APPENDIX D – PERTINENT CORRESPONDENCE

This page intentionally left blank

TABE D-1. COMMENTS REVEIVED DURING FEDERAL, STATE AND AGENCY REVIEW OF THE SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND PROPOSED FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND RESPONSES

#	Commenter	Comment	Response
1	Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)	The FWC continues to support the development of a water control plan that raises the maximum operational limit of the L-29 Canal, increases the availability of S-333 deliveries from WCA 3A to Everglades National Park throughout Northeast Shak River Slough, and provide operational flexibility to deliver water to Taylor Slough. Support for the proposed actions were expressed in letters from the FWC to the USACE Jacksonville District Commander on December 1, 2016, and November 11, 2016, respectively (enclosed). USACE may consider including these letters as reference material within the Increment 1.1/1.2 EA. Raising the maximum operational limit in the L-29 Canal maximizes opportunities for water to flow from north to south and delivers fresh water to ENP and Florida Bay. These	The Corps is proposing to include additional operational flexibility within Increment 1.1/1.2 to operate the L-29 Canal to a maximum of 7.8 feet, NGVD subject to downstream constraints. This additional capacity will increase deliveries to NESRS and also assist efforts to lower WCA 3A during periods of high stages as experienced during 2016. Information has been included within Section 2 of the EA, noting that the Corps has received continued support from Federal and state agencies and members of the general public to continue planning to raise the L-29 Canal above 7.5 feet, NGVD and to expeditiously move restoration efforts forward.

		combined actions will help maintain ecologically desirable water levels in the Everglades and Francis S. Taylor Wildlife Management Area (EWMA) where the FWC has fish and wildlife and land management responsibilities. The Everglades and Francis S. Taylor Wildlife Management Area includes WCA-2, WCA-3A, and WCA-3B.	
2	FWC	Alternative Analysis: The increment 1.1/1.2 EA and FONSI presented five alternatives for consideration (alternatives A-E). The alternatives are well developed and the FWC staff appreciate the table of Alternatives Description (Table 1-2) as a way to easily differentiate between the complex alternatives. The FWC supports the decision to eliminate Alternatives B and C from consideration as they do not raise the canal stage in the L-29 Canal or provide a high water strategy for the EWMA. Furthermore, the FWC supports the preferred alternative (Alternative D) that provides a process to raise the L-29 Canal	Thank you for your comment.

		stage to 7.8 feet NGVD, incorporates a high water strategy for the EWMA, and provides operational flexibility to deliver supplemental flows to Taylor Slough to help facilitate the recovery of Florida Bay.	
3	FWC	High Water Strategy: The FWC has fish and wildlife and land management responsibilities for EWMA and has found that hydrology, water depth, and duration of standing water are very important components of wildlife and habitat protection. The FWC has developed a position paper entitled *Hydrologic Requirements for the Everglades and Francis S. Taylor Wildlife Management Area* dated November 20, 2013 (enclosed). This paper provides a biologically based guidance for managing water levels in the Everglades to ensure restoration of fish and wildlife populations, habitat, and diversity so that the goals of the Everglades restoration may be fully realized. The FWC staff recommend that the above-mentioned position paper be referenced within the Increment	The referenced position paper has been included within the EA, by reference, as any correspondence with regard to the Proposed Action has been provided within Appendix D (Pertinent Correspondence). The Corps recognizes the potential effects of high water stages on fish and wildlife resources throughout the EA; specifically reference Sections 4.7 and 4.8, in which reference is made to the continued implementation of the Increment 1 Action Line, and Section 2.1.5, which includes discussion of the WCA 3A High Water Strategy criteria developed by the Corps to mitigate for the potential contribution to WCA 3A high water stages associated with the extended closure periods for S-12A and S-12B. The Increment 1 Action Line is a seasonally varying WCA 3A water level of 10.0 to 10.75 feet NGVD (i.e. Increment 1 Action Line), as measured by the three gage average, which will continue to be used to define the priority of releases from S-333 and S-356 to the L-29 Canal and NESRS. Implementation of the Increment 1 Action Line to manage high water conditions in WCA 3A, would help to prevent conditions of extreme high water levels and prolonged inundation periods within WCA 3A that result in negative impacts to its natural communities. The proposed action includes a closure period for S-12A, S-12B, S-343A, S-343B, and S-344 starting 01 October through 15 July consistent with the 2016 ERTP BO RPA. Alternative D also includes a 'high water strategy' criteria developed by the Corps to

		1.1/1.2 EA and FONSI to help readers understand the various wildlife impacts, ecological concerns, and recreational impacts from prolonged high water in the EWMA.	mitigate for the increased frequency and duration of WCA 3A high water stages in excess of the 90th percentile of historical water stages(compared to the 2012 Water Control Plan) associated with the expanded closure periods. The 90th percentile water level varies seasonally and reaches a maximum of 11.5 feet, NGVD during the month of October. Levee safety concerns and the risk of overtopping to the perimeter levees are exacerbated with higher water levels in WCA 3A and are most vulnerable during the later parts of the wet season (July, August, September and early October), which coincides with the height of the hurricane season. Therefore, a conditions based scenario that varies the opening and closing dates of the structures depending on measured conditions within the system was developed, rather than prescriptive open and close dates. A conditions based approach to the operation of S-12A and S-12 B is included in Alternative D to retain critical flexibility during WCA 3A high water conditions while also ensuring that the structures are operated optimally for CSSS habitat during normal and low water conditions. The 'high water strategy' criteria are included within Annex 1 of Appendix A (Part 1).
4	FWC	<u>High Water Strategy:</u> The Increment 1.1/1.2 EA and FONSI correctly recognize that actions to alleviate and manage high water conditions in EWMA are a critical component of the Water Control Plan. The FWC appreciates that USACE and the USFWS have worked cooperatively to develop and incorporate a high water strategy for managing high water events in the EWMA. The high water strategy is included in the	The WCA 3A Interim Regulation Schedule, implemented with the ERTP in October 2012, will continue to govern discharges from WCA 3A. ERTP operations implemented by the Corps within the 2012 Water Control Plan incorporated the 1960 WCA 3A 9.5 to 10.5 feet, NGVD Regulation Schedule as the required interim water management criteria for WCA 3A Zone A to mitigate for the observed effects of discharge limitations of the S-12 structures, while also recommending further consideration of additional opportunities to reduce the duration and frequency of WCA 3A high water events. Increment 1.1/1.2 also maintains the Increment 1 Action Line, which varies seasonally from 10.0 to 10.75 feet NGVD, as the established threshold for priority releases from WCA 3A to the L-29 Canal from S-333 with no dedicated capacity for the S-356 pump station. Alternative E includes additional seasonal

		preferred alternative and may help mitigate for the increased frequency and duration of high water events in the EWMA associated with extending the closure periods of the S-12A, S-12B, S-343A, S-343B, and S-344 structures. The high water strategy developed through consultation with USFWS and incorporated into Increment 1.1/1.2 EA and FONSI utilizes the 90th percentile of historical water levels for WCA 3A, expressed as a 3-gauge average. This represents a stage threshold or deviation action limit to reduce potential for adverse impacts due to high stages in the EWMA. The 90th percentile water level varies seasonally and reaches a maximum of 11.50 feet NGVD during the month of October. The FWC appreciates the added flexibility the high water strategy provides for managing high water events in the EWMA but cautions that the strategy may be inconsistent with the FWC high water criteria that was developed as a	closures to outlet structures within WCA 3A (S-12A, S-12B, S-343A, S-343B, S-344), with the flexibility to conditionally open S-12A and S-12B under high water conditions between October and November. As documented in Section 4.5.3.1 of the EA, the effect of Alternative E operations within WCA 3A are not anticipated to increase by a maximum of 0.2 to 0.5 feet at the end of the wet season in October-November, with recognition that these conditions will be further reduced through the inclusion of the high water strategy that allows conditional opening of S-12A during October and conditional opening of S-12B during October and/or November. Implementation of MWD Increment 2 has the potential to reduce WCA 3A average water levels by 0.1-0.2 feet compared to the No Action Alternative (including during October and November); Implementation of MWD Increment 2, has the potential to reduce WCA 3A water levels during moderate wet hydrologic conditions by 0.0-0.5 feet compared to the No Action Alternative (including no increase during October and November). The WCA 3A high water criteria were also assessed to determine whether the high water criteria would have kept the S-12A and/or S-12B structures open during four historical years where the FWC previously closed recreational access to WCA 3A due to the two-gauge average stage at the 3A-2 and 3A-3 monitoring gauges (2008, 2012, 2012, and 2016). A summary graphic showing historical observed stages for the WCA 3A three-gauge average (3A-3, 3A-4, and 3A-28) and the FWC two-gauge average during recent years with FWC closures of WCA 3A (2008, 2012, 2013, and 2016) is shown in Figure 4-10 of the EA. Based on the WCA 3A high water criteria included in Increment 1.1/1.2 Appendix A (Part 1) for S-12A and S-12B operations, the WCA 3A high water criteria would have resulted in S-12A remaining open during October in 2008,

		conservation practice to reduce stress on native wildlife during high water events. The FWC utilizes a high water criteria based on the daily mean stage at the 62 and 63 stage gauges as a mechanism to restrict access, reduce stress on native wildlife, and protect native vegetation and tree islands. Regression analysis between the daily WCA 3A 3-gauge average and the daily mean stage of the 62 and 63 gauges indicates that a significant linear relationship exists (R2=0.93). The linear equation suggest that the 62-63 closure criterion of 11.60 NGVD is reached when the 3-gauge average is approximately 10.92 NGVD which is 0.6 feet less than the 90th percentile maximum of 11.50 feet NGVD. The criteria used by FWC to protect native wildlife and wildlife habitats is more closely related to the 75% percentile of historical water levels for WCA 3A 3-gauge average. Therefore, the FWC staff recommends that USACE considers using the	2012, 2013 and 2016; the WCA 3A high water criteria would have resulted in S-12B remaining open during October and November in 2008 and 2012, and remaining open through the end of October in 2013 and 2016. Levee safety concerns and the risk of overtopping to the perimeter levees are exacerbated with higher water levels in WCA 3A and are most vulnerable during the later parts of the wet season (July, August, September and early October), which coincides with the height of the hurricane season. Therefore, a conditions based scenario that varies the opening and closing dates of the structures depending on measured conditions within the system was developed, rather than prescriptive open and close dates advocated by the USFWS during the ERTP consultation under the Endangered Species Act. The conditions based approach to the operation of S-12A and S-12 B retains critical flexibility during WCA 3A high water conditions while also ensuring that the structures are operated optimally for CSSS habitat during normal and low water conditions. Lowering of the WCA 3A stage criteria identified within the WCA 3A High Water Strategy would result in an incremental increase in the frequency of S-12A and S-12B operations during the extended closure periods identified under the RPA requirements of the 2016 FWS Biological Opinion, and increased hydroperiods within the CSSS-A habitat areas; the WCA 3A High Water Strategy, as prescribed for Alternative E, is a requirement under the RPA of the 2016 Biological Opinion, and the High Water Strategy was therefore not further modified during development of Increment 1.1/1.2. As requested, the USACE will consider opportunities to incorporate the 75% percentile of historical water levels for WCA 3A 3- gauge average when making ecological considerations for the EWMA in future planning processes.

		75% percentile of historical water levels for WCA 3A 3-gauge average when making ecological considerations for the EWMA in future planning processes.	
5	FWC	Operational Strategy: The FWC appreciates the opportunity to work directly with the USACE engineers and staff very closely on the operational plan during the Increment 1.1/1.2 Project Delivery Team (PDT) meetings. The face-to-face engagement and USACE technical support remains critical to developing and understanding the complexities of the Water Control Plan. The Increment 1.111.2 Operational Strategy (Appendix A) offers several critical improvements over the previous operational strategy. As expressed in the previously referenced letters, the FWC supports expeditious implementation of an operational strategy that raises the L-29 canal stage and provides flexibility to deliver water to Taylor Slough. The Increment 1.1/l.2 EA,	Upon review of monitoring data associated with Increment 1 operations and the 2016 Temporary Emergency Deviation, it became apparent that additional modifications are necessary to the Increment 1 operational strategy to ensure flood mitigation within 8.5 SMA. During Increment 1 and the 2016 Temporary Emergency Deviation, the Corps learned information with respect to how 8.5 SMA and the SDCS respond to increased water levels in NESRS prior to the full build out of the MWD and C-111 South Dade Project features. Operational limitations of canals within 8.5 SMA, ongoing construction efforts, and remaining needed infrastructure all currently limit flowing additional water into NESRS. Increment 1.1/1.2 has the ability to raise the L-29 Canal stage maximum operating limit from 7.5 up to 7.8 feet, NGVD contingent upon compliance with all of the following conditions: (1) acquisition of required real estate interest and any associated improvements for the private ownership along Tamiami Trail including receipt of Tamiami Trial Bridge and roadway channel and flowage easements from the FDOT; (2) completion of the C-358 Canal (Richmond Drive Seepage Collection Canal) and installation of S-357N (C-358 control structure); (3) completion of sufficient portions of Contracts 8 (construction of the C-111 NDA L-315 western levee and the L-357W Extension Levee between Richmond Drive and the 8.5 SMA Detention Cell) and completion of the Contract 8A berms inside the 8.5 SMA Detention Cell.

