

# **Indian River County Florida**

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



**Indian River Soil and Water  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

## **Meeting Minutes – Final**

**Monday, February 10, 2025**

**1:30 PM**

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

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

*Christine Kelly-Begazo, Vice Chairman: Seat 4*

*Dr. David L. Cox, Secretary/Treasurer: Seat 2*

*Vacant: Seat 3*

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

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

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman Robert C. Adair, Jr. called meeting to order at 1:34 P.M

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

**Staff in attendance:** Linda Caggiano, Staff Support Assistant II

**IRC Staff and**

**Partners in attendance:** Jennifer Abbey, District Conservationist, USDA/NRCS  
Micah Dettweiler, Conservationist, USDA/NRCS  
Andrea Lazzari, IRC Extension Director; UF/IFAS  
Melissa Meisenburg, IRC Senior Lagoon Environmental Specialist  
Morgan Moran, IRC 4-H Extension Agent; UF/IFAS  
Laura Moss, BOCC of IRC  
Stephen Wright, Environmental Specialist II- FDACS-OAWP

**Public in attendance:** Adam Honour, Aerex Global Solutions  
Lex Kromhout, The Hammock Ranch Preserve LLC  
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 January 13, 2025 were approved as written.

**Motion: A Motion to approve January 13, 2025 as presented was made by George F. Hamner, Jr. and Seconded by Christine Kelly-Begazo. Motion carried unanimously.**

**4. FINANCIAL REPORT:**

A. The Financial Report for January 2025 was available and reviewed by the Board.

**Motion: A Motion to accept the January 2025 financial report as presented was made by George F. Hamner, Jr. and Seconded by Christine Kelly-Begazo. Motion carried unanimously.**

**5. REPORTS:**

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

- ❖ **News:** Protect Your Agricultural Land with a Conservation Easement offered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Florida. Apply by March 7 for Fiscal Year 2025 Funding
- ❖ **Farm Bill Programs:** 28 of 63 Active contracts totaling approximately \$1,316,000 over approximately 12,300 acres
- ❖ **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP):** 16 Active Contracts | 18 - 2025 Applications | 1 - 2025 Emergency Application (preapproved)
- ❖ **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP):** 13 Active Contracts | 15 - 2025 Applications



- ❖ **Agricultural Conservation Easement Program - Wetland Reserve Easements (ACEP – WRE) :**
  - ❖ **Conservation Applications: January – February**
    - None
  - ❖ **Other:** Completed CSP annual Payments. Attended EWP site visit in St Lucie County and assisted with application process by completing environmental evaluation for proposed project. Soil Conservationists attended Working Effectively with Livestock Producers training. All staff attended the annual Environmental compliance training
  - ❖ **Next Month:** Continue conservation implementation field inspections as needed. Continue site visits to EQIP and CSP applicants to develop conservation plans and process applications for funding consideration.
- B. Andrea Lazzari, Indian River County (IRC) Agricultural Extension Director/ University of Florida/Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF IFAS) Report:**
- ❖ Morgan Moran, IRC 4-H Extension Agent attended the meeting. Morgan started with IRC Agricultural Extension August 2024.
  - ❖ Envirothon Competition Wednesday, February 19, 2025. Andrea is Chair of Soil Stations. Coordinating final preparations for a successful event.
  - ❖ Preparing for the IRC County Fair March 14-23, 2025.
  - ❖ IRC Agricultural Extension is planning to host this year's small and beginning farmers conference in August 2025. Working to finalize the date and location.
- C. Matthew Cox, Environmental Specialist III, Office of Agricultural Water Policy- Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (OAWP-FDACS) Report: (Matthew not in attendance.)**
- ❖ Report provided by Stephen Wright.
- D. Stephen Wright, Environmental Specialist II, Office of Agricultural Water Policy- Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (OAWP-FDACS) Report:**
- ❖ New Commodity Manual Rulemaking Update:
    - The Poultry rule is adopted and will go into effect on 2/13.
    - The Small Farms and Specialty Livestock rule is adopted and will go into effect on 2/23.
    - The Rule Adoption Packages for Specialty Fruit and Nut, VAC and Dairy are approved and the rules are scheduled for filing on 2/4, 2/7 and 2/12, respectively. This means the rules will go into effect around the end of February.
    - The Notice of Change for Citrus was published in the FAR on 1/15. The Rule Adoption Package is near approval and the rule will be filed as soon as possible after the 20-day public comment period ends on 2/4.
    - The Rule Adoption Packages for Nursery and Equine are moving through internal review.
  - ❖ OAWP Field Staff Activity:
    - Completing IV's and new enrollments as well as updating existing enrollments into the 2024 Florida Cattle Operations & Florida Sod Operations BMP Manuals after IV completion.
    - Cost Share: The BMP Cost Share Program will not be accepting any new applications for the 2024-2025 fiscal year.
- E. Eric Charest, Indian River County Assistant Natural Resources Director: (Eric not in attendance due to scheduling conflict.)**
- ❖ County is requesting that the Indian River SWCD Supervisors go through the storage area and scan all records for retention and clean out the area. Supervisors will need to retain a company for scanning and destroying the hard copies. SWCD funds will need to be used for the expense.



