

# LAKE OKEECHOBEE SYSTEM OPERATING MANUAL (LOSOM)

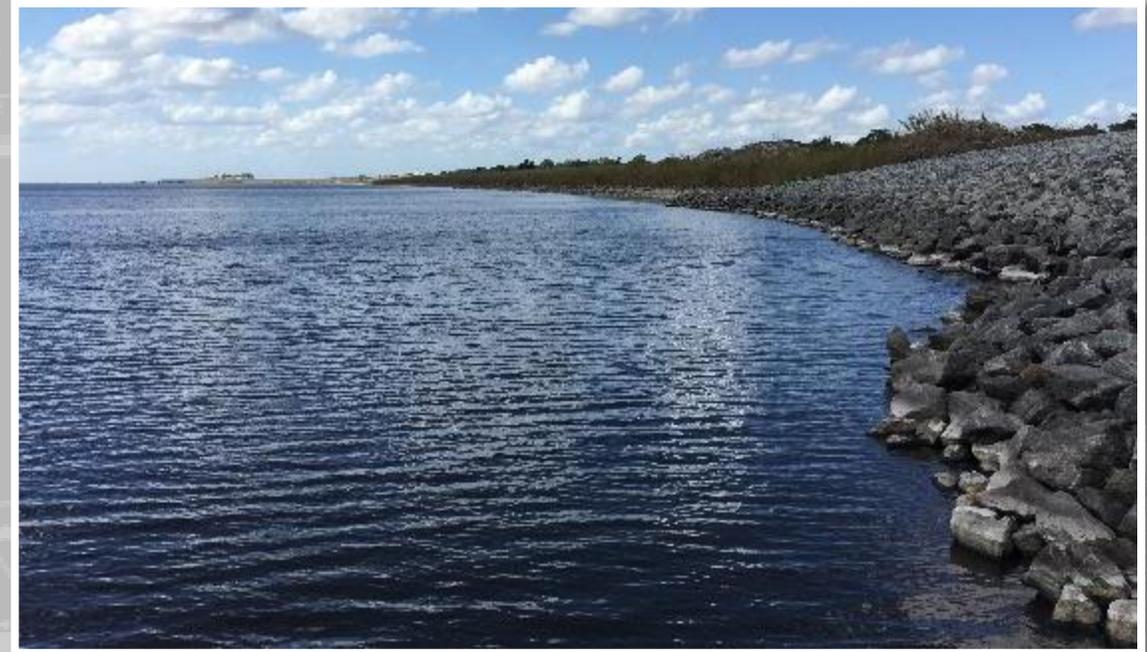
## PROJECT DELIVERY TEAM (PDT) MEETING

August 20, 2019  
Clewiston, FL

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Jacksonville District



US Army Corps  
of Engineers®





# AGENDA



## Morning Session

1. Introduction
2. LOSOM Process and Planning Framework
3. Break
4. PDT Feedback
5. Public Comment Period

- 9:30 AM – 9:45 AM
- 9:45 AM – 10:45 AM
- 10:45 AM – 11:00 AM
- 11:00 AM – 11:30 AM
- 11:30 AM – 12:00 PM

## Lunch

1. Lunch Break

- 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM

## Afternoon Session

1. Common Scoping Comments
2. Planning Horizon and Performance Evaluation
3. Break
4. PDT Feedback
5. Public Comment Period
6. Closing Remarks

- 1:00 PM – 1:30 PM
- 1:30 PM – 2:00 PM
- 2:00 PM – 2:15 PM
- 2:15 PM – 3:30 PM
- 3:30 PM – 4:15 PM
- 4:15 PM – 4:30 PM



# FACA OVERVIEW



Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) enacted in 1972 to ensure no outside group becomes the preferred source for advice for a federal agency.

- FACA provides specific requirements to form an advisory committee, which may include members of non-government organizations and the public (F.A.C.A pub. L No. 93-502, 88 Stat. 1561).
- Meetings held between federal official and elected state, local, and tribal officers or their designated employees are exempt from these requirements (2 U.S.C.A. 1534(b)).



# FACA OVERVIEW



To avoid violations under FACA rules and meet the statutory exemption, the Corps will run LOSOM meetings under the following USACE guidance:

- The Project Delivery Team (PDT) will be created made up of federal, state, local, and tribal government officials
- The PDT will be physically distinct at meetings from public attendees, generally by seating
- Attendance sheets will be kept for all meetings
- Public comment periods will be at specifically designated times and not as question and answer with the PDT
- **Please sign-in at the front table**



# PROJECT DELIVERY TEAM

PDT members include only the federal officials and elected officers of state, local, and tribal governments (or their designated representatives with authority to act on their behalf) acting in their official capacities.

The PDT is not an advisory committee or decision making body

**Any recommendations or decisions to be made during LOSOM will be through the USACE organizational chain of command.**



# PROJECT DELIVERY TEAM

The PDT utilizes technical skills and knowledge to support the Corps operational planning and NEPA effort through:

- Information and fact finding
- Development of performance evaluation criteria
- Identification of alternatives
- Evaluation and comparison of alternatives



# PDT MEMBERS



- Sent out 60+ invites to include:
  - Federal agencies
  - State agencies
  - Local governments
  - Tribes
- Encourage all Federal, State and Local governments to be a part



# NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT



The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (N.E.P.A. pub. L No. 91-190, 83 Stat. 852) was enacted to require federal agencies to evaluate environmental effects of their actions.

Federal agencies prepare detailed assessments addressing the potential effects related to a major federal action:

- Environmental Assessment (EA)
- Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

Federal agencies must consider both environmental and socio-economic consequences before making final decisions.

Cooperating agencies are used to assist in these evaluations.

**The Corps is the lead federal agency and has the final decision on the contents of the NEPA assessment.**



# NEPA REQUIREMENTS



NEPA analysis evaluates a proposed action using 10 significant factors to measure the intensity of potential impacts on the surrounding environment (context of action):

- Adverse effects associated with “Beneficial Projects”
- Effects on public health and safety
- Unique characteristics of the geographical area
- Degree of controversy
- Degree of uncertain effects, unique or unknown risks
- Precedent-setting effects
- Cumulative effects
- Effects on scientific, cultural or historical resources
- Effects on endangered or threatened species, habitat
- Violations of Federal, state or local environmental law



# COOPERATING AGENCIES



1. National Park Service (NPS) – Everglades National Park
2. National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)
3. South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD)
4. Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS)
5. Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP)
6. Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FFWCC)
7. Florida Department of Health (FDOH)
8. Seminole Tribe of Florida



**COMPLETION**

**START**

10 Public Meetings  
(Feb - Mar 2019)  
> 8,000 comments received

Decision/Approval

Scoping Period

Educational Webinars

**WE ARE HERE**

Public Comment Period  
(Fall 2022)

Final NEPA Document

# LOSOM NEPA Process and Engagement Opportunities

Public Comment Period  
(Spring 2022)

Draft NEPA Document

Develop Purpose & Need, Study Objectives, Constraints and Considerations

Develop Performance Metrics & High Level Scenarios

**PDT Meetings & Public Workshops**

[lakecomments@usace.army.mil](mailto:lakecomments@usace.army.mil)  
[www.saj.usace.army.mil/LOSOM](http://www.saj.usace.army.mil/LOSOM)

**PDT Meetings & Public Workshops (2020 – 2021)**

Select Operational Alternatives

Evaluate and Compare Alternatives

Develop Operational Alternatives



**ANY QUESTIONS ON  
ROLE/PARTICIPATION AS  
A PDT MEMBER?**



# WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING?



Scoping Period  
(Feb – April  
2019)



Review of  
Scoping  
Comments and  
Development of  
Draft Planning  
Framework  
(June – July  
2019)



Tribal  
Coordination  
(Ongoing)



Cooperating  
Agency  
Coordination  
Kickoff Meeting  
(9 Aug 2019)

