



## Independent review reports CERP making tangible progress

**A** thorough review of the **Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP)** shows that federal, state and local partners are making significant and tangible progress.

The **National Research Council** released its third biennial evaluation of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan Sept. 23. The **Committee on the Independent Scientific Review of Everglades Restoration Progress** prepared the report, which is required every two years by Congress as mandated in the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2000. The council released previous reports in 2006 and 2008.

Committee members are experts in their respective fields and are often from nationally-known universities. The

committee generally meets four times a year for two years and conducts a detailed and objective review of Everglades restoration, particularly from the context of CERP.

The report noted that partners have made progress during the past two years, with improvements in restoration pace, federal and state partner relationships and research efforts. Four CERP projects are under construction, and pilot projects are addressing possibilities. It is especially valuable that the pace of federal funding picked up. It praised the federal government for starting to build the one-mile Tamiami Trail bridge project, a linchpin to the larger restoration effort.

The committee noted that only sparse natural system restoration benefits have resulted from the current construction. It suggested increasing the pace of CERP, if possible. The committee stated that if restoration progress continues, substantial ecological benefits to the ecosystem will increase. It also stated some wildlife species are increasing or holding their own, while others, such as the Everglade Snail Kite, are diminishing.

The committee recognized the daunting water quality and quantity challenges facing Everglades restoration. It suggested additional land is needed for stormwater treatment areas and supports the South Florida Water Management District's River of Grass initiative to purchase 26,800 acres of U.S. Sugar land for additional water storage and treatment – which took place Oct. 12. It recognized that 'getting the water right' – in the right amount and quality – is a formidable task that requires coordinated partnering and improved research on tradeoffs



*The report commended the Corps for starting construction on the Tamiami Trail bridge project.*

## Agencies approve agreement for Indian River Lagoon restoration

**R**estoration of the southern Indian River Lagoon took an important step forward Aug. 12. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District and the South Florida Water Management District entered into a partnership to construct this restoration project.

The **Project Partnership Agreement** will allow the two agencies to move forward with phase one of the **Indian River Lagoon-South** project, a component of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan.

“This agreement marks another huge gain for Everglades restoration,” said **Stu Appelbaum**, Corps’ Jacksonville District deputy for restoration. “This project will help get the water right in the Indian River Lagoon via a series of reservoirs and water treatment areas that will improve the quality, timing, volume and rate of flow from local basins.”

“The Indian River Lagoon South project is another building block in Everglades restoration we’ve recently set into place,” **Julie Hill-Gabriel**, Audubon of Florida senior Everglades policy associate said in August. “The likelihood of restoration becomes stronger every day as we move forward with these projects.”

Located on 12,000 acres in Martin County, the project is divided into two phases and includes 13 components. The estimated cost of the first phase is \$1.1 billion. The Corps anticipates awarding a construction contract in early 2011. Phase 1 construction will take about eight years.



*The Indian River Lagoon is one of the most diverse estuaries in the United States.*

“We’re delighted that the Corps of Engineers and the Governing Board of the South Florida Water Management District approved entering into the Indian River Lagoon-South Phase I Project Partnership Agreement,” said **Doug Smith**, chairman of the Martin County Board of County Commissioners, on the day of the signing. “This is the final hurdle to allow the Corps to move forward on the construction of 12,000 acres of reservoir and stormwater treatment areas in the **St. Lucie** watershed. This project will be built on lands purchased, in part, by a \$27 million contribution by the citizens of **Martin County**.”

For more information, visit [www.evergladesplan.org](http://www.evergladesplan.org) and click Projects & Studies at the top right, then click Project List, then Indian River Lagoon - South.

## Site 1 project breaks ground Oct. 29

**E**verglades restoration is taking another step forward! The **Site 1 Impoundment / Fran Reich Preserve Project** breaks ground Oct. 29. Located in southern Palm Beach County, the project will increase water storage capacity and water management flexibility adjacent to the **Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee**

### **National Wildlife Refuge.**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District is constructing the project in partnership with the South Florida Water Management District, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

This is one of several Everglades

restoration projects under construction. For information on the groundbreaking ceremony, e-mail [sherilyn.a.connor@usace.army.mil](mailto:sherilyn.a.connor@usace.army.mil) or call 561-472-8885. For information on the project, visit [www.evergladesplan.org](http://www.evergladesplan.org) and click Projects & Studies on the top right, then Project List, and then Site 1 Impoundment.

