

COMPREHENSIVE EVERGLADES RESTORATION PLAN

WESTERN EVERGLADES RESTORATION PROJECT (WERP)

SOUTH FLORIDA ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION JOINT WORKING GROUP (WG) AND SCIENCE COORDINATION GROUP (SCG) MEETING

September 1, 2022



Trusted Partners Delivering Value Today for a Better Tomorrow



U.S. ARMY



US Army Corps of Engineers
BUILDING STRONG.

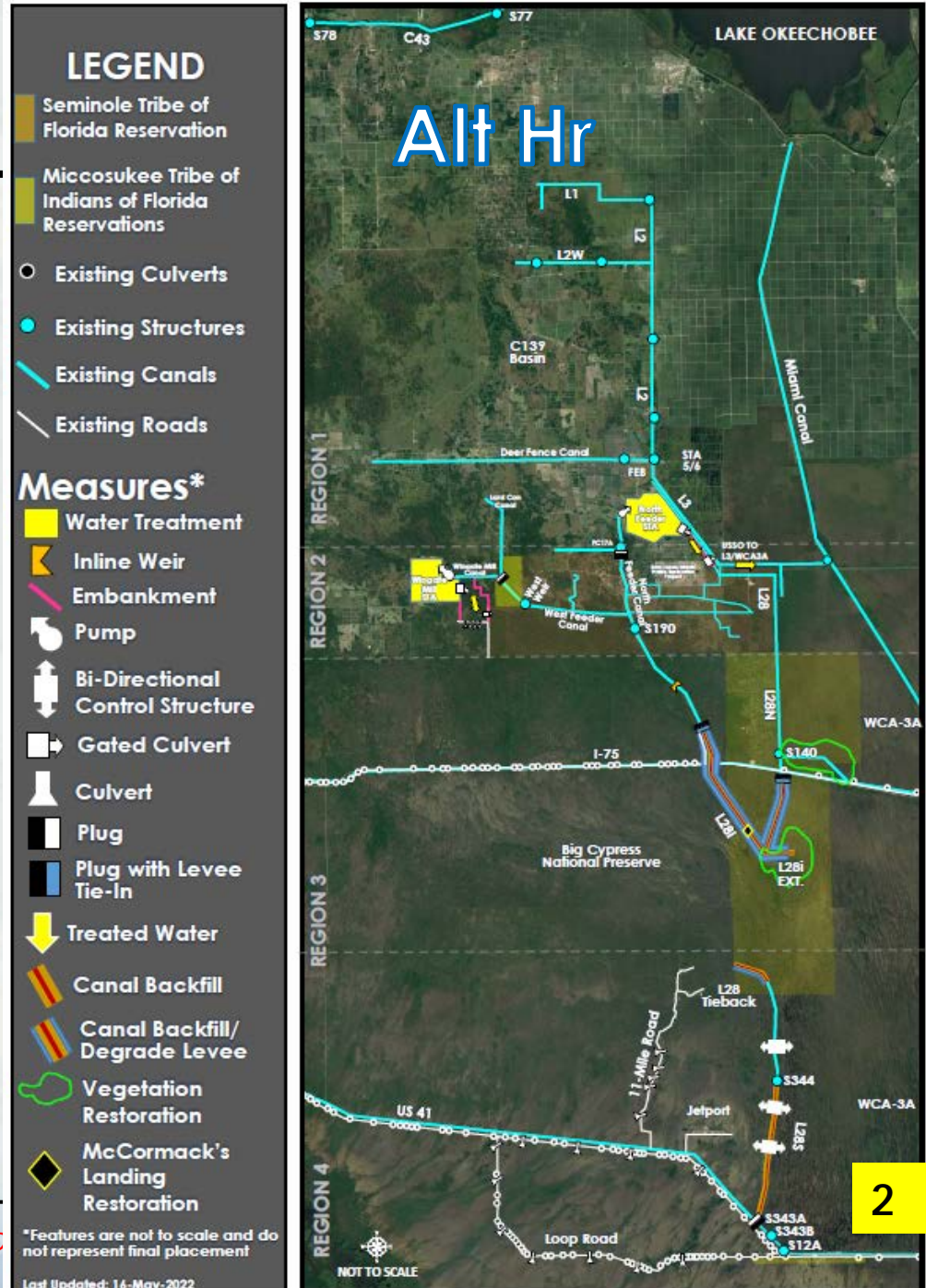




Proposed Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP)

