

**Introduction to the  
*2011 South Florida Environmental Report*  
and Peer-Review Findings and  
Recommendations on Draft Volume I**

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## South Florida Environmental Report (SFER)

### *Background*

- 1999: The Everglades Interim Report mandated by the Everglades Forever Act (EFA; Section 373.4592, Florida Statutes)
- 2000 to 2004: District integrated ~50 Everglades reports into annual, peer-reviewed Everglades Consolidated Report
- 2005: District expanded contents to a region-wide, two-volume report as a pilot for other statewide reporting
- 2006: Legislature adopted annual, state-mandated reporting for all five Water Management Districts
- 2011: new Volume III further streamlines reporting and enhances submittal process for annual permit reports to FDEP and federal agencies

## 2011 SFER Overview

### ***Objectives***

- Summarizes annual monitoring, research data, and findings
- Consolidates over 50 individual reports in three volumes and database
- Fulfills dozens of annual reporting mandates and permits  
(Everglades Forever Act, Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan, Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Program, and more)
- Supports key South Florida programs and initiatives

### ***The Process***

- Accelerated schedule for full report and Executive Summary, which showcases agency progress and achievements
- Over 200 authors/contributors, including FDEP and other partners
- By March 1, 2011, complete 3000+-page report is published on the web ([www.sfwmd.gov/sfer](http://www.sfwmd.gov/sfer)) and on DVD to provide significant cost-savings

## Peer-Review Process – Volume I



### *Specified by the Everglades Forever Act*

*“...issue a peer-reviewed report... that summarizes all data and findings.”*

### ***A Streamlined Review Process***

- Draft Volume I on-line with a public WebBoard for review and comment
- Panel provided chapter-specific comments at three levels of review: (technical, accountability, and programmatic) and agency authors respond
- Panel provided final comments and recommendations, with key findings presented to District Governing Board by agency staff
- Complete final Panel report is posted on WebBoard: [www.sfwmd.gov/sfer](http://www.sfwmd.gov/sfer)

## 2011 SFER Peer-Review Panel

**Dr. Joanna Burger, *Rutgers University, NJ***

**Dr. JoAnn Burkholder, *North Carolina State University, NC***

**Dr. Peter Dillon, *Trent University, Canada***

**Dr. Vladimir Novotny, *Northeastern University, MA***

**Dr. Vijay Singh, *Texas A&M University, TX***

**Dr. Otto Stein, *Montana State University, MT***

**Dr. Robert Ward, *Colorado State University, CO (emeritus)***

## Panel Recommendations

### ***Hydrology and Water Quality (Chapters 2 & 3)***

- District and FDEP have successfully published an excellent synthesis of water quality for a large, complex region
- Expand integration and automation of water quality within chapter and across chapters/programs
- Continuing study of factors driving mercury cycling and accumulation is encouraged, esp. regarding sulfur interactions

### ***Nutrient Source Controls and Everglades STAs (Chapters 4 & 5)***

- Expand reporting on how regional nutrient control programs are impacting long-term, water quality compliance goals (in Chapter 8)
- Add a formal assessment of scientific studies in the STAs to aid in information/understanding of STA performance optimization
- More description on STA compliance reporting (new Volume III)

## Panel Recommendations

### ***Everglades Ecology (Chapter 6)***

- Continue Everglades research on tree island dynamics, nesting statistics, restoration of plant assemblages, and role of climate in restoration
- Expand emphasis on exotic species and consider authors' recommendations on exotic controls in future reports

### ***Everglades Restoration /Long-Term Plan Update (Chapters 7 & 8)***

- Local data from CERP restoration projects needs to connect implementation to ecosystem responses in RECOVER system-wide data
- Consider consolidation of these two chapters

### ***Nonindigenous Species (Chapter 9)***

- Nonindigenous animals merit are a huge threat to regional restoration efforts and deserve more multi-agency attention
- Analyze risk to restoration if exotic controls are not successful

## Panel Recommendations

### ***Lake Okeechobee (Chapter 10)***

- Using watershed management to reach the loading goal of 140 metric tons will require aggressive control programs
- More study needed on reducing internal (sediment) phosphorus release

### ***Kissimmee Basin (Chapter 11)***

- Stress importance of water reservations to protect the gains made in ecosystem health
- Continue attention to nutrient controls in the Kissimmee Basin

### ***Coastal Ecosystems (Chapter 12)***

- Need more information on exotic species in coastal areas
- Provide an update/linkages to the District's Science Plan for coastal ecosystems in future reporting

## Upcoming Governing Board Reviews

### ***2011 SFER – Volume II***

#### ***Five-Year Water Resource Development Work Program (Chapter 5A)***

- Mandated by state law (Section 373.536(6)(a)(4), Florida Statutes)
- Money to be spent on Water Resource Development component of Water Supply Plans over the next five years
- Draft review by FDEP
- Separately approved by Governing Board in Dec. 2010

#### ***Florida Forever Work Plan, 2010 Annual Update (Chapter 6A)***

- Mandated by state law (Section 373.199, Florida Statutes)
- Proposed changes to Florida Forever eligibility list
- Update of land acquisition activity
- Separately adopted by Governing Board in Dec. 2010, or latest Jan. 2011

**Each year the peer-review process,  
although sometimes difficult, adds value to  
the SFER product**

**The review is one key reason that this  
report has won 12 national awards for  
excellence in reporting**



## Acknowledgments

*The* monumental effort and outstanding contributions of the many professionals who contribute to the success of this report are gratefully recognized and applauded

