life of
12 Florida. I would encourage you all as quickly
13 as you could to get the maps from South Florida
14 Water Management District, that's what the parts
15 per billion are looking like actually in the
16 WCA, or excuse me, Water Conservation Area, I
17 ate alphabet soup as well, Everglades National
18 Park, and, you know, the Loxahatchee Wildlife
19 National Refuge, you know, so on and so forth.

20 And then I also think you need it as plain
21 as the nose on your face; in my case it's a very
22 large nose, but, you know, as you look at what's
23 coming in to the top end of the lake and what's
24 coming out the bottom end, and then some of the
25 best management practices. I know you told us

1 the folks on the Western basin here, but I
2 really think that we need to try to tie that
3 into the discussion as much as we can, because I
4 think it is going to show time and time again
5 that Ag is doing a great job, and, you know,
6 we're putting our best foot forward and trying
7 to help be a part of the solution.

8 Thank you very much for being here
9 tonight.

10 MS. RALPH: Okay. I have Roger Plouffe and
11 then Janet Plouffe. I have Roger Plouffe first,
12 followed by Janet Plouffe.

13 AUDIENCE MEMBER: I thought you said
14 Rhonda.

15 MS. RALPH: I am so sorry, I did say Rhonda
16 next. Rhonda, I apologize.

17 MS. ROFF: Remember when we were all in
18 grade school and we wanted the teacher to forget
19 that we were there before we had to get up and
20 speak in front of a group, and now we're all
21 clamoring for the microphone. What changed?
22 I'm on the clock. Sorry. Okay.

23 I'm Rhonda Roff. I'm a property owner in
24 Hendry County. One of my residences is on the
25 Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation, and I

1 represent Sierra Club, Caloosa Group, tonight
2 representing the Sierra Club Florida.

3 I think that the folks in this town know
4 that environmental issues are human race issues
5 at the very heart of them, and that there's
6 nothing about Sierra Club that is ever going to
7 be willing to risk human health.

8 And Janet, we would really love the
9 opportunity to talk with you and the Glades
10 Lives Matter about that, because it is so
11 critical. We want to see this dike fixed. We
12 want human lives to be spared from any kind of
13 catastrophe that may happen as a result of this
14 dike breaching, especially given what we know
15 are the predictions for the increasingly severe
16 fluctuations of drought and flood cycles within
17 the context of climate change.

18 So I'm assuming that even though this is on
19 a really tight schedule, that this all is
20 happening after the dike gets fixed. Maybe,
21 maybe not. Hopefully it is.

22 And then what I would like to know, because
23 mostly I have questions, I really don't
24 understand the project too much, I think it's a
25 great idea, but I don't understand it. So the

1 questions here are at what lake level will this
2 project be implemented? What kind of land and
3 how much Ag land specifically will be taken out
4 of service, and how will the legacy (inaudible)
5 be dealt with in the land that is rehydrated as
6 a result.

7 In light of the proposed human health
8 criteria, what water quality standards will be
9 employed and at what locations will they be
10 monitored and enforced, particularly if the
11 Seminole Tribe does not prevail in the lawsuit
12 regarding the water quality standards.

13 Sierra Club opposes ASR everywhere. It
14 does nothing for water quality, we oppose it
15 flat out.

16 You just -- we'll have more questions and
17 we'll submit them before the 24th.

18 Thank you very much.

19 MS. RALPH: Thank you. I just remind
20 everybody that there will be representatives
21 from the Corps of Engineers and South Florida
22 Water Management district located here after the
23 meeting if you have additional questions.

24 But now Roger Plouffe, followed by Janet
25 Plouffe.

1 MR. PLOUFFE: Hi. I'm Roger Plouffe. I'm
2 not representing anybody but myself.

3 Pretty much everything that I had noted has
4 been said already. I mean we have a lot of very
5 sincere, intelligent people here at the meeting.

6 The bottom line is I go back to what Billy
7 said; what are we going to do for our future
8 generations? Our future generations currently
9 are built around agricultural and financial gain
10 from agricultural. When I look at your Western
11 Everglades Restoration Project, which you ask we
12 limit our comments to, I see two natural
13 barriers to sheet flow, so I don't understand.
14 You're going to have to bridge I-75 and you're
15 also going to have to bridge US 41 somehow to
16 bring sheet flow into this area.

17 Secondly, the financial impact that we're
18 leaving. You move water south -- the gentleman
19 here before me already had brought up a very
20 important issue, and that is population is not
21 going to stop growing. I was growing up in
22 Broward County when there was building
23 moratoriums because they couldn't get enough
24 water down there; now they've built all the way
25 to 27 in Broward County. It's not going to take

1 much to cross the road.

2 Water is essential. Population is going to
3 grow, and as much as we want the Everglades
4 restored to the pristine conditions they once
5 were, it's not going to happen. It may happen
6 in small part, but we're going to have continued
7 population growth, we're going to need water for
8 people.

9 Again, to the financial here, Ag land, this
10 is our livelihood, this is our blood.

11 Thank you.

12 MS. RALPH: Thank you. Janet Plouffe is
13 not going to speak, so next I have Hugh
14 Connolly, followed by Jennifer Earnest. Hugh
15 Connolly. Calling once. Okay, then Jennifer
16 Earnest, please, and following Jennifer Earnest
17 will be Georgiana Granville.