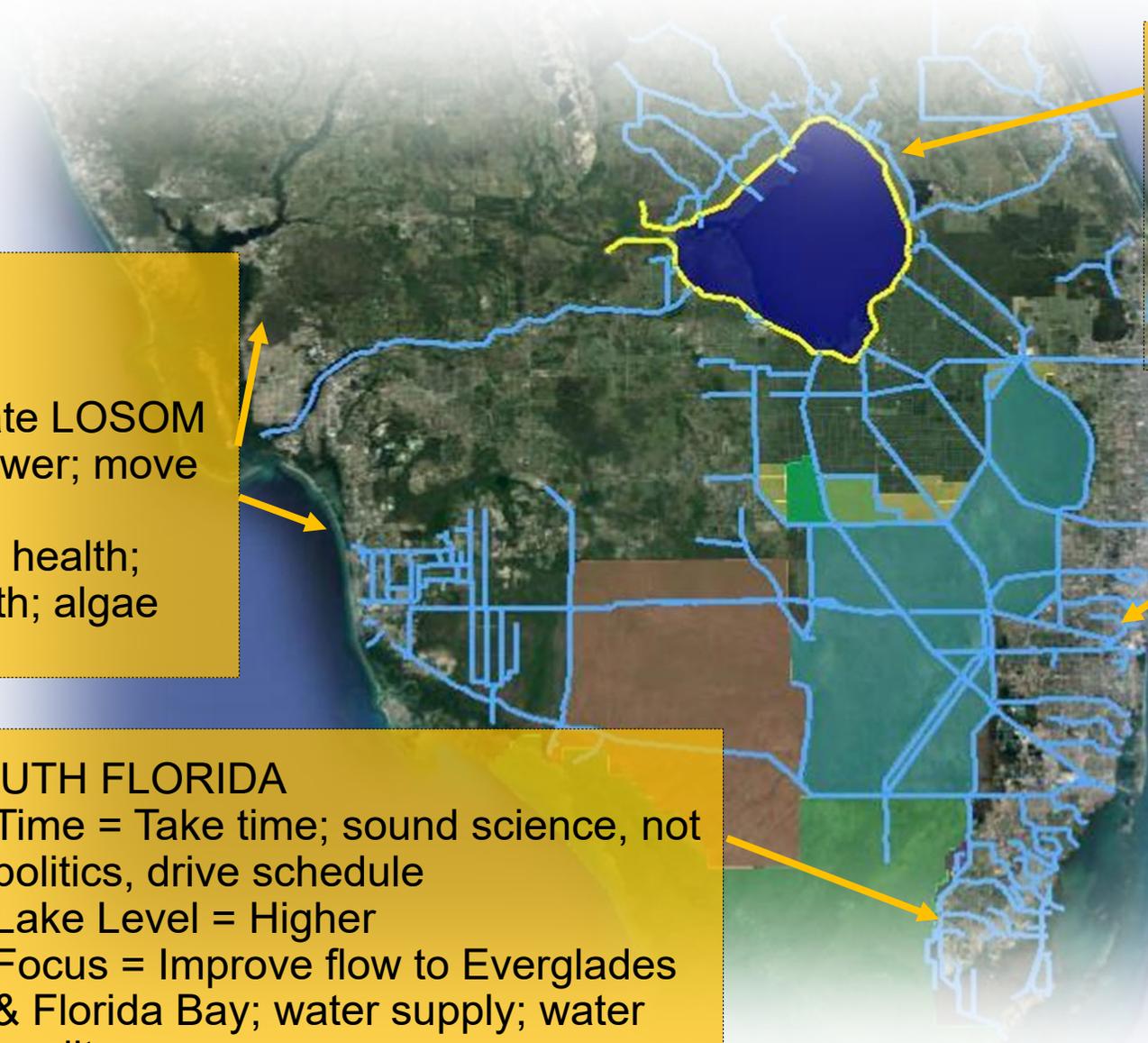


Preparing for  
First PDT  
Meeting  
(20 Aug 2019)





# LOSOM SCOPING MEETING SUMMARY



## COMMUNITIES AROUND LAKE O

- Time = Take time; sound science; not politics, drive schedule
- Lake Level = Higher
- Focus = Water quality; agriculture; water supply; recreation; Lake health

## WEST COAST COMMUNITIES

- Time = Accelerate LOSOM
- Lake Level = Lower; move water south
- Focus = Human health; ecosystem health; algae

## EAST COAST COMMUNITIES

- Time = Accelerate LOSOM
- Lake Level = Higher & lower
- Focus = Human health; water supply; water quality; algae; economy