		FONSI and the associated Operational Strategy identifies several contingent actions required to raise the L-29 Canal stage from 7.5 to 7.8 NGVD. These identified actions include acquisition of real estate interests and "associated improvements." The FWC staff recommend that the USACE considers removing all references to "associated improvements" as a contingent factor because moderate improvements sufficient to protect these properties when canal levels were > 7.8 NGVD were completed during the 2016 Emergency Deviation. Furthermore, in lieu of completing improvements, which may take an indeterminate time, the USACE could consult with the potentially affected parties to seek concurrence or a flowage agreement until such time as the permanent improvements are complete.	During the 2016 Temporary Emergency Deviation, temporary flowage authorizations from private land owners along the L-29 Canal were obtained by the SFWMD allowing maximum stages of 8.5 feet, NGVD. With some improvements made by the SFWMD during the 2016 Temporary Emergency Deviation, sustained stages over 8.0 feet, NGVD were implementable during the period covered by the temporary flowage authorizations. Additional existing constraints at the remaining private ownerships along the L-29 Canal limited the peak operating stage during the temporary emergency deviation to about 8.3 feet, NGVD. In addition, flows at S-331, S-176 and S-177 were significantly increased to manage seepage into the L-31N and C-111 Canals. To achieve project purposes, the C-357, L-31N and C-111 Canals were also operated lower than the Column 2 stages contained in the 2012 Water Control Plan. Efforts by the USACE and DOI/ENP to acquire permanent real estate interests along Tamiami Trail (expected January 2017) and Florida Department of Transportation channel and flowage easements for the bridge and roadway improvements, as required to raise the maximum operating limit of the L-29 Canal above 7.5 ft, NGVD, are ongoing with all acquisition expected to be complete by October 2017. Based on the current construction schedule for the C-111 South Dade Contract 8, the earliest opportunity to consider incremental raising of the L-29 Canal above 7.5 feet, NGVD is expected between July and October 2017, coincident with the 2017 wet season. Downstream constraints identified within the EA are required to ensure no reduction in current flood protection or mitigation. It is suggested that the referenced text is appropriate.
6	FWC	<u>Operational Strategy:</u> The Increment 1.1/ 1.2 EA, FONSI	The Corps 2016 EA for Contract 9 did not consider operations of S-328. The SFWMD first proposed operation of S-328 as a

		and the associated Operational Strategy incorporates operational criteria for the S-328 structure contingent on the construction of three L-31W canal plugs proposed between S-328 and the L-31W gap. The L-31W canal plugs were identified in the 2016 C-111 South Dade Contract 9 EA and are contracted for installation by the South Florida Water Management District. The FWC staff recommends that the USACE considers making this prescriptive condition a recommendation which may help create near-term opportunities to use the S-328 structure to facilitate the recovery of Florida Bay from hyper-salinity conditions	component of the Florida Bay Initiative in July 2016, following release of the Corps Contract 9 draft EA in May 2016. The S-328 gated culvert, is located in the southwest corner of Cell 1 of the S-332D Detention Area and provides an ability to discharge up to 500 cfs from Cell 1 into the L-31W Canal to short-circuit the southern portion of the S-332D Detention Area if necessary to ensure water deliveries reach Taylor Slough. During initial stakeholder outreach efforts conducted by the SFWMD following release of the Florida Bay proposal, some stakeholder agencies expressed concerns regarding potential for the S-328 inflows to the L-31W Canal to by-pass the southern portion of the S-332D Detention Area flowpath (approximately 2.7 miles of the 4.5 miles flowpath is located south of S-328); as discussed in Section 4.5.3.3 of the EA, concerns were expressed that the S-328 operation would potentially limit the opportunity of nutrient uptake by the wetland vegetation within the S-332D Detention Area, resulting in an increased nutrient load into Taylor Slough. Other stakeholders advocated for increased operation of S-328 as a means to reduce the potential for return seepage from the S-332D Detention Area to the C-111 Canal, upstream of the C-111 Spreader Canal project's Frog Pond Detention Area. In requiring the completion of the three plugs downstream of S-328 prior to the initial operations of S-328, the Corps considered stake holders' input regarding the water quality concerns with this new inflow location to Taylor Slough.
7	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service January 23, 2017	NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) reviewed the Supplemental Environmental Assessment and Proposed Finding of No Significant Impact (EA/FONSI) dated December 2016 entitled *G-3273 Constraint Relaxation/S-356 Field Test and S-357N*	Thank you for your comment.

		Revised Operational Strategy: Increment 1 Plus (Increment 1.1/ 1.2) and the corresponding public notice dated December 8, 2016. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers proposes to modify its operation of canal structures to ensure flood mitigation within the 8.5 SMA (Square Mile Area) and to continue working towards operating the features of the C-111 Canal in manners that deliver restoration flows to Northeast Shark River Slough in Everglades National Park, western Miami-Dade County. The Jacksonville District finds the proposed operational changes would not impact essential fish habitat (EFH) or federally managed fisheries (EA/FONSI Section 4.25.23). As the nation's federal trustee for the conservation and management of marine, estuarine, and anadromous fishery resources, the NMFS provides the following comments and recommendations pursuant to authorities of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act and the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act).	

		The project should benefit wetlands, along with fish and wildlife habitat, in Everglades National Park, including Taylor Slough and Shark River Slough. Wetlands in Northeast Shark River Slough, the Rocky Glades, and the western marl prairies should also benefit from the new operations strategy by partially restoring more natural hydroperiods that lead to more ecologically appropriate vegetation communities. Consequently, the NMFS has no objection to the proposed modifications to the C-111 operation strategies, detention areas, and associated features.	
8	U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service January 23, 2017 (NPS)	The National Park Service is highly supportive of the incremental field testing approach, and we agree that this approach supports the stated project purpose: to improve water deliveries into the park and, to the extent practicable, take steps to restore the natural hydrological conditions within the park. National Park Service policy seeks to establish effective land stewardship through persistent communication, negotiation and	Thank you for your comment. The 2016 ERTP BO acknowledges planning efforts by the Corps to increase flows into NESRS under the MWD Project and requires the Corps to proceed as scheduled, and as allowable by law, for completing NEPA analysis on Increment 2 prior to March 1, 2018. Increment 1.1/1.2 operations will extend until implementation of Increment 2. The Corps acknowledges support from Federal and state agencies and members of the general public to continue planning to raise the L-29 Canal above 7.5 feet, NGVD and to expeditiously move restoration efforts forward. Information obtained from the Increment 1 field test and this Increment 1.1/1.2 field test (e.g. achieving objectives without violating constraints, unanticipated results, etc.) will be used to support development of a second field test (Increment 2) and

		analysis, that brings all parties into a shared dialogue that leads to mutual acceptance of how a large landscape like this can be effectively managed. The foundation of our support for the proposed changes in this phase of the incremental testing, particularly the modified operations in NESRS, Taylor Slough, and the C-111 basin, is that most of these changes are expected to be temporary, revisited during each future increment, and are supported by effective monitoring. It is our desire that this planned extension of Increment 1.1/1.2 be as brief as possible, while recognizing current limitations related to real estate acquisitions and the need to complete construction of the remaining 8.5 SMA and C-111 South Dade features.	subsequent modifications to the 2012 Water Control Plan. Increment 2 is anticipated to build upon the Increment 1.1/1.2 Operational Strategy and include, but not be limited to, proposing water management operating criteria to increase the maximum stage allowed in the L-29 Borrow Canal (e.g., raise L-29 constraint from elevation 7.5-7.8 up to 8.5 feet). Evaluation of Increment 1 and this Revised Increment 1 (Increment 1.1/1.2) during and after the field test will likely result in refining, revising, or removing operating criteria contained in Increment 1.1/1.2) for MWD and C-111 South Dade Projects when developing the Increment 2 Operational Strategy. All structures in the MWD Increment 1 and Increment 1.1/1.2 field tests will be evaluated and their operating criteria will be subject to a complete revision in Increment 2.
9	NPS	Our key concern with the proposed actions in this EA, beyond the duration of the tests, is the water lost by progressively lowering of L-31N and C-111 Canal operational stages over	The need to maintain flood mitigation for 8.5 SMA while facilitating completion of S-357N (C-358 control structure) and completion of C-111 South Dade Contract 8 and 8A (construction of the C-111 NDA to fill the existing 2 mile gap in the hydraulic ridge system) warrant additional changes to the operational strategy identified in Appendix A of the Increment 1 EA and FONSI (dated

		many miles along the ENP boundary, which raises concerns over the potential impacts on the adjacent marshes. While much of this water is pumped westward into the C-111 detention areas, the seepage return flows from the Everglades can be significant, particularly during the dry season when the pumps are turned off. Similarly, the lowering of operational stages in the southern end of the C-111 canal system and the expected increased flows at S-18C and S-197 are concerning, since this represents a lost opportunity to further hydrate the marshes in Taylor Slough. We have worked closely with the Corps and SFWMD to develop an expanded hydrologic, ecological, and water quality monitoring program to evaluate these proposed actions (particularly related to the SFWMD's planned Florida Bay Initiative). As we move forward, it is important that we clearly document the benefits and impacts of the planned canal operational changes and new	May 27, 2015). More use of S-176, S-177, S-18C and S-197 to compensate for the increased pumping at S-331 and operational restrictions at S-332B, S-332C, and S-332DX1 during the C-111 South Dade Contracts 8 and 8A construction is anticipated under the Proposed Action. Potential environmental effects resulting from the Proposed Action are expected to be small in magnitude given the short duration of the proposed action. The Increment 1.1/1.2 monitoring plan for surface water hydrology and ground water hydrology will provide data to analyze the net effects of operational modifications under the Proposed Action and inform future MWD Project efforts. Evaluation of Increment 1 and this Revised Increment 1 (Increment 1.1/1.2) during and after the field test will likely result in refining, revising, or removing operating criteria contained in Increment 1.1/1.2) for MWD and C-111 South Dade Projects when developing the Increment 2 Operational Strategy. All structures in the MWD Increment 1 and Increment 1.1/1.2 field tests will be evaluated and their operating criteria will be subject to a complete revision in Increment 2.

		surface water inflows to ENP, particularly how these changes might affect freshwater flows to central Florida Bay.	
10	Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services January 20, 2016 (FDACS)	FDACS supports the Increment 1.1/1.2 effort and completion of the C-111 South Dade Project to increase operational flexibility and the capacity to convey more water west towards ENP and the headwaters of Taylor slough. Both ENP and the agricultural areas adjacent to ENP will benefit from increased opportunities to move water away from the private lands where it is not needed and into the restoration project areas. We believe that implementation of the proposed revised operational strategy will result in negative impacts to privately owned agricultural lands in Miami-Dade County that rely on the South Dade conveyance System (SDCS) and appropriate operation of the C-111 South Dade Project and the C-111 Spreader Canal Project to maintain flood protection. The operations currently proposed will not maintain existing flood	The net effect of reduced WCA 3A regulatory discharges to NESRS combined with increased flood control releases from S-331/S-173 and increased seepage to the L-31N Canal south of S- 331 is not able to be quantified prior to completion of the Proposed Action and associated hydrologic monitoring. Increment 1.1/1.2 proposes to generally lower the target operational ranges for the SDCS L-31N Canal compared to the No Action Alternative in order to facilitate the construction of C-111 South Dade Contract 8 and Contract 8A and provide increased operational flexibility to achieve the hydroperiod and nesting condition targets specified by the 2016 ERTP BO for the eastern CSSS subpopulations. The lowered target stages along L-31N (between G-211 and S-331, and S-331 to S-176) may provide a minor improvement to flood risk management within the South Dade basin, compared to the No Action Alternative. Furthermore, low volume releases from S-197 have been included as components of Increment 1.1/1.2 to mitigate for potential increased risk to flood protection in south Miami-Dade County areas, which may be affected by increased water levels in NESRS and associated water management operations within south Miami-Dade County. Two of the primary objectives of the Hydrologic Monitoring Plan (Appendix C, including Annex 1) are to ensure existing levels of flood protection are maintained within the southern L-31N Basin (between S-331 and S-176), and to ensure existing levels of flood protection are maintained within the C-111 Basin (south of S-176). Increment 1.1/1.2 will maintain the authorized purposes of the C&SF Project, which include flood control, navigation, preservation of fish and wildlife, drainage, salinity control, and

		protection and will result in adverse impacts to C-111 Basin private property even though recent operations prove environmental benefits can be maintained without increasing the flood risk to private property.	water supply. Please see responses to comments 11, 12, and 13 below.
11	FDACS	S-176 Operations: The Operations Table for Increment 1.1/1.2 (Table 1 in Appendix A) for operations specified for S-176 and S-177 will return the system to the same levels that contributed to adverse impacts to crops through persistent high groundwater levels and above ground flooding events. The Corps states one of their goals is to "maintain pre-existing flood protection along the L-31N and C-111 Canals." It is not clear what "pre-existing" means specifically in this context since there have been so many different operating regimes in this area. It has been shown in recent years that the rigid operations that were followed prior to Increment 1 contributed to significant flood damage in the area. The S-176 operating range, once	Two of the primary objectives of the Hydrologic Monitoring Plan (Appendix C, including Annex 1) are to ensure existing levels of flood protection are maintained within the southern L-31N Basin (between S-331 and S-176), and to ensure existing levels of flood protection are maintained within the C-111 Basin (south of S-176). The monitoring plan (Appendix C of the EA) identifies the pre-project base conditions used for the Increment 1 and Increment 1.1/1.2 field test as represented by the long-term hydrologic conditions during IOP and ERTP from July 2002 through June 2015. “Pre-existing” therefore refers to canal operating ranges which were maintained under IOP and ERTP (July 2002-May 2015) prior to the start of Increment 1. These levels are specified in the 2012 WCP, which did not alter SDCS canal levels from the levels used during the IOP. Regarding 4.0-4.6 operating range, the interagency Operations/H&H sub team did not adopt the initial FDACS recommendation based on the considerations of all agencies’ perspectives. The ops strategy includes the capabilities to discharge up to 200 cfs when S-176 headwater is above 4.5 ft, NGVD. Within the draft EA, the operational criteria for S-176 are consistent with the recommended criteria identified by the 2015-2016 South Dade Investigation workshops, which were also incorporated into the hydrologic modeling effort facilitated by the Corps in support of the 2016 ERTP USFWS Biological Assessment.

		the Corps decides that the North Detention Area (NDA) and 8.5 Square Mile Area (SMA) are "functionally complete," is too high for that reach of the canal. The guidelines set S-176 as the last structure to operate in that reach with the Detention Areas as the first priority, which is appropriate. However, with restrictions placed on the S-332 structures under the new Everglades Restoration Transition Plan (ERTP), S-176 operations may be the only effective outlet under wet conditions. The range of 4.75 to 5.0 ft. NGVD has been shown to contribute to crop damage in the past as a result of the prolonged high water table under farmland to the east. The guidelines for S-176 need to be revised so the gates will open much sooner if the S-332B, C and D pumps cannot keep the canal below 4.6 ft. NGVD. We request the range discussed and accepted at the October 2016 workshop, 4.0 to 4.6 ft. NGVD, be reinstated in the final Supplemental EA and FONSI.	Based on further dialogue conducted during the interagency Operations/H&H sub team meeting on February 2, 2017, the following statement has been added to Section 4.6 of the Operational Strategy, which addresses OPERATIONAL FLEXIBILITY, OBJECTIVES AND CONSTRAINTS (ALL FOUR OPERATIONAL CONDITIONS): •"During the period when pumping at S-332B, S-332C, S-332D combined is restricted to less than 1,125 cfs total (up to 325 cfs may not be available during C-111 SD construction) due to the operational restrictions associated with the RPA targets of the 2016 ERTP Biological Opinion or maintenance/repair issues which result in reduced pump capacity or a combination of both, the operational range for S-176 may be lowered 0.2 feet from the operating range of 4.75 to 5.0 (the adjusted lower limit of S-176 HW is 4.55)."

12	FDACS	S-177 Operations: The S-177 structure has a problem similar to S-176. The S-177 should not default to the 3.6 to 4.2 ft range. If the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) pumps cannot keep the canal in the appropriate range, or if sparrow concerns limit pumping at those stations, then S-177 should be used to achieve the same levels, not a range that we know leads to crop damage to farms in the area. We request the range discussed and accepted at the October 2016 workshop, 3.0 to 3.6 ft NGVD, be reinstated in the final Supplemental EA and FONSI. We understand that the operations for S-199 and S-200 pumps have been omitted from the Supplemental EA and Proposed FONSI at the request of the SFWMD since these are currently operated by SFWMD under their C-111 Spreader Canal permit and are not incorporated into the current 20212 WCAs, ENP, and SDCS Water Control Plan (2012 Water Control Plan).	S-177 was addressed in Increment 1.0 which matches the 2012 WCP. Within the draft EA, the operational criteria for S-177 are consistent with the recommended criteria identified by the 2015-2016 South Dade Investigation workshops, which were also incorporated into the hydrologic modeling effort facilitated by the Corps in support of the 2016 ERTP USFWS Biological Assessment. Based on further dialogue conducted during the interagency Operations/H&H sub team meeting on February 2, 2017, the following statement has been added to Section 4.6 of the Operational Strategy, which addresses OPERATIONAL FLEXIBILITY, OBJECTIVES AND CONSTRAINTS (ALL FOUR OPERATIONAL CONDITIONS): "During the period when pumping at S-199 and S-200 combined is restricted to less than 300 cfs total due to the operational restrictions associated with the RPA targets of the 2009 C-111 Spreader Canal Western Project Biological Opinion and/or 2016 ERTP Biological Opinion or maintenance/repair issues which result in reduced pump capacity, the operational range for S-177 may be lowered 0.2 ft from the operating range of 3.6 to 4.2 (the adjusted lower limit of S-177 HW is 3.4 ft, NGVD)." The operations for S-199 and S-200 pumps have been omitted from the Supplemental EA and Proposed FONSI since these are currently operated by SFWMD under their C-111 Spreader Canal permits and are not incorporated into the current 2012 WCAs, ENP, and SDCS Water Control Plan (2012 Water Control Plan).
13	FDACS	Low Flows Based on Stages at S-178: The S-197 low flows	Under Increment 1 for the condition when S-356 is not operated due to high water levels in WCA 3A (condition 3 and condition 4), S-

		based on stages at S-178 have been removed from the revised operational strategy for Increment 1.1/1.2. This is an unexpected development that was never mentioned in the workshops when developing the revised operational strategy. Increment 1 prescribed small discharges to help moderate high stages within the C-111 Canal as detailed in Table 1 of Appendix A. The S-197 protocols utilized in Increment 1 should be reinstated in the final Supplemental EA and FONSI. A report on the impacts of S-197 low level operations is still pending and the proposed Increment 1.1/1.2 includes water supply deliveries to Manatee Bay which were achieved under the Increment 1 operations. It is not consistent with knowledge gained and revised water management conditions to revert back to the 2012 Water Control Plan for structures 176, 177, 178 and 197. Additional water management capabilities and flexibility are now in place	197 would have release up to 100 cfs for S-18C HW is greater than 2.4/ S-178TW is greater than 2.5. S-197 would have release up to 150 cfs for S-18C HW is greater than 2.5/ S-178 TW is greater than 2.6. Compared to Increment 1, as documented in the EA, the Proposed Action anticipates more use of S-176, S-177, S-18C and S-197 to compensate for the increased pumping at S-331 and operational restrictions at S-332B, S-332C, and S-332DX1 during the C-111 South Dade Contracts 8 and 8A construction. Under Increment 1.1/1.2 during condition 3 and condition 4, S-197 would release the minimum of S-176 + 200 cfs, S-177 + 200 cfs, or 400 cfs if S-18C HW is above 1.8 to 2.5 ft, NGVD (equivalent to S-178 TW range of 1.9 to 2.6), seasonal variations. These operations enable increased use of S-197 during periods with inflows to the South Dade basin from S-176 and/or S-177. The S-197 low flows issue was further discussed and resolved during the H&H sub-team teleconference call and web meeting on February 2, 2017.

		due to completion and operation of the C-111 Spreader Canal Project and the near completion of the C-111 South Dade Project. Other operations proposed in the Supplemental EA and Proposed FONSI have progressed from the 2012 Water Control plan via the Increment 1 Field Test, 2016 Temporary Emergency Operations and 2016 Temporary Emergency Deviation Recovery Period Extension. The proposed operational revisions to Increment 1 are due to the many new conditions that need to be addressed, including the increase of the L-29 stage to 7.8 ft. NGVD and the increased duration of S-12 closures. On page Appendix A.1-29, the revised conditions of the revised operational strategy are detailed. They include less use of S-356, less use of S-332B North, less use of S-332B (West), more use of S-331 to deliver water to Taylor slough and more use of S-176, S-177, S-18C and S-197 to compensate for the increased pumping at S-331. Also	

		included are operational restrictions at S-332B, S-332C, and S-332DX1 during construction, commitment to deliver excess water from WCA 3A and using S-332D to ensure flow to Taylor Slough and less use of S-332B, S-332C, S-332D to meet the habitat hydroperiod targets imposed by the ERTP BO. All of this leads to more water in the SDCS which requires that potential impacts to private lands also be addressed. Operational stages protective of private agricultural lands do not require a reduction in environmental benefits. On page Appendix A.1-43 the text states "It has also been demonstrated that along the L-3l Canal reach, operation of the SDA has been able to maintain the hydraulic ridge and effectively hold stages in eastern ENP higher while also simultaneously maintaining lower L-31 N Canal levels to prevent or reduce seepage under the L-31N. This has been observed during recent operations." Given this success, the lower canal levels east of ENP adjacent to agricultural	

		lands that were collaboratively developed during the technical workshops for this effort should be reinstated in the final Supplemental EA and FONSI along with the S-197 protocols utilized in Increment 1.	
14	Florida Department of Environmental Protection January 18, 2017 (FDEP)	The Department has provided input and guidance throughout the planning process and is supportive of initiating the Increment 1.1/1.2 field test. The Department authorized a 21-day operational test of the S-356 Pump Station (Increment 0) on October 24, 2014, and a conditional authorization to conduct a multi-year operational test of the S-356 Pump Station (Increment 1) on March 13, 2015 and a one-year extension of the conditional authorization to continue the operational test of the S-356 Pump Station (Increment 1) on September 30, 2016, as part of implementing the operational strategy and monitoring plan described in the Increment 1 EA. Most of the components for the MWD to ENP and C-111 South Dade projects have been constructed or are currently under	The Corps is proposing to include additional operational flexibility within Increment 1.1/1.2 to operate the L-29 Canal to a maximum of 7.8 feet, NGVD subject to downstream constraints. This additional capacity will increase deliveries to NESRS and also assist efforts to lower WCA 3A during periods of high stages as experienced during 2016. The Corps has received continued support from Federal and state agencies and members of the general public to continue planning to raise the L-29 Canal above 7.5 feet, NGVD and to expeditiously move restoration efforts forward. Thank you for your support on these efforts. The EA recognizes that the Corps Water Management Section's assessment of hydrometeorological conditions and stakeholder or agency input may suspend or discontinue the field test due to impacts greater than expected/discussed within this EA. A robust monitoring plan has been developed for Increment 1.1/1.2. Data outlined within Appendix C will be used during the evaluation of the Proposed Action, along with other pertinent information that may be relevant at the time. Additional text has been added to the Supplemental EA to reflect similar language within the Increment 1 EA and FONSI, dated May 27, 2015. Furthermore, consistent with the coordination structure established for Increment 1, field test operations updates and action items will be discussed on a weekly basis between water managers from USACE and SFWMD, as well as ENP when needed, to provide

		construction, but a Combined Operations Plan has not been developed. The Department believes that the Increment 1.1/1.2 field test is necessary to not only move forward on implementing Increment 1Plus, but to establish a path forward for Increment 2, and the completion and implementation of the Combined Operations Plan. The previous FDEP conditional authorizations for Increment 1 provided to the Corps relied upon the acknowledgment that all parties, including the Corps, the Department of Interior (DOI), the SFWMD and the FDEP, are committed to implementing joint restoration projects and associated operational plans in a manner that is consistent with the objectives of the underlying Central and South Florida (C&SF) Project. It is important to acknowledge in this Draft Supplemental EA, as in previous EAs, there is a commitment that the Corps, DOI and the State would use all available relevant	collective interpretation of results and evaluate implementation of field test operations relative to the Increment 1.1/1.2 field test goals, objectives, and constraints. USACE, SFWMD, and ENP will meet monthly to discuss the collected data and the results of preliminary analyses, as well as system conditions and field test operations. Results from these weekly and monthly coordination meetings, including preliminary recommendations from water managers to incrementally modify the operational strategy (within the covered NEPA EA scope), will be further discussed with the project delivery team (PDT) during regularly-scheduled interagency meetings to occur four times per year. PDT meetings will also include updates from the water quality and ecological monitoring sub-teams. Additional meetings (e.g. WCA-3 Periodic Scientists Calls) and/or workshops may be conducted in support of the field test on an as-needed basis based upon ongoing or anticipated conditions within the WCAs, ENP, and/or the SDCS.

		data and supporting information to inform operational planning and decision making, document decisions made and evaluate the resulting information from those decisions to avoid adverse impacts to water quality where practicable and consistent with the purposes of the conditional authorization for Increment 1.	
15	FDEP	The Department received the semi-annual report for the Increment 1 field test on August 31, 2016. The Department anticipates receipt of the annual report in early 2017 that details the operations and monitoring for the first year of Increment 1 field test operations. Please note a separate conditional authorization is required from the Department that authorizes operational testing of the S-356 Pump Station for the Increment 1.1/1.2 field test. The conditional authorization provided to the Corps on September 30, 2016, does not authorize the operation of the S-357N water control structure nor does the current FDEP MWD to ENP Project Comprehensive	The Corps has applied for S-356 operations under Increment 1.1/1.2. The SFWMD will be the applicant for any modifications necessary to operate S-357N.

		Everglades Restoration Plan Regulation Act (CERPRA) permit (FDEP File No. 0246512-003). A permit modification is required to operate the S-357N water control structure.	
16	FDEP	The conditional authorization provided to the Corps on September 30, 2016, as a Reasonable Assurance relied upon adherence to Section 8.3 of the Recommendations Chapter in the Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP), Project Implementation Report (PIR); whereas Section 8.3 provides the expectations and guiding principles associated with water quality for ENP and the southern Estuaries. During this Increment 1.1/1.2 field test, the combined flows to NESRS through the S-222 water control structure and the S-356 pump station will be likely more than what would have otherwise been discharged through the S-333 water control structure under current WCP operations. The CEPP water quality language, as illustrated below, shall be	CEPP PIR Section 8.3 wording regarding water quality has been added to the EA in Section 4.24. These words provide the guidance to resolve water quality issues.

		included into this Draft Supplemental EA and an explanation/analysis/assessment as to how the Corps plans to follow these guiding principles to resolve potential water quality issues associated with the proposed Increment 1.1/1.2 field test. See Correspondence for Above Referenced Language	
17	FDEP	The Draft Supplemental EA shall include an acknowledgment that the Technical Oversight Committee will consider and decide whether future Consent Decree Appendix A calculations for Long-Term Limits will include the S-356 Pump Station.	Text within Section 4.11.1 has been revised as follows: "At present, TP concentrations measured at the S-356 pump station are not included in the Appendix A calculation. However, the TOC is continuing to determine how this structure will be incorporated in future Appendix A calculations. Currently it will be reported provisionally until the exact methods is determined."
18	FDEP	The Draft Supplemental EA should acknowledge that the Increment 1.1/1.2 field test may affect multiple construction projects such as the 2.6-Mile Tamiami Trail Bridge and C-111 Spreader Canal. In addition, an acknowledgment should be noted for the authorization of CEPP in December 2016.	Section 4.20 of the EA summarizes past, present, and projected efforts that cumulatively affect the regional environment of south Florida. Table 4-4 illustrates the net cumulative effects of the various resources which are directly or indirectly impacted, by implementation of the Proposed Action, as well as past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions. Increment 1.1/1.2 is expected to contribute to a net beneficial cumulative impact on the regional ecosystem, providing benefits to ENP by increasing flows to NESRS.