18 MS. EARNEST: Good evening. I am in a very
19 distinctive position in that I am a 22 year
20 resident of Stuart; however, I was born and
21 raised in the Glades. I'm the vice-president of
22 the H.E. Hill Foundation, and I have the extreme
23 privilege of working with and for some of the
24 hardest working people out there, the American
25 farmer, farm workers, straight from the fields

1 and tractor drivers and mechanics.

2 I'm disappointed that there's not specifics
3 on who owns the land that you've drawn the big
4 circle around. I also have the distinct
5 privilege of being engaged to a charter
6 fisherman in the Stuart area. There's no one
7 more affected by clean water -- impacted -- than
8 myself for farmers and myself for the fishermen
9 of the land.

10 I'm disappointed that here we are, looking
11 at another project and we have so many projects
12 that aren't completed. I'm also disappointed
13 that we've heard very loudly environmental,
14 environmental, environmental, but tonight I
15 would like to say that I implore you to consider
16 the human impact of what these things do; the
17 jobs affected, the food production taken out.

18 Why isn't the dike finished? All the plans
19 in the works haven't been finished; however,
20 we're throwing money at a whole new phase and a
21 whole new development.

22 It's time to implement and store water to
23 the north. Why would we drain water that's
24 polluted all the way through our aquafilters?
25 Why would we put that into our Everglades? We

1 need to identify areas to the north before we
2 start these areas and putting the water draining
3 through.

4 We should implement septic inspections.
5 How hard is that? If septics aren't the
6 problem, then what is the problem with
7 inspecting them? It's cheap, there's no focus
8 groups, it is affirmed.

9 And we oppose anything in this area, our
10 area of farmers, that would take a job away or
11 food out of the mouths of the people here who
12 are good, hard-working Glades people that can't
13 afford to lose a job.

14 So it's obvious there's no one cause and no
15 one solution to the entire mess. However;
16 starting the cycle over is not the route to
17 take.

18 MS. RALPH: Georgina.

19 MS. GRANVILLE: Good evening, everyone. My
20 name is Georgina Granville, I'm the daughter of
21 (inaudible) Granville. I grew up here in the
22 Harlem community, I'm 37 -- I'm 38; just had a
23 birthday August 1st, but I know everyone here
24 has the same sentiment, there is a lot of
25 concern that we have within this whole

1 community, not just the Harlem community, but
2 this whole community, and so I just ask and I
3 plead with you, take these concerns into
4 consideration when you start making plans,
5 because every plan and everything that you do
6 has impacts. It is the second, third, fourth
7 impact.

8 I come from New York, I'm in the Army and I
9 live in New York, but I came home because I
10 thought this was important.

11 And there's a lot of people, you know, that
12 grew up here that are not here, so I'm going to
13 have to speak for them. It's very important
14 that you please take into consideration all our
15 concerns here, because there are more people
16 that want to be here, but they're concerned what
17 they are going to be presenting to you falls on
18 deaf ears. But I told them I would come here
19 and speak for them.

20 Thank you very much for what you're trying
21 to do for our environment and thank you all for
22 coming tonight. God Bless you.

23 MS. RALPH: Okay. And our final speaker of
24 tonight is Mr. Rick Murphy.

25 MR. MURPHY: Thank you. First, thanks for

1 letting me speak tonight. I've been around,
2 born and raised here, and I was around back in
3 late '80s, the '87 to '90, whenever the swim
4 plan was first introduced to us. Some of the
5 folks are still here, some of us are gone. Lake
6 O Lake and other folks fought it tooth and nail.
7 And we've seen a lot of changes, I think we've
8 seen also a lot of good things happen. I think
9 our farmers have done a great job of restoring
10 the water.

11 When you talk about the impact, the impact
12 is also not only here in the Glades as far as
13 maybe contributing to the factor of population,
14 we don't have much here. I think what you have
15 to look at, consider, if you think about it, is
16 the big impact, which is north of us. When
17 Disney came in, that was a big impact. Whenever
18 they decided just recently to expand Disney
19 again, I think they need to look at the impact
20 of that, that's going to have a major impact.

21 You also have the west coast of Florida,
22 Manatee County, Pasco, Hernando County, all
23 those counties are going gangbusters,
24 gangbusters as far as development. All that is
25 going to impact the plan of where the water's

1 going to go.

2 I do believe that some of the rain could
3 come from south, the original plan back in I-75
4 was to create bridges to create more flow, the
5 culverts aren't really enough, never has been,
6 never will be.

7 I also believe that if we continue with
8 population, we're going to have this problem,
9 we're never going to really solve the problem,
10 all we've got to do is try to make it better. I
11 don't think we'll ever get it back to the
12 quantity it used to be, the quality may get
13 there, everybody working together, but I think
14 all together we need to really look at the big
15 picture here, because Florida is going to grow,
16 there's a lot of impacts. I don't think it's
17 just right here in the lake, okay, I think if
18 you take away the land and the some of the
19 livelihood of these people, it's a major impact.

20 I think we can look a little further north
21 and try to solve the problem up north and divert
22 that water first. I think we're doing a good
23 job of taking care of our water.

24 Thank you.

25 MS. RALPH: Okay. So once again I would

1 like to thank you all for taking time out
2 tonight, I know everybody is very busy, but
3 thank you for coming to our meeting, thank you
4 for providing your comments. I encourage you to
5 provide any additional comments in one of these
6 venues. There will be some folks here to answer
7 any additional questions.

8 Thank you.

9 (Meeting concluded.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF HENDRY

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