

# **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, June 10, 2024**

**1:30 PM**

### **Indian River Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisors**

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

*Dr. David L. Cox, Vice Chairman: District 2*

*Charles Kennon Hendrix, Member: District 3*

*Christine Kelly-Begazo, Secretary/Treasurer: District 4*

*George F. Hamner, Jr., Legislative Liaison: District 5*

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

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman Robert C. Adair, Jr. called meeting to order at 1:33 PM.

**Supervisors in attendance:** Robert C. Adair, Jr., Chairman – District 1  
Dr. David L. Cox – District 2  
Charles Kennon Hendrix – District 3  
Christine Kelly-Begazo – District 4  
George F. Hamner, Jr. – District 5

**Staff in attendance:** Linda Caggiano, Staff Assistant II  
Eric Charest, IRC Interim Natural Resources Director  
Sean Leiske, IRC Utilities Director  
Kylie Yanchula, IRC Natural Resource Director  
Matt Cox, Environmental Specialist III- OAWP-FDACS

**Public in attendance:** Dr. Richard Baker, Pelican Island Audubon Society  
Ronald Edwards, Manager of Grove Land Utilities, LLC  
and President of Evans Properties,  
Kelly Jackson, Indian River Pioneer Farms  
Honey Minuse, Vero Beach Resident  
Judy Orcutt, Clean Water Coalition of IRC

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

A. The Minutes for the Board Meeting of May 13, 2024, were approved as written.

**Motion: A Motion to approve the May 10, 2024, Minutes was made by George F. Hamner and Seconded by Dr. David L. Cox. Motion carried unanimously.**

B.

The Local Working Group Minutes for the Board Meeting of May 13, 2024, were approved as written.

**Motion: A Motion to approve the May 10, 2024, Minutes was made by Dr. David L. Cox and Seconded by George F. Hamner. Motion carried unanimously.**

**4. FINANCIAL REPORT:**

A. The Financial Report for May 2024 was available and reviewed by the Board.

**Motion: A Motion to accept the May 2024 financial report as presented was made by George F. Hamner and Seconded by Dr. David L. Cox. Motion carried unanimously.**

**5. DEPARTMENTAL MASTERS:**

A. **OPPAGA Update** (Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability):

i. Audit with State in process. (No action required.)

**B. Financial Audit for year ending 2023 per FDACS contract):**

- i. Financial Audit and AFR submitted to State of Florida May 17, 2024. Approval of \$8,000.00 Invoice from Kmetz, Elwell, Graham & Associates, PLLC.

**Motion: A Motion to approve the payment of \$8,000.00 to Kmetz, Elwell, Graham & Associates for Invoice #: 124027 representing the professional services for Audit of GASB 34 Financial Statements for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2023, was made by Christine Kelly-Begazo and Seconded by George F. Hamner. Motion carried unanimously.**

**C. July 8, 2024 Board Meeting Attendance:**

**Motion: A Motion to cancel the July 8, 2024, IRSWCD Board of Supervisors Meeting due to not having a quorum was made by Dr. David L. Cox and Seconded by George F. Hamner. Motion carried unanimously.**

**6. NEW BUSINESS:**

- A. **Ronald Edwards, Manager of Grove Land Utilities, LL and President of Evans Properties, Inc providing a presentation on the proposed Grove Land Reservoir and Stormwater Treatment Area Project with the SJRWMD and SFWMD.**

**Motion: A Motion to send a letter to Governor DeSantis that Indian River Soil and Water Conservation District supports the concept of a large, dispersed water management project between the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) and the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) within the Fort Drum Marsh area (commonly referred to as the Grove Land Reservoir and Stormwater Treatment project). Copy the State and local legislators. The Motion was made by Dr. David L. Cox and Seconded by George F. Hamner, Jr. Motion carried unanimously.**

**7. REPORT:**

- A. **Jennifer Abbey, United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) (Jennifer provided report but was not able to attend meeting.)**

❖ **News: USDA Invests \$7 Million in Wetland Mitigation Banking to Support Producers and Protect Wetland Ecosystems** May 30, 2024 (USDA) is investing \$7 million to support the development of wetland mitigation banks for agricultural producers through the Wetland Mitigation Banking Program (WMBP). The funding is available to Tribes, government entities, nonprofits and other organizations. NRCS is accepting proposals for creating wetland mitigation banks through Grants.gov now through August 2, 2024. See the Notice of Funding Opportunity for details on eligibility and how to apply. A webinar for applicants will take place on June 12 from 12-1pm ET. See the WMBP website for information.

