

## RECORD OF DECISION

### **Central and Southern Florida Project Broward County Water Preservation Areas Project Broward and Miami-Dade Counties, Florida**

The Final Integrated Project Implementation Report and Environmental Impact Statement (PIR/EIS), dated May 2012, and the report of the Chief of Engineers, dated May 21, 2012, address ecosystem restoration and recreation in the South Florida ecosystem. Based on these reports, the reviews of other Federal, State and local agencies, input from the public, and the review by my staff, I find the Broward County Water Preservation Areas project to be technically feasible, environmentally justified, cost effective, in accordance with environmental statutes, and in the public interest. Thus, I approve the Broward County Water Preservation Areas project for construction.

The PIR/EIS documents the evaluation of alternatives to restore aquatic habitat in Water Conservation Areas 3A and 3B (WCAs) in western Broward County and the Everglades National Park (ENP). This habitat has been adversely affected by runoff with high nutrient loads from adjacent watersheds and excessive seepage losses to those watersheds. The selected plan is Alternative A4. This plan is the National Ecosystem Restoration plan and it consists of the following major features:

- Construction of a 1,068-acre impoundment that would capture and store runoff from the C-11 basin, reduce pumping of surface water into the WCAs, and provide releases for other regional uses;
- Construction of a 4,353-acre seepage management area that would establish a buffer, reduce seepage to and from the WCAs, and maintain flood protection;
- Construction of a 1,641-acre impoundment that would capture and store surface runoff from the C-9 Basin, store C-11 Impoundment overflow, manage seepage, and provide releases for regional benefits;
- Construction of 14 miles of trail surface, parking areas, toilets, walkways, a kiosk, shaded benches, footbridges, trash receptacles, and signs that would enable incidental recreation, and
- Monitoring of habitat that would ensure restoration of ecological outputs.

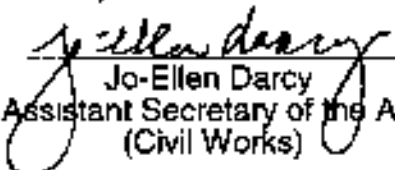
In addition to the no action plan, eight alternatives are evaluated in the PIR/EIS. The alternatives include different combinations of detention reservoirs (impoundments) and a seepage management area with appurtenant canals, pumps and water control structures. All of the alternatives are fully described and evaluated in the PIR/EIS, which is incorporated herein by reference.

The selected plan would restore the quantity, timing and distribution of freshwater flows in the WCAs and ENP, increase the spatial extent of natural areas by improving flow patterns at the project site, and potentially provide water for other restoration projects. It would also help meet municipal, agricultural, and environmental water

supply demands in the region during dry periods. The plan would restore approximately 563,000 acres of fish and wildlife habitat in the WCAs and 200,000 acres in the ENP, which would improve native plant and animal species abundance and diversity. The selected plan is the environmentally preferable alternative. All practicable means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental effects have been incorporated into the project and no impacts that would require compensatory mitigation have been identified. The selected plan would require authorization.

Technical, environmental, economic, and risk criteria used in the formulation of alternative plans are those specified in the Water Resources Council's Economic and Environmental Principles and Guidelines for Water and Related Land Resources Implementation Studies. All applicable laws, Executive Orders, regulations, and local government plans are considered in the evaluation of alternatives and the selection of the recommended plan. Based on review of these evaluations, I find that the public interest would be best served by implementing the recommended plan. This Record of Decision completes the National Environmental Policy Act process

October 25, 2012  
Date

  
Jo-Ellen Darcy  
Assistant Secretary of the Army  
(Civil Works)