## SOUTH FLORIDA

- Time = Take time; sound science, not politics, drive schedule
- Lake Level = Higher
- Focus = Improve flow to Everglades & Florida Bay; water supply; water quality



# SUMMARY OF SCOPING COMMENTS



- Lake Levels  
(Higher, Lower, within Ecological Bands)
- Health & Safety Concerns  
(Dam Safety, Water Quality, HABs\*)
- Study Schedule  
(Hurry Up/Slow down)
- Broaden Scope of Study  
(Upper Kissimmee, entire SFWMD Watershed, Florida Bay, infrastructure)
- Stop Discharges to the East
- Baseline (LORS08, WSE)



- Savings Clause  
(Do include/don't Include)
- Move More Water South
- Do Not Lower Lake to 10.5 feet
- Increase Dry Season Flow South
- Consider Impacts to Tourism, Economies, Water Supply, Flood Control, Recreation, Water Quality, etc.
- Use Science based Solutions
- Consider Health of the Lake, Estuaries, Everglades National Park, & Florida Bay

\* HABs: Harmful Algal Blooms



# STUDY AREA



- Entire C&SF watershed area from Orlando down to and through Florida Bay and the Keys.
- Study area defines the limits of the NEPA effects analysis; it does not indicate the areas where LOSOM will look at making operational changes
- The project area is the location where the federal action takes place; for LOSOM this is Lake Okeechobee





# NEPA PLANNING CONDITIONS



- Existing Condition = current condition including infrastructure and operating schedules.
- No Action Alternative = “future without federal action” (FWO) alternative that describes the condition in the future without additional federal action including additional infrastructure.
- The FWO becomes the condition to which all other alternatives (future regulation schedules) are compared and evaluated.
- **LORS 2008 is the regulation schedule for the Existing Condition & Future Without Federal Action.**



# DRAFT OBJECTIVES

Develop a new Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule that better balances the project's authorized purposes and is mutually beneficial for all stakeholders. The new lake regulation schedule will take advantage of the HHD rehabilitation and new infrastructure to:

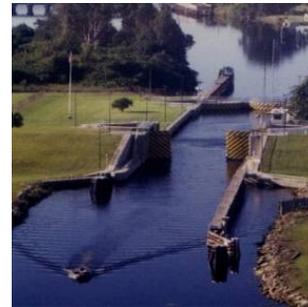
- Better balance Congressionally authorized project purposes



Flood  
Control



Water  
Supply



Navigation



Recreation



Preservation  
of Fish  
& Wildlife



# DRAFT OBJECTIVES



- Improve the lake's ecology and natural resources while maintaining the structural and operational integrity of the project
- Minimize high regulatory releases to the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee estuaries to the extent practicable
- Improve dry season flows to the Caloosahatchee Estuary and the Everglades to enhance the environment and natural resources
- Improve water supply performance
- Avoid risk to public health and safety as it relates to flood control, water supply and harmful algal blooms



# DRAFT CONSTRAINTS



- Herbert Hoover Dike (Dam Safety Risk)
- Design and operational capacity of major outlets and their downstream canals and the Okeechobee Waterway (OWW)
  - However, no new infrastructure will be authorized by LOSOM
- Tribal Water Compact
- Meet applicable water quality standards
- Endangered Species Act (ESA) consultation terms and conditions



# DRAFT CONSIDERATIONS: WATER SUPPLY



- Agricultural needs
- Everglades National Park
- Municipal and Industrial needs
- Saltwater Intrusion
- Stormwater Treatment Areas
- Tribal Entitlements



# DRAFT CONSIDERATIONS: ECOSYSTEMS



- Lake Okeechobee
- St. Lucie Estuary
- Caloosahatchee River and Estuary
- Greater Everglades system
- Lake Worth Lagoon



# DRAFT CONSIDERATIONS: WATER QUALITY



- Inflows to Lake Okeechobee
- Within Lake Okeechobee
- St. Lucie Canal
- Caloosahatchee River
- Associated waterways to include HABs



# OTHER DRAFT CONSIDERATIONS



- Economic impacts across the system
- Recreation impacts within the system
- Navigation impacts along the Okeechobee Waterway (OWW) and within Lake Okeechobee
- Downstream available storage, future storage and capacity of:
  - Water Conservation Areas (WCAs)
  - Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs)
  - Reservoirs
- Downstream effects to public and private property along the OWW and the communities south of Lake Okeechobee
- Climate Change



