

Indian River County Florida

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



Meeting Minutes – Final

Monday, December 9, 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

Vacant: 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 1:39 P.M

Supervisors in attendance: Robert C. Adair, Jr., Chairman – District 1
Dr. David L. Cox – District 2
Christine Kelly-Begazo – District 4

Staff in attendance: Linda Caggiano, Staff Assistant II

IRC Staff and

Partners in attendance: Jennifer Abbey, District Conservationist, USDA/NRCS
Eric Charest, IRC Assistant Natural Resources Director
Matt Cox, Environmental Specialist III- OAWP-FDACS
Andrea Lazzari, IRC Extension Director; UF/IFAS
Stephen Wright, Environmental Specialist II- FDACS-OAWP

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 November 4, 2024, were approved as written.

Motion: A Motion to approve the November 4, 2024 Minutes as presented was made by Dr. David L. Cox and Seconded by Christine Kelly-Begazo. Motion carried unanimously.

4. FINANCIAL REPORT:

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

Motion: A Motion to accept the November 2024 financial report as presented was made by Dr. David L. Cox and Seconded by Robert C. Adair, Jr. Motion carried unanimously.

5. REPORTS:

- A. **Jennifer Abbey, United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS)**
- ❖ **Farm Bill Programs:** 27 of 60 Active contracts totaling approximately \$1,200,000 over approximately 11,500 acres
 - ❖ **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP):** 15 Active Contracts | 18 - 2025 Applications | 1 2025 Emergency Application (high tunnel)
 - ❖ **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP):** 12 Active Contracts | 1 renewal application, preapproved | 15 - 2025 Applications
 - ❖ **Agricultural Conservation Easement Program - Wetland Reserve Easements (ACEP – WRE) :** 2025 Application Deadline – Oct 4 and Dec. 20
 - ❖ **Conservation Applications: November – December**
 - None
 - ❖ **Other:** CSP annual Payments. Continued site visits to EQIP and CSP applicants for 2025. Assessed and ranked CSP renewal applications (3 total). All staff attended NRCS annual operations meeting in Ft. Pierce.

- ❖ **Next Month:** Continue conservation implementation field inspections as needed. Continue site visits to EQIP and CSP applicants .
- ❖ **Site visit:** Saturday, December 7, 2024 to a local Oyster Farm with floating cages. USDA-NRCS asked to meet with farmer under the Emergency EQIP Program due to recent hurricanes. Advertising new conservation funding for Bivalve Aquaculture Gear and Biofouling Control for shellfish, i.e. oysters, clams’ environmental recovery effort. Actions that reduce, clean, or remove biofouling organisms and other waste from bivalve production area while minimizing environmental risk and risk to species of concern. Reduce adverse impacts of shellfish aquaculture operations and gear on water, plant, animal, and human resources. Improve dependable water quantity and quality to support shellfish production. Improve adequate food quantity and quality to support shellfish production.

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

- ❖ Submitted Annual reports on Friday, December 6, 2024. Planning programs for 2025.
- ❖ Site visit to Morning Star Fields: Water and Soil samples taken for a baseline prior to production. Sent to a private laboratory in Georgia to test for nutrients and coliform counts per Andrea’s recommendations.

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

- ❖ Sod Manual is now available online. Topics: Agricultural Best Management Practices, IV Site Visit, How to enroll in BMP Program, BMP Rules, Manuals, and Brochures, BMP Cost-Share Program are all now online at the FDACS’ Office of Agriculture Water Policy website.

Dr. David L. Cox mentioned that the Florida Medical Entomology Laboratory (FMEL), located on Oslo Road may want to have an arbovirus sentinel station near the Morning Star Fields property. FMEL may report to the Florida Department of Health regarding Florida Arbovirus Surveillance.

Chairman Robert C. Adair, Jr. will reach out to Jonathan Day, Emeritus Professor UF-FMEL.

**D. Stephen Wright, Environmental Specialist II, Office of Agricultural Water Policy-
Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (OAWP-FDACS) Report:**

- ❖ Florida Administrative Code 5M-1 Purposes –
 - To prevent duplicate regulation. What programs can substitute for FDACS BMPs?
 - To consolidate rules common to the various FDACS Best Management Practices Program manuals into a single chapter.
 - To adopt language allowing enrollees in the FDACS Best Management Practices Program to apply replacement fertilizer if impacted by an emergency event that results in an unmarketable, destroyed, or flooded crop.

E. Eric Charest, Indian River County Assistant Natural Resources Director:

- ❖ Continuing to work with the State of Florida on the differences between total nitrogen and nitrate nitrogen regarding their modeling effort. How you can use a program that gives you a nitrate loading, but the State is not converting to total nitrogen for the BMAP. The revised modeling effort is almost two years late to show the County what our allocations and targeted goals are.

F. 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 two audits. Received two (2) Cost-Share Agreements totaling \$63,768.05. Annual Audit: Usual GASB 34 Financial Statement per 582. F.S. Possible amendment to contract regarding the audit, due to FDACS only paying for their portion of audit.
- ❖ **FCDEA:** Brainstorm Workshop sponsored by FCDEA to be held Wednesday, November 13, 2024 @ Florida Farm Bureau in Gainesville. Future legislation. . Attendees: FL Cattlemen’s Association, FL Citrus Mutual, FL Farm Bureau, FL Forestry Association, FL Fruits & Vegetable Assoc., FNGLA Executive Directors & Lobbyist Team. *Update to be sent to SWCDs week of 12/09/2024 – 12/13/2024.*
- ❖ **AFCD:** AFCD Director, Charlene Meeks gave her resignation with terms for the AFCD Board to review. Current AFCD President, Buck Carpenter, Madison SWCD planning to resign due to his involvement with Florida Farm Bureau. Vice President of AFCD, Matthew Griffin from Lake SWCD already resigned. FDACS-OAWP has terminated contract with AFCD effective November 8, 2024. *AFCD status to assist SWCDs in Florida is unknown.* Possibility of Districts getting assistance from Florida Association of Special Districts (FASD).
- ❖ **OFFICE:** Monthly Meetings Agenda, Minutes. FCDEA Agenda and Minutes. Working with Webmaster to post updates with Webmaster for New website. Processing of Annual Dues and Memberships (NACD payment not received as of 11/05/2024.). Sending out request for Audit Proposals. Waiting to hear from Cheryl Williams, Wicks, Brown, Williams & Co., CPA’s LLP. Updates to Strategic Plan with goals, objectives, performance measures and standards. TC Palm published annual calendar of Meetings 12/02/2024.
 - Poster Contest: Sent to SDIR waiting for approval from Superintendent. Posted to Facebook page.

6. DEPARTMENTAL MATTERS:**A. Financial Audit for year ending 2024.****B. QuickBooks Renewal.**

Motion: A Motion to approve to negotiate a lower payment of \$534.60 for QuickBooks Online 2025 and figure it out next year looking into a more economical program was made by Dr. David L. Cox and Seconded by Christine Kelly-Begazo. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Future Legislation: Brainstorm Workshop sponsored by FCDEA held Wednesday, November 13, 2024 @ Florida Farm Bureau in Gainesville. Future legislation. . Attendees: FL Cattlemen’s Association, FL Citrus Mutual, FL Farm Bureau, FL Forestry Association, FL Fruits & Vegetable Assoc., FNGLA Executive Directors & Lobbyist Team.

D. Supervisor for District 3 Vacant:

- i. The Chairman did speak to Mr. Louis Schacht for his consideration.
- ii. It was mentioned at the FCDEA Brainstorm Meeting that a Supervisor does not have to live within the District as per the School Board or County Commissioners, as long as they are living in the County. Need to find a Supervisor to fill the vacant seat.

E. Mission Statement:

- i. Supervisors discussed amending the IRSWCD Mission Statement to follow the Florida Statutes 582.02.

Current Mission Statement: The Indian River Soil and Water Conservation District's (IRSWCD) mission is to provide resources, planning, assessment, assisting citizens to apply conservation and preservation technology, and to educate the citizens in these technologies.

Amended and Approved Mission Statement as of December 9, 2024: Our Mission: The Indian River Soil and Water Conservation District's (IRSWCD) mission is to provide assistance, guidance, and education to landowners, land occupiers, the agricultural industry, and the general public in implementing land and water resource protection practices.

Motion: A Motion to approve amending the IRSWCD Mission Statement to follow the Florida Statutes 582.02 as presented was made by Dr. David L. Cox and Seconded by Christine Kelly-Begazo. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Chapter 189 F.S. Special District Accountability Act:

Motion: A Motion to Table the Strategic Plan to discuss any further until our next meeting in January 2025 was made by Dr. David L. Cox and Seconded by Christine Kelly-Begazo. Motion carried unanimously.

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

- i. STEM Advisory Committee Update. Review Grant Proposals for projects. Next meeting scheduled for February 11, 2025.

B. Update on Morning Star Fields:

- i. Tuesday, December 10, 2024 Chairman, Robert C, Adair was invited to tour the site by Commissioner Susan Adams.

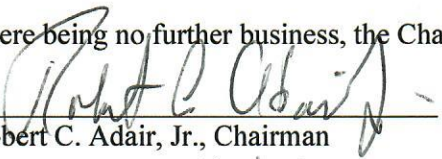
C. Update Nature Farms, Inc. Mark Dellerman:

- i. Needs DOT to clean out ditches. It will take two days to fill out an application together for a Maintenance Dredge permit from the State of Florida, which can take 6-9 months to obtain approval to clean the ditches. Need approximately \$8,000. and could be cleaned up within 3 days after permit. He possibly could look into grant assistance to assist him to keep his farm productive.

8. NEW BUSINESS:**A. Short discussion on consideration of issuing grants to small farmers in the County with SWCD funds.**

2. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 3:44 PM.



Robert C. Adair, Jr., Chairman

1-13-2025
Date



Christine Kelly-Begazo, Secretary/Treasurer

2-10-25
Date