

# LOXAHATCHEE RIVER WATERSHED RESTORATION PROJECT

January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015



One of the Last Old Growth Cypress  
Floodplains in the SE Florida



Last Large Freshwater Wetland  
Corridor in Project Area



Vulnerable estuarine habitats



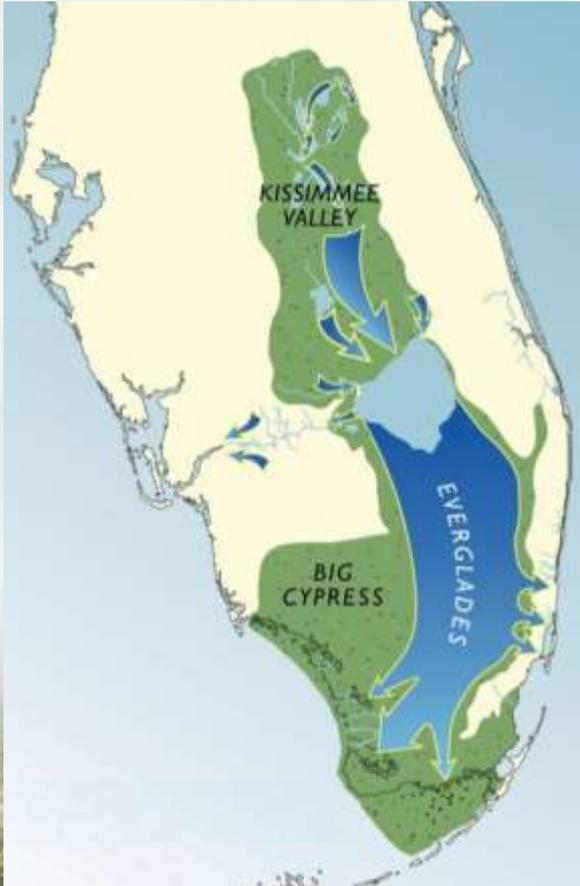
# **MEETING PURPOSE AND AGENDA**

- **Everglades Restoration Overview**
- **National Environmental Policy Act**
- **Project Planning Process**
- **Project Scope Update**
- **Next Steps**

# EVERGLADES RESTORATION OVERVIEW



# COMPREHENSIVE EVERGLADES COMPREHENSIVE RESTORATION PLAN (CERP) GOAL



**HISTORIC FLOW**



**CURRENT FLOW**



**RESTORED FLOW**

# COMPREHENSIVE EVERGLADES RESTORATION PLAN

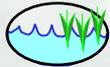
## 68 Components



Surface Storage



Aquifer Storage and Recovery



Stormwater Treatment Areas (water quality)