			The referenced projects within the provided comment (2.6 Mile Bridge and C-111 Spreader Canal) are included within Table 4-3. Reference to CEPP has been added to Table 4-3. Text within Table 4-4 has been updated accordingly.
19	FDEP	The Draft Supplemental EA does not present hydrologic model simulation for the Increment 1.1/1.2 field test operational strategy, but relies upon model screening runs that were conducted for the United States Fish and Wildlife Service 2016 Everglades Restoration Transition Plan (ERTP) Biological Opinion and SFWMD South Dade efforts. The Department recommends an evaluation of operational changes as the operational strategy described in Appendix A may have an impact on affected environments and Everglades Restoration progress.	The Corps is proposing to modify the Increment 1 operational strategy, in part, to address the mandated RPA of the 2016 ERTP BO. Model simulations were conducted during reinitiation of consultation for ERTP to evaluate the additional closure periods associated with the S-12A, S-12B, S-12C, S-12D, and S-343A, S-343B, and S-344 structures and their effect on the regional water management system. A summary of these model simulations were included within the EA since alternatives considered in Section 2.0 include operational modifications as required per the RPA. The results of these simulations along with prior analyses from the Increment 1 EA, dated May 27, 2015, and lessons learned from Increment 1 operations and the 2016 Temporary Emergency Deviation have been used to evaluate anticipated changes to the existing environment. This information is the best available information at this time. Potential environmental effects as a result of implementation of the Proposed Action are thoroughly evaluated within the EA. Hydrologic modeling was not completed to support the Increment 1 EA and FONSI (dated May 27, 2015), and hydrologic modeling was similarly not specifically conducted to support modifications for the Increment 1.1/1.2 EA. Because the base condition models developed for the ESA consultation provided further documentation of the hydrologic effects for Increment 1 and provided new information regarding the anticipated hydrologic effects associated with the RPA requirements identified in the 2016 ERTP USFWS Biological Opinion, the Corps elected to include this information within the EA. The COP will include regional hydrologic modeling in order to balance the ecological restoration

			objectives of the MWD and C-111 South Dade projects while demonstrating compliance with the project constraints.
20	FDEP	The title of the project "G-3273 Constraint Relaxation/S-356 Field and S-357N Revised Operational Strategy" does not represent the entire affected area as Appendix A Operational Strategy includes changes to a larger regional system. Within the project location description, please describe the larger regional system.	Section 1.2 adequately describes the project area to include WCA 3, ENP and adjacent areas. The Corps is proposing to modify the operational strategy, currently defined in the Increment 1 EA and FONSI (Dated May 27, 2015) to ensure flood mitigation within 8.5 SMA and to be able to continue working towards the construction of MWD and C-111 Project features to achieve the needed capacity to deliver restoration flows to NESRS in ENP. The title of the EA is consistent with prior NEPA documentation.
21	FDEP	The Department recommends clear and concise figures that illustrate all structures and project components identified in the Increment 1.1/1.2 operational strategy.	Figures within the EA have been reviewed and are considered adequate. All efforts were made to reference the location of pertinent features within the main body of the text, if the specific feature was not marked within a given figure.
22	FDEP	Page 1-1, Section 1.1 Project Authority: Please note that there are other related documents that are not referenced. Please include all applicable documents.	Section 1.1, Project Authority, describes the Everglades National Park Protection and Expansion Act as the authorizing legislation for the MWD Project.
23	FDEP	Page 1-12, Figure 1-3, Page 4-27 and Page 10 in the Draft ERTP Increment 1Field Test Assessment from Appendix A: The Draft Supplemental EA states the S-357 Pump Station is	The hydraulic design capacity of the S-357 pump station is 575 cfs, consisting of 4 diesel pumps with 125 cfs capacity and 1 electric pump with 75 cfs capacity. Operational plans for the S-357 have incorporated the electric pump when less than one diesel unit is needed to manage stages within the 8.5 SMA, such that the maximum operational capacity is 500 cfs during normal operations.

		designed to operate at 575 cubic feet per second (cfs); however, please note the FDEP permit File No. 0317442-003 authorizes 500 cfs at the S-357 Pump Station.	
24	FDEP	Page 1-25, Section 1.10 Permits: In the preface paragraph, please include a reference to FDEP issuing S-356 Pump Station Operational Test authorization for Increment 1 extension issued on September 30, 2016, in accordance with the requirements of Specific Condition No. 22 for Pump Station Testing of permit File No. 0246512-003 for an additional year of operational testing. In the preface paragraph, please change "FDEP has issued testing approval for Increment 1 testing operations associated with the S-356 pump station under the test authorization provision (specific condition 18 of CERPRA permit number 0246512-10)" to "FDEP has issued a testing approval for a one-year extension to Increment 1 testing operations associated with the S-356 Pump	The referenced text edits within this comment have been incorporated into the EA.

		Station under the test authorization provision (specific condition no. 22 of CERPRA permit number 0246512-003)." Update File No. 0306639-002 to 0306639-003. Update "Modification to File No. 0246512-010 or otherwise a modification or test authorization to File No. 0246512-003" to "Modification to File No. 0246512-003 and test authorization." File No. 0246512-010 has been superseded by File No. 0246512-003. Update File No. 0317442-002 to 0317442-003. Update "New Permit File No. 0246512-012, C-111 South Dade Project, Contract 8 Phase" to "Modification to File No. 0246512-012, C-111 South Dade and Modified Water Deliveries to the Everglades National Park Projects." Contract 8 phase was issued in File Nos. 0246512-008 and 0246512-011. File No.	

		0246512-012 added Contract 8A and partial demolition and decommission of S-174 and S-175. Update the Non-ECP permit File No. 06, 50259070, which was modified to File No. 0237803-001.	
25	FDEP	Page 4-64, Table 4-3. Past, Present and Reasonably Foreseeable Actions and Plans Affecting the Project Area: Please reference CEPP in Table 4-3 as being authorized through the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) in 2016. Please clarify why the CERP projects listed are outside the affected area (e.g., Picayune Strand Restoration Project, Site 1 Impoundment Project and Indian River Lagoon South Project).	Table 4-3 has been updated to reflect recent authorization of CEPP. CERP projects are included within the referenced table as they are current and/or future actions that will affect the regional water management system.
26	FDEP	Appendix A.1-13: Operational Strategy for Increment 1.1/1.2 Field Test: Please include FDEP in the weekly and monthly meetings for the Increment 1.1/1.2 field test operations updates.	The purpose of the weekly meetings is to have communications amongst the water managers to address the day to day operational discussions that arise. The monthly meetings serve more as an update and may include attendees in addition to the water managers. FDEP will be included in the invitation list for this meeting.
27	FDEP	Appendix C.1-14, C.1.4 Active Mandates and Permits: Please	The referenced text within the EA for Increment 1.1/1.2 is a carryover from the Increment 1 EA and FONSI dated May 27,

		clarify which project the new monitoring stations south of S-331 are associated with described in C.1.4. Table C.A-1 references proposed new wells for the C-111 SC project. Please ensure that all monitoring stations included in the Draft Supplemental EA are depicted in a clear and concise figure.	2015. The text has been revised as follows: "Increment 1.1/1.2 will utilize a network of monitoring stations to demonstrate the effects of operations on hydrology and water quality as well as compliance with water quality standards. Authorization to conduct the Increment 1.1/1.2 test will be obtained from the FDEP and this monitoring plan is likely to be included in that authorization be reference.
28	FDEP	Appendix C.1-9: Administration and Implementation of the Monitoring Plan. In the statement regarding the proposed Water Quality Monitoring Plan, item (2) lists "distinguish water sources for S-35." This should be corrected to S-356.	Text within the EA was reviewed for editorial corrections.
29	FDEP	Appendix C, Table C.2-4: Please ensure all locations identified in the monitoring table are reflected in a clear and concise figure.	Figures within the EA have been reviewed and are considered adequate. All efforts were made to reference the location of pertinent features within the main body of the text, if the specific feature/gage was not marked within a given figure.
30	South Florida Water Management District January 20, 2017	Main Document: Page 1-9, last paragraph: The current Environmental Assessment lists the estimated completion date for construction of the S-357N structure as January 2017. This should be updated to reflect the current estimated completion date of March or April 2017.	Text has been revised to reflect the current construction status of S-357N.

31	SFWMD	Pages 2-7, 2-8 and 2-9, Table 2-3: To accurately describe the early dry season operations time frame based on the modeling runs titled R2H, INCR1H, INCR2H and INCR2H2 that is currently stated in the EA document as "Early dry season operations (September-December) being informed by SFWMD South Dade Investigation Workshops". We suggest correcting this statement to say "Early dry season operations (August-December) being informed by SFWMD South Dade Investigation Workshops." Alternative C descriptions on page 2-34 should also be updated accordingly.	Table 2-3 and Alternative C descriptions have been updated as requested.
32	SFWMD	Page 4-21, last paragraph and Page 4-40, next to last paragraph: Both paragraphs include a generic phrase stating "…the SFWMD proposed connection of from S-200 to Taylor Slough". For clarification, SFWMD proposes to establish the connection between S-200 and Taylor Slough by constructing a new culvert structure between the C-200 Header Channel and the L-	Suggested text has been added to provide further information with regard to the connection between S-200 and Taylor Slough.

		31W Canal. This new structure will be named G-737 and will be operated in accordance with the operating plan associated with the permit to be issued by FDEP. Suggest that this clarification be added to the text in these paragraphs.	
33	SFWMD	Page 4-21, second paragraph: The last sentence of this paragraph states: "Monitoring will need to be conducted to characterize the water quality of these new discharges into the ENP to determine if the current compliance monitoring point (S-332D) needs to be shifted to or include in the S-328 flows". SFWMD recommends that this sentence be deleted.	Cited text within EA has been revised to state the following: "Monitoring will be conducted to characterize the water quality of these new discharges into the ENP. The S-328 structure will be closely monitored during startup operations to ensure no adverse water quality impacts occur as a result of S-328 flows. The water quality at the S-328 intake area would be sampled before initially opening the S-328. As operations proceed and water quality data is obtained and evaluated, the operational regime would be adjusted if necessary to manage potential water quality concerns."
34	SFWMD	Appendix A: Operational Strategy: A. Table 1, Page A.1-26 and Page A.1-32, paragraph d): Both of the referenced pages include a statement indicating that construction of the three plugs in the L- 31W Canal between S-328 and the L-31W gap must be completed prior to initial operation of S-328.	The Section 404 Permit Review by the Corps acknowledged the prior requirements specified in Increment 1 Plus Ops Strategy regarding completion of the three plugs downstream of S-328 prior to operation of S-328. The S-328 gated culvert, is located in the southwest corner of Cell 1 of the S-332D Detention Area and provides an ability to discharge up to 500 cfs from Cell 1 into the L-31W Canal to short-circuit the southern portion of the S-332D Detention Area if necessary to ensure water deliveries reach Taylor Slough. During initial stakeholder outreach efforts conducted by the SFWMD following release of the Florida Bay proposal, some stakeholder agencies expressed concerns regarding potential for the S-328 inflows

		Neither the Section 404 permit issued by USACE to SFWMD for the L-31W plug and levee work (Permit Number SAJ-2016-02186) or the Ninth Amended Emergency Final Order to Operate the S-3328, S-332C, S-3320 Pump Stations and Appurtenant Structures (File No. OGC Case Nos. 00-0880 and 99- 2242) require construction of the plugs prior to operating S-328. SFWMD is agreeable to having the L-31W plugs in place consistent with the District's proposed Florida Bay plan and associated schedule and recommends revising the language on both referenced pages to reflect this.	to the L-31W Canal to by-pass the southern portion of the S-332D Detention Area flowpath (approximately 2.7 miles of the 4.5 miles flowpath is located south of S-328); as discussed in Section 4.5.3.3 of the EA, concerns were expressed that the S-328 operation would potentially limit the opportunity of nutrient uptake by the wetland vegetation within the S-332D Detention Area, resulting in an increased nutrient load into Taylor Slough. Other stakeholders advocated for increased operation of S-328 as a means to reduce the potential for return seepage from the S-332D Detention Area to the C-111 Canal, upstream of the C-111 Spreader Canal project's Frog Pond Detention Area. In requiring the completion of the three plugs prior to the initial operations of S-328, the Corps considered stake holders' input regarding the water quality concerns with this new inflow location to Taylor Slough. The Corps 2016 EA for Contract 9 did not consider operations of S-328. The SFWMD first proposed operation of S-328 as a component of the Florida Bay Initiative in July 2016, following release of the Corps Contract 9 draft EA in May 2016.
35	SFWMD	Table 1, Page A.1-27, first paragraph: SFWMD has concerns with the current text that limits the time frame during which water can be delivered and places a constraint that S-	Within the draft EA, the operational criteria for S-177 are consistent with the recommended criteria identified by the 2015-2016 South Dade Investigation workshops, which were also incorporated into the hydrologic modeling effort facilitated by the Corps in support of the 2016 ERTP USFWS Biological Assessment.

		177 must be maintained above 3.2 feet NGVD with the restriction of supplemental water deliveries through S-177 during the August 1 to February 14 time period. This limits the District's ability to release water to meet the upstream needs of more favorable hydroperiods for the Cape Sable Seaside Sparrow nesting from February to July. Suggest revising the last sentence to read: "Releases to Manatee Bay through S-177 are limited to a maximum of 250 cfs and require that the daily average stage at S-177 HW be maintained at or above 2.8 ft. NGVD".	No change has been incorporated into the Operational Strategy in response to this comment. Verbiage stays as written to maintain pre-existing canal levels in Increment 1 Ops Strategy and the 2012 WCP.
36	SFWMD	Page A.1-10, last paragraph: The following sentence should be updated to reflect the current implementation schedule: "It is expected that Increment 1.1/1.2 operation will begin in the November-December 2016, which is well past the start of the May 1through April 30 water quality reporting year."	Concur, changed in document to below: It is expected that Increment 1.1/1.2 operation will commence on March 1, 2017.
37	SFWMD	Table 1, Page A.1-17, last line: Suggest that this sentence be changed from "DOI Sandbag culverts under Tram Road by	Changed in document to: DOI to install sandbags to prevent flow through culverts under ENP Tram Road by February 1 if necessary.

