



IMPROVING SCIENCE COMMUNICATION: DEVELOPING A COMMUNICATION PLAN FOR ASSESSMENT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE EVERGLADES RESTORATION PLAN



Jessica Dell¹, Jazika Levario¹, Jeffrey Prafer¹, Laura Brandt², Rebecca Elliott³, Amanda Kahn⁴, Phyllis Klarmann⁴

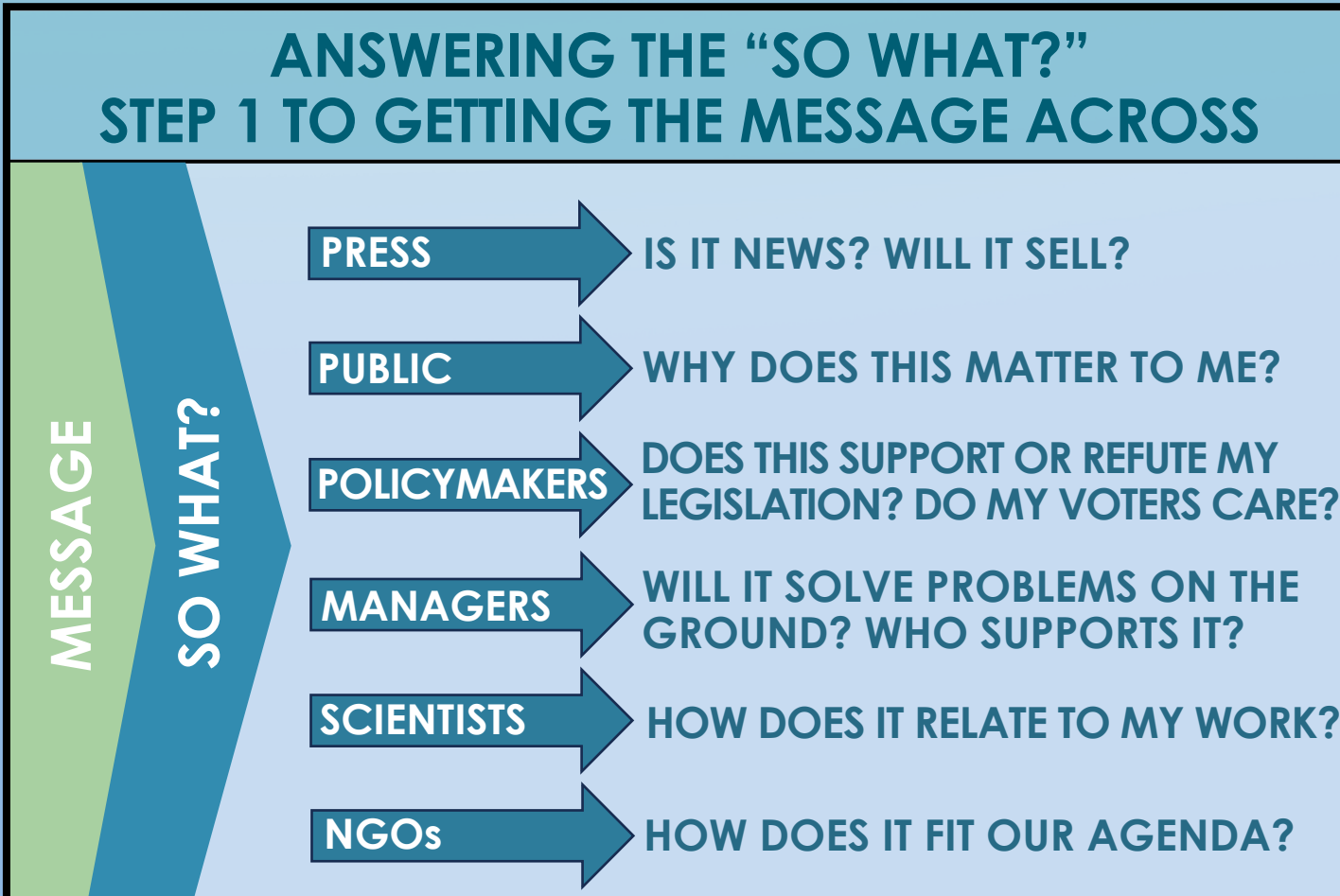
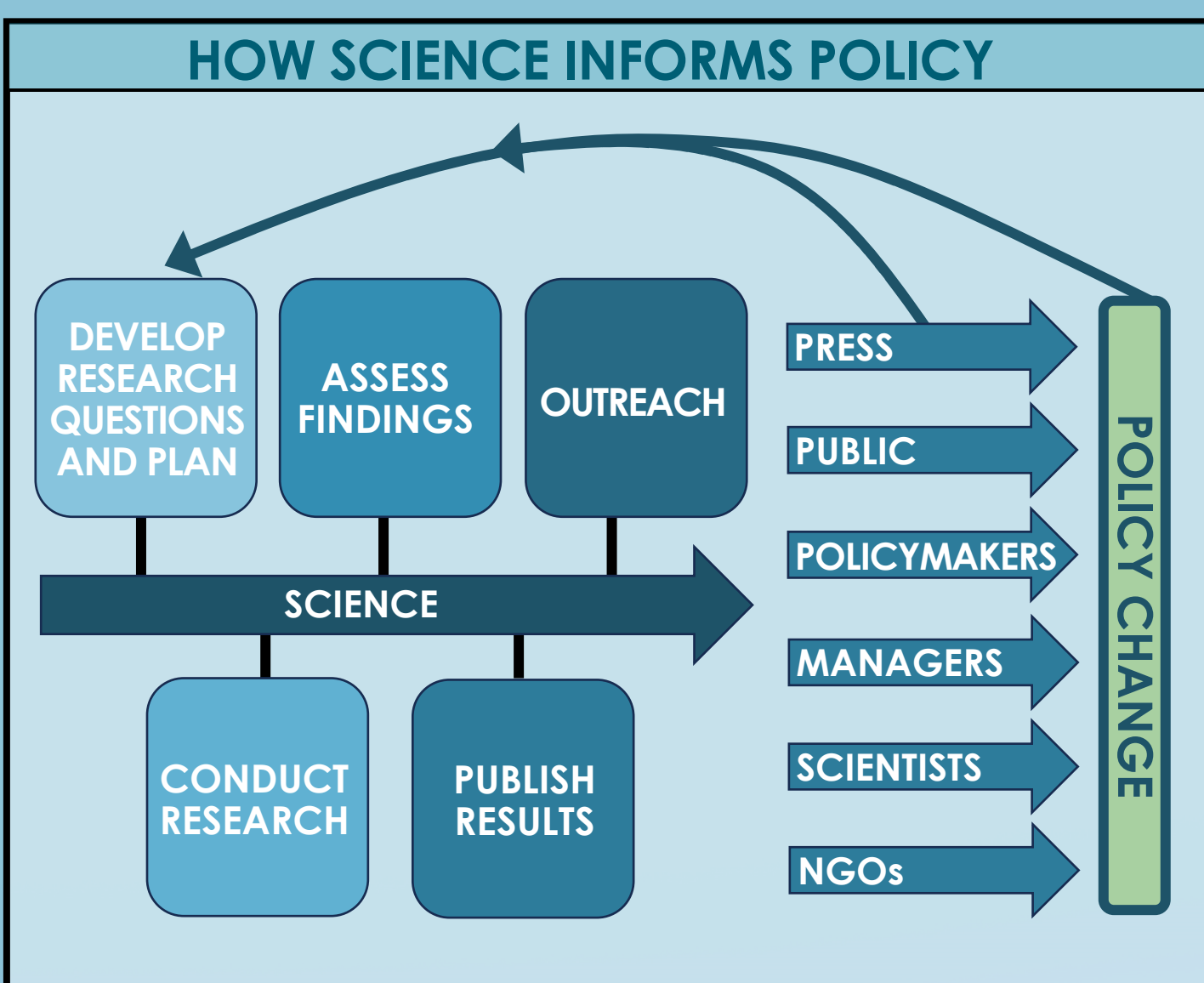
¹U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District, ²U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, ³Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, ⁴South Florida Water Management District



