

Indian River County Florida

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



Meeting Minutes – Final

Monday, November 13, 2023

1:30 PM

Indian River Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisors

Robert C. Adair, Jr., Chairman: District 1

Dr. David L. Cox, Secretary/Treasurer: District 2

Charles Kennon Hendrix, Member: District 3

Christine Kelly-Begazo, Member: District 4

George F. Hamner, Jr., Member: District 5

Linda Caggiano, District Staff Assistant II: IRSWCD

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Robert C. Adair, Jr. called meeting to order at 1:30 PM.

Supervisors in attendance: Robert C. Adair, Jr., Chairman
Charles Kennon Hendrix
Christine Kelly-Begazo
George F. Hamner, Jr.

Staff in attendance: Linda Caggiano, Staff Assistant II, IRSWCD
Eric Charest, Interim Natural Resources Director
Jennifer Abbey, District Conservationist, USDA-NRCS
Matt Cox, Environmental Specialist III- OAWP-FDACS

Public in attendance: Lex Kromhout, The Hammock Ranch Preserve, LLC
Honey Minuse, Vero Beach Resident
Laura Moss, BOCC of IRC
Judy Orcutt, Clean Water Coalition of IRC

2. ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA/EMERGENCY ITEMS:

A. Robert C. Adair, Jr, Chairman called a meeting of all supervisors - All five supervisors of the governing body of each district shall meet at least once per calendar year in a public meeting pursuant to F.S. 286.011. The Board agreed to hold an official Public Board Meeting on Tuesday, November 28, 2023 @ 11:00 AM.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. The Minutes for Board Meeting of October 2, 2023 were approved as written.

Motion: A Motion to approve the October 2, 2023 Minutes was made by George F. Hamner, Jr. and Seconded by Christine Kelly-Begazo. Motion carried unanimously.

4. FINANCIAL REPORT:

A. The Financial Report for October 2023 was available and read by Robert C. Adair, Jr.

Motion: A motion to accept the October 2023 financial report as presented was made by Christine Kelly-Begazo and Seconded by Charles Kennon Hendrix. Motion carried unanimously.

5. REPORTS:

A. Jennifer Abbey, United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) Report:

❖ **News: Urban and Innovative Producers, Public Invited to Attend November Meeting of Federal Advisory Committee for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production** The virtual meeting will run from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Eastern on Nov. 29, 2023. To attend virtually, register by Nov. 29, 2023, on the Committee's webpage. usda.gov/urban

Florida NRCS offers \$15.5 million through Conservation Stewardship Program. Virtual workshop Nov 6 (recorded). Deadline to apply for program November 17

Recent Florida Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) projects will receive over \$40.2 million in funding. In Florida, two projects were approved for funding:

Lake to Lagoon RCPP – Funded at \$25 million, this project led by Alachua Conservation Trust will accelerate land protection and land management to protect environmentally sensitive and working lands and benefit regional climate mitigation in the low-lying region of East Central Florida, which is bound by large lakes and rivers on the west boundary, and Mosquito and Indian River Lagoons along the Atlantic Coast.

Corridor to Coast (C2C) – Led by North Florida Land Trust, this project was funded at over \$15.2 million to protect and improve ecological conditions of the C2C Corridor all the way out to the East Coast. This includes protection of natural areas, wildlife habitat, and regional water quality as compatible with working lands and the natural resource-based economy of the area.

- ❖ **Farm Bill Programs:** 24 of 62 Active contracts totaling approximately \$1,190,000 over approximately 11,900 acres
- ❖ **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP):** 15 Active Contracts
- ❖ **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP):** 9 Active Contracts
- ❖ **Agricultural Conservation Easement Program - Wetland Reserve Easements (ACEP – WRE) :** 0 application
- ❖ **Conservation Applications: September – October**
 - 9 ac - Irrigation Water Management
 - 114 ac – Forage Harvest Management
 - 728 ac – Prescribed grazing
- ❖ **Other:** Continue conservation implementation field inspections and FY 2024 EQIP application field visits. Started CSP contract annual payments
- ❖ **Next Month:** Continue FY 2024 EQIP application field visits. Internal office Quality Assurance Review results.

