

Appendix 1-1: Overview of the Volume I Peer-Review Process

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PEER-REVIEW PROCESS

The draft *2013 South Florida Environmental Report (SFER) – Volume I* was prepared during summer 2012 and web-posted in September–October 2012 for external peer and public review on the South Florida Water Management District’s (SFWMD or District) website at www.sfwmd.gov/sfer. In accordance with the Everglades Forever Act requirement for scientific peer review [Subparagraph 373.4592(4)(d)5, Florida Statutes], an expert panel reviewed the draft report. The external review was organized in accordance with (1) typical scientific review practices, (2) the independent panel review process required by Florida Statutes for evaluating Minimum Flows and Levels [Subsection 373.042 (4), Florida Statutes], and (3) Government in the Sunshine provisions of the Florida Statutes. The panel reviewed this report independently and then interacted with each other over the public-accessible SFER WebBoard linked to the District’s SFER website.

An overview of the 2013 SFER peer-review process is presented in **Table 1**. For draft Volume I, a Statement of Work (SOW) was prepared for the specific tasks and roles assigned to the SFER panelists as part of this year’s peer-review process. Volume I chapters and their associated level of review were defined in the panel’s assignment matrix in the SOW (**Table 2**). Through purchase orders, panelists provided the following services per the SOW:

- **Read and prepare comments on assigned draft 2013 SFER – Volume I.** Broad reading of previous consolidated reports, as appropriate, was encouraged as general background for the draft 2013 SFER – Volume I review. These earlier reports and other agency reports were made available through the District’s website, as needed. Panelists reviewed their assigned draft Volume I documents and prepared chapter-specific written reviews including comments and questions to be addressed by SFER authors. Panel comments were submitted to the District via the SFER WebBoard by September 19, 2012¹.

To enhance the SFER peer review, a bi-level review was conducted during this year’s streamlined process. As outlined in **Table 2**, each panelist reviewed assigned portions of the draft report according to either a technical or accountability review; draft Chapters 1 and 2 were also provided as background information as part of this review.

- **Provide final comments and recommendations.** Following the written review provided by the panelists, the SFER authors posted their responses to comments

¹ Panel comments and agency responses to comments on draft Volume I, Chapter 3B, were slightly delayed, as this draft chapter was web-posted late in September 2012.

on the SFER WebBoard by October 10, 2012¹. Subsequently, the panelists reviewed these responses and prepared their final conclusions and recommendations for each chapter, as assigned. Panel final comments were submitted to the District via the SFER WebBoard by October 26, 2012.

- District staff presented an overview of the panel's key findings and recommendations on the draft 2013 SFER – Volume I at the agency's Governing Board meeting in December 13, 2012, in West Palm Beach, FL.

During the 2013 SFER peer-review process, public and panel reviews resulted in various written comments and suggestions to the report's authors. All panel received on the draft Volume I, as posted verbatim on the SFER WebBoard, are provided in Appendix 1-2; there were no public comments received on the draft document. The authors' responses to these comments are presented in Appendix 1-3. Advice from the SFER panelists and other reviewers provided guidance to the authors through revisions while preparing the final 2013 SFER – Volume I.

2013 SFER PEER-REVIEW PANELISTS

The selection of panelists for the draft 2013 SFER – Volume I review was primarily based on preceding consolidated report reviews. Consistent with these earlier reviews and with routine practice in scientific peer review, professional expertise and experience in the major subject areas covered by this report were the main criteria used for selecting this year's panelists. Knowledge of environmental management and decision making was also an important consideration. Similar to the 2012 SFER, four experts were selected to represent the 2013 SFER panel. To ensure their independence, panelists continued to be free of any professional connection to interests or organizations in South Florida. With these considerations, the following three returning panelists and one new panelist, respectively, participated in this year's peer review of draft Volume I:

- Dr. Peter Dillon, Professor in Environmental & Resource Studies and Chemistry Departments, and Director, Water Quality Centre, Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario, Canada
- Dr. Vladimir Novotny, Professor Emeritus, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI, and Northeastern University, Boston, MA
- Dr. Otto R. Stein, Professor, Department of Civil Engineering, Montana State University, Bozeman, MT
- Dr. Walter Dodds, Distinguished Professor, Division of Biology, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS

Table 1. Overview of the draft *2013 South Florida Environmental Report – Volume I* (SFER) peer-review process.