Image courtesy of Peter Frederick

SCIENCE COMMUNICATION

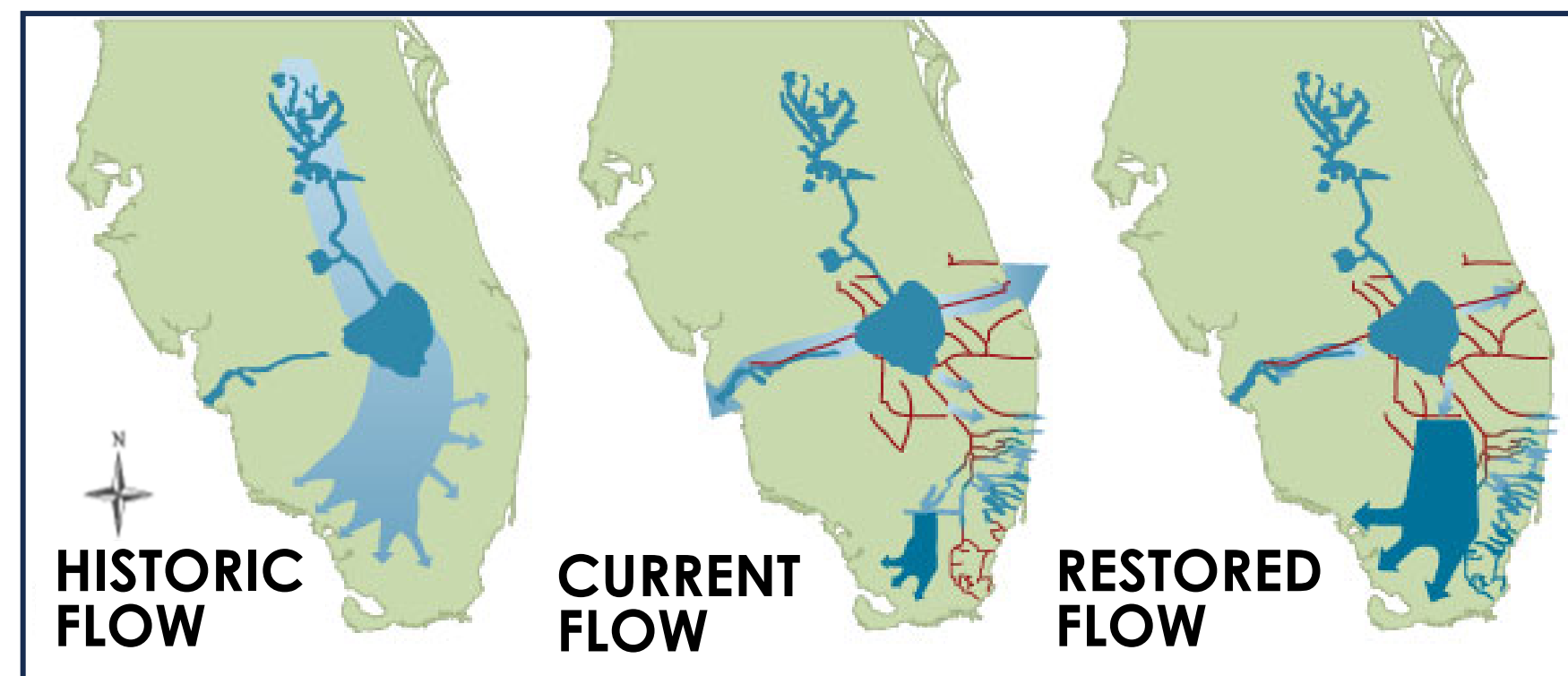
Restoration projects of all sizes depend on clear and open communication among scientists, land managers, and stakeholders; however, scientific reports often fall short in bridging the gap between restoration science and restoration practices. Communication plans can be used by restoration teams to identify their target audiences and tailor scientific reports to the needs and expertise of their audience.