		February 1 if necessary" to "DOI to install sandbags to prevent flow through culverts under ENP Tram Road".	
38	SFWMD	Table 1, Page A. 1-21, G-211 Row: Change the note from "Note: If S-331 pumping is limited and the G-211 tailwater rises above 5.3 feet, NGVD then close G-211 to "Note: If S-331 pumping is limited, LPG2 > 5.5 and the G-211 tailwater rises above 5.3 feet, NGVD, then close G-211"	No Change: Prefer to keep the LPG2 criteria limited to S-331 Operations. Keep G-211 criteria as is and consistent with the 2012 WCP.
39	SFWMD	Table 1, Page A.1-21, S-338 Row: Change the maximum of the operating range from "5.8 feet NGVD" to "6.0 feet NGVD".	No Change: Prefer to keep the S-338 criteria consistent with 2012 WCP.
40	SFWMD	Table 1, Page A.1-23, S-331 Row: Change from "When LPG2 < 5.5 then water manager may use any operation range as long as the bottom of the range is at or above 5.0 ft, NGVD (e.g. 5.5 to 6.0)" to "When LPG2 < 5.5 then water manager may use any operation range as long as the bottom of the range is at or above 5.0 ft, NGVD (e.g. 5.5 to 6.0) when pumping at S-331 and above 4.8 when siphoning at S-331. There is no stage	Concur, changed in document as indicated below: When LPG2 < 5.5 then water manager may use any operation range as long as the bottom of the range is at or above 5.0 ft, NGVD (e.g. 5.5 to 6.0) when pumping at S-331 and above 4.8 when siphoning at S-331. There is no stage requirement when water supply deliveries are being made through G-211.

		requirement when water supply deliveries are being made through G-211.”	
41	SFWMD	A.1-38, Subparagraph I: This section is inconsistent with the first portion of the paragraph marked with an asterisk on the previous page, which allows discharge of accumulated water until August 15. If the intent is to completely stop Column 2 operations after July 14th if WCA-3A is below the Increment 1 High Water Line, then some editing is required. Suggest replacing the current language with the following : "S-334 will not be used after 14 July during periods when the WCA-3A stage is below the Increment 1 Action Line. S-334 may be used to discharge accumulated water from 15 July through 14 August if WCA- 3A stage is above the Increment 1 Action Line. Regardless of conditions within WCA-3A or any residual WCA-3A storage deficit balance, the use of S-334 to deliver a portion of WCA-3A regulatory releases to the SOCS will be discontinued on 15	Concur, changed in document to below: S-334 will not be used after 14 July during periods when the WCA-3A stage is below the Increment 1 Action Line. S-334 may be used to discharge accumulated water from 15 July through 14 August if WCA- 3A stage is above the Increment 1 Action Line. Regardless of conditions within WCA-3A or any residual WCA-3A storage deficit balance, the use of S-334 to deliver a portion of WCA-3A regulatory releases to the SOCS will be discontinued on 15 August. The WCA-3A storage deficit balance resultant from the S-12 closures, if applicable for the prior period from 1 November through 14 July, will zero-out on 15 August and will preclude a balance carryover into the next year."

		August. The WCA-3A storage deficit balance resultant from the S-12 closures, if applicable for the prior period from 1 November through 14 July, will zero-out on 15 August and will preclude a balance carryover into the next year."	
42	SFWMD	Page A.1-43, first partial paragraph: Revise this paragraph to read, "Both operational experience and modeling conducted under the 2015-2016 SFWMD South Dade Investigation study show that an abrupt shut down of S-332B, S-332C, and S-3320 when water levels decline in the early dry season below the flood control level causes flow to Taylor Slough from S- 3320 to end abruptly, undesirable recession rates in ENP and undesirable seepage to the east. The following bullets describe objectives that the additional operational flexibility will be used to meet and criteria to ensure that the use of the operational flexibility does not have unintended impacts	Concur, changed in document to below: “An abrupt shut down of S-332B, S-332C, and S-332D when water levels decline in the early dry season below the flood control level causes flow to Taylor Slough from S-332D to end abruptly, undesirable recession rates in ENP and undesirable seepage to the east.”
43	SFWMD	Appendix C Monitoring Plan	Concur, corrections have been made.

		Page C.1-32, Section C.1.7.2.1 and Table C.1-3: Stations TAMBR1 and TAMBR4 were renamed L29C1 and L29C4, respectively (DBHydro station names). Monitoring began at these two stations in 2015; they replaced L-29 canal sites just upstream of Tamiami Trail culverts that became unsafe to monitor due to the construction of the one-mile bridge. This section and table should be updated to use the current nomenclature.	
44	SFWMD	Page C.1-50, Section C.1.9.1, fifth sentence: This sentence currently reads: "Most of the surface water quality that is specific to the Increment 1.1 /1.2 test is currently scheduled to be conducted by the SFWMD though this is subject to negotiations with ENP". SFWMD and ENP entered into a five-year cooperative agreement (June 2015 - June 2020), "Cooperative Monitoring, Assessment and Modeling to Support Everglades Restoration: Incremental Testing of G-3273 Constraint Relaxation/S-356 and S-357N Operation and	Reference to the executed five-year cooperative agreement has been included within the referenced location. The text has been updated to reflect the active status of the SFWMD-ENP Cooperative Agreement.

		Development of a Combined Operational Plan". This Cooperative Agreement covers additional monitoring of surface water and groundwater quality monitoring identified in the Monitoring Plan. SFWMD suggests that this sentence be revised to reflect the active status of the SFWMD-ENP Cooperative Agreement.	
45	SFWMD	Page C.1-37, Table C.1-3, last row: SFWMD recommends deleting the S-328 structure row from this table since no agency has been identified for collecting water quality samples. Monitoring of this structure will be considered in future forums.	S-328 will be retained in Table C.1-3. As previously documented in Section C.1.3 of the Monitoring Plan (Appendix C), pending concurrence with the monitoring regime by the ENP, FDEP, SFWMD and the Corps, the preliminary S-328 operational criteria identified in the Operational Strategy (Appendix A of the draft Supplemental EA) will be included within Increment 1.1/1.2. The monitoring requirements for S-328 will be the responsibility of SFWMD and S-328 will not be operated until monitoring requirements have been finalized and implemented by SFWMD.
46	SFWMD	**Section/Page 1-3:** In Figure 1-1 cannot distinguish MWD features (C-358, S-357N, S-357); suggest including an insert.	Figures within the EA have been reviewed and are considered adequate. All efforts were made to reference the location of pertinent features within the main body of the text, if the specific feature was not marked within a given figure.
47	SFWMD	**Section/Page: 1-44, 46:** S-357N is described as a gated culvert for the first time in the documents on page 44. On page 46 in the Example of Test Phase section, it is apparent that flow through S- 357N will be affected by lowering (instead of raising)	S-357N consists of 3 box type gated concrete control structures. Each structure will be equipped with a manually operated double leaf slide gate system. The double leaf slide gate system was designed to accommodate variable flow regimes: (1) weir flows to by lowering the top gate; (2) orifice flows by raising the lower gate; or (3) submerged or un-submerged, uncontrolled flows by raising both the top and bottom gates above the top (crown) of the culvert. The above language has been added to the operational strategy.

		gate(s): "The three upper (weir) gates at S-357N should be opened (lowered) one foot from about 6.5 feet to 5.5 feet". This important feature may result in more favorable water quality conditions downstream as weir flow is less likely to have sediment or turbidity concerns that if the gate were opened from the bottom.	
48	SFWMD	**Section/Page 1-19:** Sentence "Increment 2 will increase the L-29 Canal operating constraint up to 7.8 feet" is paradoxical. Use text similar to that on page 1-13 and say "Increment 2 will relax the L-29 operating constraint..." The phrase "constraint relaxation" is used in the title of the document.	Text within the EA has been reviewed for consistency and changed as appropriate.
49	SFWMD	**Section/Page 1-22:** Change "G-3273 stage criteria" to "G-3273 stage constraint" to be consistent ("constraint" is used in the next bullet).	Text within the EA has been reviewed for consistency and changed as appropriate.
50	SFWMD	**Section/Page 2-34:** Replace "G-3272" with "G-3273" in Alternatives B and C titles	Text within the EA has been reviewed for consistency and changed as appropriate.
51	SFWMD	**Section/Page 3-18:** In Section 3.12, Water Quality, sentence 'Water is not normally allowed to be directly routed from Lake	Text within the EA has been reviewed and changed as follows: "The water quality of the study area is largely controlled by Lake Okeechobee and the EAA to the north and urban and agricultural development southeast of ENP. The northern WCAs are fed from

		Okeechobee and EAA runoff to the WCA's" is unclear and needs to be revised. Remove apostrophe from 'WCA's".	Lake Okeechobee as well as runoff from the EAA. Stormwater Treatment Areas (STAs) were constructed to reduce total phosphorus from surface water runoff and releases from Lake Okeechobee."
52	SFWMD	**Section/Page 3-18:** In Section 3.12, suggest rewriting sentence "STAs have been designed, constructed and operated for flood control purposes and also to reduce phosphorous (sic) concentrations in runoff from the EAA and regulatory releases from Lake Okeechobee that discharges into the WCAs" to "Everglades Stormwater Treatment Areas (STAs) were constructed to reduce total phosphorus from surface water runoff and releases from Lake Okeechobee"; "phosphorous" is misspelled; should be "phosphorus" (noun); "phosphorous" is an adjective. Not all Lake 0 releases sent south to the STAs are regulatory releases.	Text within the EA has been reviewed and corrected as suggested. See response to comment 51 above.
53	SFWMD	**Section/Page: 3-19:** "phosphorous" is misspelled	Text within the EA has been reviewed for consistency and changed as appropriate. Spelling errors will be corrected.
54	SFWMD	**Section/Page: 4-3, 4-7:** In light of the first two anticipated hydrologic effects Increment 1 is anticipated to have within NESRS relative to the 2012	Average annual hydroperiods within northern NESRS (up to 5 miles south of the L-29 Canal) range between 305 and 355 days. Because these areas are generally inundated most of the year under ERTP, the increased inflows to L-29 associated within Increment 1 result in hydroperiod increases of 0 to 15 days within northern

		Water Control Plan (64% increase in # days of WCA 3A unconstrained discharges and an increase in frequency and duration of L-29 Canal stage), is there an explanation why there is virtually no increase in average annual hvdroperiod comparing Increment 1 and ERTP (Figure 4-4) in most of NESRS?	NESRS. Hydroperiod increases are more significant along the eastern boundary of the slough, since these areas are inundated less frequently under ERTP. Depth increases of 0.1-0.2 feet are evident throughout these northern areas of NESRS, although a depth comparison map was not included in the EA (Figure 4-2 illustrates the depth changes for the G-3273 monitoring location).
55	SFWMD	**Section/Page 4-15:** Figure 4-8, "gaguge" misspelled	Text within the EA has been reviewed for consistency and changed as appropriate. Spelling errors will be corrected.
56	SFWMD	**Section/Page 4-23:** Last paragraph, sentence that begins with "In response to concerns ..." insert ""first" after "including:" and insert "then" after "temporary pumps and".	Text within the EA has been reviewed and is appropriate as written.
57	SFWMD	**Section/Page 4-23:** The placement of a berm around the western end of the C-358 Canal was to prevent surface water from entering the C-358 canal.	Text within the EA has been reviewed and is appropriate as written. Further rational with regard to SFWMD actions taken during the 2016 Temporary Emergency Deviation are further described within Section 1.0.
58	SFWMD	**Section/Page 4-23:** Modify sentence as follows: “Based on the demonstrated ability of these measures to maintain flood mitigation requirements for the 8.5 SMA, the Corps completed construction of a temporary bypass connection between the C-358 Canal and the C-357 Canal in order to maintain this	The text within the referenced comment has been incorporated into the EA. Text in Section 4.6.1.2 has been revised as recommended.

		level of service during construction of S-357N.	
59	SFWMD	**Section/Page A.1-5:** Third full paragraph, last sentence refers to conditions to allow transition to 1.2 in Section 3.0., which covers WQ. Probably meant to refer to 4.0.	Concur, changed in document.
60	SFWMD	**Section/Page A.1-11:** Last sentence on page 11 indicates operational flexibility applies to all structures identified in Section 12. A section 12 was not found in the document.	Changed to Table 1.
61	SFWMD	**Section/Page A.1-11 to 13:** Section 4.0 could benefit from better organization .and each paragraph focusing on a single topic. This section covers Increment 1.1/1.2 together and each increment individually which makes it confusing.	Noted. Will remain as written.
62	SFWMD	**Section/Page A.1-29:** Rename Sections 4.2 and 4.3 to something like "Revised/Unvarying Conditions of Increment 1.1/1.2 Field Test". The operational strategy is the result of the new or unvaried conditions. Plus the operating strategy includes four conditions so it could be clearer.	Noted. Will remain as written.

63	SFWMD	**Section/Page 1.25:** May want to add Contract 8A permit to this list.	Reference to File No. 0246512-012 (C-111 South Dade and Modified Water Deliveries to Everglades National Park Project) is included within Section 1.10 Permits, Licenses and Entitlements.
64	SFWMD	**Section/Page 4-64:** Table 4-3 may want to add the SFWMD proposed actions to increase flows towards Taylor Slough	Suggested reference has been included within the appropriate location within the Table.
65	SFWMD	**Section/Page 1-3:** Figure 1-1: suggest using "CERP C-111 Spreader Canal Western Project" in the legend for red areas (S200, S199 and Frog Pond areas); suggest showing S-333 and S-334 as MWD components (light blue)	Figures within the EA have been reviewed and are considered adequate. All efforts were made to reference the location of pertinent features within the main body of the text, if the specific feature was not marked within a given figure. Text is included within the EA noting that S-333 and S-334 are MWD Project features, as well as noting that S-199, S-200 and the Frog Pond Detention Area, fall under the C-111 Spreader Canal Western project.
66	SFWMD	**Section/Page 1-4:** A design refinement for the 8.5 SMA and EA was completed in August of 2012 (USACE 2021a) – Suggest showing a figure with details before and after refinements.	Text within the current paragraph describes the design refinement. Inclusion of a reference to Figure 1-3 has been included to provide further context with regard to the location of the C-358 canal.
67	SFWMD	**Section/Page 1-21:** Suggest adding Contract 8 features explicitly in Figure 1-5 (similar to CNT 8A)	Figures within the EA have been reviewed and are considered adequate. Text is present within the EA with regard to Contract 8 and 8A features.
68	SFWMD	**Section/Page 2-7, 2-8:** Table 2-3, 2-4: For R2H, INCR1H and INCR2H scenarios, suggest excluding the comment "includes lower some coastal operating ranges." Because no change has been made in modeling for coastal operating ranges. A slight modification	Table 2-3 and Table 2-4 have been updated as requested.

		was made for S-148 ops which is not a coastal structure.	
69	SFWMD	**Section/Page 2-17, 2-18:** Figure 2-7, 2-8 " ROUND 1 and 2 Modeling instead of ROUND 1 Modeling	The caption title has been corrected.
70	SFWMD	**Section/Page 2-21:** Table 2-5: suggest not including any numbers in INCR1B and INCR1H columns outside highlighted in yellow to avoid confusion. Suggest adding CSSS-A (Expanded) or CSSS-Ax to match with text.	Additional numbers not highlighted in yellow are provided for context with regard to potential effects on CSSS subpopulations for those metrics described in Table 2-5. CSSS-Axis included within the table. Please refer back to the EA.
71	SFWMD	**Section/Page 2-28:** Table format is confusing.	The referenced table is consistent with prior NEPA documentation and is meant to provide a summary of Increment 1 operations. For further information/detail, please reference the Increment 1 EA and FONSI, dated May 27, 2015 and the operational strategy contained therein.
72	SFWMD	**Section/Page 2-35: 2.1.5** "Alternative D represents a combination of simulations INCR1B and R2H conducted for purposes of ESA consultation for the 2016 ERTP BO". Suggest changing to "Alternative D represents a combination of simulations INCR1B and INCR1H conducted for purpose of ESA consultation for the 2016 ERTP BO plus raising the L-29 canal maximum to 7.8 feet, NGVD.	Alternative D represents a combination of simulations INCR1B and R2H as it incorporates SDCS operations represented in R2H.