## Corps builds annex to fight invasive plants

**T**he U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District awarded a \$1.6 million contract to construct a facility to help fight invasive plants in south Florida.

The contract is for the design and construction of a biocontrol rearing facility in Davie, Fla. The annex will cultivate insects that destroy *Melaleuca* and other unwanted plants. The annex will contain two laboratories, four scientists' offices and support systems adjacent to the **U.S. Department of Agriculture's Invasive Plant Research Facility**.

The Corps of Engineers awarded the contract Sept. 20 to **Native American Service Corp.**, a small disadvantaged business in Orange Park, Fla. Funding comes from the **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act** (ARRA) Program.

The *Melaleuca* Mass Rearing Annex

is part of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan to help combat invasive plants in the Everglades. The decades-long endeavor will assist in preventing invasive species from degrading and damaging natural south Florida ecosystems, and contribute to the quality of south Florida's natural areas, native plants and wildlife.

It's estimated that as many as 25,000 non-native species have found a home in the region and account for more than one-third of all plants in Florida. Of all these species, four are the most infamous: *Melaleuca*, Brazilian pepper, Australian pine and Old World climbing fern. The contract involves constructing a 2,700-square-foot facility for the mass rearing of biological agents – bugs that harm or kill select plants – to manage these invasive plant intruders.

Biocontrol is part of a multi-faceted program to eradicate select non-native plants. "It complements the

more traditional mechanical removal and chemical treatment management methods that the Corps and others use," said Corps Project Manager **Kim Vitek**.

State and federal agencies have worked together for 20 years to combat invasive plants in the greater Everglades ecosystem. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of the Interior, Army Corps of Engineers and South Florida Water Management District are the principle agencies responsible for designing and constructing the Invasive Plant Research Laboratory in Davie. The 17,000-square-foot facility opened in 2005. The Corps anticipates the new annex's completion in 2012.

For more information, visit [www.saj.usace.army.mil](http://www.saj.usace.army.mil), and click Operations Division, and then click Invasive Species Management Branch.



*With hundreds of seeds per flower, Melaleuca is one of the most invasive plants in Florida. Specially-cultivated bugs should help control it.*



## Fall *Community Outreach in Action* soon available



The fall 2010 issue of a newsletter that encourages participation in the protection of the greater Everglades ecosystem hits newsstands in November. *Community Outreach in Action* focuses on how people can get involved in CERP and other restoration programs. It is written for all audiences, but it is distributed as a printed newsletter to African American

readers. A Spanish-language version is expected in December.

The publication is distributed through community newspapers and service organizations. To request copies for your organization, please call 305-948-8063.

To read or download a copy online, visit [www.evergladesplan.org](http://www.evergladesplan.org) and click News & Events, then newsletters.

## Special efforts help to get CERP in Florida classrooms!

Florida science teachers had the opportunity to learn about CERP teaching tools at their annual conference Oct. 21 to 23 in St. Augustine, Fla.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District was an exhibitor and presenter at the **Florida Association of Science Teachers (FAST)** conference. **Erica Robbins**, Corps outreach program specialist, shared information with teachers about many environmental education products the Corps

has developed for use in school settings. She highlighted materials on the endangered Florida panther.



Many teaching products are available at [www.evergladesplan.org](http://www.evergladesplan.org) under Learn & Teach. For more information, contact Robbins at 561-472-8893 or via email at [erica.a.robbs@usace.army.mil](mailto:erica.a.robbs@usace.army.mil).

## Independent review reports CERP making tangible progress

*continues from page 1*

throughout the ecosystem.

Stu Appelbaum, the Corps' deputy for restoration program management and the Everglades division chief, said he is pleased the committee recognized the significant progress made over the last two years. "We always take the committee's recommendations seriously to improve the program and achieve

Everglades restoration," he said. He noted the integrated delivery schedule resulted from previous recommendations from the committee.

The report is sponsored by the **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, South Florida Water Management District** and **U.S. Department of the Interior**.

To read *Progress Toward Restoring the Everglades – The Third Biennial Review, 2010*, visit [www.nap.edu](http://www.nap.edu) and click Environment and Environmental Studies to the left. For information on purchasing a copy, call the National Academies Press at 202-334-3313 or 800-624-6242.



### The Journey to Restore America's Everglades

A partnership of the U.S Army Corps of Engineers, South Florida Water Management District and many other federal, state, local and tribal partners.



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