Communication Graphics Adapted From: Baron, Nancy. *Escape From the Ivory Tower: A Guide to Making Your Science Matter.*

THE COMPREHENSIVE EVERGLADES RESTORATION PLAN (CERP)

The Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) is the largest aquatic ecosystem restoration effort in the nation.



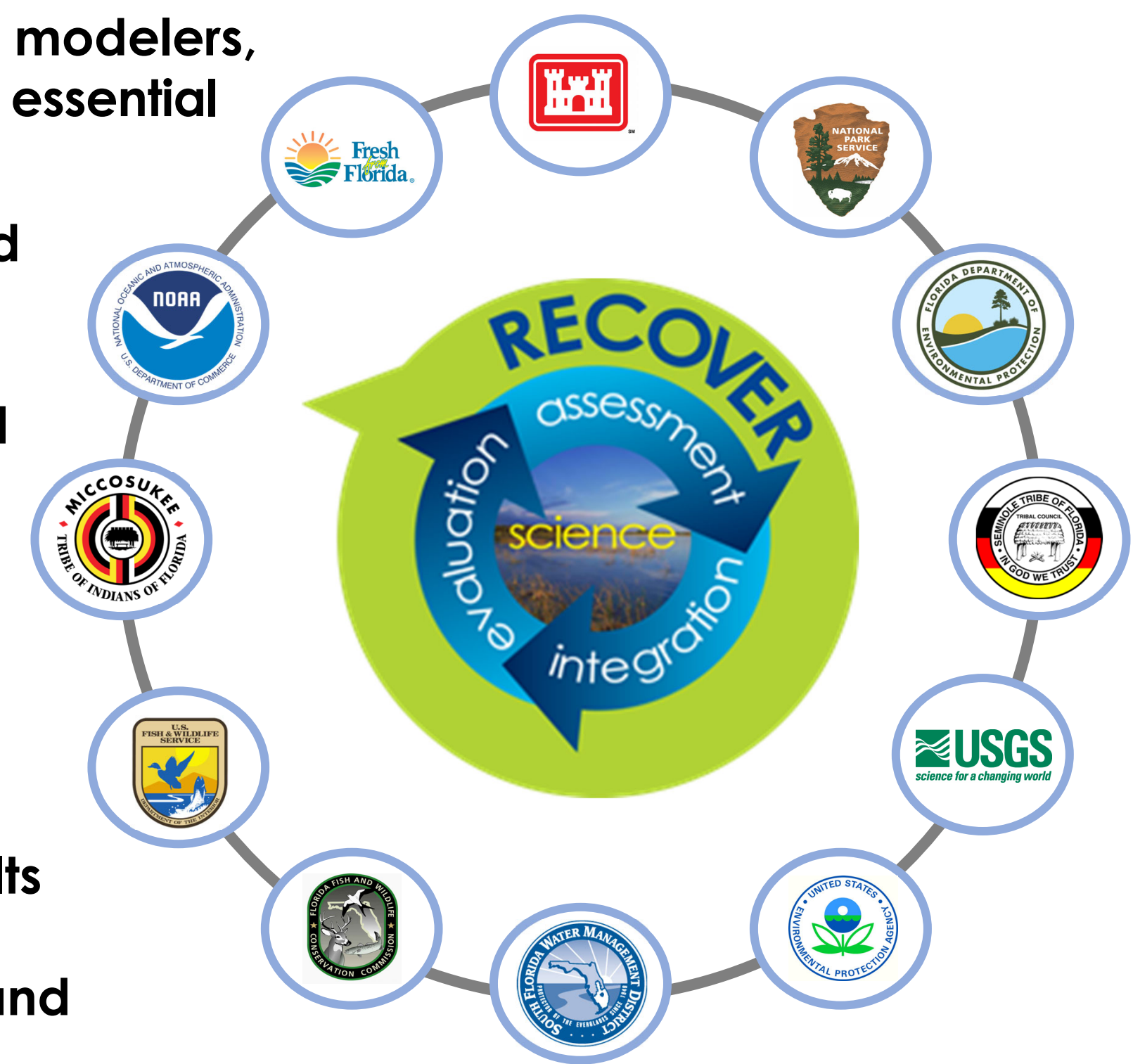
Spanning over 18,000 square miles, CERP includes a series of restoration projects to alter the quantity, quality, timing, and distribution of water throughout south Florida with the goal of improving the health of more than 2.4 million acres of the Everglades while also providing for the region's water supply needs and flood protection.

