Recent History: Alligators v. Litigators

- 1988: Federal lawsuit filed against the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD)
- 1992: U.S. and Defendants enter into a settlement agreement
- 1994: Florida Legislature enacts the Everglades Forever Act
- 2004: Modifications to the act and state rulemaking result in an additional legal challenge
- 2008-2010: Judgements result in a comprehensive plan for achieving water quality standards for discharges into the Everglades.
Recent History:
Impacts to Fish and Wildlife

- Mix of regulatory releases and above average rainfall, paired with distribution of rainfall and sustained high water levels.
- High water levels resulted in 159 confirmed deer mortalities, 67% occurred in WCA3AS.
- Majority of mortalities (~70%) occurred in 1.5-2.5 age range.
- Adversely effected future recruitment.
Average water levels in Everglades Wildlife Management Area (63, 64, & 65 gauge average)
Recent History: The Everglades Forever Act

- 1994 Everglades Forever Act
  ~40,000 acres of stormwater treatment areas (STAs)
- 2003 EFA Amendments
  - Compartments B and C expansions (~17,000 acres)
  - 10 part per billion water quality standard for phosphorus
Recent History:
The Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan

• 1992 and 1996: Central and Southern Florida Flood Control Project Restudy was authorized.
• 2000: Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan was authorized by Congress/Florida Legislature.
  - 68 Projects ranging from the Northern Everglades Watershed to Florida Bay.
  - Improve water quality, quantity, timing and distribution.
  - Specifically identified environmental purposes.
• 50/50 partnership between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and SFWMD
Recent History:
Restoration Strategies Water Quality Plan
Recent History:
Central Everglades Planning Project

- Beneficial impact to seasonal fluctuations in hydrology
- Restore hydropatterns in WCA 3
- Slow/eliminate adverse topographic changes
- Enhance ridge and slough systems and tree islands
- Natural flow path
- Benefit northern estuaries
- Fresh water for Florida Bay
Recent History
Modified Waters/Tamiami Next Steps

- Modified Water Delivery to Everglades National Park/C-111 Project
- Everglades National Park Bridging
- CEPP (Old Tamiami Trail)
Authorities/Funding

State:
- EFA: 373.4592, CERP 373.1501/1502 (50/50), NEEPP: 373.4595
- Funding: Legislative Budget Requests, ad valorem taxes, other revenue (Everglades Agricultural Area/Alligator Alley Tolls)

Federal:
- Administrative budget requests/federal budget process
- NEPA: Environmental Impact Statement/Project Implementation Report
- U.S. Army Corps Approval (Civil Works Review Board, Chief’s Report)
- Congressional Authorization (Water Resource Development Act or Water Resources Reform and Development Act)
Challenges Still Facing Ecosystem Restoration

- Water Quality v. Water Quantity
  - Water quality- ecosystem health and habitat- gradual effects
  - Water quantity- flood control, water supply, wildlife, habitat, threatened and endangered species- short term/immediate

- Dedicated funding
- Federal authorization schedule/frequency
FWC’s Response

- 2007 FWC Commissioner Bergeron initiated the first High Water Action Meeting between partner agencies with regulatory/operational authorities in the EWMA.
- Develop Operational strategies BEFORE an event occurs.
  - Utilize existing infrastructure in the interim.
  - Identify and use all of the “tools in the toolbox.”
  - Avoid, minimize and mitigate for high water level events (depth/duration).
- Developed an internal team with Everglades specific knowledge that reviews and participates in the planning of Everglades restoration projects.
- Developed a position paper with regards to operational water levels in the EWMA for other agencies to use as a guide for future operational plan development.
FWC Ongoing Efforts

- Annual High Water Meetings
- Kissimmee Okeechobee Everglades Big Cypress Coordinating (KOEBCC) Team
- Planning level involvement: e.g. Restoration Strategies Reservoir planning
- Holey Land (SFWMD/DEP/SFWMD) regulation schedule
- CEPP: Old Tamiami Trail Removal
- Exotic/invasive Species
- South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force (SFERTF)
- SFERTF Working Group