

# Indian River County Florida

*Indian River County Administration Complex  
1800 27<sup>th</sup> Street, Building B  
Room B1-501  
Vero Beach, Florida*



## Meeting Minutes – Final

Monday, February 8, 2021

1:30 PM

### Indian River Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisors

*David E. Gunter, Chairman: IRSWCD - Seat #2*

*Robert C. Adair, Jr., Vice-Chair: IRSWCD - Seat #3*

*Dr. David L. Cox, Secretary/Treasurer: IRSWCD - Seat #5*

*Shawn P. Elliott, Member: IRSWCD - Seat #1*

*Bobby Lindsey, Member: IRSWCD - Seat #4*

**Linda Caggiano, District Staff Assistant II: IRSWCD**

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman David E. Gunter called meeting to order at 1:33 PM.

**Supervisors in attendance:** David E. Gunter, Chairman  
Robert C. Adair, Jr., Vice-Chairman  
Dr. David L. Cox, Secretary/Treasurer  
Shawn P. Elliott, Member

**Staff in attendance:** Linda Caggiano, Staff Assistant II, IRSWCD  
Jennifer Abbey, District Conservationist, USDA/NRCS

**Public in attendance:** Archie Matthews, AFCD, Parliamentarian  
Charlene Meeks, AFCD, Executive Director  
Mark La Furno, David Cox Consulting, LLC

**Public via Zoom:** Jeff Moore, AFCD, President  
Bryan Corrigan, Corrigan Ranch & Clean Water  
Coalition of Indian River County, Inc.  
Suzanne Archer, Technical Program Coordinator –  
Agricultural Assistance, St. Johns River Water  
Management District  
Judy Orcutt, Clean Water Coalition of Indian River  
County, Inc.

**2. ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA/EMERGENCY ITEMS:****3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

A. The minutes for January 11, 2021 Board Meeting were approved as written.

**Motion: A motion to approve minutes was made by Shawn P. Elliott and Seconded by Robert C. Adair, Jr. Motion carried unanimously.**

**4. FINANCIAL REPORT:**

A. The Financial Report for January 2021 was available and read by Dr. David L. Cox.

**Motion: A motion to accept the financial reports as presented was made by Shawn P. Elliott and Seconded by David E. Gunter. Motion carried unanimously.**

**5. OLD BUSINESS:**

**A. Indian River Lagoon Council STEM Advisory Committee Update:**

- i. Per Dr. David L. Cox, IRLNEP STEM Meeting will be held February 9, 2021 @ 1:30. Next month will give report. Disbursement of funds for Brevard County Marine Resources Council Report Card on the health of the Indian River Lagoon. <https://savetheirl.org/irl-health-update/irl-report-card/> Allocating funds to projects.

**B. Charlene Meeks, Executive Director with Association of Florida Conservation District (AFCD) and Board Member Archie Matthews, Parliamentarian, Alachua SWCD in attendance to answer IRSWCD questions per our letter sent to AFCD on 11/09/2020.**

- i. **David E. Gunter:** The AFCD Overview of goals: To be self-sufficient to be able to serve the Districts of Florida. To be an independent association, independent of any financial restrictions. Does that mean AFCD will no longer have financial ties to FDACS?

**Archie Matthews:** Of course not. Majority of our revenue comes through FDACS. AFCD uses the money for training. AFCD does not have a lot of funds coming through except the annual dues. Budget for staff and materials. AFCD relationship with FDACS is not changing. We are all a part of the Agricultural Soil Water Conservation District Family. AFCD is seeking to diversify our revenue stream. Signed contracts with NRCS at the State Level. Deepwater Horizon Offshore Oil Spill in the Gulf of Mexico. AFCD administers the contract with states in the Gulf region. New State Conservationist Juan Hernandez wants to have a Local Working Group Meeting in all 57 Counties. An uncertainty of the future is the Future Administration of Agricultural Commission. Will the next Commissioner of Agriculture be friendly? Funding from FDACS can change. AFCD's relationship with FDACS will continue like "it is". We have a good relationship with FDACS and AFCD wants it to continue.

- ii. **David E. Gunter:** So, how does that affect AFCD's ability to lobby the legislators directly?

