South Florida Water Management District

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Warren/Karen -
I mentioned on our last phone conference that EPA R-4 was making contacts?
Jack

SWFA

GOV 02-08 RF #99639R

August 3, 1999

Elizabeth Estill, Regional Forester
USDA Forest Service
Mail Room R08A
1720 Peachtree Road NW
Atlanta, GA 30367

Dear Ms. Estill:

Subject: Clean Water Action Plan: Restoring and Protecting America's Waters
draft policy comments

As provided for in a July 2 letter from Robert McGhee, EPA Region IV, we would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft unified federal policy for water quality management on federal lands, which is part of the 1998 Clean Water Action Plan. Overall, the general direction of the proposed policy is consistent and should compliment the current interagency focus in south Florida. We recognize that most of the areas to be affected by this policy are in the western United States, but think you will concur that the numerous public resources, federal and nonfederal, in south Florida warrant special attention.

There are four National Parks in south Florida: Everglades National Park, Biscayne National Park, Big Cypress National Preserve, and the Dry Tortugas National Park. In addition, the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary and the Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve are in very close proximity. These and other critical natural resources are a primary focus of the Everglades Forever Act and the Central and Southern Florida (C&SF) Restudy, two critical Everglades restoration efforts. As such, the groundwork for extensive interagency coordination in this region has been put in place. Continued emphasis in this region is essential if restoration is to continue forward.

A key focus issue identified in the draft policy is this Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) process. In the beginning of 1999, the Florida Legislature passed the Watershed Restoration Act (403.067 F.S.), which described the process by which TMDLs would be established in Florida. Over the next six months, the state will further define the process that will be utilized to prioritized waterbodies for TMDL development. It is critical that all agencies with an interest in water quality participate in this process to ensure that their concerns are incorporated, particularly in south Florida.

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We look forward to being an active partner with the local federal offices as they move forward to implement this policy. Again, we thank you for the opportunity to comment on this draft and look forward to receiving the final version.

Sincerely,

Dan Cary
Director, Planning Department
South Florida Water Management District

DC/mm

cc: Richard Harvey, EPA SFO
Dick Ring, ENP