RECOVER (REstoration, COordination and VERification)

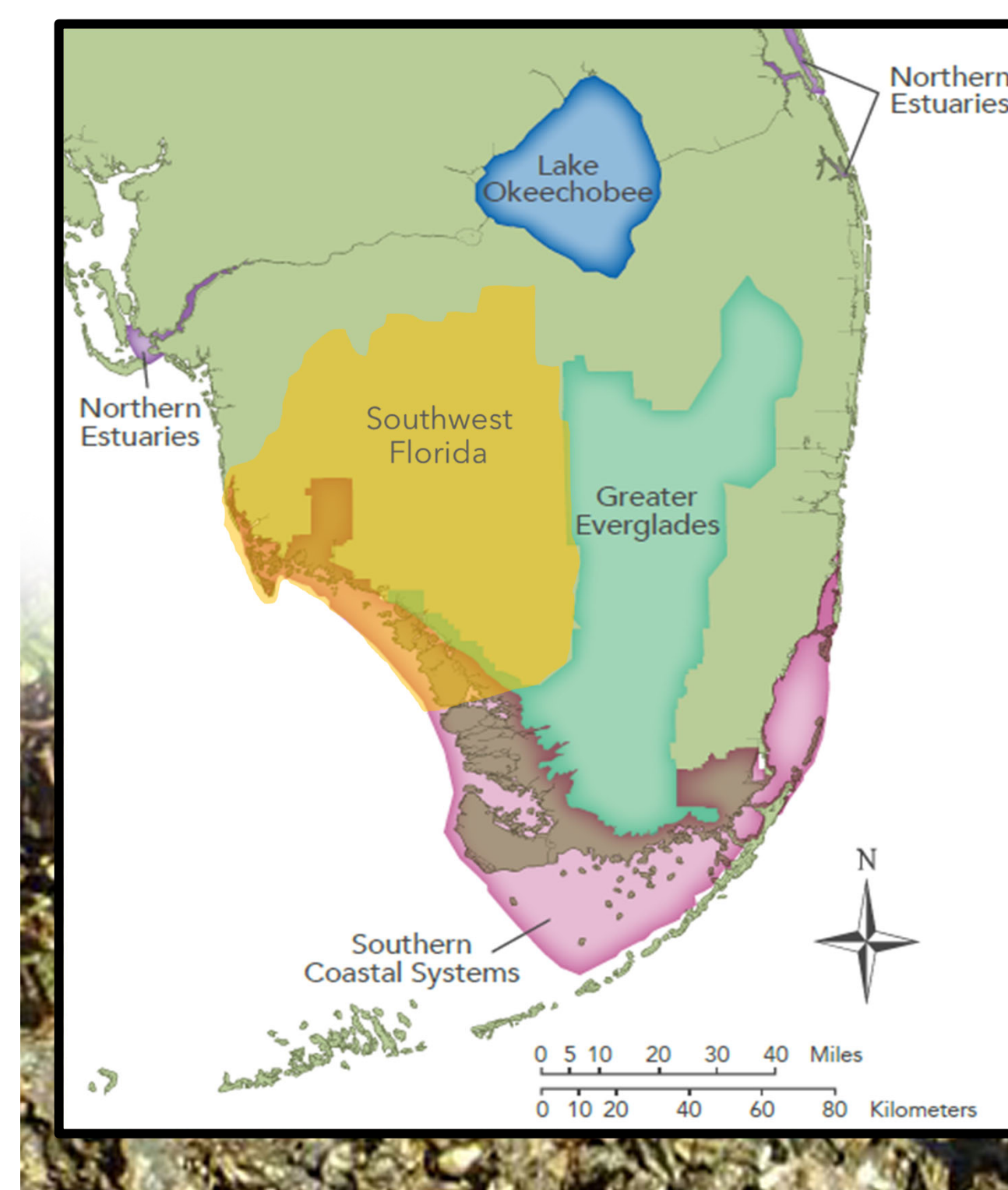
RECOVER is a multi-agency team of scientists, modelers, planners, and resource specialists who provide essential support to the CERP effort.