**Archie Matthews:** AFCD cannot lobby the legislators directly. AFCD is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization and we are forbidden by law. Now, any individual can lobby the legislator. What we have done in the past is AFCD will take its concerns to our contacts at the Office of Agricultural Water Policy and they then will go to the legislator. Any individual can lobby, individual members of a Board can lobby as a private citizen can lobby; but a 501(c)(3) cannot lobby. AFCD will provide information to legislators, and/or FDACS to pass information on to use when contacting legislators.

- iii. **David E. Gunter:** The problem we have had in this County from the beginning from the Florida Association to Association of Florida is Indian River Soil and Water Conservation District sits on the dividing line between St. Johns River Water Management District and the South Florida Water Management District. IRSWCD has been put with South Florida Water Management District. The Rules are different, the issues are different. Have to assume other districts are in the same position as IRSWCD. If you are going to reorganize the AFCD Districts, why not follow the Water Management District's boundaries?

**Archie Matthews:** In some cases that works, and then some cases that does not work. Member of the Alachua SWCD, our district is split by two Water Management Districts: Western part of the District is on the Suwannee River Water Management District and Eastern part of the District is on St. Johns Water Management District. Water Management Districts are established based on the drainage basins.

**David E. Gunter:** In Area Meetings, IRWCD currently is in the South Florida Water Management District. If the SWCD have issues that they want to address with SFWMD, but it is not an issue for IRSWCD. It would be better for IRSWCD if we were in an Area Meeting that is a part of the St. Johns Water Management District, since we are the Headwaters of that Water Management District.

**Archie Matthews:** What you can look at and certainly is do able, if you feel like that IRSWCD is more philosophically aligned with say SJRWMD then you can write a letter to AFCDC and ask to change Areas, so you can meet more with the Districts that are in the SJRWMD. There is nothing even in the By-Laws of AFCDC that are set in stone. If you feel like it would be better to be in a different area and meet with people that you feel are like minded, that can be done. A letter from IRSWCD to the AFCDC Board to petition to change from Area 5 to Area 4.

**Dr. David L. Cox:** Indian River should be in Area 4 with Brevard, Volusia/SE Volusia. But Volusia is in Area 3. The Indian River Lagoon is being split up which is hydrologically does not make sense. IRSWCD moved into what is now Area 4 we would have greater leverage to get the SJRWMD and other entities to help IRSWCD to address our water concerns.

**David E. Gunter:** If 441 could be the dividing line, then we could get like-minded conservationist grouped together and have a solid voice at the Board Meeting and a letter from the Area that includes the total St. Johns River Upper Basin, we could get a little more push. Currently, not working. But, if we have a lot of people on our side together and an organization that puts you together so you can discuss it at Area meetings. We are definitely in the Indian River Lagoon and the SJRWMD, and those environmental issues are what we look at.

**Archie Matthews:** What if I take it back to the AFCDC Board and we look at coming up with a way that we can group a special conservation districts that are in a certain water management area together.

**Davie E. Gunter:** The whole idea of this is so that we have more voices to bring pressure on the district boards to follow our programs and thoughts. If we can do that through AFCDC it saves us money. Maybe some kind of sub-area of St. Johns and separate them at out? That we can all meet together in one spot and discuss the issues that we see that need to be addressed by the water management district boards.

**Robert C. Adair:** I agree with our Chairman, David E. Gunter that we need to move North into the SJRWMD to get information, funding, working with our cooperators and working with AFCDC in a coherent way. It is very important.

**Archie Matthews:** I will take this back to the AFCDC Board and see what we can do. I was unaware of these concerns. Maybe, we need to establish some sub-groups or sub-committee within AFCDC, so that we have SWCD within the boundaries of a particular water management district can meet together to discuss water management issues.

**David E. Gunter:** If all of the board local members in the meeting are dealing with the same/slightly different issues. We can figure out how to address the issue to the water management district board.

