

Corkscrew Watershed Initiative (CWI) Initial Public Meeting

June 26, 2024



Agenda

- Welcome and Project Team
 - CWI Background and Overview
 - Project Scope and Work Plan
 - Stakeholder Engagement and Input



Project Team



South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) Staff:

- Fort Myers
- Big Cypress Basin
- Headquarters

J-Tech Consultant Team

An alliance of Jacobs and Tetra Tech







CWI Background and Overview Concerns, Objectives, and Study Area



Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed (CREW)



- Important resources within CREW lands:
 - Flint Pen Strand
 - Bird Rookery Swamp
 - Corkscrew
 Swamp
 Sanctuary (CSS)
 - Corkscrew Marsh
 - Camp Keais Strand



Hydrologic Changes



- Drying, dry season trend observed in the last 20 years
 - Approximately 60 years of data in CSS
- Cascading negative effects on ecosystem and wildlife
- Some areas within region are subject to flooding



Source: Shawn E. Clem and Michael J. Duever

Impacts to Ecosystems





Impacts to Wildlife



> Historically CSS wood stork population was the largest in the United States

- Wood storks are threatened species
- Population of nesting pairs in CSS has dramatically declined
- Hydrological changes affect fish populations, which limits food availability for wading birds



Additional Impacts

- > Altered succession of plant communities and habitats
- Increased fire risk
- Reduced freshwater storage
- Changed timing and quantity of freshwater to estuaries



CWI Objectives

- Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to achieve ecological restoration of the Corkscrew system; emphasis on hydrology
- Reduce flood risk
- Maintain water supply
- Engage partners, stakeholders, and the public in planning
- Gather data and identify viable short- and long-term strategies and features for ecological restoration

CWI Overview

- > 3-year Public Planning Project (2024–2027)
- Study will identify project(s) to be implemented by various agencies that meet CWI objectives
- Builds upon previous Big Cypress Basin (BCB) efforts in and around the CSS
- Collaborate with stakeholders to gather input, test suggestions, and present findings for advancing potential solutions
- Identify projects that can be implemented quickly

Project Area





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Technical Working Group (TWG)

- Includes representatives from local governments and other groups with expertise in and responsibility for CREW
 - SFWMD, CSS, CREW Land & Water Trust, Collier County, Lee County, City of Bonita Springs, Village of Estero
 - Serves as a liaison between the project and constituents and public
 - Provides technical input to SFWMD project manager and consultant team





Project Scope

Scope of Work, Data, Performance Metrics, and Identify Projects



Scope of Work and Goals

- > Review available data, identify gaps, field visits
- Refine BCB Watershed Model components
- Develop goals, performance metrics, and measures
- Coordinate with TWG to identify projects to be hydrologically modeled
- Identify early implementation strategies that can be advanced separately
- Propose a final alternative(s) that meets CWI objectives:
 - Identify funding sources
 - Prepare conceptual plans
 - Estimate costs for construction, operation and maintenance

Data and Previous Studies

- Previously conducted studies on flooding, water supply, and ecology
- Examples:
 - BCB Regional Modeling Tool Completed May 2024
 - SFWMD Lower West Coast Water Supply Plan Updates 2022
 - Coastal and Heartland National Estuary Partnership South Lee County Watershed Initiative Model (CHNEP – SLCWI) – 2021
 - CSS Hydrologic Modeling Project (Audubon) 2021
 - Southern Lee County Flood Mitigation Plan 2020



Performance Metrics

- > Guidelines for using performance metrics for project evaluation
- Easy to measure and informative to multiple aspects
- Can be evaluated using the CWI Model
- Deliverable: Draft and Final Project Performance Measures and Metrics Technical Memorandum





Project Schedule







Stakeholder Engagement and Input We need your input!



Need Public Input



- > Understanding of watershed issues
- Project goals
- Available data and gaps
- Potential solutions



Menti Poll Instructions

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Community Input



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What watershed issue is of most concern to you?





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Community Input



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Mentimeter

Do you have any short or long term project ideas?

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Community Input





Mentimeter

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Project Email Address and Website

Project email address for comments or questions: <u>CorkscrewWatershedInitiative@sfwmd.gov</u>

Project website: <u>https://www.sfwmd.gov/our-work/corkscrew-watershed-initiative-public-planning-project</u>



Home >> Our Work >> Corkscrew Watershed Initiative Public Planning Project





Corkscrew Watershed Initiative Public Planning Project



Future Project Meetings





Next Steps

- > Begin BCB model refinement specific to CWI area
- Develop goals, performance measures, and metrics
- Conduct site reconnaissance and data collection
- Identify short and long term projects









Thank You

Questions and Answers

