

South Florida Everglades Restoration

**Location:**

Miami-Dade, Monroe, and Collier Counties, Florida

Contracting Party:

U.S. Department of Interior /
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Project Dates:

Apr 2000 – Sep 2010

Services Provided:

- Multi-disciplinary Project Leadership
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Subject Matter Expertise
- Ecological Assessment
- Critical Resources Identification
- Climate Change Risk Assessment
- Multi-Sector Analysis
- Scenario-Based Approaches
- Science-Based Policy Advocacy
- Action Plan Development
- Briefings and Reports

Key Outcome:

Science-Based Resolution of Complex Litigation over Ecosystem Restoration Project

Project Summary:

This project involved assisting federal and state agencies, the South Florida Task Force, and diverse stakeholder communities to reach agreement and find solutions to implement Everglades restoration while sustaining vital natural resources, endangered species, and stakeholder use of the area. Despite a \$5.8 billion investment, the restoration project was stymied by the competing needs of several endangered species, leading to advocates of each species pitted against each other. The issues were already in litigation; several lawsuits had been filed and more were pending. Initially, the USFWS requested that we convene a panel of avian experts, however, once we were able to drill down on the issues and create clarity in identifying their underlying problems and questions, it became apparent that understanding habitat dynamics and hydrology was critical to evaluating the endangered species issues and addressing the concerns of all stakeholders. Bringing in the right experts allowed us to provide a better, more comprehensive and useful review.

We led assessments to better understand the goals and needs of each stakeholder group, convened a team of expert scientists to help articulate existing knowledge and peer-review risks and uncertainties, convened scientists and stakeholders to work through science-based solutions, and facilitated agreement on solutions and their implementation. The project targeted a diversity of communities and stakeholders, including underserved communities such as native tribes that have a strong historical connection to the Everglades. The project encompassed three separate efforts and facilitated the implementation of several critical steps in the restoration processes including the raising of the Tamiami trail (to restore water flows), and implementation of endangered species recovery programs.