

G-3273/S-356 Pump Station Field Test (Increment 1)

Project Delivery Team Meeting

Wednesday, October 15th 2014 (9:30 AM – 3:23 PM)

Summary of Public Comments

- Some members of the public expressed serious concerns about current conditions in the Everglades and are supportive of moving forward expeditiously with the field test.
- Several members of the public were in support of the field test as a management tool to alleviate high water conditions experienced in Water Conservation Area (WCA) 3A. Reference was made to prior closures of WCA 3A due to high water, which limits recreational use and is also detrimental to fish and wildlife resources. Comments were made regarding current water management of the system for a single-species (i.e. Cape Sable Seaside Sparrow).
- Suggestions were provided to further alleviate high water conditions within WCA 3A, including removal of vegetation south of the S-12 structures and existing culverts located along Tamiami Trail to help facilitate flow through these structures.
- Members of the public expressed concerns regarding potential environmental effects to Biscayne Bay and areas of Manatee Bay and Barnes Sound as a result of increased discharges from S-197 currently being considered under the field test. Reference was made to historic large volume releases related to past hurricanes and resulting algae blooms. Current operations being considered, including releases of 200 cubic feet per second, may still be a concern.
- Questions pertaining to the draft monitoring plan presented at the project delivery team meeting were raised during the public comment period. Members of the public questioned how existing monitoring within the system, including that currently supported by Biscayne National Park, would be considered within the current monitoring plan. Reference was made to the need to incorporate water quality monitoring for Biscayne Bay and areas of Manatee Bay and Barnes Sound into the current monitoring plan to evaluate potential effects for the operations currently being considered at S-197 under the field test. Questions also pertained to how information identified to be monitored within the current monitoring plan would be collected during the field test and how those results would be communicated back to the public.
- Concerns were expressed regarding the ecological benefits already being provided by the recently constructed C-111 Spreader Canal Western Project which is a component of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan. The C-111 Spreader Canal Western Project has been in operation by the South Florida Water Management District since 2012. Members of the public stated that current monitoring efforts have identified early success and benefits to Florida Bay have been observed. Concerns regarding increased discharges from S-197 and how these operational changes may decrease/interact with benefits currently being realized from operation of the C-111 Spreader Canal Western Project were noted.
- Some members of the public questioned the need for additional discharges from S-197 to potentially alleviate elevated water levels in agricultural fields within and adjacent to areas of the South Dade Conveyance System within Miami-Dade County. Recommendations were made to further evaluate the allegation of potential flooding within this area and the cause of the potential

flooding. Some members of the public questioned the appropriateness of including S-197 within the field test and references made that the C-111 Spreader Canal Western Project was potentially a contributing factor to the alleged flooding. References were made to increases in sea level rise as a potential cause of elevated water levels in South Dade and/or high rainfall events.

- Some members of the public stated that inclusion of S-197 operations under the field test may set a precedent with the concern being that the operational criteria currently being considered under the field test would become permanent. Some members of the public were adamantly opposed to routine S-197 operations.
- Questions were received regarding the duration of the field test. Suggestions were provided to incorporate data collected from the field test quickly as a means to improve current water management practices within the system to move water south. Several members of the public expressed concern over potential delays to the field test.
- References were made to existing infrastructure that is currently not used (S-356 and S-357) and the need to move forward with operating these constructed features.