



Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program
1926 Victoria Avenue, Fort Myers FL 33901
239/338-2556, Fax 239/338-2560, www.chnep.org

December 18, 2007

Colonel Paul L. Grosskruger, District Engineer
Jacksonville District Corps of Engineers
U.S. Department of the Army
701 San Marco Blvd
Jacksonville FL 32207-8175

Dear Colonel Grosskruger:

From 1975-1978 the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency undertook a programmatic area-wide environmental impact statement (EIS) for the phosphate-mining region in south central Florida. That effort was intended to address the impacts of phosphate mining for the next 20 years at which time it was to be updated.

In November 2003 the Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program (CHNEP) reiterated its request made in September 2000 to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers *for a programmatic area-wide environmental impact statement (EIS) to address cumulative impacts for all types of development – agriculture, mining, residential – in the Peace and Myakka River basins in southwest Florida for federal permitting and funding.* This letter again requests this EIS.

CHNEP is a partnership program, created by Section 320 of the Clean Water Act, to protect and preserve the greater Charlotte Harbor estuary, recognized as an estuary of national significance and one of the most productive estuaries in Florida. CHNEP developed and adopted a *Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP)* for the estuary and its watershed. This plan was developed by four committees of citizens, scientists, resource managers, industry representatives and policy makers. The CHNEP partnership includes, among others, Lee, Polk, Manatee, Sarasota, Hardee, DeSoto, and Charlotte counties; several cities; the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission; the Florida Department of Environmental Protection; Southwest and Central Regional Planning Councils; and the South and the Southwest Florida Water Management Districts.

This new programmatic area-wide environmental impact statement would comply with the spirit and intent of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), recognizing that Corps permitting and funding activities within the Peace and Myakka River basins of the Greater Charlotte Harbor watershed constitute federal actions that may have significant effects on the environment, particularly when considered cumulatively. CHNEP expects that following the NEPA procedure would result in an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

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Recently many government agencies and companies have found the need for this update to be so important that they have pledged financial support toward this update.

We politely request the courtesy of a written response to our concerns.

If we can be of assistance in furthering your efforts or if you have any questions, please contact me at the Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program office at (239)338-2556 x 235. or by e-mail to lbeever@swfrpc.org.

Sincerely,



Lisa B. Beever, PhD, AICP
Director
Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program

cc:

Mr. David Hobbie, Chief Regulatory Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Jacksonville District
Chief South Permits Section, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District
Mr. Charles A. Schnepel, Team Leader, South Permits Branch-West Permits Section, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District
James I. Palmer, Jr., Regional Administrator, U. S. Environmental Protection Agency Region IV
The Honorable Charlie Crist, Governor, State of Florida
Mr. Michael P. Sole, Secretary, Department of Environmental Protection
Ms. Judy C. Whitehead, Governing Board Chair, Southwest Florida Water Management District
The Honorable Mel Martinez, United States Senate
The Honorable Bill Nelson, United States Senate
The Honorable Adam Putnam, United States House of Representatives, Florida 12th District
The Honorable Vern Buchanan, United States House of Representatives, Florida 13th District
The Honorable Connie Mack, United States House of Representatives, Florida 14th District
The Honorable Tim Mahoney, United States House of Representatives, Florida 16th District
Charlotte Harbor NEP Policy Committee Members
CHNEP Management Committee Officers
Charlotte Harbor NEP TAC Officers
Charlotte Harbor NEP CAC Officers