Dr. David L. Cox spoke to the GIS Department last week and they are very interested in SWCD's aerial photographs to scan with the GIS new system.

Commissioner Moss would like to be carbon copied on the email from Dr. David L. Cox and the GIS Department.

George F. Hamner, Jr recommends that Robert C. Adair, Jr. go through the files and content in the storage area, allowing one month to review content and then another month to remove from storage. Dr. David L. Cox will handle all aerial photography. All aerial photograph should be in one central location of the County. Both Supervisors Adair and Cox will report back to the Board next month on the cost of the scanning and destroying content.

**F. Melissa Meisenburg, IRC Senior Lagoon Environmental Specialist:**

- ❖ No Report.

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

- ❖ **FDACS:** Contract 27690: \$250,000.00 Annually for next three (3) years plus \$15,000.00 annually for audit. Two (2) Cost-Share Agreements pending RFR \$48,290.17. Paid (2) Cost-Share Agreements \$63,768.05. Balance of funds available - \$150,441.78. Contract 27690 - Amendment # 3 signed January 27, 2025. Audit for the final year of the contract (State fiscal year July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027) would need to be paid for by the District as it wouldn't be due to us until June 30, 2028.
- ❖ **FCDEA:** Florida Senate Agricultural Committee met Tuesday, February 4, 2025. Presentation on OPPAGA SWCD's by David Jahosky. Senator Keith Truenow stated changes are necessary for the SWCD's. David Ramba is drafting a bill for Senator Truenow.
- ❖ **AFCD:** Audrey Kuipers spoke with Burlin Findley. He stated that FDACS received word AFCD had an Executive Board meeting and voted to dissolve itself. He states it is false. AFCD President Buck Carpenter and Vice President, Matt Griffin were sent an email invite to give an oral or written report. No response.
- ❖ **OFFICE:** Monthly Meetings Agenda, Minutes. FCDEA Agenda and Minutes. Updated website changes 01/30/2025 and provided to Webmaster for New website. All audit documents have been delivered to Certified Public Accountant - Cheryl Williams with Wicks, Brown, Williams & Co., CPA's LLP. Prepared and mailed IRS Forms (1099-G) for Cost-Share Recipients and the Internal Revenue. Poster Contest: Deadline Friday March 7, 2025.

**6. DEPARTMENTAL MATTERS:**

**A. Election of Board Supervisors of Indian River Soil and Water Conservation District:**

Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary/Treasurer

- i. Chairman: Robert C. Adair, Jr.
- ii. Vice Chairman: Christine Kelly-Begazo
- iii. Secretary/Treasurer: Dr. David L. Cox

**Motion:** A motion to appoint Robert C. Adair, Jr as Chairman was made by George F. Hamner, Jr. and Seconded by Dr. David L. Cox. Motion carried unanimously.