❖ Florida NRCS will host a public webinar for conservation partners who are considering submitting an **RCPP** project proposal. The meeting will be held at 3 p.m. (EST), June 11, 2024, via Zoom. **Join ZoomGov Meeting:**  
<https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1619295017?pwd=ZE92T1pDdEpBM3N5TkthdEFqbXcrQT09>

Meeting ID: 161 929 5017 Passcode: 212949

- ❖ **Farm Bill Programs:** 31 of 70 Active contracts totaling approximately \$1,450,000 over approximately 12,400 acres
- ❖ **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP):** 18 Active Contracts; 5 new
- ❖ **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP):** 13 Active Contracts; 4 new

- ❖ **Agricultural Conservation Easement Program - Wetland Reserve Easements (ACEP – WRE) :** 0 application
  - ❖ **Conservation Applications: May – June**
    - 470 ft – Fence
  - ❖ **Other:** Continued contract status reviews. Completed obligations for preapproved CSP and EQIP applications. Assisted other offices with contract agreement creation
  - ❖ **Next Month:** Continue conservation implementation field inspections as needed. Continue contract status reviews and contract follow up.
- B. Andrea Lazzari, Indian River County (IRC) Agricultural Extension Director/ University of Florida/Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF IFAS) Report:**
- ❖ Officially booked the Intergenerational Recreation Center for Thursday, September 12<sup>th</sup> for an all-day Small & Beginning Farmers Conference. In the next few weeks, will be working on opening registration, marketing, and finalizing some speakers (Andrea will be reaching out to some folks at USDA-NRCS, FDACS, Farm Bureau, IRC Property Appraiser, etc.) If anybody has any suggestions for speakers, please send them my way! I'm planning to charge a small registration fee to ensure people who register actually attend and am hoping to use IRSWCD sponsorship funds to cover lunch and the purchase of UF/IFAS Direct Marketing Handbooks for Small Farmers for all attendees.
  - ❖ Our new 4-H Agent has accepted the position, and she will be starting July 29<sup>th</sup>. Her name is Morgan Moran and she's coming to us from North Carolina State University.
- C. Matthew Cox, Environmental Specialist III, Office of Agricultural Water Policy- Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (OAWP-FDACS) Report:**
- ❖ FDACS, via CRI, has sent out 1085 letters to landowners in the IRL BMAP areas. Those 1085 landowners account for 1,691 parcels within the IRL BMAP area. Responses from the letters have come in for 399 parcels. 357 of those parcels have been assigned to staff for enrollment. So far, staff have enrolled 86 parcels.
  - ❖ Of the 399 parcels we've received responses for, 369 want to enroll, 6 inquired about WQ monitoring, 16 have been identified as Not Ag, 2 have been sold, and 4 are silviculture, 1 is in aquaculture, and 1 refused enrollment.
  - ❖ Field staff continue to conduct implementation verifications for enrolled producers on or prior to their individual due dates in BMAPs as well as completing cost share projects that are currently ongoing.
- D. Stephen Wright, Environmental Specialist II, Office of Agricultural Water Policy- Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (OAWP-FDACS) Report:**
- ❖ Working with Matthew Cox. Information as stated above.
- E. Eric Charest, Indian River County Assistant Natural Resources Director**
- ❖ Blue-Green Algae Task Force Reviews Agriculture BMPs: "Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs) were reviewed at the Blue-Green Algae Task Force June 4 meeting. West Gregory, director of the Florida Department of Agricultural and Consumer Services Office of Agricultural Water Policy, said FDACS has the responsibility to protect water supply while promoting agriculture. He said BMPs are designed to improve water quality, conserve water and protect water resources. Practices like precision fertilization ensure the nutrients go to the plants, using the most efficient manner possible, and that nutrients do not run off into waterways, he explained. BMPs are required in areas with a Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP), Gregory continued. BMPs were developed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and FDACS. FDEP identifies water bodies at risk and determines the maximum nutrient load allowed (TMDL). FDACS develops practices that will help reduce the nutrient load in runoff. Currently there are 10 BMP manuals, he said. If you are a producer and you are in a BMAP, you are required to follow the manual for your commodity, he said. FDEP works with FDACS to verify the BMPs are working and make changes if needed.

