The South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force: Roles & Responsibilities

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The South Florida Ecosystem

- 18,000 square miles
  - 16 counties
  - Orlando to Key West
  - 9 million residents
- Diverse ecosystem
  - Rivers, Lakes, Bays
  - Uplands and Wetlands
  - Coral Reefs
- Significant federal conservation lands
  - 4 National Park Units
  - 16 National Wildlife Refuges

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South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force

• Established by the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1996 which outlines the Task Force’s:
  • Membership
  • Organization
  • Purpose and Duties

• The Office of Everglades Restoration Initiatives (OERI) supports the Task Force and its subgroups:
  • Meetings and workshops
  • Reports
  • EvergladesRestoration.gov
Task Force Membership

- **Federal Members (7):**
  - Secretary of the Interior (Chair)
  - Secretary of Commerce
  - Secretary of the Army
  - Attorney General
  - Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency
  - Secretary of Agriculture
  - Secretary of Transportation

- **Tribal Members (2):**
  - 1 representative of the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida
  - 1 representative of the Seminole Tribe of Florida

- **State/Local Members (5):**
  - 2 representatives of the State of Florida
  - 1 representative of the South Florida Water Management District
  - 2 representatives of local government in the State of Florida
Task Force Organization

- Task Force
  - Working Group
  - Science Coordination Group
  - Subgroups and Teams
  - Stakeholder Engagement

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Task Force Organization

- **Working Group (WG)**
  - Required by WRDA 1996
  - Includes additional agencies involved in restoration
- **Science Coordination Group (SCG)**
  - To coordinate science and research as required by WRDA 1996
  - Includes agency scientists and managers
- **Advisory bodies, subgroups, and teams** are established or designated as needed
- **Stakeholder engagement**: Task Force meetings and stakeholder workshops provide vital and innovative opportunities for public input.
- Note: The Task Force and its subgroups and teams are not considered advisory committees under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA).
Task Force Purpose

• The Task Force is the only forum that provides strategic coordination and a system-wide perspective to guide the separate restoration efforts being planned and implemented in the Everglades ecosystem.

• The Task Force established three strategic goals for Everglades restoration:
  • Get the Water Right
  • Restore, Preserve & Protect Natural Habitats and Species
  • Foster Compatibility of the Built and Natural Systems
Task Force Duties

- The primary duties of the Task Force are:
  - Intergovernmental coordination
  - Coordination of strategic science
  - Exchange of information
  - Facilitation and conflict resolution
  - Public participation and access
Task Force Duties: Reports
Biennial Report

Fulfills requirements of WRDA 1996 to report biennially on Task Force activities and progress made toward restoration.
Biennial Report Timeline

April 2022: OERI Request for Information sent to agency points of contact
May 27: Request for info due to OERI
June 2022: First draft out to WG/SCG for comments
July 2022: Final draft distributed to WG/SCG
Sept 2022: WG and SCG acceptance
October 2022: Final draft to Task Force for approval
Oct-Dec 2022: Task Force approval of 2022 biennial report for OMB/DOI clearance, followed by transmittal to Congress and posting on website
Integrated Financial Plan (IFP):

Fulfills requirements of WRDA 1996 to report annually on the progress, status, and costs of individual restoration projects; contains detailed project sheets.
Integrated Financial Plan (IFP) Timeline

May 2022: OERI Request for Information will be sent to agency points of contact

July 2022: Project sheets due to OERI

Sept 2022: IFP completed

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Cross-cut Budget

Provides **coordinated budget requests** for the federal and state agencies represented on the Task Force.
Cross-Cut Budget Timeline

March 2022: OERI Request for Information sent to agency points of contact

May 20, 2022: Funding information due to OERI

June 2022: Cross-Cut completed
System-wide Ecological Indicators Report

Assesses current ecosystem health and provides a means to track ecosystem response to restoration; summary included in the Biennial Report.
System-wide Ecological Indicators Report Timeline

March 2022: Request for Information sent to indicator scientists

May 20, 2022: Indicator Sections summary for the Biennial Report are due to Laura Brandt

June 20, 2022: System-wide Ecological Indicators Full Report sections due to Laura Brandt

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Questions?
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