

Environmental Program Performance Management
Suwannee River Water Management District (SRWMD)/
FDOT Central Environmental Management Office (CEMO)
Annual ETDM Program Review Meeting Notes



<i>Meeting Date and Location</i>	<i>Meeting Attendees</i>
May 17, 2006 10:30 AM at Suwannee River Water Management District Office 9225 County Road 49 Live Oak, Florida 32060	Buddy Cunill - FDOT Mary Harger - FDOT Carl McMurray - FDOT Patrick Webster - SRWMD Donna Harrington - SRWMD Bruce Barrett - URS Roosevelt Petithomme - URS

❑ **Purpose and Overview of the Annual Review Meeting**

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss how the ETDM process has been proceeding and gain an understanding of how the relationship and coordination efforts between the Suwannee River Water Management District (SRWMD), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) have improved from a before and after perspective since implementation of the Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) process. The SRWMD provided a “draft copy” of the agency’s 2006 Annual Report prior to the meeting. The SRWMD Annual Report served as a guide for discussion at the meeting.

❑ **Business Relations and Processes Before ETDM**

Mr. Webster stated that prior to ETDM transportation projects entered SRWMD through the state clearinghouse process, permit pre-application meeting, an application for a permit or through the Advance Notifications (ANs) process. The SRWMD allocated the project to one of the six or seven individuals who review permit applications. Each reviewer was assigned one or two counties. As FDOT projects entered SRWMD they were assigned to these reviewers based upon the county in which the project occurred. There was not a single point of contact for FDOT projects. Mr. Webster stated that there was very little communication between FDOT and SRWMD. Any communication that occurred between the two agencies occurred at the time of permitting or minimally during the PD&E phase of the project. The two agencies typically did not meet unless a project was controversial. In those instances, the agencies would hold a pre-application meeting. These pre-application meetings were prompted by FDOT. Mr. Webster stated that despite the limited communication between the two agencies their relationship was good and not adversarial.

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Prior to ETDM, SRWMD reviewed approximately six projects per year. Mr. Webster stated that the greatest barrier to reviewing projects was time and resource allocation. SRWMD reviewed projects in the areas where there was the greatest need within their jurisdictional requirements. SRWMD was not involved in the transportation planning or PD&E phase of a project. Mr. Webster stated that fast track projects were a problem, since these projects “pop up” late and permitting and mitigation occurred during the design phase leaving limited time to find mitigation sites for FDOT to maintain its production dates. Overall there was minimal coordination between the two agencies.

□ **Business Relations and Processes After ETDM**

Mr. Webster stated that since ETDM the level of coordination and communication has greatly increased. ETDM funding has enabled the agency to hire a Contract Engineer (CE) to oversee the day-to-day operations and act as a single point of contact for FDOT projects. The CE also serves as a one stop shop for all transportation projects. The CE supplements existing staff and provides advanced, comprehensive project reviews through the EST, field reviews, coordinating pre-permit and permit phases. Additionally, the Director of Resource Management serves as the ETAT Coordinator. The Administrative Assistant is also a part of the ETDM process. Collectively, the SRWMD staff work to streamline the review of FDOT projects. The program has increased the communication between FDOT and SRWMD for issue identification and problem solving.

Since ETDM, in addition to the traditional ways projects enter the system to SRWMD, FDOT projects are also discussed at a regular quarterly inter-agency meeting between FDOT and SRWMD. In addition, email notification via the Environmental Screening Tool(EST) and semi-annual Environmental Technical Advisory Team (ETAT) coordination meetings held by FDOT continue to enhance communication and coordination on transportation projects. The topics at the quarterly meetings range from project permits, quality community projects, storm-water and drainage issues for future projects and any needs and compliance issues. The overall focus is on establishing ways to protect environmental resources. Various FDOT offices (Design, PD&E, etc) are represented at each meeting including the roadway maintenance group. Through the Quarterly Meeting SRWMD is able to review more projects including potential “fast track” projects because of the broad involvement of FDOT staff, the awareness of additional sources of information, and early awareness of pending FDOT projects. Mr. Webster stated that without the funding provided by ETDM, SRWMD would not be able to participate in the streamlining program and maintain the current level of involvement. He added that

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the funding enables SRWMD to perform a better review and move projects forward more efficiently.