**Motion: A motion to send a letter to AFCDC to make a request that IRSWCD change from the current Area 5 to Area 4 to be within the SJRWMD and possibly make-up a sub-group within the Areas where all of the SWCD within the SJRWMD and Indian River Lagoon meet together and voice concerns was made by Dr. David L. Cox and Seconded by Robert C. Adair, Jr. Motion carried unanimously.**

- iii. **Robert C. Adair, Jr.:** In the past there have been some individuals challenging the necessity of SWCD's. An article by Ryan Gillespie in the Orlando Sentinel on January 17, 2020. The article stated that, "State Representative Anthony Sabatini (District 32) wants to swipe all Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) across the State of Florida." AFCD cannot lobby the legislator, but we do need a spokesperson to protect the integrity of our SWCD and the State of Florida's SWCD's. To what measure can AFCD communicate (not lobby) the facts to the legislators; about the need, the necessity, and the importance of the SWCD's around the state?

**Archie Mathews:** We are working on aligning that message. We do have some good friends in the legislators. Number of people with good friends in the legislator, who they can talk too. One of the former Orange SWCD Members recently elected to the House of Representatives in last election season. We now have a former SWCD Board Member sitting on the House of Representatives. She can provide direct information to committees, to departments, or anyone that raises the questions about SWCD. The legislator who went to and never made it out of committee and tried to abolish Florida Statute 582 and try to close down all Soil and Water Conservation Districts; my understanding is that he moved on.

**David E. Gunter:** Can you please forward the New House of Representative from Orange County to IRSWCD, so that we can send her a letter to congratulate her election?

**Motion: A motion to pay the 2021 AFCD Membership dues of \$350.00 was made by Dr. David L. Cox and Seconded by Robert C. Adair, Jr. Motion carried unanimously.**

**C. Indian River County CUP Users:** Letter to Vincent Burke.

- i. **Motion: A motion to approve the letter to Vincent Burke as presented was made by Robert C. Adair, Jr. and Seconded by Shawn P. Elliott. Motion carried unanimously.**

**6. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. IRSWCD Aerial Photo's: Geographic Information Systems Division (GIS):** IRSWCD to loan out aerial photos to scan at a high resolution to provide service to IR County. Sign-out system to be in place. If third-party involved, insurance requirements.

- i. Table until Phil Matson, Community Development Director, Indian River County gets back to IRSWCD.

**7. REPORTS:**

**A. Jennifer Abbey, NRCS – Report:**

- ❖ **Farm Bill Programs:** 18 of 53 Active contracts totaling approximately \$1,300,000 over approximately 12,000 acres.
- ❖ **EQIP:** 13 Active Contracts; 9 applications.
- ❖ **CSP:** 5 Active Contracts.
- ❖ **ACEP-WRE:**
- ❖ **Conservation Applications:** January - February:
  - Florida Research – IPM, NM.
  - Clifton Lightsey – Brush Management (Pepper Treatment)

- ❖ Contracting status reviews and reminder letters. Completed EQIP application field visits. EQIP application assessments and ranking. Acting as Area 4 Program Specialist.
- ❖ **Local Working Group Meeting:** Send the Questionnaire to all the Local Cooperators via email to complete and return to us with contact information and if they want in-person or virtual meeting. Next Meeting March 8, 2021 IRSWCD will decide how we want to proceed.

**B. Linda Caggiano**

- ❖ Annual Audit: In-Process, sent additional information to Patrick 02/04/2021.
- ❖ **Please read and respond to emails.** I do realize all Supervisors have a full-time paying job, but there are items that arise, that do need your attention. Call for Agenda Items, letters, and/or Minutes to be reviewed
- ❖ NACD: Annual Meeting: February 1-10, 2021 – Virtual \$50.00
- ❖ FCDEA: Teleconference Meeting February 23, 2021 @ 1:00 pm.; Mid-Year Meeting May 2021.
- ❖ The 2021 Poster Contest and Stewardship week theme is “Healthy Forests = Healthy Communities.” Flyers sent out to schools. DEADLINE: Posters must be received on or before 4:00 PM – March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021.
- ❖ FDACS Contract #: 24393; 2020-2021: \$90,00.00 + \$3,237.22 = \$93,237.22 balance from the 2019-2020 Contract. Waiting for Cost-Share contracts to be sent to office from FDACS.
- ❖ AFCD Annual Meeting: September 2021.
- ❖ Website and Facebook updated in the past week.
- ❖ AFCD: Membership - \$350.00
- ❖ Monday, March 8, 2021: IRSWCD Board Meeting.

**8. ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 3:04 PM.

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David E. Gunter, Chairman

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Date

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David L. Cox, Secretary/Treasurer

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Date