B. Andrea Lazzari, Indian River County (IRC) Agricultural Extension Director/ University of Florida/Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF IFAS) Report:

- ❖ No Report.

C. Matthew Cox, Environmental Specialist III, Office of Agricultural Water Policy- Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (OAWP-FDACS) Report:

- ❖ Continuing with Implementation Verifications (IV’s) with agricultural producers.

Lex Kromhout asked if whether the County had to follow the Best Management Practices (BMP’s) as do the agricultural land owners that are within the BMAP enrollment Maps. He further asked, “ Who is the County regulated by” and if it is Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and if so “are the regulation requirements equivalent to BMP’s requirements that the agricultural land owners have to follow?”

Robert C. Adair, Jr. Chairman of IRSWCD stated it would be very helpful to our Board if we were to have a somebody from the Utilities Department to attend our meetings. Whether Sean Lieske wants to attend or send someone else from the Utilities Department to help field questions from the public and the board would be greatly appreciated.

Eric Charest, Interim Natural Resources Director stated that the Indian River County’s compliance with the BMAP requirements is far beyond just the Utilities Department. If you are seeing yard debris or grass debris spread into the road ways. That is against County ordinances. There are many departments within the County that are involved in compliance with the BMAP. Watering depends on where the irrigation is applied as well as the water source; whether it is re-use water. If the area is within the City of Vero Beach limits or the

unincorporated area of the County. If there is an abuse of watering, the County has to apply the same standards as everyone else does.

Lex Kromhout, I don't know if it is the County; it looks like the County is doing landscaping maintenance in the area between 43rd Street and I-95 on State Road 60 and has seen irrigation going at the craziest times.

Eric Charest stated that is on established sod. You have 30-90 days to water in new sod. But the area you are mentioning is an established grass area. There are many entities within the County that are involved with regard to BMAP's. Can not speak for Utilities Department, but can speak for Stormwater side of things.

Robert C. Adair, Jr. Chairman of IRSWCD asked Eric Charest to provide the Board with a presentation for the December 11, 2023 meeting featuring Indian River County Stormwater efforts and compliance with BMAP's and a look at the milestones. Also, reiterated that the IRSWCD Board would like a liaison from the Indian River Utilities Department to attend our meetings.

D. Linda Caggiano, Staff Assistant II:

- ❖ **FDACS:** Contract 27690: Amended 10/17/2023 - \$15,041.26 due to Audit Cost. \$115,041.26 for 2023-2024; Paid out a total of \$55,193.32: \$32,504.98 from prior year and \$22,688.34 current FY 2023-2024. 4 Cost-Share Agreements pending receipt of RFR's totaling \$48,155.64. Balance available of \$21,783.57 for FY 2024 Cost-Share FY 2023-2024.
- ❖ **FCDEA:** No new updates since last Board Meeting. Next meeting scheduled Tuesday, November 21, 2023.
- ❖ **AFCD:** contracted with Stream Line technology websites for special districts. AFCD does pay Stream Line \$960 annual or \$1,080 individual for creation of website. Then once completed it is up to the District to handle all the website content and keep up to date. Transition is not going very well from what I have seen.
- ❖ **ENVIROTHON:** Kick-Off Meeting held Thursday, September 28, 2023. Heather Stapleton is leading the 2024 Envirothon Event. Station Chair: Wildlife - Heather Hitt, Soils - Andrea Lazzari, Forestry – Ashley Lingwood, Aquatics - Jennifer Thompson, IR Lagoon - Kirk Fusco, and Current Topic: Renewable Energy – Terry Williamson. Competition Day: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 at the ELC.
- ❖ **OFFICE:** Monthly Meetings Agenda, Minutes. FDACS Cost-Shares. Completed FY 2022-2023 for County and District. Prepared binders for the FY 2023-2024 and Budget. Gathered all documents for the CPA and put onto a flash drive as required. Ready to deliver files to CPA for 2023 Audit. OPPAGA: Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability - October 1, 2023 they will start audit of each SWCD in the State of Florida. *Need to create a Strategic Plan to have available for OPPAGA.* Poster Contest Conservation theme for 2024 Poster Contest: "May The Forest Be With You Always." National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) to have information available online after November 15, 2023, so information can be given to schools.

