

## CORRECTION NOTICE

This version of Issue 1 was posted on May 1, 2003. It corrected an error in the prior version, posted April 28, 2003, on page 3, as follows:

*The Net Environmental Benefit regarding no discharge of stormwater to surface waters now reads "wastewater", not "stormwater".*

Thank you.



# ETP Update

**Panama City-Bay County International Airport Relocation**

**Number 1, April, 2003**

## **Ecosystem Team Permitting Begins for Airport Relocation**

*"The Ecosystem Team Permitting (ETP) process emphasizes collaboration while meeting the public interest. By looking at everything at once, we can understand the relationships better and identify potential net environmental benefits that might be overlooked if the whole team was never in the same room."*

**Mary Jean Yon,**  
**Director, NW District ,**  
**DEP**

### **We're on the Web!**

**You can access ETP documents and other information at:**

**<http://pcairport.bechtel.com>**

*"Agency participants in both the ETP and EIS processes are taking care to coordinate their efforts and share information."*

**Jim Stansbury,**  
**ETP Facilitator**

The Panama City - Bay County Airport and Industrial District proposes to relocate the airport to a 4,000 acre site north of West Bay. The Airport Authority cites the need for longer runways, increased safety, improved support facilities and the ability to expand. It states that such features are not possible at the present site. Applications have been made to federal, state and local agencies for permitting of the relocation. This newsletter covers Florida's current environmental review of the proposed relocation, using a consolidated approach. Conventional environmental permitting in Florida requires separate applications to be filed for each aspect of a proposed project. Different proponent and regulatory staff deal with each impact as a separate issue, and each permit is issued or denied on its own merits.

Ecosystem Team Permitting (ETP) is a consolidated permit review process, bringing proponents, regulators and stakeholders together to understand and review all impacts. The agency's requirements are not less stringent, but the opportunities for understanding resource interrelationships, and dealing with them as an ecosystem, are greatly enhanced. ETP embraces the following purpose and mission:

- "To apply ingenuity, dedication, local knowledge and the best available science such that the natural environment and public safety are protected and enhanced, while producing regional economic and net ecosystem benefits, in an efficient and cost-effective manner for the Airport Authority."
- "To examine and evaluate the Project conceptual plan and, through innovation and imagination, find ways to accomplish the above goal."

The ETP structure consists of three distinct Circles:

- The Largest Circle offers non-regulatory stakeholders such as public and private organizations, property owners, and residents to influence the permitting decision through special meetings held throughout the review period. Public comment is also taken at Smallest Circle meetings.
- The Middle Circle is comprised of federal, state and local agencies that do not have primary regulatory authority over the project, but do have information and opinions that need to be taken into account.
- The Smallest Circle consists of the agencies that do have primary regulatory authority, and will issue or deny the permit. The FL Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and the Panama City-Bay County International Airport Authority form the collaborative membership of this Circle. The U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is a participant.

A separate federal Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is underway. EIS looks at alternative sites and regional impacts while ETP focuses on the merits of the application.

# Applicant Submits Permit Application with Mitigation Ideas

Bechtel Infrastructure (Project Manager) and PBS&J representatives formally submitted an application for a single consolidated permit to the Department of Environmental Protection, Northwest District Office and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on January 13, 2003. On February 21, 2003, PBS&J submitted a separate application to the USACE for a Section 404, Clean Water Act permit. The former comprehensive application was designed to give the Circle Members background information on the project, a detailed project description, and the purpose of the relocation from the 700 acre existing Airport in Panama City to the 4,000 acre tract in north central Bay County.

Specific impact areas were addressed in the application. These included;

- Wetland jurisdictional determination within the 4,000 acres and proposed wetland impacts;
- Listed plant and animal species survey data and impact analysis;
- Stormwater management plans;
- Potable water supply;
- Plans for wastewater treatment and disposal
- Air quality impacts; and
- Consumptive use requirements for irrigation demand.