73	SFWMD	**Section/Page 2-31:** 2012 WCP has no relevant ops, but confusing for the reader.	The referenced table is consistent with prior NEPA documentation and is meant to provide a summary of Increment 1 operations. For further information/detail, please reference the Increment 1 EA and FONSI, dated May 27, 2015 and the operational strategy contained therein.
74	SFWMD	**Section/Page 2-39:** Table 2.9: a) suggest adding units (ft, NGVD) for the table. For R2H for SDCS heading, b) suggest adding "operating range" c) for S177HW, suggest adding definition of high and medium rainfall or 14 day rainfall.	Table 2.9 has been updated to include units and "operating range" as recommended. Rainfall criteria are addressed within the operational strategy in Appendix A.
75	SFWMD	**Section/Page 2-39:** Table 2.9: a) correct S338 R2H outside CSSS nesting period data from "Column 1: 4.8-5.5; Column 2: 4.3-4.8" to "Column 1: 5.5-5.8; Column 2: 5.4-5.0" b) correct S176HW, inside CSSS nesting period data from "Column 2: 4.7-4.9" to "Column 1: 4.75-5.0; Column 2: 4.7-4.9"; c) correct S176HW, outside CSSS nesting period data from "Column 1: 4.75-5.0" to "Column 1:4.75-5.0; Column 2: 4.7-4.9"	Table 2.9 has been updated as recommended. Thank you for providing detailed review of the ERTP modeling documentation.
76	SFWMD	**Section/Page 1-9:** Line 8: replace "S-35" with "S-356"	A thorough review of the EA has been conducted and reference to S-35 has not been found for correction to be made.
77	SFWMD	**Section/Page 1-14:** Penultimate line: replace "Increment 11.1" with "Increment 1.1"	A thorough review of the EA has been conducted and reference to Increment 11.1 has not been found for correction to be made.

78	SFWMD	**Section/Page A.1-8:** Missing "r" in required; Increment 1.1/1.2 will provide increased operational flexibility of the C-111 South Dade detention areas to allow the detention areas to respond to expected fluctuations in water the levels in eastern ENP	Corrected in document.
79	SFWMD	**Section/Page A.1-10:** Revise sentence in first paragraph to include "from" stages: raise L-29 constraint from 7.5 to 7.8 by March 1, 2017; raise L-29 constraint from 7.8 to 8.5 by March 1, 2018.	Corrected in document.
80	SFWMD	**Section/Page A.1-11:** Suggest rewording the following sentences: "During supplemental deliveries up to 250 cfs as measured at S-334 or S-337 to Taylor Slough, Florida Bay, and Manatee Bay, it is expected that except during relatively dry conditions with typical seasonal rainfall patterns S-356 will be used less in Increment 1.1 than expected in Increment 1"	Concur, changed in document to below: During supplemental deliveries of up to 250 cfs, measured at S-334 or S-337, to Taylor Slough, Florida Bay, and Manatee Bay, it is expected that S-356 will be used less in Increment 1.1 than expected in Increment 1. However this is with the exception or periods during relatively dry conditions with typical seasonal rainfall patterns.
81	SFWMD	**Section/Page A.1-12:** Suggest rewording the following sentence: At a minimum S-333, S-334, S-356, S-197, and S-	Concur, changed in document to below:

		357N will be utilized, as well as S-332B, S-332C, S-332D, S-194, S-196, S-176 and S-177 as identified in Table 1"	At a minimum, S-333, S-334, S-356, S-197, and S-357N will be operated, as well as S-332B, S-332C, S-332D, S-194, S-196, S-176 and S-177 as identified in Table 1.
82	SFWMD	**Section/Page A.1-15 Column 1:** Suggest revising sentence from "When in Zone A S-12s, S-333, S-343A&B, and -344 subject to conditions below, otherwise, S-12s open full, S-151 make discharges to the East Coast and ENP-SDCS as needed and make maximum allowable discharges to the East Coast and ENP-SDCS as needed and make maximum allowable discharge when WCA 3B stage (Site 71) is below 8.5 feet, NGVD. S-343A&B and S-344m if non-nesting season (15 July through 30 September), make maximum allowable discharge if downstream conditions permit" to "When in Zone A From 15 July through 30 September (outside of the CSSS nesting season) S-12s, S-333, S-343A, S-343B, and S-344 open to make maximum allowable discharges. During the CSSS nesting period S-12A, S-12B, S-343A, S-343B, and S-344 are closed as prescribed in the following	Will remain as written below: **When in Zone A** S-12s, S-333, S-343A&B, and S-344 subject to conditions below, otherwise, S-12s open full, S-151 make discharges to the East Coast and ENP-SDCS as needed and make maximum allowable discharge when WCA-3B stage (Site 71) is below 8.5 feet, NGVD. S-343A&B and S-344, if non-nesting season (15 July through 30 September), make maximum allowable discharge if downstream conditions permit. (Suggested change is covered within the S-12 conditions below)

		sections. Year round S-151 may be used to discharge water for water supply, to WCA 3B if Site 71 is below 8.5 feet NGVD, or to tide through S-31 if downstream conditions allow, or any combination thereof.	
83	SFWMD	**Section/Page A.1-15 Column 2:** Suggest revising sentence from: "When in Zone A S-12s, S-333, S-343A/B, and S-344 subject to conditions in Table 1, otherwise, S-12s open full, S-151 make discharges to the East Coast and ENP-SDCS as needed and make maximum allowable discharge when WCA-3B stage (Site 71) is below 8.5 feet, NGVD. S-343A&B and S-344, if non-nesting season (15 July through 30 September), make maximum allowable discharge if downstream conditions permit" to "When in Zone A from 15 July through 30 September (outside of the CSSS nesting season), S-12s, S-333, S-343A, S-343B, and S-344 open to make maximum allowable discharges. During the CSSS nesting period S-12A, S-12B, S-343A, S-343B, and S-344 are closed as prescribed in the following	Will remain as written below: **When in Zone A** S-12s, S-333, S-343A&B, and S-344 subject to conditions in Table 1, otherwise, S-12s open full, S-151 make discharges to the East Coast and ENP-SDCS as needed and make maximum allowable discharge when WCA-3B stage (Site 71) is below 8.5 feet, NGVD. S-343A&B and S-344, if non-nesting season (15 July through 30 September), make maximum allowable discharge if downstream conditions permit. (Suggested change is covered within the S-12 conditions below)

		sections. Year round S-151 may be used for 1) water supply releases, 2) regulatory discharges to WCA 3B if Site 71 is below 8.5 feet NGVD, 3) regulatory discharges to tide through S-31 if downstream conditions allow, or 4) any combination thereof. Discharge to L-31N and C-111 via S-344 following the criteria described in the following sections."	
84	SFWMD	**Section/Page A.1-16 Rainfall Plan:** Suggest revising sentence from "Rainfall Plan located in Table 7-1 of the 2012 Water Control Plan. Operational intent is to maximize discharge capacity from S-333 prior to utilization of the S-12s, subject to conditions below. Rainfall Plan target distribution through S-333 may exceed 55% of the Rainfall Plan target" to "Rainfall Plan located in Table 7-1 of the 2012 Water control Plan. Operational intent is to maximize discharge capacity from S-333 prior to utilization of the S-12s, subject to conditions below. When S-12s capacity is required the structure should be opened from east to west.	Concur, changed in document to below: Rainfall Plan located in Table 7-1 of the 2012 Water Control Plan. Operational intent is to maximize discharge capacity from S-333 prior to utilization of the S-12s, subject to conditions below. Rainfall Plan target distribution through S-333 may exceed 55% of the Rainfall Plan target. When S-12s capacity is required the structures should be opened from east to west.

		Rainfall Plan target distribution through S-333 may exceed 55% of the Rainfall Plan target."	
85	SFWMD	**Section/Page A.1-19 S-333:** Change "Follow the same constraints as S-333. Open whenever hydraulic gradient allows southerly flow" to "Follow the same constraints as S-333. Open whenever the available hydraulic gradient allows meaningful flow south with low risk of backflow (flow north)"	Concur, changed in document to below: Follow the same constraints as S-333. Open whenever hydraulic gradient allows flow from WCA-3B to L-29 with low risk of backflow from L-29 to WCA-3B.
86	SFWMD	**Section/Page A.1-20 S-356:** Change "When supplemental water deliveries are being delivered through S-334 are being made and they by themselves or in combination with local rainfall result in S-356 pumping to maintain the canal range, the supplement delivery will be stopped by closing S-334 by the next business day or sooner. Supplemental water can be delivered to Taylor Slough through S-151, S337, S-335 while S-356 is operating" to "When supplemental water deliveries are being delivered through S-334 and they by	Concur, changed in document to below: When supplemental water deliveries are being delivered through S-334 and they by themselves or in combination with local rainfall result in S-356 pumping to maintain the canal range below the top of the range, the supplement delivery will be stopped by closing S-334 by the next business day or sooner. Supplemental water can be delivered to Taylor Slough through S-151, S337, S-335 while S-356 is operating,

		themselves or in combination with local rainfall result in S-356 pumping to maintain the canal range below the top of the range, the supplement delivery will be stopped by closing S-334 by the next business day or sooner. Supplemental water can be delivered to Taylor Slouqh throuqh S-151, S337, S-335 while S-356 is operating".	
87	SFWMD	**Section/Page A.1-20 S-337:** Change from "supplemental Deliveries up to 250 cfs as measured at S-334 or S-337 Taylor slough, Florida Bay, and Manatee Bay" to "Supplemental Deliveries up to 250 cfs to Taylor Slough, Florida Bay, and Manatee Bay as measured at S-334 or S-337.	Concur, changed in document to below: Supplemental Deliveries up to 250 cfs as measured at S-334 or S-337 to Taylor Slough, Florida Bay, and Manatee Bay
88	SFWMD	**Section/Page A.1-22 S-357:** Change to: When S-357 pump station is restricted due to the construction of the flow way berms inside the 8.5 SMA detention the following constraints of 6.8 ft NGVD will be used to maintain the flood mitigation for 8.5 SMA. 1. If no S-357 units are available a G-3272 constraint of 6.8 ft., NGVD	Changed to below: When S-357 pump station is restricted due to the construction of the flow way berms inside the 8.5 SMA detention cell and subsequent operational testing, the following constraints will be used to maintain the flood mitigation for 8.5 SMA. 1. If no units are available, a G-3273 constraint of 6.8 ft, NGVD will be used for S-333 and S-356. 2. If one electric or one diesel is available, a G-3273 constraint of 6.9 ft, NGVD will be used for S-333 and S-356.

		will be used for S-333 and S-356. 2. If one S-357 unit is available a G-3273 constraint of 6.9 ft., NGVD will be used for S-333 and S-356. 3. If two S-357 units are available a G-3272 constraint of 7.0 ft., NGVD will be used for S-333 and S-356.	3. If two units are available, a G-3273 constraint of 7.0 ft, NGVD will be used for S-333 and S-356.
89	SFWMD	**Section/Page A.1-23 S-331**: Delete redundant last sentence. Change from "Supplemental Deliveries up to 250 cfs as measured at S-334 or S-337 to Taylor Slough, Florida Bay, and Manatee. It is the expectation that supplemental deliveries will not cause prolonged pumping with two or more units at S-331. When LPG2 < 5.5 then water may use any operation range as long as the manager bottom of the range is at or above 5.0 ft, NGVD (e.g. 5.5 to 6.0)" to "Supplemental Deliveries up to 250 cfs as measured at S334 or S-337 to Taylor Slough, Florida Bay, and Manatee. It is the expectation that supplemental deliveries will not cause prolonged pumping with two or more units at S-331.	Concur, changed in document to below per comment 40: When LPG2 < 5.5 then water manager may use any operation range as long as the bottom of the range is at or above 5.0 ft, NGVD (e.g. 5.5 to 6.0) when pumping at S-331 and above 4.8 when siphoning at S-331. There is no stage requirement when water supply deliveries are being made through G-211.
90	SFWMD	**Section/Page A.1/24:** Change "S-331, 2) use of S194 and	Concur, changed in document.