# **PDT DISCUSSION:**

# **QUESTIONS ON NEPA PROCESS OR PLANNING PROCESS?**



# PUBLIC COMMENTS



**LUNCH**  
**12:00 TO 1:00**



# SCOPING COMMENTS

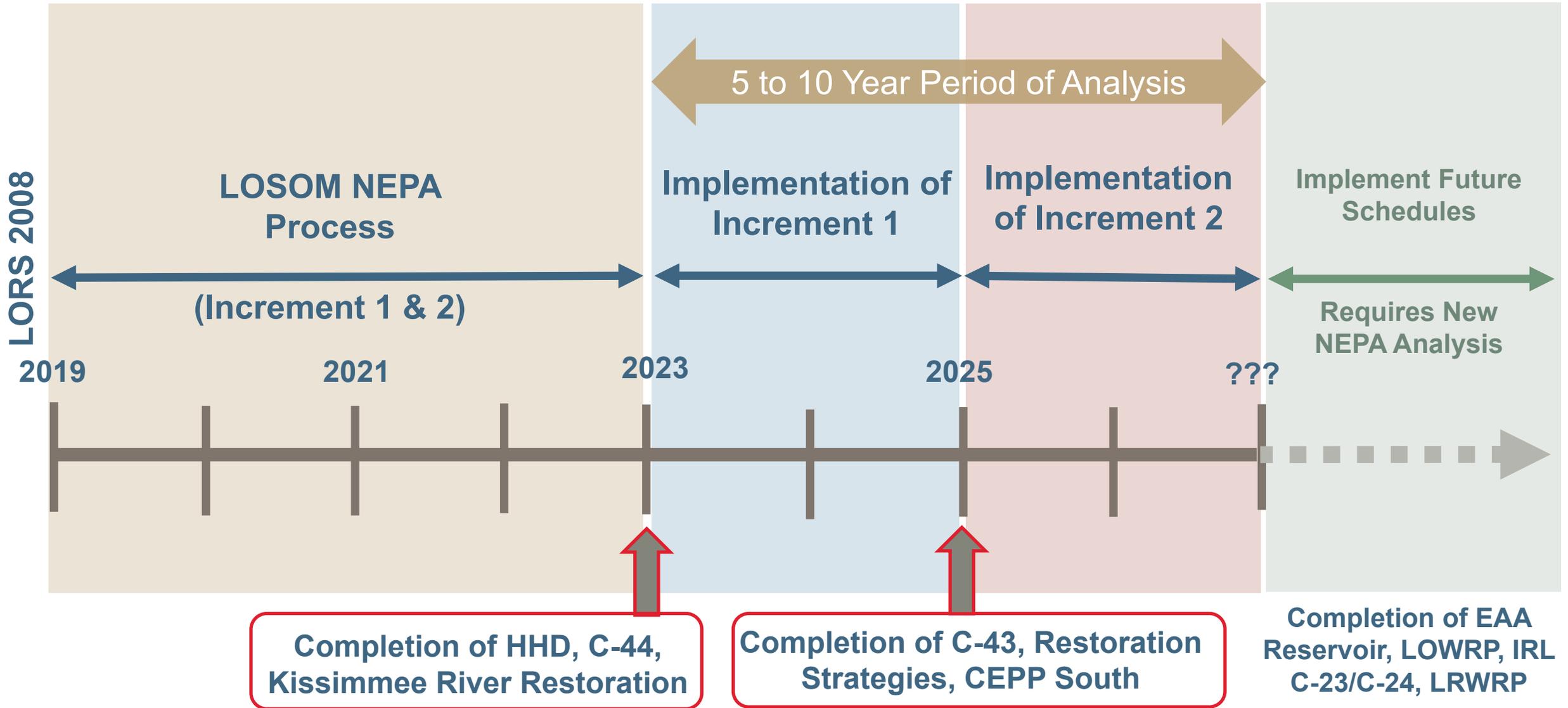


# COMMON SCOPING COMMENTS

- Schedule
- Take your time, use science, not politics
- Human Health (Dam safety vs. HABs)
- Ecological health (Lake, estuaries and everglades)
- Stop releases to St. Lucie estuary
- Water quality and HAB consideration
- Send more water south
- Health impacts of lake water used on crops
- Guarantee the water supply 1-in-10 year drought level of service