Alternative Hr: Hybrid revised

-Includes a blend of features assembled from the final array of alternatives, as well as changes based on updated modeling information, Tribal coordination and stakeholder engagement



BENEFITS FROM WERP

- ✓ Restore historic flow paths of sheetflow and **improve** seasonal hydroperiods across approximately **644,400 acres** in the Western Everglades by **degrading** levees and **backfilling 385 acres** of man-made canals

1943 Vegetation Map of Southern Florida, illustrating conditions prior to the levees and canals constructed under the C&SF project.

Current aerial of existing conditions in the Western Everglades

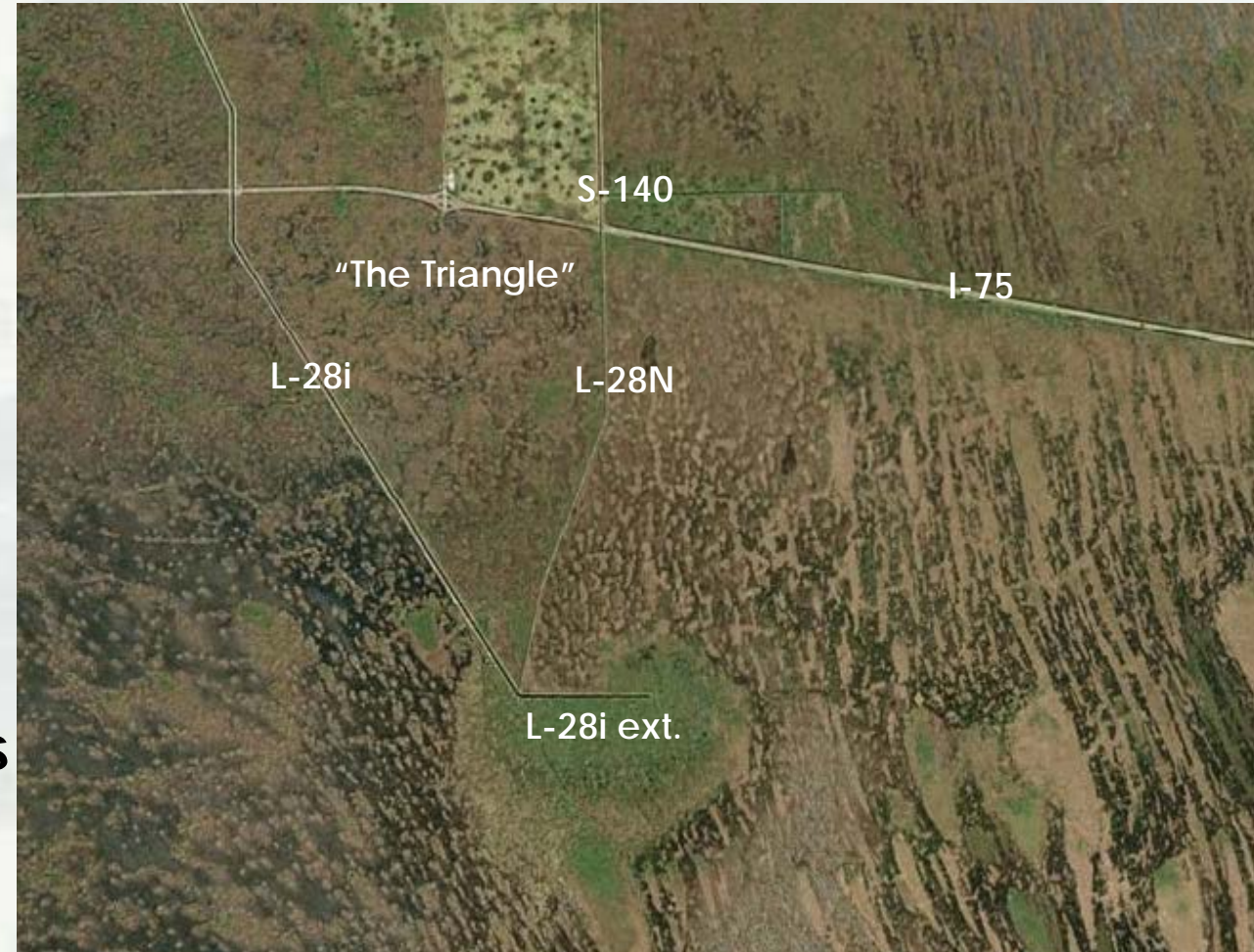




BENEFITS FROM WERP



- ✓ Promote plant and animal diversity and foster conditions for native species by **treating** approximately **7,500 acres** of nuisance vegetation at the terminus of the **L-28i extension** and approximately **4,900 acres** downstream of S-140
- ✓ Reconnect and rehydrate approximately **7,850 acres** of wetlands within "the triangle" by removal of manmade features associated with the L-28i, L-28i extension, and L-28N south of I-75



Current aerial of existing conditions in the Western Everglades. Shows extent of nuisance vegetation and compartmentalization in the triangle.



BENEFITS FROM WERP



BUILDING STRONG

✓ Restore low nutrient conditions by constructing two STAs with an estimated combined total of approximately 7,500 acres of treatment area, which will treat an estimated 40 kilo acre feet per year of flows entering Big Cypress National Preserve and the Big Cypress Seminole Reservation Native Area and 38 kilo acre feet per year of flows entering WCA 3A



Wingate Mill STA (WMSTA), North Feeder STA (NFSTA), and STA outflows are illustrated in yellow above. WMSTA will treat water before entering BCNP via open culverts and before entering the Big Cypress Seminole Reservation Native Area via gated culverts. NFSTA outflows will enter a 3.8-mile outlet canal, then flow into WCA 3A by way of the L-3 Canal.