		S196…"to"S-331, 2) use of S-194 and S-196…"	
91	SFWMD	**Section/Page A.1-26 S-176:** Delete first line of text, "Operating Range from 4.7 to 4.9 Feet, NGVD"	Concur, changed in document.
92	SFWMD	**Section/Page A.1-29,30:** Further indent bullets A) and 8) as they are sub-bullets or make them part of the previous bullet	The suggested formatting issues in the referenced comment have been corrected within the operational strategy.
93	SFWMD	**Section/Page A.1-35 S-197:** Correct table reference, from "Tables 3A and 38" to "Tables 2A and 28".	Concur, changed in document.
94	SFWMD	**Section/Page A.1-43 First bullet:** Change "holding short term holding" to "short-term holding".	Concur, changed in document.
95	Everglades Law Center National Parks Conservation Association Everglades Foundation Audubon Florida	**The Timeline for Implementation** : The Service's July 2016 Biological Opinion for the Everglades Restoration Transition Plan ("July 2016 ERTP BiOp") set forth a Reasonable and Prudent Alternative ("RPA") for southern C&SF System operations that included an expedited timeline for the implementation of remaining portions of the C-111 South Dade Project. *See* July 2016 BiOp at § 7.1.2 (page 189). According to the July 2016 ERTP BiOp, a subset of	The Corps remains committed to the actions outlined in the RPA, including actions to move water east. Consistent with this action, the Corps has completed the NEPA assessment for "Increment 1 Plus" (Increment 1.1/1.2) to analyze a set of alternatives including the proposed BO operational changes for the WCA 3A water control structures and the expanded operational ranges within the SDCS. The FONSI for Increment 1.1/1.2 is anticipated to be signed in late February 2017, prior to the BO deadline of March 1, 2017. Pending the completion of critical features necessary to operate the Canal 111 South Dade Project North Detention Area construction contracts and the acquisition of Department of the Interior (DOI) and Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) real estate interests, we expect Increment 1.1/1.2 operations to be implemented prior to March 2017 and Increment 2 operations to be

		that project was to be completed in time to allow operations that would allow the stage in the L-29 Canal to rise up to 7.8 feet NGVD to begin in March 2017, and further parts of the projects were to be completed in time to allow "Increment 2" operations to begin in March 2018. However, the December 2016 Draft Supplemental EA suggests that this timeline has already slipped. In discussing the Preferred Alternative, it states: The combined duration of Increment 1 and Increment 1.1/1.2 may extend beyond the two calendar years initially envisioned for Increment 1 to compensate for the temporary suspension of the Increment 1 field test during the 2016 Temporary Emergency Deviation and extended recovery period (February-November 2016). In addition to the 2016 Temporary Emergency Deviation, extension of the Increment 1 and Increment 1.1/1.2 field test duration to up to three years will allow sufficient time to complete the C-111 South Dade construction components needed to operate the [Northern	implemented prior to March 2018, and to adjust our L-29 operations accordingly. Real estate acquisition is ongoing and is expected to be complete by October 2017. Based on the current construction schedule for C-111 South Dade Contract 8, the earliest opportunity to consider incremental raising of the L-29 Canal above 7.5 feet, NGVD is expected between July and October 2017, coincident with the 2017 wet season. Following completion of the C-111 South Dade NDA, the Corps anticipates that the L-29 Canal stage maximum operating limit will be further raised up to 8.5 feet, NGVD under Increment 2. The 2016 ERTP BO (page 185) recognizes that "The Service understands that implementing each of the actions listed in section 7.1.2 is subject to various contingencies, including real estate acquisitions by DOI and the Corps, timely completion of several ongoing and planned construction projects, and complying with NEPA, some of which the Corps does not control (e.g., non-Corps land acquisition, tribal consultation, state CZMA evaluation). These actions must proceed in accordance with applicable federal laws and regulations, and are subject to the administrative and Congressional budget process, appropriations, the Federal Acquisition Regulations and Competition in Contracting Act requirements, and the actions of third parties, which may delay or otherwise require changes to their execution." The Corps remains committed to adhering to the RPA outlined within the 2016 ERTP BO, however, as FWS has acknowledged, factors outside the Corps control may act to delay full implementation in the time frames included within the RPA.

		Detention Area] during Increment 2 of the [ModWaters] Project. Increment 1.1/1.2 will extend until implementation of Increment 2. December 2016 Draft Supplemental EA at 2-44. To similar effect, it notes that work to allow the stage in the L-29 Canal to rise up to 7.8 feet will not be complete until the summer or fall of 2017: Real estate acquisition is ongoing and is expected to be complete by October 2017. Based on the current construction schedule for C-111 South Dade Contract 8, the earliest opportunity to consider incremental raising of the L-29 Canal above 7.5 feet, NGVD is expected between July and October 2017, coincident with the 2017 wet season. Following completion of the C-111 South Dade [Northern Detention Area], the Corps anticipates that the L-29 Canal stage maximum operating limit will be further raised up to 8.5 feet, NGVD under Increment 2 of the [ModWaters] Project.	

		Id. at 1-23. These apparent delays are troubling. We emphasize the need to ensure that project implementation happens expeditiously to meet the Service's RPA designed to stop the continuing downward slide in the Sparrow population.	
96	Everglades Law Center National Parks Conservation Association Everglades Foundation Audubon Florida	**Protecting the Cape Sable seaside sparrow** *Subpopulation A* The Preferred Alternative would implement the RPA set forth in the July 2016 ERTP BiOp. First, it is important to note that the impact of the RPA is to move a greater amount of water from WCA 3 into ENP, while slightly extending the closure periods for the S-12A, S-12B, S-343A/B and S-344 structures to increase the amount of nesting habitat available to Sparrow Subpopulation A and to improve hydroperiods in that habitat overall. Modelling suggests that the extended closure dates will improve Subpopulation A's habitat and nesting success. Areas south of these structures should remain dry during the dry season, not only for the Sparrow, but for all wildlife that rely on this habitat.	The Corps is proposing to modify the Increment 1 operational strategy, in part, to address the mandated RPA of the 2016 ERTP BO. Model simulations were conducted during reinitiation of consultation for ERTP to evaluate the additional closure periods associated with the S-12A, S-12B, S-12C, S-12D, and S-343A, S-343B, and S-344 structures and their effect on the regional water management system. The RUSFWS BO RPA includes recognition of the high water strategy that allows conditional operation of the S-12A and/or S-12B during the extended closure period when necessary to limit the duration of high water stages in WCA 3A. A summary of these model simulations were included within the EA as alternatives considered in Section 2.0 include operational modifications as required per the RPA. As noted, within the reference comment, the "high water strategy" was not included within the model simulations. The results of the model simulations along with prior analyses from the Increment 1 EA, dated May 27, 2015, and lessons learned from Increment 1 operations and the 2016 Temporary Emergency Deviation have been used to evaluate anticipated changes to the existing environment. This information is the best available information at this time. Potential environmental effects as a result of implementation of the Proposed Action are thoroughly evaluated within the EA. The Corps commits to avoiding, minimizing or mitigating for adverse effects. All practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental effects were incorporated into the Proposed Action.

		However, the modeling did not include what the Service and Corps refer to as the "high water strategy" – an exception to the extended closure period for the S-12A and S-12B structures, allowing those structures to open in October and November under specified conditions to mitigate the need for later openings to avoid "overtopping" the structures (which can threaten their structural integrity). *See* December 2016 Draft Supplemental EA at 4-13. Both overtopping and opening the S-12A and S-12B structures during Cape Sable Seaside Sparrow nesting season are problematic. As the Service explains in the July 2016 ERTP BiOp, during last year's C&SF Project emergency deviations, imminent overtopping of those gates led the Corps to open them in the middle of Sparrow nesting season to protect their structural integrity ("to allow the equivalent amount of water that would have otherwise been released by overtopping"). *See* July 2016 ERTP BiOp at 26-27. The exceptionally high water levels	A monitoring plan has been developed for Increment 1.1/1.2. Interagency workshops to facilitate discussion of field test performance relative to the achievement of field test goals and objectives are planned to be conducted. Field Test operations updates and action items will be discussed on a weekly basis between water managers from the Corps and SFWMD, as well as ENP when needed, to provide collective interpretation of results and evaluate implementation of field test operations relative to the goals, objectives, and constraints. Corps, SFWMD, and ENP water managers will meet monthly to discuss the collected data and the results of preliminary analyses, as well as system conditions and field test operations; additional technical staff from these agencies who are involved in the monitoring and data assessment efforts will also participate in the monthly coordination meetings, as needed. Results from these weekly and monthly coordination meetings, including preliminary recommendations from water managers to incrementally modify the operational strategy (within the covered NEPA EA scope), will be further discussed with the PDT during regularly-scheduled interagency meetings to occur four times per year. PDT meetings will also include updates from the water quality and ecological monitoring sub-teams. Additional meetings (*i.e.* WCA 3 Periodic Scientist Calls) and/or workshops may be conducted in support of the field test on an as-needed basis based upon ongoing or anticipated conditions within WCAs, ENP, and/or the SDCS. In addition to the monitoring plan outlined in Appendix C for Increment 1.1/1.2, monitoring will continue to be conducted under the purview of ERTP, consistent with the RPA as outlined in Section 8.5 of the 2016 ERTP BO. Information and operational criteria identified from Increment 1 and Increment 1.1/1.2 will continue to be used to develop an

		Water Conservation Area 3A ("WCA-3A") in 2016 led to this event, but the harmful impacts were felt. "While the effect of opening this structure was negligible on water levels in WCA-3A, the impact to [Sparrow Subpopulation A] was noticeable and resulted in a reversal of water levels and elimination of available nesting habitat two weeks into the sparrow nesting season as a result of an additional 4 inches of water across the western marl prairie south of S-12A." July 2016 ERTP BiOp at 26-27. The impact of allowing earlier opening of the gates under specified conditions to reduce the need for this kind of "emergency" opening during nesting season remains uncertain. A limited analysis of recent years with high water stages in WCA-3A showed that four of four of the years analyzed would have had S-12A and S-12B open into October (beyond their extended closure dates) and two of four would have also had S-12B remain open into November (beyond its extended closure date). It is unclear whether and how this "high water strategy" will be evaluated in the	expanded set of operations and monitoring criteria for a subsequent operational field test (Increment 2) that will raise the maximum operating limit in the L-29 Canal level up to a maximum of 8.5 feet, NGVD, as outlined in the 1992 MWD GDM and Final EIS (USACE 1992). Operational changes based on Increment 2 are planned to be incorporated into the 2012 Water Control Plan prior to implementing the third increment which is development of the COP. The COP will incorporate constructed features of the MWD and C-111 South Dade Projects into the 2012 Water Control Plan. To further prevent westward flow of water into CSSS-A, the Corps' 2011 ERTP FEIS also included blocking of the Old Tamiami Trail Borrow Canal culvert between S-12C and S-12B, at the junction with the Shark Valley Tram Road. Authority to purchase, install, monitor and maintain this feature resides with the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI). The closure of the Old Tamiami Trail Borrow Canal culvert was included in all proposed action modeling scenarios conducted for the ERTP BO consultation. Closure of this structure is most critical during the mandated closure period for S-12A and S-12B to minimize any potential effects of S-12C and/or S-12D operations on water levels within the CSSS-A habitat area, to complement the closure of the culverts along the ENP Tram Road.

		proposed monitoring plan, and whether and how other operational options will be considered going forward into future increments of ModWaters implementation. We respectfully request that monitoring be implemented to assess the need for and effect of violating the extended closure periods for S-12A/B, as well as other operational strategies to avoid overtopping the S-12 gates in high water.	
97		*Eastern Subpopulations* Although modelling of the Preferred Alternative shows benefits to Subpopulation A, it shows "variable effects" on the eastern subpopulations. *Id.* at 2-24; *see also* July 2016 ERTP BiOp at 205. Of particular concern are potential effects on Subpopulation E. *Id*. As the Service has emphasized, the effects on eastern Sparrow subpopulations must be closely monitored, and adaptive management is critical to ensure their protection and conservation. *Id*. at 205-06. The July 2016 ERTP BiOp sets targets for all subpopulations, reconsultation triggers, and monitoring of habitat conditions and breeding success.	The Corps remains committed to the actions outlined in the RPA, including actions to move water east. Consistent with this action, the Corps has completed a NEPA assessment for "Increment 1 Plus" (Increment 1.1/1.2) to analyze a set of alternatives including the proposed BO operational changes for the WCA 3A water control structures and the expanded operational ranges within the SDCS. The Corps remains committed to looking for avenues to protect this subspecies to the extent practicable through water management operations. However, it is widely recognized that ERTP and its predecessor, 2002-2012 Interim Operational Plan for Protection of the CSSS, were not designed to recover CSSS, but instead, as measures to protect the subspecies during its breeding season from unfavorable water levels. Water management operations are only one factor in creating suitable hydrologic conditions to promote recovery of this subspecies and avoid extirpation. A collaborative group effort among all agencies that share responsibility for this subspecies is necessary to truly promote recovery.

		We urge the agencies to work expeditiously to advance Everglades restoration while continuing to ensure an adequate nesting window for all Sparrow subpopulations and hydrologic regimes that support the bird's habitat – short-hydroperiod freshwater marl prairies in the southern Everglades. To that end, we look forward to reviewing the Corps' annual monitoring reports (see July 2016 ERTP BiOp at 191) regarding effects of increased flows to NESRS (as well other operational changes worked in the L-31N and C-111 basins as part of Increment 1.1/1.2) on the habitat and nesting success of eastern Shark River Slough Sparrow populations, and to being part of work to ensure the species' continued survival and recovery.	
98	Everglades Law Center National Parks Conservation Association Everglades Foundation Audubon Florida	**S-328 and S-332D Operations:** The Preferred Alternative incorporates a portion of the South Florida Water Management District ("SFWMD")'s "Florida Bay Plan." *See* December 2016 Draft Supplemental EA at 4-20, 21. Specifically, it would allow increased flows through a gated structure, S-328, with the goal of	Monitoring will need to be conducted to characterize the water quality of these new discharges into the ENP to determine if the current compliance monitoring point (S-332D) needs to be shifted to or include the S-328 flows. The S-328 structure will be closely monitored during startup operations to ensure no adverse water quality impacts occur as a result of S-328 flows. The current concept is that the water quality at the S328 intake area would be sampled before opening the S-328 during start up operations. As operations proceed and water quality data is obtained, the

		moving additional water south in L-31W toward the L-31W levee gap, and then out into Taylor Slough. However, experts have identified the potential for water quality problems as a result of these proposed increased flows: "concerns were expressed that the S-328 operation would potentially limit the opportunity of nutrient uptake by the wetland vegetation within the S-332D Detention Area, resulting in an increased nutrient load into Taylor Slough." *Id.* at 4-21. As a result, the Corps' Preferred Alternative limits the amount of flow through S-328 and requires that additional L-31W plugs identified in the 2016 C-111 South Dade Contract 9 EA between S-328 and the L-31W gap be completed prior to its operation. *Id.* Although the Corps recognizes the need for monitoring both to discern water quality problems,[4] *id.*, no proposed monitoring plan for S-328 operations is available for review. *Id.* at 4-55 (monitoring plan still "being developed"). It is unclear whether and how the public will be able to comment on this plan. We request an opportunity to review the	operational regime would be adjusted as necessary to manage potential water quality concerns. The monitoring plan for this new inflow to the ENP is currently being developed by the SFWMD in conjunction with ENP and FDEP, in support of the SFWMD initiative to increase flows to Taylor Slough and Florida Bay and the monitoring plan will be the responsibility of SFWMD. Pending concurrence with the monitoring regime by these agencies and the Corps, the preliminary S-328 operational criteria identified in the Operational Strategy (Appendix A) will be included within Increment 1.1/1.2. Prior to initial operation of S-328, construction of the three L-31W Canal plugs proposed between S-328 and the L31W gap must be completed and the monitoring regime approved by the Corps must be implemented.