# LOSOM INCREMENTS





# PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS DISCUSSION



# DRAFT PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS



- Economic Impacts
- Endangered Species
- Flood Risk Management
- Navigation
- Public Health
- Recreation
- Salt Water Intrusion
- System Wide Ecology
- Water Supply
- Water Quality

**Goal: Finalize  
Performance  
Measures (PMs) by  
December 2019**



# PROJECTS WITH CANDIDATE PMs

- RECOVER
- Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule (LORS 2008)
- Herbert Hoover Dike (HHD) Dam Safety Modification Report (DSMR)
- Lake Okeechobee Watershed Restoration Project
- Restoration Strategies
- Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) Reservoir
- Combined Operational Plan (COP)
- SFWMD Lower East Coast Water Supply Plan
- Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP)
- Loxahatchee River Watershed Restoration



# PROJECT LOCATIONS





# SUB-TEAM LEAD INTRODUCTIONS

Sub-Team	USACE Sub-Team Lead
Economics	Colin Rawls
Environmental	Ann Hodgson
Modeling	Jessica Mallett
Plan Formulation	Marci Jackson
Water Quality/ HABs	Jim Riley
Water Supply	Jessica Mallett

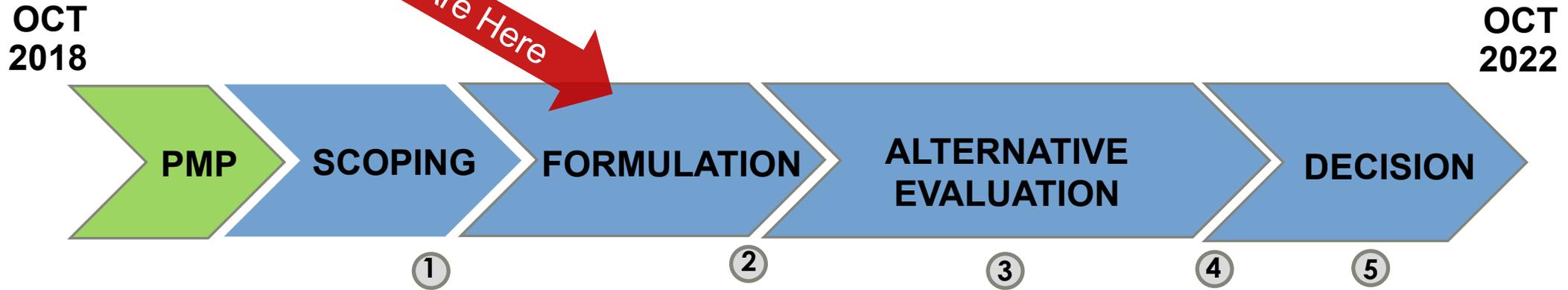
Other Disciplines	USACE Lead
Water Management	Savannah Lacy
Cultural Resources	Chris Altes



# PDT COMMENTS ON PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS



# LOSOM SCHEDULE



Milestones	Date
1 - Scoping Meetings (complete)	February/March 2019
2 – Initial Increment I Array of Alternatives & Performance Metrics Finalized	February 2020
3 - Alternative Evaluation Increment I, Increment II	February 2020 – April 2021
4 - Draft Report	January 2022
5 - Final Report	September 2022



# LOSOM 3-MONTH LOOK AHEAD



Aug 2019  
You are  
Here

- Kickoff Meetings for PDT, Sub-Teams, & Cooperating Agencies
- Defining Objectives, Constraints, & Considerations
- Begin Developing Performance Measures (PMs)

Sep  
2019

- Public Workshops (September 16 & 17)
- PDT Meeting (September 26)
- Develop Preliminary Screening Methods, Tools and Metrics