The Application also included a comprehensive set of appendices, that provided the Smallest Circle Members with details about the Airport planning process and resource surveys that have been conducted to support the various impact analyses. Key appendices included the Cultural Resource Survey, three seasonal listed species surveys, and one year of background water quality monitoring in Crooked and Burnt Mill creeks and West Bay. This Application will be supplemented by presentations on specific areas of impact during Smallest Circle meetings. Members were asked to evaluate the Application for completeness and to make a determination regarding the Permitability in each area of impact. The final step in the process will be to formulate conditions of approval for the Consolidated Ecosystem Team Permit.

- *Doug Robison*. PBS&J

## Environmental Impacts Ranked by Complexity:

1. Wetlands
2. Stormwater
3. Species
4. Waste Water
5. Consumptive Use (tie)
5. Air Quality (tie)
6. Water Supply

## Smallest Circle Ranks Impacts

The ETP team ranked the environmental impacts arising from the airport relocation project, by the degree of complexity involved in review and mitigation efforts (see sidebar). Wetland impacts will occupy more of the Smallest Circle agenda than any other impact, and the members decided to initiate that review as well as one or two less complex issues at each meeting. "We'll work on them for as long as it takes, with stakeholder and other agency inputs", said Mary Jean Yon, Chair.

From January through April, the team began its review of Waste Water, Water Supply, Stormwater, Air Quality and Species, hearing from consultants and staff and establishing additional information that will be needed. It also began to address Wetland impacts, with initial review focusing on information gaps in the application, and recent allocations by the St. Joe Company within the Sector Plan Conservation Area proposed for project mitigation. Another impact, Underground Fuel Storage has since been added to this list, and review will be initiated in May.

# First Middle Circle Meeting Addresses Agency Interests and Sunshine Requirements

Middle Circle participants were given an overview of the application submitted on January, 2003 by PBS&J representatives on behalf of the Airport Authority. They were encouraged to make their interests known so that the Smallest Circle could seek their input at the most appropriate place in the review process. Participants were asked to identify the impacts that concerned their respective agencies, as well as the interim decision points on completeness, permitability and conditions of permitting. In filling out a worksheet provided by ETP facilitator Jim Stansbury, some showed interest in many impacts and decision points, while others wished to be involved in the conditions of the permit that would apply to a single impact.

Florida’s Sunshine law requires public notification of state and local agency meetings, and prohibits private communications outside of such meetings among public officials. The law is applicable to any formal or casual communications of public officials. It also applies to members of an advisory board or committee. No two or more members can discuss in private any matter on which foreseeable action will be taken by the agency that established the advisory body. Betsy Hewitt, Deputy General Counsel for the Water Section of DEP, told the participants that Sunshine requirements would not apply to the Smallest Circle since its membership consisted only of FDEP and the applicant. USACE is an active participant, but not an official member, as it did not sign the Memorandum of Agreement covering the ETP approach. She noted, however, that the Smallest Circle has elected to issue public notices for all its meetings, at which it will always allow opportunities for public comment.

Ms. Hewitt did tell the group that the Sunshine requirements would pertain to the Middle Circle members. This means the Middle Circle’s official members cannot discuss the permitting outside of publicly noticed meetings. Since the entire ETP approach is based on collaboration, many of the meeting attendees expressed alarm that one biologist could not talk to another on technical matters between meetings. Ms. Hewitt told them that Middle Circle membership should be limited to higher officials having the authority to make agency decisions, thus allowing technical staff to participate in the ETP process, including reviews and discussions of a fact-finding and advisory nature, without having to issue public notices for every contact. Ms. Hewitt concluded that technical and scientific staff should not be Middle Circle members—“Leave that responsibility to your administrators” and you can then collaborate at the field level”.

## Emerging Issues and “Nebbies”

Issues that will involve collaboration and negotiation are emerging from Smallest Circle Meetings. One is avoidance and minimization of wetland impacts in an airport environment that the FAA requires to be as free of bird populations as possible. Another is whether and how Bay County’s approved Sector Plan covering future land use should be taken into account in assessing cumulative impacts. A list of potential Net Environmental Benefits (“Nebbies”) is also in progress as opportunities are identified. One major benefit is that the relocation project will produce no discharge of waste water to surface waters. Another is the re-use of treated waste water for irrigation purposes. One potential benefit under consideration and in use at some other airports is the concept of voluntary “green” standards covering ramp and land side vehicles, facilities and operations. Such standards reduce energy consumption and increase air quality.