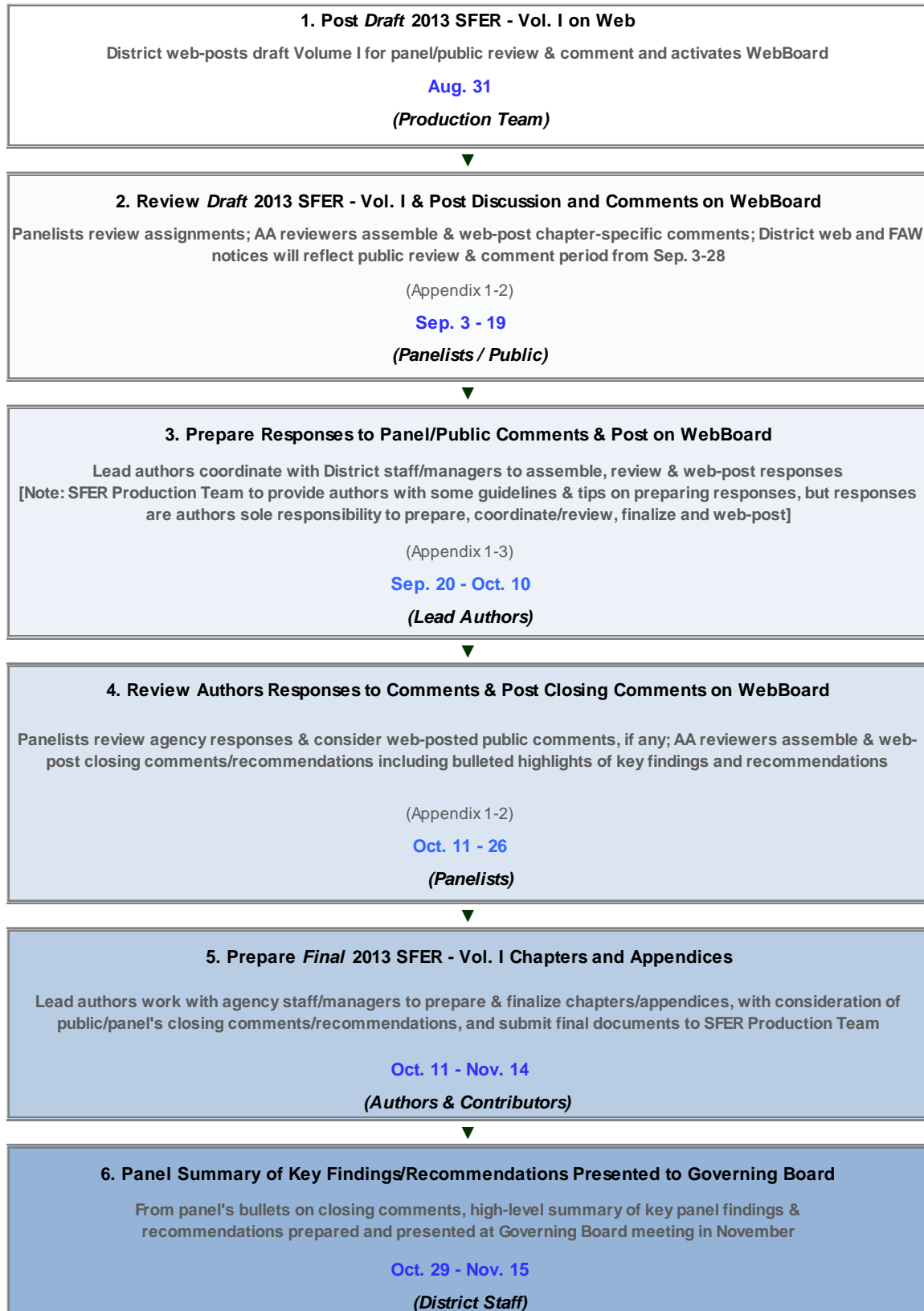


Table 2. Draft 2013 SFER – Volume I assignments of the peer-review panelists.

PANELISTS	CHAPTERS AND PRIMARY LEVELS OF REVIEW										
	Ch. 1 (Introduction) Background	Ch. 2 (Hydrology) Background	Ch. 3A (Water Quality) Accountability	Ch. 3B (Mercury/ Sulfur) Technical	Ch. 4 (Nutrient Source Controls) Accountability	Ch. 5 (Stormwater Treatment Areas) Technical	Ch. 6 (Ecological Research) Technical	Ch. 7 (Nonindigenous Species) Accountability	Ch. 8 (Lake Okeechobee) Technical	Ch. 9 (Kissimmee Basin) Technical	Ch. 10 (Coastal Ecosystems) Accountability
W. Dodds	B	B					AA	AA	A		
P. Dillon	B	B				A	A		AA	AA	
O. Stein	B	B		AA		AA				A	
V. Novotny	B	B	AA	A	AA						AA

“AA” indicates a primary reviewer for a chapter responsible for writing the review, providing questions to staff and responding to comments from other reviewers and outside parties, as needed. “A” indicates a primary reviewer to provide specific comments and questions to staff; comments were forwarded to the “AA” reviewer for consolidation. Chapters 1 and 2 were available as introductory/background information (“B” review).

Levels of Review

Technical Review: This level of review is a more traditional peer review aimed primarily at projects and products and associated methodology and findings. It is expected to provide detailed input on science and engineering and will draw more heavily on the expert’s time to complete the review.

Accountability Review: This level of review targets progress in District programs and projects and is aimed at chapters or sections that are of a more routine nature, and may deal with cross-cutting themes or content.