

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

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PEER-REVIEW PROCESS

The draft *2012 South Florida Environmental Report (SFER) – Volume I* was prepared during summer 2011 and posted in September–October 2011 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 received 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 2012 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 levels of review were defined in the panel’s assignment matrix in the SOW (**Table 2**). Concurrent with the overall Volume I review, a technical peer review of draft 2012 SFER – Volume I, Appendix 1-6, South Florida Water Depth Assessment Tool, was also conducted under a separate SOW by specialized experts. Through purchase orders, panelists provided the following services per the SOW:

- **Read assigned draft 2012 SFER – Volume I chapters/appendices.** Broad reading of previous consolidated reports, as appropriate, was encouraged as general background for the draft 2012 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 chapters/appendices and prepared section-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 16, 2011.

To enhance the SFER peer review, 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. Draft Appendix 1-6 was reviewed by specialized panelists as part of the review process.

- **Develop a final report with conclusions and recommendations.** Following the written review provided by the panelists as well as public comments, the SFER authors posted their responses to comments on the SFER WebBoard by October 7, 2011. Subsequently, the panelists reviewed these responses and prepared their

final conclusions and recommendations for each chapter/appendix, as assigned, representing a final report. Public comments contributed during the review on the SFER WebBoard were also considered by the panel, as appropriate. Panel final comments were submitted to the District via the SFER WebBoard by October 21, 2011.

- District staff presented an overview of the panel's key findings and recommendations on the draft 2012 SFER – Volume I at the agency's Governing Board meeting on November 10, 2011, in West Palm Beach, FL.

During the 2012 SFER peer-review process, public and panel reviews resulted in many written comments and suggestions to the report's authors. Public comments on draft 2012 SFER – Volume I, Appendix 10-2, during November–December 2011 were also posted on the SFER WebBoard. All panel and public comments received on the draft Volume I, as posted on the SFER WebBoard, are provided in Appendix 1-2. 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 2012 SFER – Volume I.

2012 SFER PEER-REVIEW PANELISTS

The selection of panelists for the draft 2012 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. As part of continued streamlining efforts, the overall panel composition was reduced from seven to four panelists. To ensure their independence, panelists continued to be free of any professional connection to interests or organizations in South Florida. Based on these considerations, the following four returning panelists participated in this year's peer review of draft Volume I:

- Dr. JoAnn M. Burkholder, Professor and Director, Center for Applied Aquatic Ecology, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC
- 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

To supplement this year's process, three additional panelists with specific knowledge and expertise in the fields of geostatistics and hydrology participated in the technical review of draft 2012 SFER – Volume I, Appendix 1-6:

- Dr. George Christakos, Birch Distinguished Professor of Geography, Department of Geography, San Diego State University, San Diego, CA
- Dr. Yoram Rubin, Professor, Civil and Environmental Engineering, University of California, Berkeley, CA
- Dr. Jery Stedinger, Professor Cornell School of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Ithaca, NY

Table 1. Overview of the draft *2012 South Florida Environmental Report – Volume I* (SFER) peer-review process.



Table 2. Draft 2012 SFER – Volume I assignments of the peer-review panelists. [Note: Three specialized peer-review panelists also provided technical review of draft 2012 SFER – Volume I, Appendix 1-6.]

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

“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.