Partners include members from 10 federal and state agencies and 2 federally-recognized Tribes (the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida and the Seminole Tribe of Florida), and the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD). RECOVER program management rests jointly with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the SFWMD.

RECOVER applies a system-wide perspective to the planning and implementation of CERP and communicates and coordinates the results of scientific and technical evaluations and assessments to managers, decision makers, and the public.



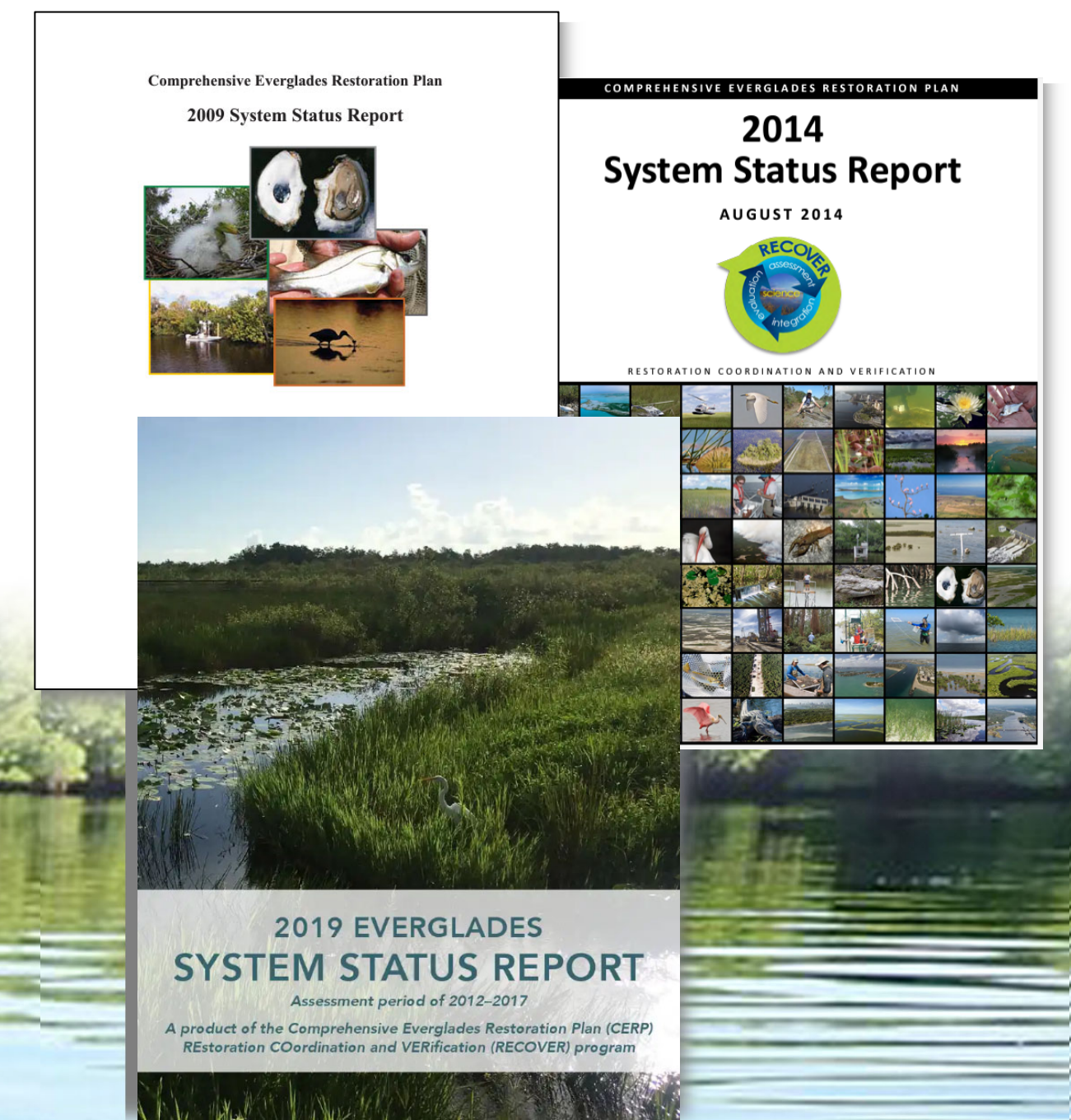
RECOVER SYSTEM STATUS REPORTS (SSR) | COMMUNICATING RESTORATION PROGRESS



RECOVER is organized into five regions or "modules" of similar landscapes for the identification of threats and restoration options. Key ecological indicators have been identified for each region to assess ecosystem conditions and response to restoration.

Based on the regions and indicators, RECOVER produces an SSR at least every five years to assess whether the CERP goals and purposes are being achieved or likely to be achieved. CERP project managers, agency leadership, and Congress use this information to make decisions on the planning and implementation of CERP and Everglades restoration.

RECOVER is releasing the 2024 System Status Report (SSR) in December 2024.



THE 2024 SSR COMMUNICATION PLAN

DEVELOPING THE COMMUNICATION PLAN

RECOVER enlisted the aid of communication experts to develop the 2024 SSR Communication Plan by identifying the target audience and their needs; determining communication goals and objectives; and electing the best communication strategies to support the purpose of the report.

RECOVER also incorporated feedback received on the 2019 SSR to develop this communication plan.



HOW THE COMMUNICATION PLAN WILL BE USED

Following the release of the report in 2024, RECOVER will survey target audience members to evaluate how well the goal and objectives of this communication plan were achieved.

