

# COMPREHENSIVE EVERGLADES RESTORATION PLAN CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN FLORIDA PROJECT BISCAYNE BAY COASTAL WETLANDS, PHASE I

27 SEPTEMBER 2011

**ABSTRACT:** The Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands Project will modify the flow of freshwater to Biscayne Bay as a first step in the restoration of the southeastern portion of the Everglades ecosystem. The non-Federal sponsor of this project is the South Florida Water Management District.

The Central and Southern Florida (C&SF) Flood Control Project altered the flow of freshwater into Biscayne Bay to provide flood protection in south Florida. However, the project had unintended impacts to Biscayne Bay by changing the natural distribution of water, resulting in a loss of suitable nesting, foraging and fisheries habitat and a decline in native species diversity and abundance.

The Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands Project is a component of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), authorized by the Water Resource Development Act (WRDA) of 2000, as amended. The CERP is a framework for modifications and operational changes to the C&SF project that are needed to restore, preserve and protect the South Florida ecosystem while providing for other water-related needs of the region, including water supply and flood protection. The project intends to redistribute freshwater runoff from the watershed away from the existing canal discharges and into the coastal wetlands adjoining Biscayne Bay to provide a more natural and historic overland flow through existing coastal wetlands. This project will also help restore saltwater wetlands and the near-shore bay through the re-establishment of optimal salinity concentrations for fish and shellfish nursery habitat.

The Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands Project is essential to achieving the restoration of Biscayne Bay and ultimately Biscayne National Park, helping to improve ecological conditions in approximately 3,761 acres of wetland and coastal habitat. The redistributed freshwater flows into Biscayne Bay will return salinities to more natural levels in portions



of Biscayne Bay and its associated estuaries. The overall significance of restoring wetland and nearshore habitats within the project study area is due to relative scarcity of the resource, high public demand for natural system habitat for recreational and aesthetic enjoyment, and the critical functional ecosystem value (connectivity, biodiversity, etc.) of the remaining habitat.

The project will restore freshwater flows in Deering Estates, Cutler Wetlands, and wetlands adjacent to L-31E. This will be accomplished through a series of pumps, culverts, spreader canals and mosquito ditch plugs throughout the project area.

The Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands Project is consistent with project goals and objectives, is estimated to have a total project first cost of \$168,023,000 (amount does not include sunk Project Implementation Report costs), and annual costs associated with vegetation management, endangered species act monitoring, and project-level monitoring, as per pending ASA(CW) policy guidance, have been identified. In accordance with the CERP WRDA 2000 authorization, costs for construction, as well as operation and maintenance, will be shared equally between the federal government and the non-Federal sponsor to maintain a cumulative 50/50 cost share throughout CERP implementation. To advance the realization of project benefits, the South Florida Water Management District, has begun construction of the project through its Expedited Construction Program. Currently, construction in Deering Estates is 62% completed, and four culverts have been completed in the L-31E component.

**REPORT DOCUMENTATION:** Pertinent documentation on the project, the results of the CWRB and subsequent Washington-Level Review Actions are linked below:

- [CWRB Agenda](#)
- [Project Summary](#)
- [CWRB Briefing Slides](#)
- [CWRB Lessons Learned](#)
- [CWRB Meeting Record](#)
- State & Agency Review Comment Letters
- Documentation of Review Findings
- Signed Chief of Engineers Report
- Advance Copy to Congressional Committees
- ASA(CW) Memo to OMB
- OMB Response
- ASA(CW) Transmittal to Congress
- Signed Record of Decision
- Authorization

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

[South Atlantic Division](#)  
[Jacksonville District](#)  
[Everglades Restoration](#)  
[Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands Project](#)