United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service
Biscayne National Park
9700 S. W. 328th Street
Homestead, Florida 33033-5634

IN REPLY REFER TO:
1.A.2

May 13, 2016

Mr. James D. Giattina, Director
Water Protection Division
US EPA Region 4
61 Forsyth Street
Atlanta, GA 30303

Mr. Jonathan P. Steverson, Secretary
Florida Department of Environmental Protection
3900 Commonwealth Blvd
Tallahassee, FL 32339

Mr. Jack Osterholdt, Director
Department of Regulatory and Economic Resources
Stephen P. Clark Center
111 NW 1st Street, 11th Floor
Miami, FL 33128

Dear Sirs:

Biscayne National Park (BNP) has ongoing concerns with the operation of Units 3 & 4 of Florida Power and Light's (FPL) Turkey Point facility. A primary concern is the potential for salt, nutrients and other pollutants in the facility's Cooling Canal System (CCS) to flow and disperse via ground or surface water connections into Biscayne Bay and BNP. Recent monitoring data has confirmed that water from the CCS is hydrologically connected to the Bay, with CCS water moving through or under CCS berms. These data have also confirmed that nutrients (phosphorus and nitrogen) have been added to the Bay system in concentrations that exceed the Numeric Nutrient Criteria (NNC) (62-302.532 F.A.C.) adopted by the State of Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for Biscayne Bay. These nutrients can stimulate algal growth and increase chlorophyll *a* concentrations above the NNC criterion. We are aware that discussions are occurring among the regulatory agencies regarding how to best address this situation. BNP respectfully requests that you include the National Park Service (NPS) in your deliberations. The NPS is required by law to "conserve the scenery, natural and historic objects, and wild life… in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." (54 USC 100101(1)) Because of our special expertise regarding BNP and Biscayne Bay, we are well suited to provide assistance.

The original scope and extent of sampling identified in the Units 3 and 4 Uprate Monitoring Plan, approved in the Fifth Supplemental Agreement with the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), FDEP, and Miami-Dade County Regulatory and Economic Resources Division of Environmental Resources Management (RER-DERM), needs to be reestablished as a requirement in order to assess the impacts of the CCS. In addition, we request the following new requirements be added.

First, we call for establishing a more extensive nearshore water quality monitoring network that is maintained by FPL and provides data on potential loading of nutrients and other contaminants to the Bay, as well as identifying the ecological impacts that FPL operations have on the Bay. BNP would like to participate in developing this monitoring plan and would like the data to be made available to BNP and regulatory agencies on the same schedule and under the same Quality Assurance Plan that initially was adopted for implementation of the Uprate Monitoring Plan. This monitoring effort would serve as an early warning system to alert all affected parties of any increases in nutrients and other contaminants to the Bay from CCS operations. Moreover, this monitoring could be linked to other monitoring efforts so that managers and decision makers have a broader view of water quality and any potential impacts in the Bay.

Second, we call for FPL to be required to develop a strategy for managing CCS salinity, nutrients, and other potential pollutants to prevent impacts to the Bay. This strategy should be developed in concert with BNP and the regulatory agencies. Every feasible aspect of controlling nutrient and salinity loadings to the Bay should be considered, while not affecting freshwater flows to BNP or the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP). Performance criteria for the CCS should be established for nutrients (particularly phosphorous, ammonia, total nitrogen and total suspended solids) and salinity. We suggest having this strategy as a requirement of FPL's NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) permit for the CCS.

Third, BNP is concerned with the relatively shallow (45') injection well used for wastewater discharge at the plant. We suggest there is the potential for nutrient-laden wastewater to migrate via the groundwater connection to the Bay, and also contribute to cooling system biofouling which requires chemicals to control. We suggest that the regulatory agencies work with FPL to facilitate wastewater transfer to the regional sewage treatment system or implement another treatment and disposal route that is protective of adjacent waters.

Finally, we suggest the establishment of an interagency adaptive management working group that would biannually review monitoring data and performance criteria, and recommend any adjustments necessary to ensure the water resources of the Bay are protected. The performance criteria established would provide the basis for management actions, should the data indicate the potential for water quality issues and impacts associated with algal blooms, changes in biotic communities, seagrass die-offs, or other ecological concerns. This group would also be valuable in monitoring the effects of construction activities for the proposed Units 6 & 7, should those reactors be built. We recommend that this group be comprised of members of the regulatory community (DERM, FDEP, SFWMD, EPA), as well as the NPS and FPL.

We appreciate your consideration of these matters, irrespective of any enforcement actions the regulatory agencies may take. We believe this level of vigilance is warranted to protect BNP now and in the future. Questions can be addressed to BISC_Superintendent@nps.gov, or you can contact me at 786-335-3646.

Sincerely,

Elsa M. Alvear

for William L. Cox
Interim Superintendent