Colin James G. May  
Jacksonville District Commander  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
400 West Bay Street, P.O. Box 4970  
Jacksonville, FL 32232-0019  

Maureen Finnerty  
Superintendent  
Everglades National Park  
40001 State Road 9336  
Homestead, FL 33034-6733  

Jay Slack  
Florida Field Supervisor  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
1339 20th Street  
Vero Beach, FL 32961-2676  

Henry Dean  
Executive Director  
South Florida Water Management District  
3301 Gun Club Road  
West Palm Beach, FL 33416-4680  

Dear Colonel May, Superintendent Finnerty, Supervisor Slack and Executive Director Dean:  

On behalf of the Everglades Coalition, we would like to comment on the Draft Combined Structural and Operational Plan (CSOP) Overview and Project Purposes and Objectives (Purpose and Objectives). The Coalition has tracked the Modified Water Deliveries and C-111 Projects since their inception and applauds your efforts to develop a process by which these long-stalled restoration projects may finally move forward. The Coalition will continue to be active participants in seeing that these projects achieve the goals for which they were authorized. We are concerned, however, that this document does not adequately reflect those goals.

Our greatest concern is the failure to articulate that restoration is the primary purpose of these projects and that the CSOP must achieve this purpose. As you are aware, the primary purpose of both the Modified Water Deliveries and C-111 Projects – as authorized by Congress – is to restore the ecosystem
of the southern Everglades, including Everglades National Park and Florida Bay. This objective must be accomplished while maintaining the authorized flood damage reduction levels within the C-111 Basin. These authorized project purposes must remain the understood premise upon which development of the CSOP takes place. If these governing assumptions are not expressly articulated in the Purpose and Objectives document, we cannot advocate the participation of the Coalition members in the CSOP stakeholder process.

The Southern Everglades Team of the Coalition has presented specific changes that will reflect the restoration mandate, help ensure that development of the CSOP achieves its legal objectives and gives us assurances that the stakeholder process will be well-grounded. We also believe that the draft Charter presented to the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Working Group has some procedural concerns that need to be addressed in order to ensure participation by the Coalition members.

We remain committed to assisting in the development of the Combined Structural and Operational Plan, but our involvement in a stakeholder process is contingent upon ensuring that such a process proceeds with a mutual understanding by all parties that the authorized restoration purpose of the plans is the primary goal. We look forward to working with you to refine this document to accurately reflect that objective.

Sincerely,

Mary Munson
National Co-Chair
Everglades Coalition

Erin Deady
State Co-Chair
Everglades Coalition

cc: Colonel Terrence Salk, South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force
Anne Klee, South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force
Rick Smith, South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Working Group
Mike Eng, U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution