

# 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, August 12, 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 1:30 PM.

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

Christine Kelly-Begazo – District 4 – Medical Excused

**Staff in attendance:** Linda Caggiano, Staff Assistant II  
Eric Charest, IRC Interim Natural Resources Director  
Melissa Meisenburg, IRC Senior Environmental Specialist  
Jennifer Abbey, District Conservationist, USDA/NRCS  
Micah Dettweiler, Conservationist, USDA/NRCS  
Matt Cox, Environmental Specialist III- OAWP-FDACS

**Public in attendance:** Mike Johannsen, Indian River Neighborhood Association  
Honey Minuse, Vero Beach Resident

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

A. The Minutes for the Board Meeting of June 10, 2024, were approved as written.

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

**4. FINANCIAL REPORT:**

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

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

**5. REPORTS:**

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: WASHINGTON** – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is accepting applications for **Composting and Food Waste Reduction (CFWR) pilot projects** for fiscal year 2024. The cooperative agreements, using remaining funds from the American Rescue Plan Act, are jointly administered by USDA's Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). Selected projects will develop and test strategies for planning and implementing municipal compost plans and food waste reduction plans and are part of USDA's broader efforts to support urban agriculture. USDA's Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (OUAIP) – led by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) – will accept applications on Grants.gov until 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on Sept. 4, 2024. Projects must be two years in duration with an estimated start date of June 1, 2025.



- ❖ **Farm Bill Programs:** 29 of 69 Active contracts totaling approximately \$1,400,000 over approximately 12,200 acres
  - ❖ **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP):** 12 Active Contracts; 5 applications
  - ❖ **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP):** 13 Active Contracts; 3 applications
  - ❖ **Agricultural Conservation Easement Program - Wetland Reserve Easements (ACEP – WRE) :** 0 application
  - ❖ **Conservation Applications: June - August**
    - 160.4 ac – Prescribed Grazing
  - ❖ **Other:** Continued contract status reviews. Completed obligations for preapproved EQIP applications. Assisted other offices with contract agreement and environmental evaluation documentation. Planning for outreach efforts.
  - ❖ **Next Month:** Continue conservation implementation field inspections as needed. Begin site visits to EQIP and CSP applicants, Attend and present at Small and Beginning Farmer Mini-Conference.
- B. Andrea Lazzari, Indian River County (IRC) Agricultural Extension Director/ University of Florida/Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF IFAS) Report:**
- ❖ Small & Beginning Farmers Conference at the Intergenerational Recreation Center on Thursday, September 12<sup>th</sup> for an all-day event. Andrea is having speakers from USDA-NRCS, FDACS, Farm Bureau, and IRC Property Appraiser attend.
  - ❖ Received the sponsorship funds from IRSWCD to cover lunch and the purchase of UF/IFAS Direct Marketing Handbooks for Small Farmers for all attendees.
  - ❖ Booth for the IRC Health Fair.
- C. Matthew Cox, Environmental Specialist III, Office of Agricultural Water Policy- Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (OAWP-FDACS) Report:**
- ❖ August FDACS Report: via CRI, has sent out 808 letters to landowners in the IRL BMAP areas. Those 808 landowners account for 1,257 parcels within the IRL BMAP area. Responses from the letters have come in for 565 parcels. 534 of those parcels have been assigned to staff for enrollment. So far, staff have enrolled 223 parcels.
  - ❖ Of the 565 parcels we've received responses for, 517 want to enroll, 8 inquired about WQ monitoring, 21 have been identified as Not Ag, 3 is in aquaculture, 2 have been identified as fallow, 6 have been sold, 4 are silviculture, and 4 refused enrollments.
  - ❖ 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.
  - ❖ Cost share is being changed to a 65%, 75%, and 90% reimbursement now. We are trying to implement data collection for these projects and depending on what data we can collect and how long 2 years for 65% and 75% and 4 years for 90%. I have not received word on all the data requirements for each project and the percent cost shared for those, but hopefully soon they will have it completed.
  - ❖ Matthew Warren, Environmental Administrator, South Florida Field Staff (Okeechobee Office) took over Raulie Raulerson's position.
- 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**
- ❖ Report prepared by Applied Ecology for Brevard County: Spatial Watershed Iterative Loading (SWIL) 5.0 Model Update and Future Land Use Impact. FDEP has identified the Indian River Lagoon (IRL) and Banana River Lagoon (BRL) as impaired waterbodies due to nutrient over-enrichment. Through an Interlocal Agreement and a Joint Participation Agreement, all MS4 permittees within the Brevard County portion of the



IRL (17 entities) partnered to fund a Study Team to update and refine the 2000 PLSM model and associated TMDLs for the IRL. The goal of SWIL is to provide a GIS-based model that can be adaptive to changes in input and can batch complex processes through several months or years on demand. SWIL aims to provide both spatially and temporally fine-scale volumes and loads (TP and TN), allowing input data to be related to water quality parameters. Since temporal and spatial differences in water quality appear essential in understanding the Indian River Lagoon and Banana River Lagoon system, an input watershed model that provides data at the same fine scales is critical to the TMDL process. The portability of the model (a toolset within ArcGIS) and flexibility of its design are key features of the SWIL.

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

- ❖ Not in attendance – No report provided.

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

- ❖ **FDACS:** Contract 27690: Amended 07/10/2024 \$250,000.00 Annually for next three (3) years plus \$15,000.00 annually for audit. FY 23/24 balance \$6,591.64; Total available for Cost-Share Disbursements FY 24/25: \$256,591.64. Cost share is being changed to 65%, 75%, and 90% reimbursement now. FDACS try to implement data collection for these projects and depending on what data they can collect and how long 2 years for 65% and 75% and 4 years for 90%. Matthew Cox has not received word on all the data requirements for each project and the percent cost shared for those, but hopefully soon they will have it completed.
- ❖ **FCDEA:** Annual Meeting September 3, 4, 2024 Gainesville. OPPAGA Report to be delivered to Tallahassee by August 19, 2024. FCDEA President, Audrey Kuipers attended the AFCD Quarterly meeting Friday, August 2, 2024. Presented a letter to Buck Carpenter, AFCD President. (*Attached*). Audrey Kuipers and Susie Bishop have been meeting with Farm Bureau to strategize how to proceed with the next legislative session. How to have SWCD's and Wilton Simpson, Florida Commissioner of Agriculture work together. 2024 Session: Dissolve ALL SWCD's; The Commissioner shall appoint one member at-large from each of the 7 SWCD District Regions to serve on council. Meet at least 3 times per year. The counties of Brevard, Indian River, Lake, Martin Okeechobee, Orange, Osceola, Seminole, St. Lucie, and Sumter shall constitute the *East Central Soil and Water Conservation District*.
- ❖ **AFCD:** AFCD Quarterly meeting was held August 2, 2024. Most of the AFCD Board backs Charlene Meeks. She is no longer Executive Director. Do we continue to pay the annual \$350.00 membership fees? What is the AFCD Board doing to help the SWCD's in Florida? 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 Need to interview new firm. (*Attached*). working on Website Updates, Business Plan and Investment Plan\* as per OPPAGA Audit. (\*Attached). *Any auditors on list are good. Need to interview and see if they will take IRSWCD as a client.*

**6. DEPARTMENTAL MATTERS:**

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

- i. Audit with State in process. (No action required.)
- ii. Recommends investing Districts money into a high yield interest money market or CD account. Money management is an ongoing process with Chairman and Treasurer. How much operating funds need to be available for business. How much money does the District want to invest?



**Motion: A Motion to provide authority to the Chairman and Treasurer an opportunity to move funds into a high yield Certificate of Deposit and an interest-bearing Money Market account was made by George F. Hamner and Seconded by Dr. David L. Cox. Motion carried unanimously.**

## **7. OLD BUSINESS:**

### **A. Indian River Lagoon STEM Advisory Committee Update: (Supervisor Dr. David L. Cox)**

- i. STEM Advisory Committee meeting on August 20 @ 1:30-4:30pm.
- ii. IRLNEP NOAA Habitat Transformation Grant: Melissa Meisenburg, IRC Senior Environmental Specialist for Natural Resources Department mentioned: The IRLNEP is uniting ten organizations across the watershed to secure a \$9.4 million. The IRC Natural Resources Department is one part of the ten partnerships with the NOAA Habitat Transformation Grants. Restoring 73 acres of seagrass - 257,800 planting units / 2,726,150 shoots (Total of all partners). IRC three years planting 22.8 acres of sea grass. Supplementing where sea grass is currently sparse in sheltered areas and replacing some areas where sea grass died off. Both areas are in a sheltered area by the Sebastian Inlet, South end of it where there is less foot traffic. Monitored for one-year: monthly; then for two-years monitored quarterly. Staff will continue to monitor beyond that timeframe.

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

### **C. Small Farms, Ranchettes, and Country Estates Best Management Practices (BMP's) Update (Supervisor Christine Kelly-Begazo) to be completed by September 9, 2024, Board Meeting.**

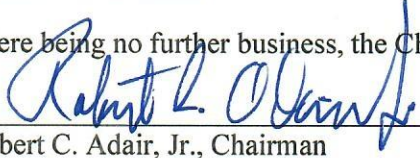
## **8. NEW BUSINESS:**

- A. Geohydrology Survey:** The need for a County wide Geohydrology Survey was discussed. The last Geohydrology Survey of Indian River County was done in 1988. Indian River County has changed dramatically in the past two decades since this report. These changes include:
- Changes in water usage by agriculture due to abandoned citrus.
  - Changes in water usage by utilities both within IRC and counties to our north.
  - Artesian wells in the County are getting older and have been abandoned and are quite possibly leaking.
  - The population has increased tremendously, thereby increasing the demand for water. This has led the County Utilities Department to drill more wells, specifically in the North County where there is a history of adverse impacts.
  - There is a possibility of additional faults in the Hawthorne Layer causing seepage.

Based on the above, there was agreement that the board should recommend to the County that Cost-Share Funding from USGS, SJRWMD, and IRC for a Geohydrology Survey should be pursued and that the survey should be undertaken. .

**2. ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 3:23 PM.

  
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Robert C. Adair, Jr., Chairman

Sept. 9, 2024  
Date

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

Sept 9, 24  
Date