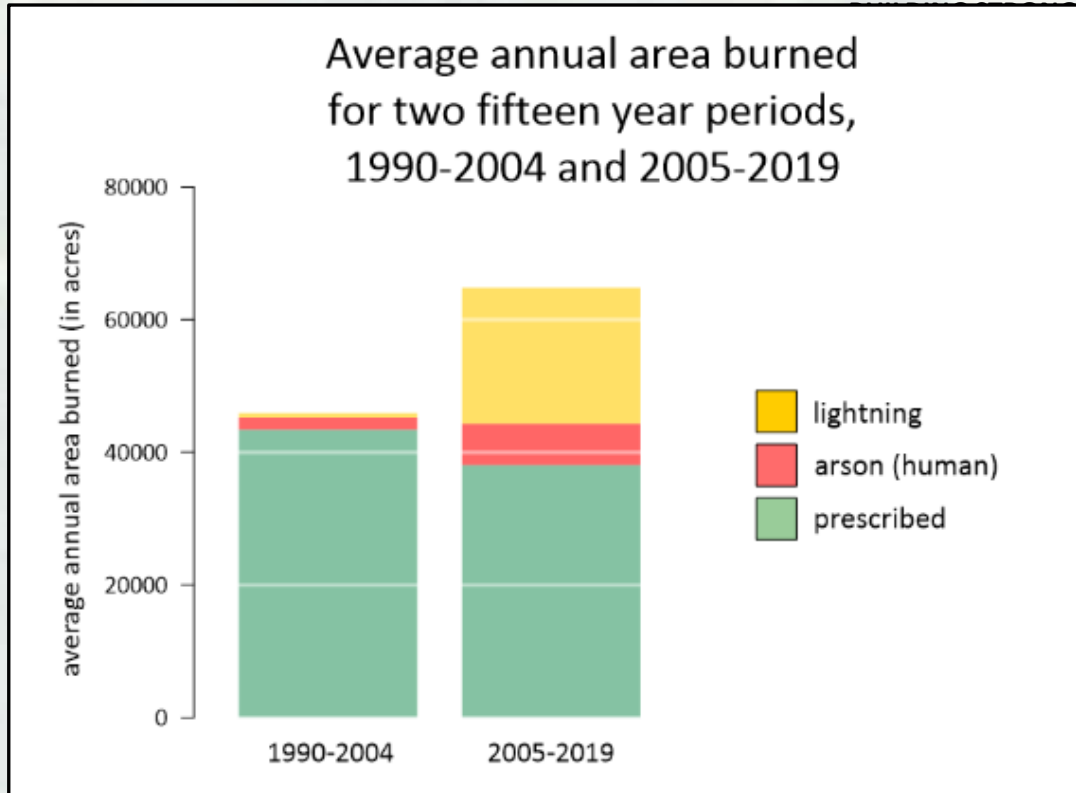
BENEFITS FROM WERP



- ✓ Reduce the intensity and duration of damaging fires by **improving surface water and groundwater elevations and hydroperiods** in areas affected by over-drainage.



Damaging wildfire in BCNP



In Big Cypress National Preserve (BCNP) from 2005-2019, spring wildfires accounted for nearly 1/3 of totally burned area during the months of April-June when the water table is lowest and surface water is least present. This is a 31% increase and includes a 20,000 acre increase in burned area due to spring lightning-caused wildfire from the prior observation period from 1990-2004.



Wingate Mill Stormwater Treatment Area



BUILDING STRONG

- The Corps and South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) are investigating potential solutions to meet the project objectives (water quality) and to also preserve the high-quality forested wetlands discussed during the last SFWMD Governing Board Meeting and public meetings.
- Draft PIR/EIS was previously delayed to November 04 to explore expansion of the western boundary of the original STA footprint to the west to allow options/flexibility for positioning the STA during final design. However, because of additional technical issues with the operations of Wingate Mill Stormwater Treatment Area (WMSTA) that require reevaluation, the date is subject to change.
- The Corps is currently considering potential courses of action.





Real Estate Analysis



BUILDING STRONG

- The Corps has preliminary Real Estate Analysis based on current TSP. The RE analysis is a conservative approach (worst case).
- Pursuing the MINIMUM RE interest necessary to implement the project. That is, flowage easements instead of fee.