This effort highlights the importance of developing communication plans to support restoration projects and inform stakeholders and decision makers on the status of restoration.

PURPOSE

Develop a roll-out plan to enhance dissemination of the 2024 SSR to **target audiences**:

1. CERP project managers
2. Agency leadership
3. Congress

COMMUNICATION GOALS

Ensure that CERP project managers, agency leadership, congressional representatives, RECOVER, and members of the public receive the report and understand the conclusions of the report.

COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

- 1 Increase message exposure to target audiences
- 2 Promote dialogue about the 2024 SSR and CERP restoration progress
- 3 Demonstrate the value RECOVER provides in support of CERP

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AND TACTICS



STRATEGY 1

Promote interest in RECOVER and awareness in the upcoming release of the 2024 SSR.
TACTIC: Social media posts showcasing RECOVER monitoring with a link to sign up for email notifications about the 2024 SSR
TACTIC: Email notifications about upcoming 2024 SSR
TACTIC: Update SSR 2024 RECOVER webpage



STRATEGY 2

Engage with target audiences and members of the public to collect their input on the draft 2024 SSR during a Review Period.
TACTIC: News release
TACTIC: Email notifications and social media posts
TACTIC: Host in-person/virtual input meetings



STRATEGY 3

Promote awareness of the release of the finalized 2024 SSR.
TACTIC: News release
TACTIC: Email notifications and social media posts
TACTIC: Host an in-person event for the release of the report
TACTIC: Update the SSR 2024 RECOVER webpage



STRATEGY 4

Assess how effectively the conclusions of the 2024 SSR were communicated.
TACTIC: Develop a survey and request responses by email
TACTIC: Discuss internally at a RECOVER meeting

Background Images (Clockwise from lower left): Florida Bay (Southern Estuaries); Oyster Monitoring (Northern Estuaries); Moonshine Bay (Lake Okeechobee); Water Conservation Area 3 (Greater Everglades).