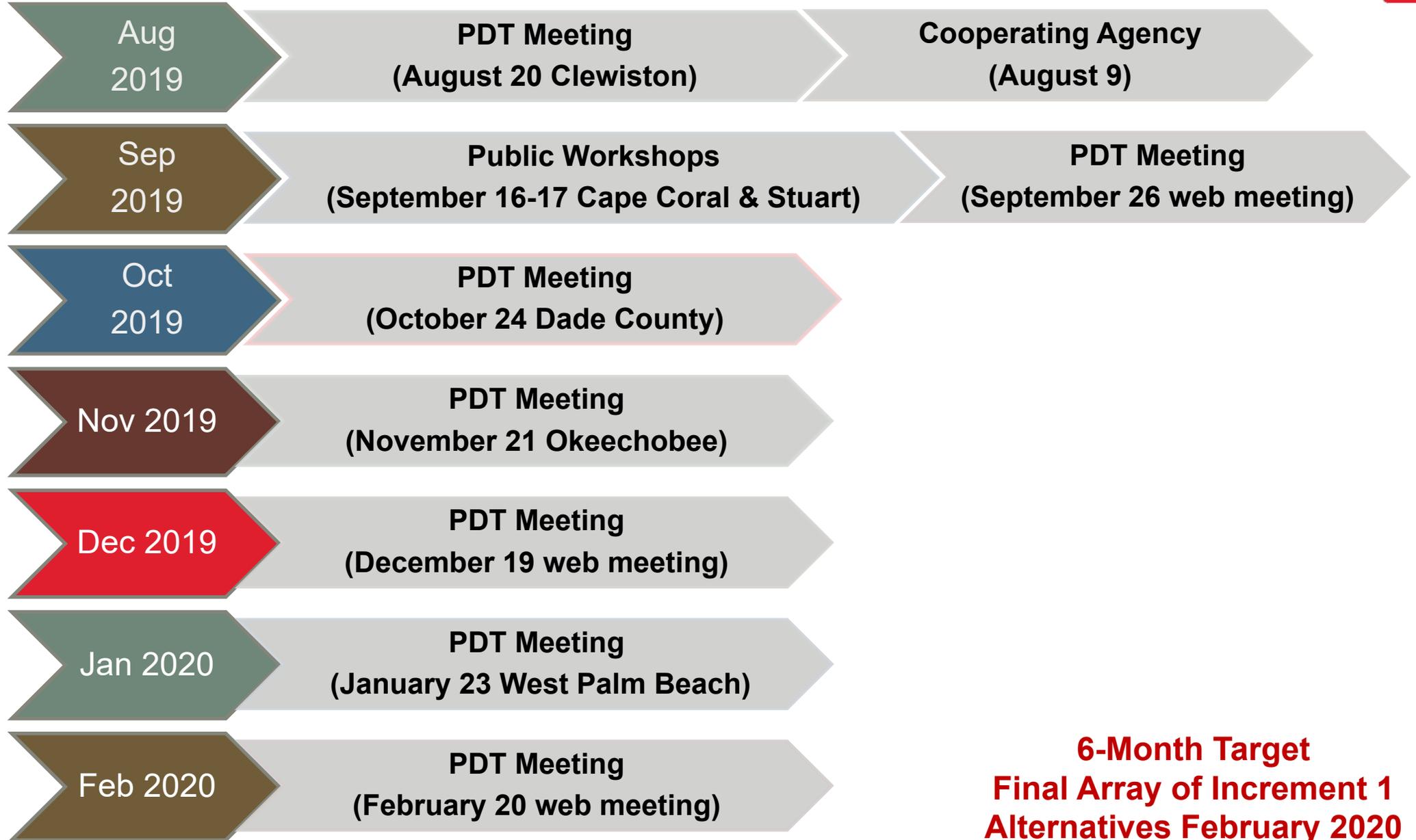
Oct  
2019

- PDT Meeting (October 24<sup>th</sup>)
- Results from Initial Screening Scenarios
- Discuss Modeling Strategy & Formulation Framework
- Continue to Define PM

6-Month Target  
Final Array of  
Increment 1  
Alternatives by  
February 2020



# HIGH LEVEL LOOK AHEAD



**6-Month Target  
Final Array of Increment 1  
Alternatives February 2020**



# PDT COMMENTS ON SCHEDULE



# PUBLIC COMMENTS