6. DEPARTMENTAL MATTERS:

A. Financial Audit for year ending 2023:

- i. Engagement letter to be signed from Kmetz, Elwell , Graham & Associates, PLLC. Maximum of \$8,000.00.

Robert C. Adair, Jr. spoke to Raulie Raulerson about the Audit expense and FDACS will only reimburse a maximum of \$5,000.00, leaving the District to pay the balance of \$3,000.00. The administrative fee amount that the District receives from FDACS for the distribution of Cost-Share funding does not cover the Audit expense. Raulie is to provide to Robert C.

Adair, Jr., the names of other Accounting firms that other SWCD's use in the State of Florida that are less costly.

Motion: George F. Hamner, Jr. made a motion to table the signing of the Engagement letter until the December 11, 2023 meeting. The District will competitively look outside their firm and to bring the cost down to the \$5,000.00 range and seconded by Christine Kelly-Begazo. Motion carried unanimously.

B. IRSWCD Budgets:

- i. Resolution No. 2023-1 Budget Amendment

Motion: A motion to accept the Resolution No. 2023-1 Budget Amendment as presented was made by George F. Hamner, Jr. and Seconded by Charles Kennon Hendrix. Motion carried unanimously.

- ii. 2023-2024 IRSWCD Proposed Budget

Motion: A motion to accept the 2023-2024 IRSWCD Proposed Budget as presented was made by Christine Kelly-Begazo and Seconded by George F. Hamner, Jr. Motion carried unanimously.

C. QuickBooks Renewal: December 2023 - \$545.99 last year

Motion: A motion to approve the purchase of the QuickBooks Renewal was made by Christine Kelly-Begazo and Seconded by George F. Hamner, Jr. Motion carried unanimously.

D. 2023-2024 Board Meeting Schedule:

Motion: A motion to accept the 2023-2024 Monthly Board Meeting Schedule as presented. If there is a month that there is no Board Business(i.e. Summer); at that time the meeting will be deferred until the following month was made by Christine Kelly-Begazo and Seconded by Charles Kennon Hendrix. Motion carried unanimously.

Z. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Indian River Lagoon STEM Advisory Committee Update:

- i. No Report.

B. Certified Conservation District Official Program Reports:

- i. Christine Kelly-Begazo: Friday, October 20, 2023
- ❖ Some districts do great work with no funding from their county's. Their boards are very involved (Highlands, Seminole). There is probably reason for this, see point below.
 - ❖ Boards interpret "agriculture involvement" differently which allows them more leeway with board members. For example, a teacher instructing "Florida Ag in the Classroom" is involved with agriculture and therefore she can be on the board. This interpretation was very interesting.
 - ❖ Emphasis on looking forward and planning for the future, NOT looking back and being stuck in the past.
 - ❖ Could possibly be condensed into one day. Move around the State

Motion: George F. Hamner, Jr. made a motion to send a letter to the Association of Florida Conservation District (AFCD) that the IRSWCD Board voted to recommend that the meeting be condensed into one day and be attended virtually/or a video component be available. Also, recommended that the Certified program be moved around to different areas in the State to make it more readily available for the working Supervisors; and was seconded by Christine Kelly-Begazo. Motion carried unanimously.

C. FP&L Response

- i. No Update.

8. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Supervisor Service Award (Discussion)

Proclamation, Detailed Resolution, Generational changes, research of years as Supervisor. Will continue providing information at the December 11, 2023 meeting.

9. SUPERVISORS MATTERS:

10. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 3:03 PM.

Robert C. Adair, Jr., Chairman

Date