		proposed monitoring plan before it is finalized. In addition, the Preferred Alternative includes operations to move water away from Everglades restoration project construction areas along the South Dade canals. *See* December 2016 Draft Supplemental EA at 4-21; *see also id.* at 4-40. To "make up" flows to Taylor Slough that may be lost as a result of these operations, the Preferred Alternative allows for additional flows out of S-332D (and potentially other neighboring structures). Again, the EA acknowledges the potential for water quality problems as a result of these operations but cursorily concludes that the proposed operations are unlikely to have the adverse effects that had been observed in the past because of "the limited duration and limited spatial extent of the operational changes." *Id*. The District's Florida Bay Plan as proposed has point discharges, and these point flows will result in localized disruptions to flora and fauna, as they are entirely inconsistent with natural	

		Everglades flow patterns. We emphasize the need to gather and evaluate data about the specific operations included in the Preferred Alternative to ensure they are effective hydrologically and not harmful from a water quality perspective. *See* Attachment E.	
99	Everglades Law Center National Parks Conservation Association Everglades Foundation Audubon Florida	**Changing rationales for increasing flows through S-197 and the Need to Increase Stages at S-18C**: We have repeatedly raised concerns about plans to increase discharges from the S-197 structure, purportedly to reduce increased flood risks being taken on by agricultural landowners in South Dade County as a result of increased flows in the historic Everglades flowway. *See, e.g.* Attachments A-D. Neither the need for, nor the adverse effects of, the increased S-197 discharges has been evaluated in a data-driven way. To the contrary, as we stated in past comments, the NEPA documentation for these operations has generally been loaded with conditional terms such as "potential flood risks," "may be affected," and "may result in," although the available data suggest that any increased	The need to maintain flood mitigation for 8.5 SMA while facilitating completion of S-357N (C-358 control structure) and completion of C-111 South Dade Contract 8 and 8A (construction of the C-111 NDA to fill the existing 2 mile gap in the hydraulic ridge system) warrant additional changes to the operational strategy identified in Appendix A of the Increment 1 EA and FONSI (dated May 27, 2015). More use of S-176, S-177, S-18C and S-197 to compensate for the increased pumping at S-331 and operational restrictions at S-332B, S-332C, and S-332DX1 during the C-111 South Dade Contracts 8 and 8A construction is anticipated under the Proposed Action. Potential environmental effects resulting from the Proposed Action are expected to be small in magnitude given the short duration of the proposed action. The Corps is proposing to modify the operational strategy, currently defined in the Increment 1 EA and FONSI (dated May 27, 2015) to ensure flood mitigation within 8.5 SMA and to be able to continue working towards the construction of MWD and C-111 Project features, to achieve the needed capacity to deliver restoration flows to NESRS in ENP. The Corps acknowledges, the stated objectives of the 1994 C-111 South Dade GRR and EIS of eliminating freshwater discharges to Manatee Bay and Barnes Sound, which includes reducing the number of occurrences of major releases at S-197, extended

		flood risks are unrelated to ModWaters operations. Data also shows that the amount of water discharged through S-197 in 2015-16 was much more than necessary to keep agricultural lands dry. Discharges through S-197 directly reduce the amount of water that is able to enter Florida Bay through Taylor Slough. To prevent repeated hyper-salinity in Florida Bay, flows through S-197 must be reduced. We continue to oppose operations that run counter to CERP, and which are purportedly designed to protect against unsubstantiated claims of increased flooding risks. The December 2016 Draft Supplemental EA also suggests that additional flows through S-197 may be necessitated by the need to hold water levels lower in the L-31N Canal both to minimize flooding of Sparrow habitat east of Shark River Slough, and to allow water managers flexibility to keep dry the areas where construction of critical restoration projects is being expedited. *See* December 2016 Draft Supplemental EA at 4-35. In turn: the frequency of opening S-197 will be highly dependent on . . .	hydroperiods within the ENP Eastern Panhandle, and the promotion of additional overland flow across the ENP Eastern Panhandle towards northeast Florida Bay. The Increment 1.1/1.2 monitoring plan for surface water hydrology and ground water hydrology will provide data to analyze the net effects of operational modifications under the Proposed Action and inform future MWD Project efforts. The SFWMD initiated operation of the C-111 Spreader Canal Western Project constructed components in June 2012, in accordance with the Project Operating Manual (POM) developed with the PIR. At the request of SFWMD, a revised POM was approved in June 2016. Steps will be taken in the future to incorporate the project into the federally authorized C&SF Project once the project's consistency with the 2014 WRRDA authorized project has been documented and approved by the Corps, and a PPA between the Corps and SFWMD has been executed. Pending execution of the PPA, operation of the C-111 Spreader Canal Western Project is not included as part of the 2012 WCAs, ENP, and ENP to SDCS Water Control Plan (hereafter referred to as the 2012 Water Control Plan) (USACE 2012c). Concurrent with the MWD Increment 1 field test, the SFWMD will continue to operate their expedited C-111 Spreader Canal Western Project.

		(1) conditions necessary upstream to facilitate completion of the C-111 South Dade construction needed prior to [ModWaters] Increment 2; and (2) operational modifications required to provide the necessary suitable hydrologic conditions for the eastern [Sparrow] sub-populations. December 2016 Draft Supplemental EA at 4-19. We are concerned by the apparent merging of rationales for additional flows through S-197. We emphasize that it is critical to separately analyze increased discharges from S-197 and related southern structures, both in terms of their need and effect. Understanding what discharges are needed to accomplish different purposes is critical to determining whether and when they are necessary. The Final Project Implementation Report and Environmental Impact Statement ("FPIR/FEIS") for the C-111 Spreader Canal Western Project indicates that the Western Project is intended to implement incremental changes to raise water levels at S-18C. While the project has been operational for	

		four years, no increase at S-18C has occurred. The FPIR/FEIS Executive Summary lists "incremental operational changes at S-18C" as one of the project components, up to four 0.1 foot incremental adjustments. *See* Final C-111 PIR/EIS at es-xi, xii. The detailed discussion of the selected plan (starting on page 6-1) again emphasizes that "incremental changes at existing structure S-18C" are part of this project. Failure to raise the canal stage at S-18C results in seepage from Taylor Slough into the entire length of the C-111 canal from S-200 south to S-18C. Much of this seepage is the same water that was discharged at S-197. Therefore, raising the canal stage at S-18C will have the dual benefits of moving more water into Taylor Slough where it is needed and preventing the need to discharge extreme amount of water through S-197.	
100	Representatives from the Miccosukee Tribe of Florida (Note: Comments were received verbally	The following describes general discussion points made during the referenced December 16, 2016 meeting: Concerns were presented with regard to water quality and the S-356 pump	A robust monitoring plan has been developed for Increment 1.1/1.2. Data outlined within Appendix C will be used during the evaluation of the Proposed Action, along with other pertinent information that may be relevant at the time. Appendix C includes information with regard to water quality monitoring including surface water and ground water monitoring.

	during a meeting on December 16, 2016 and were requested to be included within the comment/response matrix for the Supplemental EA and Proposed FONSI).	station. Reference was made to concerns related to dissolved oxygen levels and sulfur dioxide.	
101	Representatives from the Miccosukee Tribe of Florida (Note: Comments were received verbally during a meeting on December 16, 2016 and were requested to be included within the comment/response matrix for the Supplemental EA and Proposed FONSI).	The following describes general discussion points made during the referenced December 16, 2016 meeting: Reference was made to language within the EA which states that operations for Increment 1.1/1.2 will be discontinued if water levels within WCA 3A exceed the Action Line. Clarification was requested.	The Increment 1 Action Line is a seasonally varying WCA 3A water level (10.0 to 10.75 feet, NGVD) which will also serve to define the S-333 and S-356 releases to the L-29 Canal and NESRS. Implementation of the Increment 1 Action Line to manage high water conditions in WCA 3A, would help to prevent conditions of extreme high water levels and prolonged inundation periods within WCA 3A that result in negative impacts to its natural communities. The text referenced within the comment, does not occur within the EA. Consistent with the coordination structure established for Increment 1, Increment 1.1/1.2 operations updates will be discussed on a weekly basis between water managers from USACE and SFWMD, as well as ENP when needed, to provide collective interpretation of results and evaluate implementation of field test operations relative to the Increment 1.1/1.2 field test goals, objectives, and constraints. USACE, SFWMD, and ENP will meet monthly to discuss the collected data and the results of preliminary analyses, as well as system conditions and field test operations. Results from these weekly and monthly coordination meetings, including preliminary recommendations from water managers to incrementally modify the operational strategy (within the covered NEPA EA scope), will

			be further discussed with the project delivery team (PDT) during regularly-scheduled interagency meetings to occur four times per year. PDT meetings will also include updates from the water quality and ecological monitoring sub-teams. Additional meetings (e.g. WCA-3 Periodic Scientists Calls) and/or workshops may be conducted in support of the field test on an as-needed basis based upon ongoing or anticipated conditions within the WCAs, ENP, and/or the SDCS. Text has been added to the EA recognizing that the Corps Water Management Section's assessment of hydrometeorological conditions and stakeholder or agency input may suspend or discontinue the field test due to impacts greater than expected/discussed within this EA. A robust monitoring plan has been developed for Increment 1.1/1.2. Data outlined within Appendix C will be used during the evaluation of the Proposed Action, along with other pertinent information that may be relevant at the time. Additional text has been added to the Supplemental EA to reflect similar language within the Increment 1 EA and FONSI, dated May 27, 2015.
102	Representatives from the Miccosukee Tribe of Florida (Note: Comments were received verbally during a meeting on December 16, 2016 and were requested to be	The following describes general discussion points made during the referenced December 16, 2016 meeting: Reference was made to the 2016 ERTP BO as counter to restoration goals under CERP and are representative of single species management. Lack of support for additional closure of the S-12 structures and negative	The Corps reinitiated ESA consultation on ERTP on November 17, 2014 as a result of an exceedance of an Incidental Take Reinitiation Trigger from the November 17, 2010 ERTP BO for the CSSS. USFWS issued a new BO for ERTP on July 22, 2016, developed in formal ESA consultation with the Corps. As a result of this consultation, it has been determined that current conditions within CSSS habitat, threaten the survival of the sparrow, and as a result, USFWS issued a "jeopardy" opinion, which explains that unless alternatives to current water operational practices are explored and implemented, continued implementation of ERTP is likely to

	included within the comment/response matrix for the Supplemental EA and Proposed FONSI).	impacts to natural resources within WCA 3.	jeopardize the continued existence of the CSSS. The revised BO, issued July 22, 2016 presented a RPA that would avoid jeopardizing the CSSS. The RPA identifies operational modifications and expediting restoration initiatives for some of the structures in the southern portion of the Everglades ecosystem to provide suitable nesting habitat for the endangered CSSS. The Corps is proposing to modify the Increment 1 operational strategy to address the mandated RPA of the July 22, 2016 ERTP BO, which includes expanded closure periods for the S-12A, S-12B, S-343A, S-343B, and S-344 structures. The proposed action includes a closure period for S-12A, S-12B, S-343A, S-343B, and S-344 starting 01 October through 15 July consistent with the 2016 ERTP BO RPA. Alternative D also includes a 'high water strategy' criteria developed by the Corps to mitigate for the increased frequency and duration of WCA 3A high water stages in excess of the 90th percentile of historical water stages (compared to the 2012 Water Control Plan) associated with the expanded closure periods.
103	Representatives from the Miccosukee Tribe of Florida (Note: Comments were received verbally during a meeting on December 16, 2016 and were requested to be included within the comment/response matrix for the	The following describes general discussion points made during the referenced December 16, 2016 meeting: Concerns were expressed regarding potential effects to the Everglades snail kite within WCA 3A as a result of additional S-12 closures.	The 2016 ERTP BO determined that …"due to the nature of the stage changes that are predicted to occur within areas recently (*i.e.* last ten years) occupied by snail kites, the Service does not believe the implementation of the RPA represents an additional adverse effect to snail kites." Furthermore, the BO states…the predicted changes in stage and hydroperiod for the RPA are not of sufficient magnitude to adversely affect snail kite critical habitat more than already considered in this BO." Reference pages 207 of the 2016 ERTP BO. Correspondence dated November 23, 2016 has been provided to the USFWS requesting concurrence on species determinations as a result of the Proposed Action, noting that the conclusion of ESA consultation on Increment 1.1/1.2 presented within the EA is previously covered under the 2016 ERTP BO. The USFWS concurred with this assessment by correspondence dated

	Supplemental EA and Proposed FONSI).		December 7, 2016. The Proposed Action has been fully coordinated under the Endangered Species Act and is in full compliance with the Act.
104	Representatives from the Miccosukee Tribe of Florida (Note: Comments were received verbally during a meeting on December 16, 2016 and were requested to be included within the comment/response matrix for the Supplemental EA and Proposed FONSI).	The following describes general discussion points made during the referenced December 16, 2016 meeting: Concerns were expressed regarding the potential spread of invasive species (aquatic fauna) with increased utilization of the S-356 pump station under Increment 1.1/1.2. Reference was made to the recent Executive Order Safeguarding the Nation from the Impacts of Invasive Species signed on December 5, 2016.	The Proposed Action would have no significant impacts on invasive species. Increased utilization of the S-356 pump station is not anticipated to further propagate invasive species into C&SF canals. The Proposed Action does not include the introduction of a new source of water into the marsh. Furthermore, the Proposed Action consists of an operational change to the 2012 Water Control Plan and does not include construction of permanent structures or structural modifications to existing C&SF Project features. Invasive species often spread when soil is disturbed.