The ETDM program has provided SRWMD with the ability to review projects via the EST. The EST provides SRWMD with a variety of Geographic Information System (GIS) layers which are helpful with the agency's reviews. These layers can be used for various projects. Mr. Webster indicated that the EST was very helpful. He stated that there are a few additional layers that he would like to add along with historic aerials. Mr. Webster mentioned that the region is growing quickly as more people move from the coastal areas. ETDM will assist the SRWMD in this area by allowing advanced regional mitigation planning. The on-going training available through ETDM will also serve a vital role in allowing the SRWMD to maintain efficiencies for permit applications, complaints, permit compliance and joint agency participation. ETDM will also foster enhanced protection and conservation of fishery habitat through cooperative permit review and design changes at an early stage of project development.

Mr. Webster indicated he was very pleased with the ETDM program as a whole and is very excited about the possibility of the program. He has been involved with the program from its early years and has had the opportunity to see the benefits of the program from both the resource agency perspective and that of the FDOT. He believes that the program promotes an increased knowledge of FDOT and resource agency processes and regulations leading to efficiencies.

ETDM has removed many of the barriers that existed to efficient reviews by promoting early and continuous involvement and environmental streamlining. Mr. Webster stated that he looks forward to the new ideas and processes that will come forward as a result of ETDM. Some of these ideas include performance based permitting for projects prior to the design phase and eventually on-line permitting. Mr. Webster indicated that ETDM allows continuous consultation through all phases of a project and is creating a better system. ETDM also allows for advanced mitigation for projects in advance of future Work Program dates.

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Mr. Webster reflected on how local drainage districts could be plugged into the ETDM process and how permitting would be addressed during the PD&E phase. He stated that the local drainage districts were very strong in South Florida and that the question of permitting during the PD&E phase was an issue that we would have to address as the program moved forward. He also stated that the separation of Indirect Cumulative and Secondary Effects into two separate categories in the EST is a great idea, as the two areas do not necessarily relate. Mr. Cunill stated that there would have to be some training in the area of Cumulative Effects and Secondary Effects. Mr. Webster added that with the changes to the EST, SRWMD ETDM staff would need advanced EST training to familiarize themselves with the new features. All parties agreed that ETDM has created a better way of doing business. The program allows for the agencies to complete reviews and projects in the scheduled time. Mr. Webster mentioned increasing awareness of the public web site would allow the program to make the public, home owners associations and non-governmental organizations aware of projects and enable them to track events and stay abreast of issues by visiting the ETDM public website.

❑ **Discussion of Performance Measures in EST**

Mr. Cunill led the discussion on performance measures. Mr. Cunill presented the Performance measures information included in the SRWMD review packet. The packet provides a sample of the forms that will be used to evaluate program activities during Phase II of the Performance Management System. Mr. Petithomme stated that the performance measures system will be an on-line system. Currently, SRWMD can view their agency's monthly participation rates in the EST

❑ **Contract Management Discussion**

Mr. Cunill led the contract management discussion. He spoke of the importance of submitting invoices in a timely manner. It was established that SRWMD should submit their request for funding 21 days in advance of funding disbursement as required in the new funding agreement. Bruce Barrett stated that the new on-line invoicing system will assist agencies in submitting timely invoices and streamline the invoicing process. The overall objective is to save time and provide an efficient process. Mr. Cunill indicated that the second generation funding agreement would require quarterly invoice submittals rather than lump sum payment with semi-annual submittals as originally proposed. The new funding agreement has been placed on the ETDM agreement website for review and acceptance by SRWMD. Mr. Webster stated that the agreements would be reviewed at the next Governing Board meeting in August.

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❑ **Benefits of ETDM**

- Early involvement in FDOT projects through staffing availability
- Early coordination in projects
- Continuous Consultation helps FDOT meet production schedules
- Enhanced funding to participate
- Increased communication and coordination with FDOT
- The EST is a very helpful tool
- On going training
- Increased knowledge of FDOT and resource agency processes and regulations
- Enhanced protection and conservation of fishery habitat through cooperative permit review and design change at an early stage of project development.
- Enhanced ability to fully identify the scope of transportation projects
- Increased efficiencies for permit applications, complaints, permit compliance and joint agency participation
- Advanced regional mitigation planning

❑ **Conclusion**

Overall, the SRWMD is very please with the ETDM program. The resource agency is looking forward to continuing its participation in the program. Mr. Webster has been a part of the ETDM process from its inception and expressed great interest in observing the continued evolution of the ETDM program. Mr. Webster would like to eventually see the ETDM process evolve into a tool that would allow electronic permitting via the EST. ETDM has greatly improved the way that the agencies do business. The program has streamlining how business is practiced and provides an environment of increased communication and coordination throughout the various stages of a project. Mr. Webster agreed that he would finalize the Annual Report by adding a conclusion and additional issues discussed at the meeting. The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:36 pm.