Model Builder Application **HEATS** Up the Lake Okeechobee Watershed

*Habitat Evaluation Assessment Tool*

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Lake Okeechobee Watershed Project Supports The Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP)

Everglades Restoration Plan Passes House, With Final Approval Seen

By ERIC SCHMIDT
WASHINGTON, Oct. 19 — The House approved one of the largest environmental restoration projects in the nation's history today, voting decisively for a $7.8 billion plan intended to revive the Florida Everglades over the next four decades. The 346-141 vote, after the Senate's approval by 56 to 3 last month, cleared the way for an engineering undertaking to reverse a half century of environmental damage and revamp South Florida's water supply by capturing more rainwater and redirecting much of its flow into the Everglades.

The House approved the plan as part of a bill on water resources. Before the bill goes to President Clinton, who has pledged to sign it, differences between the Senate and House versions must be resolved. Although lawmakers said there were no serious differences over the Everglades provisions, they warned that it might be difficult to reach agreement on some unrelated projects of the Army Corps of Engineers, which environmental advocates oppose.

The House and Senate negotiators cannot reach compromise, lawmakers said today that they would remove the Everglades plan from the bill and attach it to a spending bill that must be passed before Congress adjourns, probably next week.

In an unusual feat of bipartisanship, the project made allies of Vice President Al Gore, his Republican rival, Gov. George W. Bush of Texas; Mr. Bush's younger brother Jeb, the Republican governor of Florida, and farmers and environmental advocates.

Florida has the fourth-largest number of electoral votes in the presidential election, and Mr. Bush and Mr. Gore are in a furious battle to sway voters there. “This bipartisan restoration plan will undo years of neglect and misunderstanding that has brought the Everglades to the brink of disaster,” said Representative Porter J. Goss, Republican of Florida.

The Everglades plan, drafted by the Army Corps of Engineers, is aimed at reestablishing the 12-mile-a-year “river of grass” that cuts across South Florida. The plan is also supposed to ensure an adequate supply of fresh water for cities and farms, a major concern to local governments, citrus growers, builders and Florida utilities.

The project calls for the federal government to split the $7.8 billion cost with the State of Florida over 35 years. The initial spending would be about $4 billion to finance 10 of the 68 projects in South Florida. The design and engineering phase of the first projects is to begin in January, with construction starting in 2004.

Under the corps of engineers’ plan, fresh water would be captured and stored in limestone quarries and aquifers — untested methods that is area Engineers would also remove dikes and barriers at the eastern edge of the Everglades, which abuts urban Miami, to allow the water to flow into the marshland.

This approach would permit 80 percent of the captured water to be used to restore the ecosystem, giving the Everglades half the total expanded water supply. Currently, farms and cities get 70 percent of a smaller water supply, leaving the Everglades with 20 percent.

Over the past decade, Congress has approved no more than $1 billion to help restore the Everglades. The measure endorsed today is a blueprint for a comprehensive plan to correct more than 50 years of damage to a treasured ecosystem that lawmakers ranked with the Mississippi River, the Grand Canyon and the redwood forests of California.

Representative Sherwood Boehlert, Republican of upstate New York, who heads the House Transportation and Water Resources Subcommittee, called the bill “our best hope to save the Everglades, to protect the wetlands and alligators and to restore the balance between the human environment and the natural system in South Florida.”

Passage of the bill is an acknowledgment that what Congress did in 1948 was wrong. That year, the lawmakers ordered army engineers to build levees and canals to curb flooding in South Florida, then in the first stages of a building boom. By changing the water flow, the engineers inadvertently guaranteed that the Everglades received too little water in the dry season and too much in rainy weather.

“A half century is a mere instant in the history of the earth, but a long time in human reckoning — long enough for the levees and canals ordered in 1948 to destroy half the Everglades,” Mr. Boehlert said.

The complexity and scale of the environmental restoration plan is unrivaled, supporters said. To keep tabs on the program, Congress will meet to review its progress each year. No individual project can go 50 percent over budget without an explanation to Congress.

In debate just before the vote today, Representative Peter Deutsch, Democrat of Florida, said, “We are about to pass the largest ecosystem restoration project in the world.”
Lake Okeechobee Watershed Project Addresses the Headwaters of the Everglades
Lake Okeechobee Watershed Project Has Four Main Goals

- Improve Water Quality
- Improve Management of Lake Levels
- Restore Isolated Wetlands
- Reduce Damaging Releases to Estuary
- Improve Management of Lake Levels
HEAT Helps Us Find The Optimal Ecological Solution

MAXIMIZE LIFT

MINIMIZE IMPACTS
HEAT Simplifies Complex Methodology

- Automated
- Flexible
- Defensible

Steve Schubert’s (USFWS) Methodology
Field_management(Wetland_Results_39, "AO4WHU3", "[AO4WHU2] * [EVAL_AC]", "VB", ")

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erByAttribute_management(Wetland_Results_40, "NEW_SELECTION", "([LUCODE3] >= 1900 AND [LUCODE3] < 20)

alculate "A13WHU1" Field (Final)...
Field_management(Wetland_Results_42, "A13WHU1", "[P_LU] * .1 * [WET_FW0]", "VB", ")

alculate "A13WHU2" Field (Final)...
Field_management(Wetland_Results_43, "A13WHU2", "[P_LU] * .9 * [WET_O4]", "VB", ")

select (4)...
erByAttribute_management(Wetland_Results_44, "NEW_SELECTION", "([LUCODE3] < 1900) OR ([LUCODE3] >=

alculate "A13WHU3" Field (Final)...
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lear Selection (5)...
erByAttribute_management(Wetland_Results_46, "CLEAR_SELECTION", ")

alculate "A13WHU4" Field (Final)...
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reqency (3)...
_analysis(Wetland_Results_48, wetlands_freq_13, "WHDR_ID", "A13WHU4")

dd Join (3)...
anagement(Wetland_Results_48, "WHDR_ID", wetlands_freq_13, "WHDR_ID", "KEEP_ALL")

alculate "A13WHU5" Field (Final)...
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Non-Degrading Land Use Analysis
HEAT Expedites Project Timeline
Flexibility Accommodates Changing Variables
The Best Defense is a Good Offense
HEAT Supports the Everglades Restoration Plan