

601(f)(2)(B) of WRDA 2000 and other applicable laws.

§ 385.38 Interim goals.

(a) *Agreement.* (1) The Secretary of the Army, the Secretary of the Interior, and the Governor shall, not later than December 13, 2004, and in consultation with the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Commerce, the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, the Seminole Tribe of Florida, and other Federal, State, and local agencies, and the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force, execute an Interim Goals Agreement establishing interim goals to facilitate inter-agency planning, monitoring, and assessment so as to achieve the overarching objectives of the Plan and to provide a means by which the restoration success of the Plan may be evaluated, and ultimately reported to Congress in accordance with § 385.40 throughout the implementation process.

(2) After execution of the Interim Goals Agreement, the Department of the Army shall memorialize the agreement in appropriate Corps of Engineers guidance.

(b) *Purpose.* (1) Interim goals are a means by which the restoration success of the Plan may be evaluated at specific points by agency managers, the State, and Congress throughout the overall planning and implementation process. In addition, interim goals will facilitate adaptive management and allow the Corps of Engineers and its non-Federal sponsors opportunities to make adjustments if actual project performance is less than anticipated, including recommending changes to the Plan. Interim goals are not standards or schedules enforceable in court.

(2) The interim goals shall:

(i) Facilitate inter-agency planning, monitoring and assessment;

(ii) Be provided to the independent scientific review panel established in accordance with § 385.22(a);

(iii) Be considered in developing the Master Implementation Sequencing Plan, Project Implementation Reports, and Comprehensive Plan Modification Reports; and

(iv) Be considered in making budgetary decisions concerning implementation of the Plan.

(3) To ensure flexibility in implementing the Plan over the next several decades, and to ensure that interim goals may reflect changed circumstances or new information resulting from adaptive management, the interim goals may be modified, consistent with the processes set forth in paragraph (d) of this section, to reflect new information resulting from

changed or unforeseen circumstances, new scientific and technical information, new or updated modeling; information developed through the assessment principles contained in the Plan; and future authorized changes to the Plan integrated into the implementation of the Plan.

(4) The Corps of Engineers and the South Florida Water Management District shall sequence and schedule projects as appropriate to achieve the interim goals and the interim targets established pursuant to § 385.39 to the extent practical given funding, technical, or other constraints.

(5) If the interim goals have not been met or are unlikely to be met, then the Corps of Engineers and the South Florida Water Management District shall determine why the interim goals have not been met or are unlikely to be met and either:

(i) Initiate adaptive management actions pursuant to § 385.31(d) to achieve the interim goals as soon as practical, consistent with the purposes of the Plan and consistent with the interim targets established pursuant to § 385.39; or

(ii) Recommend changes to the interim goals in accordance with paragraph (b)(3) of this section.

(c) *Principles for developing interim goals.* (1) RECOVER, using best available science and information, shall recommend a set of interim goals for implementation of the Plan, consisting of regional hydrologic performance targets, improvements in water quality, and anticipated ecological responses for areas such as, Lake Okeechobee, the Kissimmee River Region, the Water Conservation Areas, the Lower East Coast, the Upper East Coast, the Everglades Agricultural Area, and the Caloosahatchee River, Everglades National Park, Big Cypress National Preserve, Biscayne Bay, Florida Bay, and other estuaries and nearshore areas. These interim goals shall reflect the incremental accomplishment of the expected performance level of the Plan, and will identify improvements in quantity, quality, timing, and distribution of water for the natural system provided by the Plan in five-year increments that begin in 2005, with the goals reflecting the results expected to be achieved by 2010 and for each five-year increment thereafter. The interim goals shall be developed through the use of appropriate models and tools and shall provide a quantitative basis for evaluating the restoration success of the Plan during the period of implementation. In developing the interim goals for the five-year increments, RECOVER shall use the

Master Implementation Sequencing Plan as the basis for predicting performance at a given time. RECOVER may recommend additional interim goals in addition to those initially developed and may propose revisions to the initial set of interim goals as new information is gained through adaptive management. Interim goals shall include incremental improvements in the quantity, quality, timing, and distribution of water anticipated to be required to meet long-term hydrological and ecological restoration goals, based on best available science. These goals may be modified, based on best available science and the adaptive assessment principles contained in the Plan, in accordance with paragraph (d) of this section.

(2) In developing its recommendations for interim goals, RECOVER shall consider indicators including, but not limited to:

(i) Hydrologic indicators, including:

(A) The amount of water, in addition to the pre-CERP baseline and assumptions regarding without project conditions, which will be available to the natural system;

(B) Hydroperiod targets in designated sample areas throughout the Everglades;

(C) The changes in the seasonal and annual overland flow volumes in the Everglades that will be available to the natural system;

(D) The frequency of extreme high and low water levels in Lake Okeechobee; and

(E) The frequency of meeting salinity envelopes in estuaries such as the St. Lucie, Caloosahatchee, Biscayne Bay, and Florida Bay and nearshore areas.

(ii) Improvement in water quality; including:

(A) Total phosphorus concentrations in the Everglades; and

(B) Lake Okeechobee phosphorus concentrations.

(iii) Ecological responses, including:

(A) Increases in total spatial extent of restored wetlands;

(B) Improvement in habitat quality; and

(C) Improvement in native plant and animal abundance.

(3) In developing the interim goals based upon water quality and expected ecological responses, the Corps of Engineers, The Department of the Interior, and the South Florida Water Management District shall take into consideration the extent to which actions undertaken by Federal, State, tribal, and other entities under programs not within the scope of this part may affect achievement of the goals.

(d) *Process for establishing interim goals.* (1) The recommendations of RECOVER shall be provided to the