Seepage Management

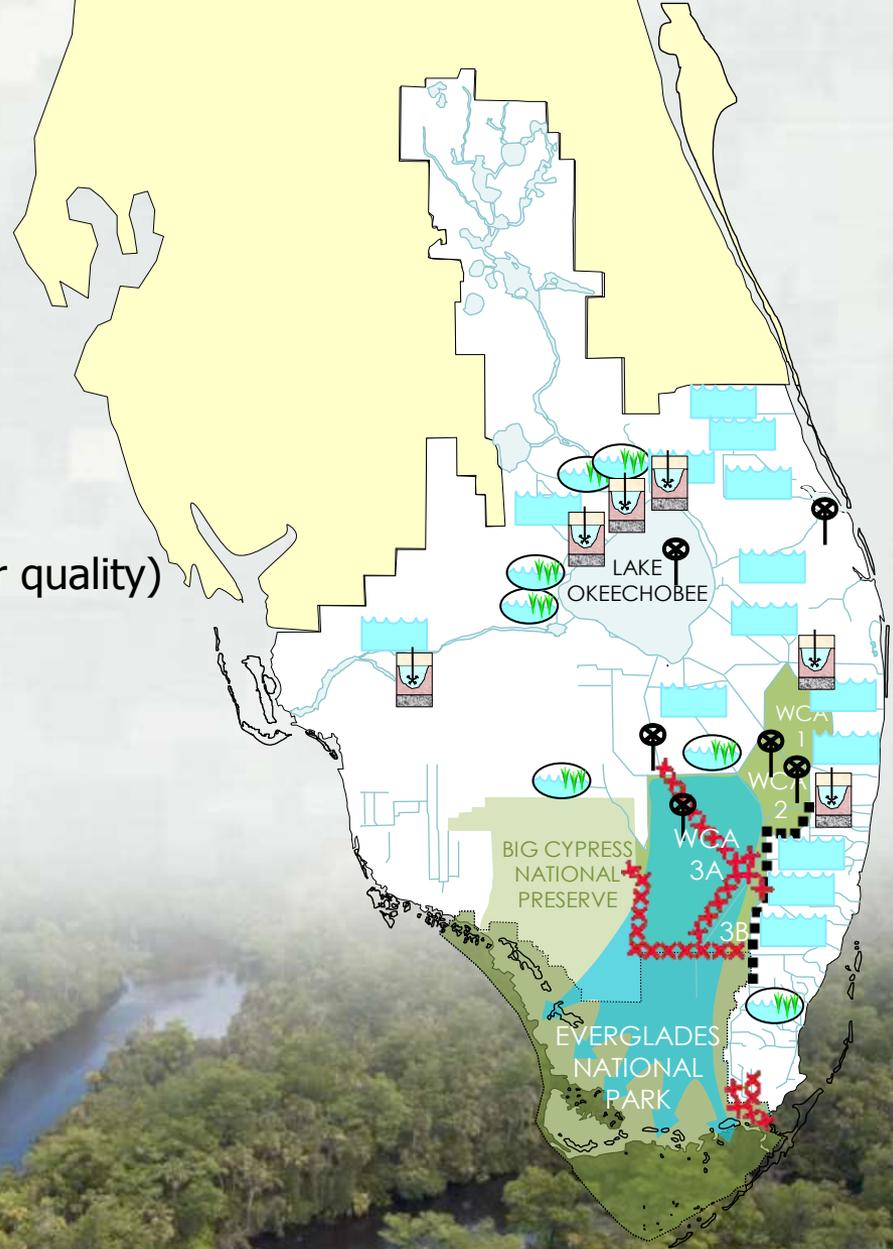


Removing barriers to flow



Revised operations

30+ year implementation



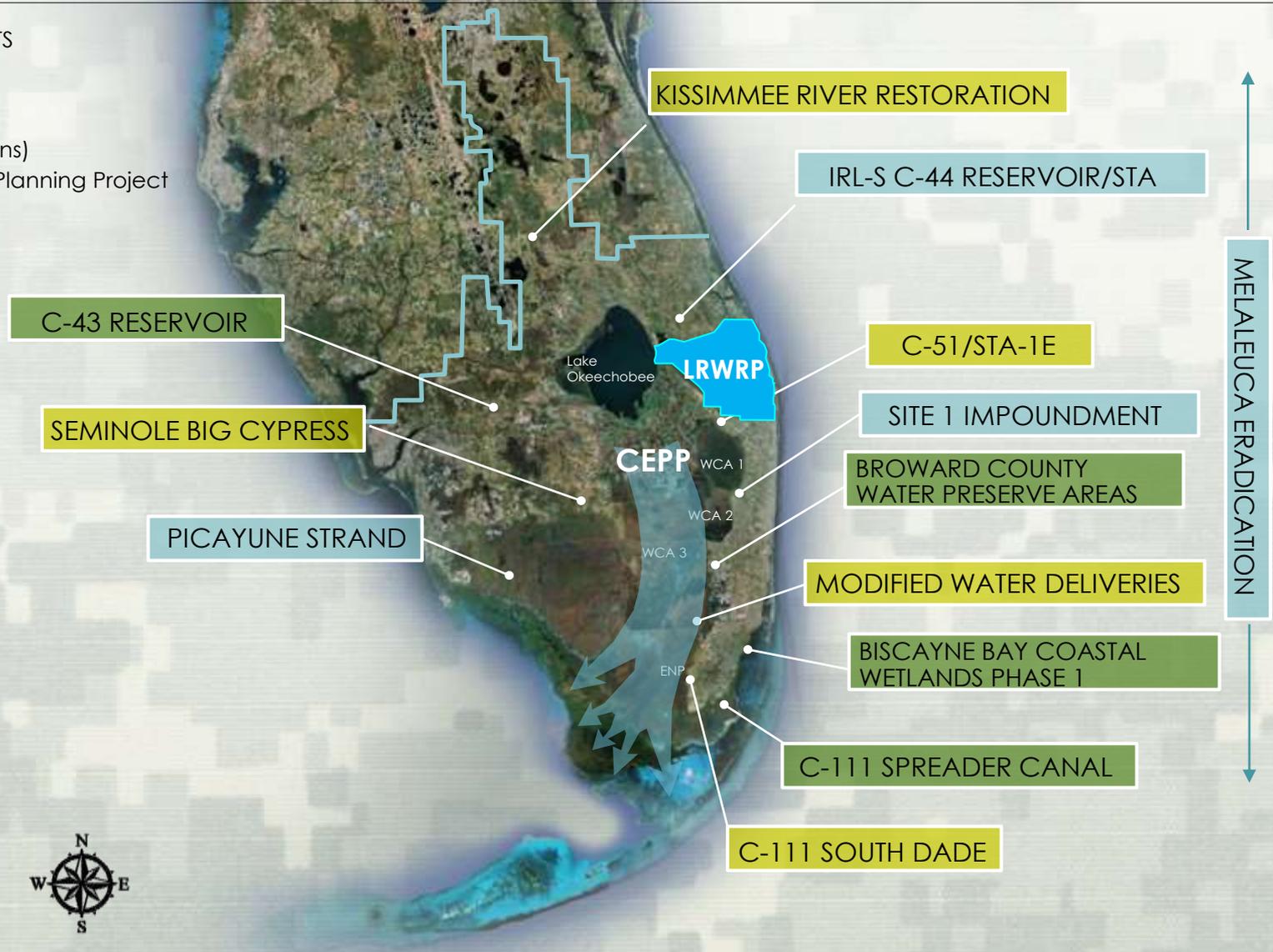
# CERP IMPLEMENTATION

FOUNDATION PROJECTS

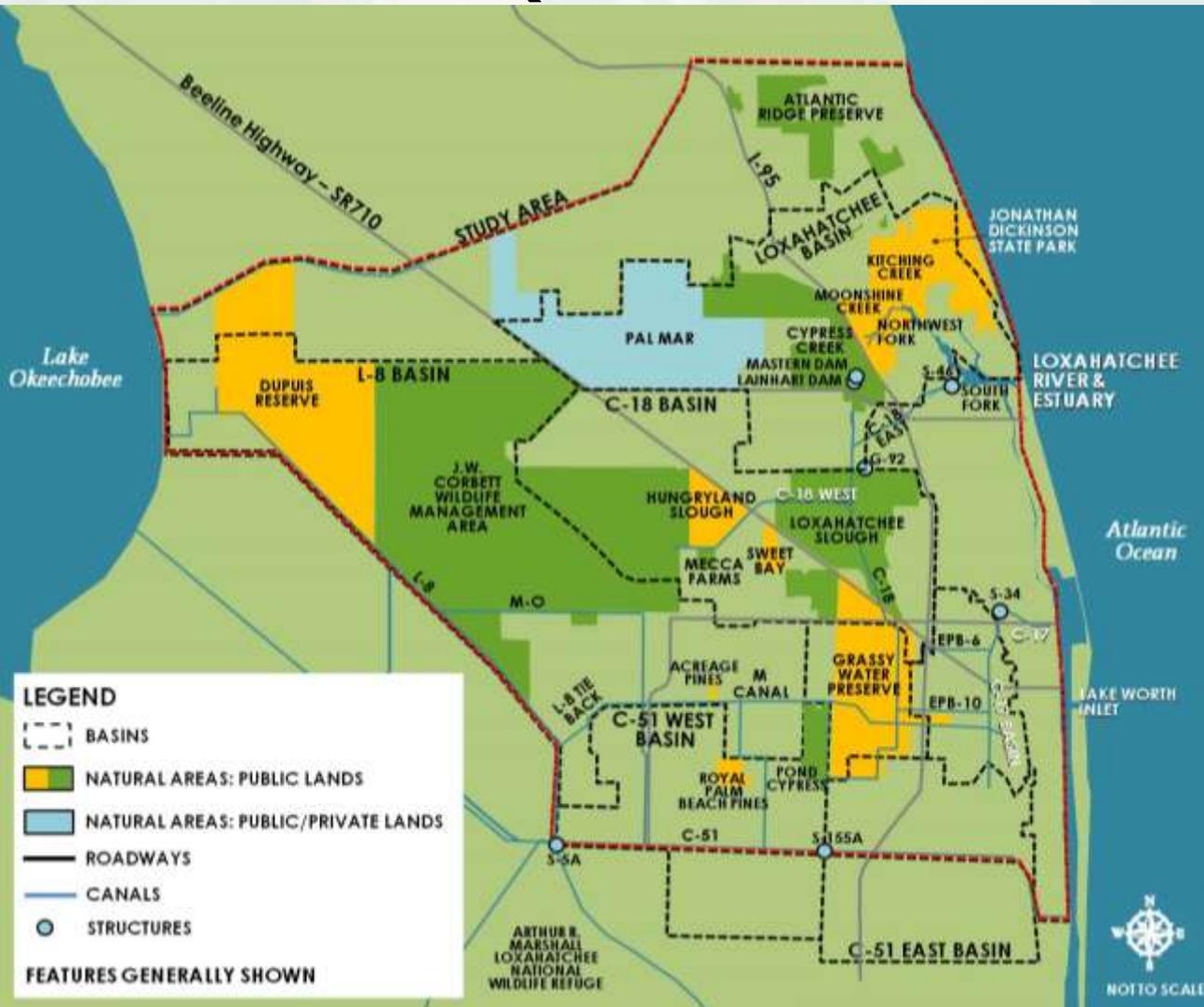
1<sup>ST</sup> GENERATION CERP

2<sup>ND</sup> GENERATION CERP  
(awaiting appropriations)

CEPP: Central Everglades Planning Project



# STUDY AREA (MARTIN & PALM BEACH COUNTIES)



## NATURAL AREAS

- 1: Kitching Creek
- 2: Moonshine Creek
- 3: Cypress Creek
- 4: Lainhart Dam
- 5: Pal Mar
- 6: Hungryland Slough
- 7: J.W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area (WMA)
- 8: Dupuis Management Area
- 9: Loxahatchee Slough
- 10: Grassy Waters Preserve

# NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT AND PLANNING PROCESS



BUILDING STRONG®

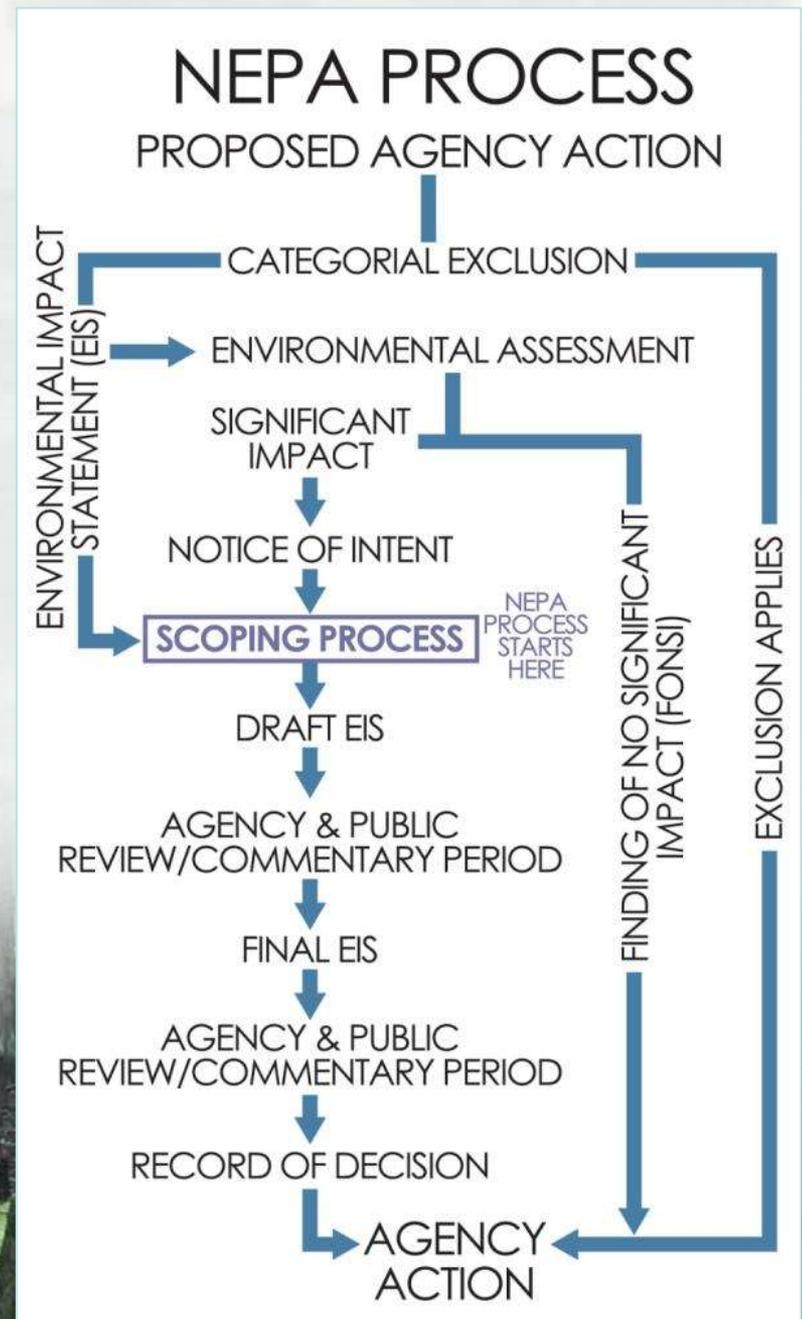
# **NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA) GOALS**

- **Requires Federal agencies to consider environmental consequences of Federal actions before making final decisions**
- **Solicit and consider public views on proposals**
- **Consult with Tribal, state, and local governments concerning plans**
- **Provide agencies with a mechanism to coordinate overlapping, jurisdictional responsibilities**

# NEPA PROCESS AND ASSESSMENTS

Prepare detailed statements addressing the potential environmental impacts related to a major Federal action:

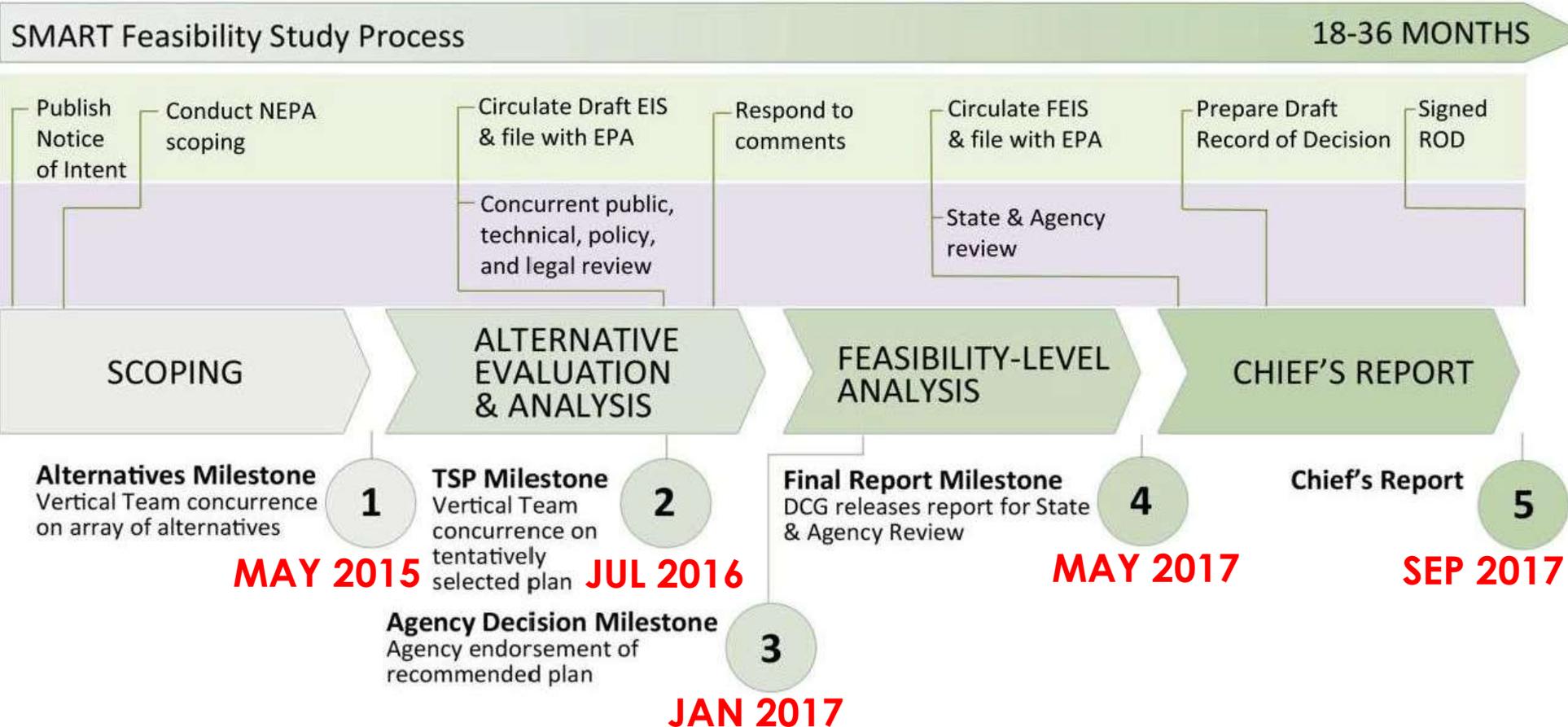
- **Categorical Exclusion (CAT-EX)**
- **Environmental Assessment (EA)**
- **Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)**



# WHAT IS NEW IN THE PLANNING PROCESS?

- **Process and outputs are decision focused, and within the 6-step planning process**
- **Risk and uncertainty for each decision is acknowledged and appropriate level of details is managed**
- **Report developed from the beginning of the study, documenting the decisions**

# NEPA PROCESS AND ESTIMATED PLANNING SCHEDULE



# OTHER PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES

**Enhance opportunities for meaningful public engagement:**

- **Corps hosted public meetings**
- **Draft NEPA Assessment public meeting**
- **Regularly scheduled Project Delivery Team Meetings**
- **Use of existing forums to engage stakeholders**
  - **South Florida Water Management District Governing Board**
  - **Water Resources Advisory Commission**
- **Topic meetings to address particular issues**
- **Others**



# PROJECT PURPOSE AND SCOPE UPDATE



# PROJECT PURPOSE

- **Improve the Quality, Quantity, Timing and Distribution of water deliveries from watershed to the Loxahatchee River and Estuary**
- **Improve hydrologic connections between the protected natural areas at the headwaters to the 'National Wild and Scenic' Loxahatchee River North-West Fork and its tributaries**



# HISTORY OF LOXAHATCHEE RIVER WATERSHED RESTORATION PROJECT

## 2000

- Congress approved the Restudy (Yellow Book)

## 2003-2005

- North Palm Beach County Phase 1 Project Management Plan
- Substantial Hydrologic and Hydraulic and Geotechnical analyses
- USACE HQ Guidance Feasibility Scoping Meeting Guidance – benefits formulation approach, constraints, project assumptions