- Submitted a waiver for the Corps Ecosystem Restoration requirement to acquire all real estate in fee and received approval for 10 of 14 non-standard estates. Additional information has been submitted for the 4 outstanding non-standard estates to HQUSACE for review.
- Briefed Real Estate analysis results to all parties –SFWMD, STOF, MTIF, DOI, NPS, BCNP, Miami-Dade County, and private landowners.





Current Project Risks



BUILDING STRONG

- Wingate Mill Stormwater Treatment Area (WMSTA), Water Availability and WMSTA Dry-Out
- High-quality Forested Wetlands within the Wingate Mill Stormwater Treatment Area footprint
- Water Quality Cost Share Coordination
- Savings Clause and RE Analysis
- NHPA Consultation



Indigenous Tribal Ecological Knowledge (ITEK)



BUILDING STRONG

- A memorandum entitled “Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Federal Decision Making” was issued by the Executive Office of the President on behalf of the Office of Science and Technology Policy and the Council on Environmental Quality dated 15 November 2021.
- Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge (ITEK) is a body of observations, oral and written knowledge, practices, and beliefs that promote environmental sustainability and the responsible stewardship of natural resources through relationships between humans and environmental systems.
- The STOF and WERP PDT incorporated ITEK into the plan formulation



Current Schedule



BUILDING STRONG

<u>Task</u>	<u>Date</u>
Release of Draft Project Implementation Report (PIR) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)	Nov. 04, 2022
Comments due on Draft PIR/EIS	Dec. 19, 2022
Agency Decision Milestone Meeting	Mar. 03, 2023
Final PIR/EIS	Sep. 20, 2023
Chief's Report	Dec. 18, 2023