**Motion:** A motion to appoint Christine Kelly-Begazo as Vice Chairman was made by George F. Hamner, Jr. and Seconded by Dr. David L. Cox. Motion carried unanimously.

**Motion: A motion to appoint Dr. David L. Cox as Secretary/Treasurer was made by George F. Hamner, Jr. and Seconded by Christine Kelly-Begazo. Motion carried unanimously.**

**B. Financial Audit FY 2024.**

- i. Wicks, Brown, Williams & Co., CPA's LLP has required documents. *(No action required.)*
- ii. FDACS Contract 27690 – Amendment # 3 signed January 27, 2025 pertains to the annual audit and FDACS-OAWP funding of the Audit. Due to the difference in fiscal year dates, availability of funds for the final audit year to the District will be \$0.00.

**C. Legislative Update:**

- i. The Florida Senate Agricultural Committee meeting was held Tuesday, February 4, 2025. Presentation on OPPAGA Soil and Water Conservation District Performance Review by David Jahosky with Mauldin & Jenkins. Senator Keith Truenow, Chair stated that changes are required for SWCD's.

**D. Supervisor for Seat 3 Vacant: *(Board Discussion)***

- i. Adam Honour, current role is in municipal water projects at Aerex. Agricultural background spans over 10 years across multiple areas in the industry. Resume and background will be sent to office support staff for Supervisors review.

**7. OLD BUSINESS:**

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

- i. STEM Advisory Committee meeting scheduled for Tuesday, February 11, 2025.

**B. Update on Morning Star Fields:**

- ❖ Carter & Associates, Engineer has been to site.
- ❖ Flood Plan has been submitted to Indian River County.
- ❖ Producer signed up for Poultry BMP and Cattle BMP, presumption of compliance.
- ❖ DEP permits followed up: Drainage and Poultry Confined Animal Operations as appropriate according to F.S. to DEP.
- ❖ Drainage issue with neighbor reported to SJRWMD. New drainage ditch dug by Mr. Ramos.
- ❖ All issues and updates completed.

**C. Update Nature Farms, Inc. - Mark Dellerman:**

- i. Chairman, Robert C. Adair, Jr. spoke to Mr. Dellerman, what the next process needs to happen to move forward.

**D. Short discussion on consideration of issuing grants to small farmers in the County with SWCD funds.**

- i. Chairman, Robert C. Adair, Jr. appointed a committee to make recommendations to the Board on how to use the District's funds for worthwhile projects in the County. Dr. David L. Cox will Chair the Committee and Andrea Lazzari, Judy Orcutt, and Linda Caggiano serve on committee.



FDACS Contract 27690 – FY Audit 2027 due by 06/30/2028 -SWCD responsibility \$15,000.00 - \$20,000.00. SWCD Supervisors hire a scanning company to scan all documents and clear the storage area. Scanning and removal expense unknown. Have a plan ready and approved. Keep funds local. Options suggested were to provide grants, scholarships, or sponsorships for future small and beginning farmers conferences, 4-H Club, State Envirothon.

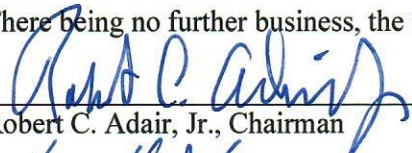
**8. NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. The Nature Conservancy Pilot Project:**

- i. The Nature Conservancy holding a meeting in Indian River County March 12, 2025. Surface water, water retention into drinking water. George F. Hamner, Jr. will be holding the meeting.

**9. ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 2:48 PM.

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

03/10/2025  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
David L. Cox, Secretary/Treasurer

04/14/2025  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date