

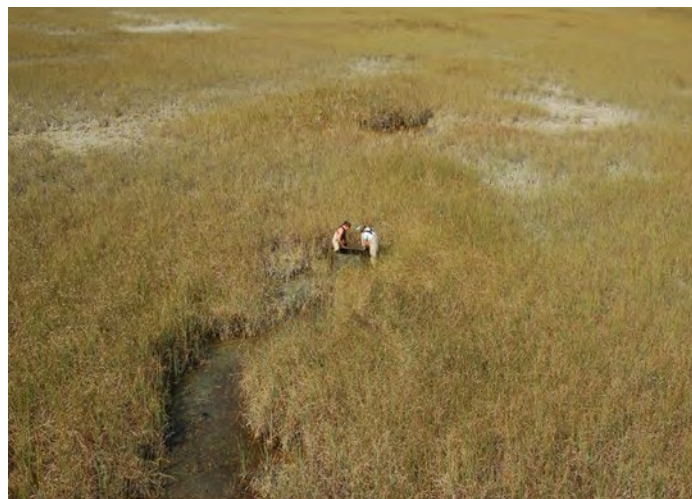


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It is critical that the environmental/ecological monitoring and assessment data generated for the restoration of the Everglades, as part of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), be able to withstand rigorous scrutiny. This means the data must be of known and documented quality. For CERP, achieving high-quality data is particularly challenging because the data are collected by many organizations for projects and programs with monitoring activities that may have different objectives. The CERP Quality Assurance Oversight Team (QAOT) was established by CERP Guidance Memorandum 041.00 that became effective November 19, 2003. The QAOT is charged with the responsibility of providing quality assurance (QA) oversight and guidance to ensure quality practices and requirements are being documented and implemented. The data collected for CERP should be comparable and merged to generate an overall picture of the current state of the Everglades system, and to track the ecological and hydrologic improvements that result from CERP projects that will span 30 years or more. The use of data with unknown, unequal, or untraceable quality could result in decision errors or legal challenges. Programmatic data quality can be achieved by systematically incorporating quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC) into every aspect of data collection.

The QAOT is a multi-agency, inter-disciplinary team comprised of members from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), Florida Department of Environmental Protection, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Geological Survey, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The USACE and SFWMD are the lead agencies.

Each agency and individuals involved with CERP monitoring must share responsibility for maintaining knowledge of the quality assurance system and for adhering to the practices and procedures. The best way to stay apprised is through the Quality Assurance System Requirements (QASR) manual that can be accessed from <https://cerp-sfwmd.dataone.org/data>. In this manual, the QAOT describes the protocols and procedures for CERP data gathering activities in addressing the following areas:



- Water quality field sampling
- Biological monitoring and assessment
- Chemical analysis and laboratory requirements
- Remote sensing
- Verification and validation of water quality data
- Information and data management
- Hydrometeorological and hydraulic monitoring
- Data quality evaluation and assessment
- Soil and sediment characterization

QAOT GUIDANCE

QAOT provides guidance on monitoring procedures, QA/QC and data validation for CERP projects, and serves as the forum to develop consistency among the various entities involved with environmental monitoring, data quality and QA/QC processes. QAOT guidance and additional QAOT information are available at: <https://cerp-sfwmd.dataone.org/data>

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why is quality and consistency of the data important?

We need defensible data to support CERP and we need to be able to compare data across time and space.

Who does QAOT report to?

The QAOT reports to the CERP Design Coordination Team (DCT), which provides consistent and effective communication, coordination and issue resolution on projects between USACE and SFWMD. On a biennial basis, the QAOT is responsible for providing a Quality Assessment Report (QAR) to the DCT summarizing results of oversight CERP monitoring activities QA practices and evaluating whether the QASR is being implemented by CERP projects and programs.

Does the QAOT have responsibility to the project delivery and Restoration Coordination & Verification teams?

Yes, with respect to QA practices.

What are some of the things that the QAOT can do for me?

- Documentation and discussion of QA requirements and methodologies for CERP data gathering activities to ensure efforts remain compatible as time progresses and participants change
- Conduct assessments of field water quality, hydrological and ecological sampling activities.
- Audit laboratories that perform work for CERP to ensure they are performing quality, consistent, and comparable work.
- Review monitoring plans and scopes of work for implementation of QA and QC requirements.
- Facilitate communication of QA practices for CERP monitoring activities.

What kinds of things can the QAOT do for my team?

- Help to formulate a scope of work and monitoring plan.
- Review data and reports for scope of work compliance.
- Review quality assurance plans/manuals and standard operating procedures that contractors formulate.
- Help to review ADAPT/ADR libraries and deliverables.



When do I submit monitoring plans and scopes of work to the QAOT?

Before the scope of work/monitoring plan is ready for project delivery team approval, please send it to the QAOT Co-chairs, Pamela Lehr and Kyle Keer. It is suggested the QAOT review occurs at the early stage of project planning.

Do I still have to submit monitoring plans to RECOVER?

Yes. RECOVER reviews monitoring plans with respect to consistency with the objectives of the Monitoring and Assessment Plan (MAP). The QAOT reviews monitoring plans with respect to quality assurance practices.

What are ADAPT/ADR libraries and deliverables?

ADAPT/ADR libraries and deliverables are an electronic data package of chemistry data that is delivered by the laboratory or contractors. It ensures the correct and exact transmission of analytical data in a standardized format with quality control information.

Can we use ADAPT/ADR libraries and deliverables for ecological data?

No, at the present time ADAPT/ADR data submissions are only applicable to chemistry data.

FOR MORE INFORMATION



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