## 2006-2011

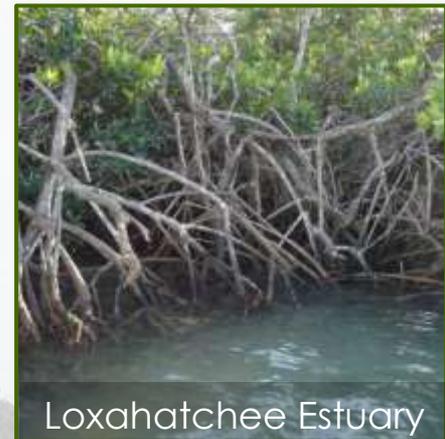
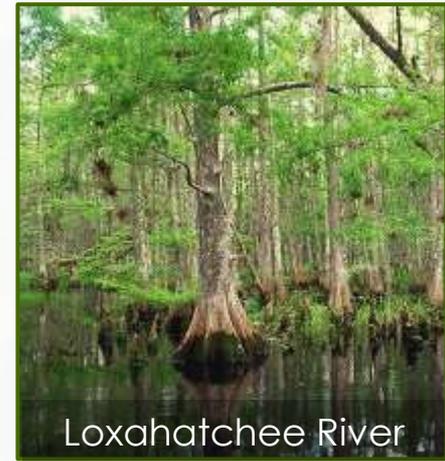
- Working on finalizing draft Alternative Formulation Briefing documents
- Management directed hold (2011)

## 2011-2013

- L-8 Reservoir component re-purposed as Flow Equalization Basin for Restoration Strategies
- Purchase of Mecca Farms by the SFWMD

# LOXAHATCHEE RIVER WATERSHED RESTORATION PROJECT PROBLEMS

- **Altered timing and distribution of headwater base flows to the Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River**
- **Increased salinity effects on formerly freshwater reaches of the Loxahatchee River**
- **Increased wet season flows to Southwest Fork and Loxahatchee Estuary**
- **Loss of freshwater cypress floodplain adjacent to Loxahatchee River**



# LOXAHATCHEE RIVER WATERSHED RESTORATION PROJECT PROBLEMS CONTINUED

- **Degraded natural area structure and function from altered hydrology**
- **Conversion of natural areas to agricultural, residential and industrial uses**
- **Loss of connectivity and barriers to flow between natural areas, river, and estuary**
- **Reduced native floral and faunal populations and diversity**
- **Degraded water quality in natural areas**



# CERP PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

## Consistent with CERP Goals and Objectives (Table 5-1)



### 1. Enhance Ecological Values

- A. Increase the total spatial extent of natural areas
- B. Improve habitat and functional quality
- C. Improve native plant and animal species abundance and diversity



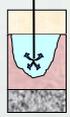
### 2. Enhance Economic Values and Social Well Being

- A. Increase availability of fresh water (agricultural/municipal and industrial)
- B. Reduce flood damages (agricultural/urban)
- C. Provide recreational opportunities
- D. Protect cultural and archeological resources and values