Gregory said farmers have the choice to enroll in the BMP program or have water quality monitoring to ensure runoff from their property meets the water quality standards. He said FDACS inspects producers under BMPs every two years to make sure the practices have been followed. “If someone is in a BMAP and not enrolled, we try to contact them several times. If they are not enrolled, they are referred to FDEP for compliance,” he said. FDACS helps producers with a cost-share program to implement the BMPs. “That can be helping them put in water control structures,” he said. In some cases, FDACS helps the producer purchase equipment. One current goal of the program is to spread awareness. “I have been to a lot of producers, a lot of farms out there, and frankly they are doing a lot,” said Gregory. Farmers care deeply about the environment, he said. “Their livelihood is directly tied to it.”...

- ❖ The Water Conservation Team at St. Johns River Water Management District is hosting another session of “Introduction to Efficient Landscape Irrigation” on **Thursday, July 11 at 11 AM**. This webinar marketed to Community Association Managers offers an elective CEU credit to CAMs who participate. This online class is a great refresher/introduction for anyone who wants to learn more about maintaining landscapes while saving money and water. Please share this invite with your colleagues and any HOAs you work with. If you have questions, please contact **Gretchen C. Smith**, Water Conservation Coordinator, Bureau of Water Supply Planning, St. Johns River Water Management District at 386-268-7405. Here’s the link to register:  
<https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/c9c88101-76d3-4e33-9528-0332fd8b3faf@b0c8375f-daa7-40b9-a01b-690d8d3723b9>

**F. Sean Lieske, Director, Indian River County Department of Utility Services:**

- ❖ Completed and submitted application to request increase of CUP for the entire County. The latest Request for Additional Information (RAI) have been answered and submitted. Pending reply from SJRWMD.

**G. Linda Caggiano, Staff Assistant II:**

- ❖ **FDACS:** Contract 27690: \$315,041.26; Disbursed \$300,449.62 in funds. Two (2) Agreements withdrawn. Pending Approval of Audit Invoice. Working on Final Closeout of Contract. Due to FDACS by 06/30/2024. New Contract still in draft. Should have beginning of July.
- ❖ **FCDEA:** Annual Meeting September 3, 4, 2024 Gainesville. OPPAGA Report should be posted, mapping of Districts reorganization. FCDEA Members are assisting with the SE NACD Meeting June 16, 2024 – June 18, 2024, in Gainesville, FL
- ❖ **AFCD:** Area meetings held last month – Training for Supervisors, so no Business Meeting was held. AFCD Annual Meeting November 1, 2, 2024 Sandestin, FL
- ❖ **OFFICE:** Monthly Meetings Agenda, Minutes. FCDEA Agenda and Minutes. OPPAGA Audit (Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability). FDACS required Audit with Kmetz Elwell, Graham & Associates, PLLC.: All documents sent to State. Invoice payment will complete the Audit. FDACS Contract Close-out due 06/30/2024. New FDACS Contract progress. Election: Districts 2, 3, 4 & 5 are up for General Election November 5, 2024. Deadline to file for Elected Office Friday June 14, 2024 @ 12:00 pm

**8. OLD BUSINESS:**

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

- i. No Update. Coordination of meeting speaking with Commissioner with Joseph Flescher, Judy Orcutt and Sean Lieske. Sewer Project for a subdivision North of Wabasso Beach. Neighbors want sewers.

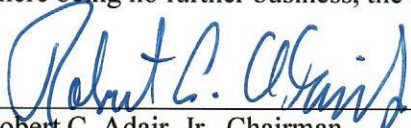
**B. Business Plan/Poll Ranking of Board Priorities:**

**Motion: A Motion to have all Supervisors submit any/all edits to the 2024 Business Plan and the IRSWCD Mission Statement prior to the August 12, 2024, Board Meeting was made by Dr. David L. Cox and Seconded by Christine Kelly-Begazo. Motion carried unanimously.**

**C. Small Farms, Ranchettes, and Country Estates Best Management Practices (BMP's) Update (Supervisor Christine Kelly-Begazo) to be completed by August 12, 2024, Board Meeting.**

**2. ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 3:24 PM.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Robert C. Adair, Jr., Chairman

Aug. 12, 2024  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Christine Kelly-Begazo, Secretary/Treasurer

Sept 9, 24  
Date