



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT CORPS OF ENGINEERS
701 San Marco Boulevard
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32207-8175

Planning Division
Environmental Branch

SEP 22 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

The Jacksonville District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is beginning preparation of a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) assessment for the Combined Operational Plan (COP). The purpose of the COP is to define operations for the constructed features of the Modified Water Deliveries (MWD) to Everglades National Park (ENP) and Canal 111 (C-111) South Dade Projects, while maintaining the congressionally authorized purposes of the Central and Southern Florida (C&SF) Project to include flood control; water supply for agricultural irrigation, municipalities and industry; regional groundwater control and prevention of saltwater intrusion; enhancement of fish and wildlife; and recreation.

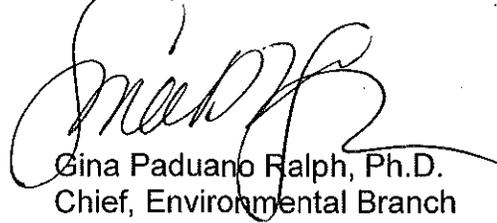
The COP will result in a comprehensive integrated water control plan for the operation of water management infrastructure associated with the MWD and C-111 South Dade Projects in Miami Dade County (Figure 1). Development of the COP will be informed by a series of operational field tests previously conducted under the authority of the MWD Project that include relaxation of the Gage-3273 (G-3273) constraint and raising the maximum operating limit in the L-29 Canal up to 8.5 feet National Geodetic Vertical Datum of 1929 (*i.e.* Increment 1, Increment 1.1 and Increment 1.2, and Increment 2). Information gained from water management actions taken by the Corps in response to unseasonable high water levels within the Water Conservation Areas (WCAs) in 2016 and 2017 will also be utilized to inform development of the COP. Implementation of the COP is anticipated to increase the availability of water deliveries from WCA 3A to ENP through Northeast Shark River Slough and improve hydrologic conditions in Taylor Slough, the Rocky Glades, and the eastern panhandle of ENP.

Water management operating criteria defined during development of the COP will be incorporated into the 2012 WCAs, ENP, and ENP to South Dade Conveyance System Water Control Plan following completion of NEPA. Development of the COP is also being pursued to address the mandated Reasonable and Prudent Alternative of the July 22, 2016 Everglades Restoration Transition Plan Biological Opinion which

requires the Corps to proceed as scheduled, and as allowable by law, for completing NEPA analysis for the COP in 2019.

We invite the participation of Federal and State agencies, Native American Tribes, local agencies, interested parties and individuals in providing comments and identifying any issues or concerns. Please share this notice with any interested party. Send any comments you may have to the attention of Melissa Nasuti (904-232-1368) at the letter head address or email melissa.a.nasuti@usace.army.mil no later than 30 days from the date of this letter. All individuals who respond with comments will be included in future mailings. Others may be added to the mailing list by making a written request (postcard) to the same address or by email.

Sincerely,



Gina Paduano Ralph, Ph.D.
Chief, Environmental Branch

Enclosure

