October 20, 2017

Melissa Nasuti
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Jacksonville District
P.O. Box 4970
Jacksonville, FL 32232-0019
Melissa.a.nasuti@usace.army.mil

Re: Scoping Comments for the Combined Operational Plan for constructed features of Modified Water Deliveries to Everglades National Park, C-111 Spreader Canal, and C-111 South Dade

Dear Ms. Nasuti:

On behalf of its 61 member organizations committed to the protection and restoration of America’s Everglades, the Everglades Coalition submits these comments on the scoping assessment for the Combined Operational Plan (COP), to define operations for the constructed features of the Modified Water Deliveries (MWD) to Everglades National Park (ENP), C-111 Spreader Canal, and C-111 South Dade Projects.

We understand that the COP will result in a comprehensive, integrated water control plan for the operation of water management infrastructure associated with the MWD and C-111 projects. The Everglades Coalition and its member organizations have long advocated for the planning, funding, and construction of these critical projects to advance ecological restoration of the Southern Everglades and Florida Bay. MWD is a project initiated and funded by the National Park Service with the primary intention to benefit ENP, with ancillary goals for South Dade agriculture. The C-111 Spreader Canal and South Dade Projects seek to further correct the damage inflicted to Florida Bay and ENP by the C&S Flood Control Project by reestablishing the hydrologic flow between Taylor Slough and Shark River Slough. Just like MDW, these projects keep the water in the natural areas and away from South Dade.

We appreciate the work by state and federal agencies that has resulted in the restoration infrastructure that is on the ground today and look forward to remaining engaged stakeholders through the COP planning process.
Finalizing the COP will be the realization of decades of work and millions of dollars in taxpayer investment by the American people to benefit Everglades National Park and Florida Bay. As such, maximizing ecological benefits to the Southern Everglades must be the primary focus of the COP. Specifically, the final plan should:

1. Eliminate the use of the S-197, as identified in the project documents.
2. Increase the canal stages of the C-111 at S-18C, as stated in the project documents.
3. Achieve restoration of water levels in ENP and Florida Bay, as stated in project documents.
4. Set the stage for more water deliveries to ENP and Florida Bay in anticipation of the Central Everglades Plan (CEP), as planned in CERP.
5. Work to reduce harmful discharges to Barnes Sound and Manatee Bay.

With a completed network of restoration and flood control infrastructure in place, the COP can outline a plan to move away from damaging emergency operations that continue to harm the Greater Everglades ecosystem. Instead, we can rely on the restoration infrastructure that has long been planned to move water in a way that is both beneficial to the natural system and protective of stakeholders in Miami-Dade County.

We look forward to remaining engaged through the COP planning process and appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the scope of this effort. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mark Perry  
Co-Chair

Michael J. Baldwin  
Co-Chair