**Want to contribute but cannot attend a meeting?**

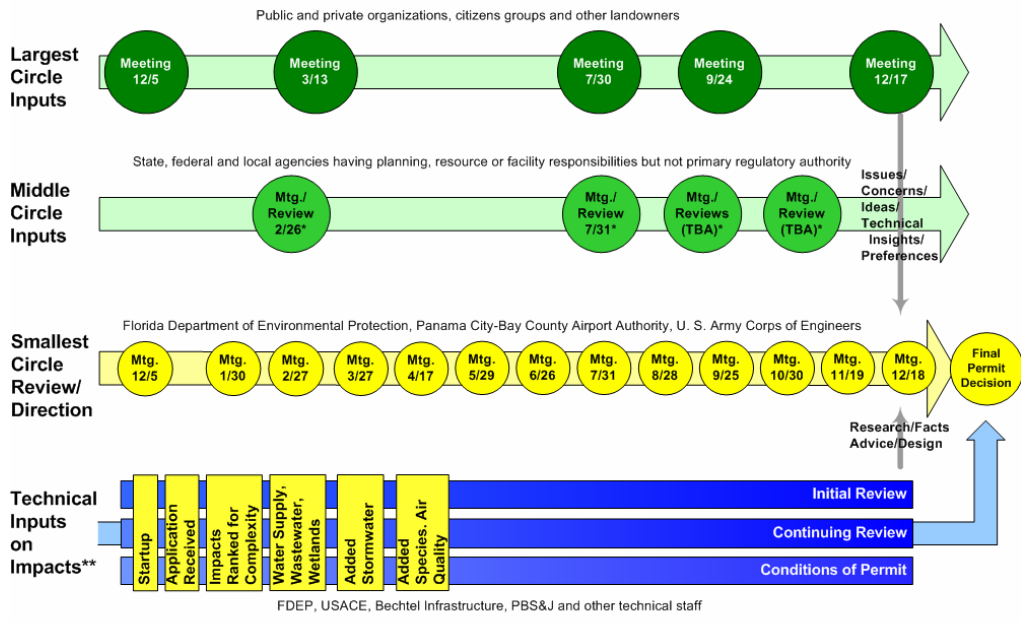
**Visit the project website to download a worksheet like the one above. Fill it out and mail to:**

**Jim Stansbury,  
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34208**

# Work Plan

The following Work Plan illustrates the currently planned schedule of meetings, and the relationships among the three circles. Each environmental impact is being addressed in three stages; Initial Review, Continuing Review and Conditions of Permit. Middle Circle advisors have indicated which issues and review stages they wish to influence, and advance notice is being provided as Smallest Circle agendas are prepared. Inputs from the Largest and Middle Circles are taken into consideration at future Smallest Circle meetings.

## Ecosystem Team Permitting Work Plan



\* = Special meetings with Smallest Circle (in addition to invitations to attend smallest circle meetings on relevant impacts).

Revised April 22, 2003

# What Next?

Circle meetings are planned well in advance with public notification.

The next Smallest Circle meetings are scheduled for 9:00am May 29 and June 26 at the FDEP office, 160 Governmental Center, Pensacola. The next Largest Circle meeting is scheduled for 6:00pm on July 30 in Panama City, followed by a joint Smallest/Middle Circle meeting on July 31 at 9:00am. Both are tentatively scheduled to be held at the Airport Authority's Conference Room, 3173 Airport Road. Watch for public notices for the latest meeting information.

For further information, please contact the following people:

- Larry O'Donnell, DEP [[larry.odonnell@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:larry.odonnell@dep.state.fl.us)] Florida jurisdiction environmental permitting.
- Don Hambrick, USACE [[gordon.a.hambrick@saj02.usace.army.mil](mailto:gordon.a.hambrick@saj02.usace.army.mil)] Federal jurisdiction wetlands permitting.
- Roger Anderson, PBS&J [[rbanderson@pbsj.com](mailto:rbanderson@pbsj.com)] Consultant to Bechtel Infrastructure, Project Managers for the Airport Authority.
- Jim Stansbury, SRBD [[srbd@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:srbd@tampabay.rr.com)] Circle Facilitation.

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