# NEXT STEPS



# MANAGEMENT MEASURES UNDER CONSIDERATION



**Aquifer Storage and Recovery**



**Storage**

**Conveyance**

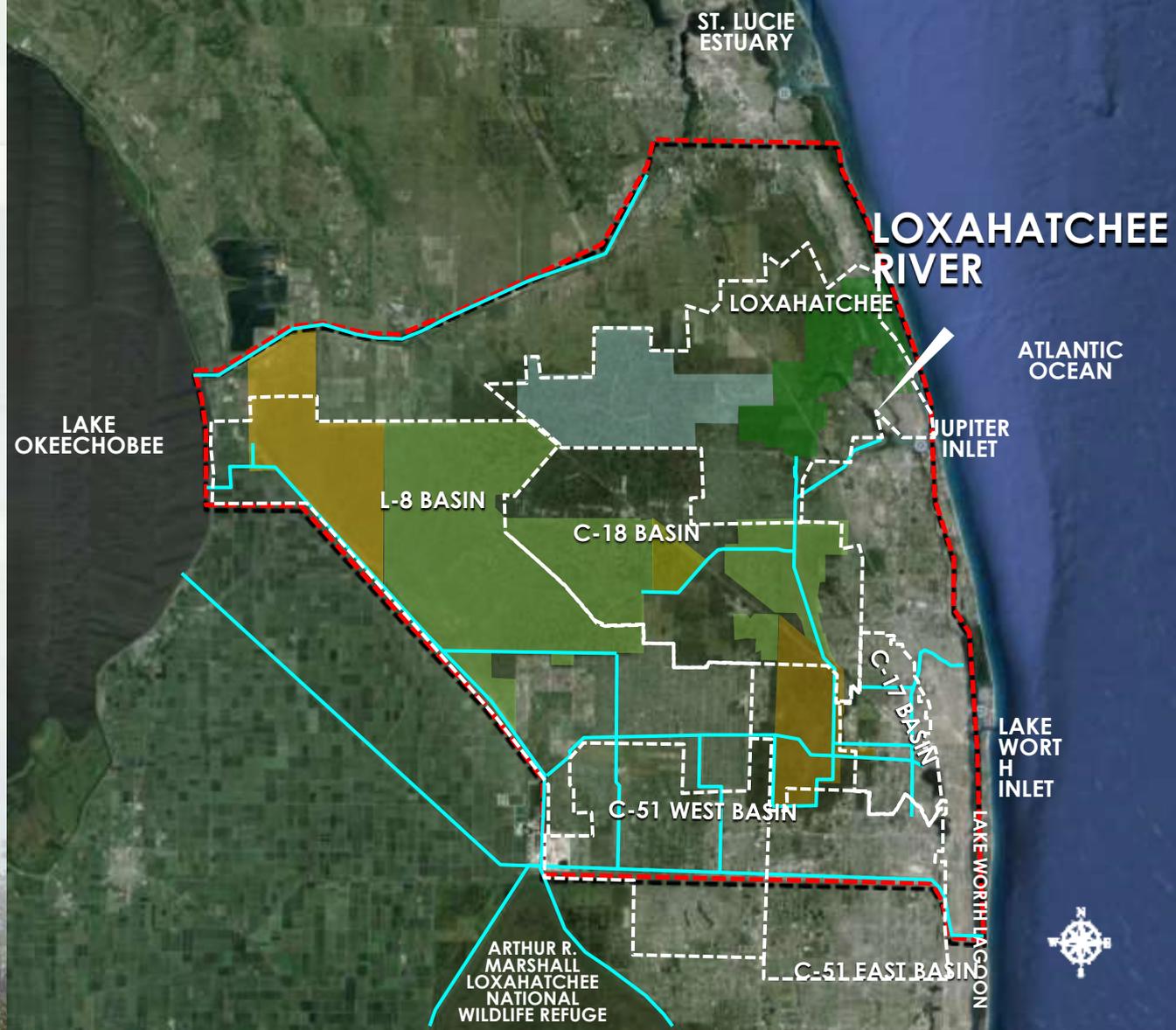
**Sheetflow enhancement**



**Operational changes**



**Vegetation Management**



# NEPA SCOPING COMMENTS

- Comments Due by February 5, 2015
- Mail To:
  - Attention: Andrew LoSchiavo
  - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Jacksonville District
  - 701 San Marco Blvd
  - Jacksonville, FL 32207
- Email Comments to: [Andrew.J.LoSchiavo@usace.army.mil](mailto:Andrew.J.LoSchiavo@usace.army.mil)

# QUESTIONS AND FOLLOW-UP

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Environmental Lead:**

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904-232-2077

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**Project Website:**

**[http://www.bit.ly/LRWRP\\_CERP](http://www.bit.ly/LRWRP_CERP)**

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# QUESTIONS AND FOLLOW-UP

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  - 561-682-6844
- **Project Website: [http://www.bit.ly/LRWRP\\_CERP](http://www.bit.ly/LRWRP_CERP)**