

Indian River County Florida

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



Meeting Minutes – Final

Monday, March 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 1:39 P.M

Supervisors in attendance: Robert C. Adair, Jr., Chairman – Seat 1
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
Eric Charest, IRC Natural Resources Assistant Director
Matt Cox, Environmental Specialist III- OAWP-FDACS
Sheila Kitaif, Environmental Manager – OAWP-FDACS
Steve Smith, Bureau Chief - OAWP-FDACS
Stephen Wright, Environmental Specialist II- FDACS-OAWP
Kylie Yanchula, IRC Natural Resources Director

Public in attendance: Kelly Jackson, Indian River Pioneer Farms

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

A. The Minutes for the Board Meeting of February 10, 2025 were approved as written.

Motion: A Motion to approve the February 10, 2025 Minutes as presented was made by Christine Kelly-Begazo and Seconded by George F. Hamner, Jr. Motion carried unanimously.

4. FINANCIAL REPORT:

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

Motion: A Motion to accept the February 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)

- ❖ **Farm Bill Programs: 28 of 61 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): Deadline March 7th**
- ❖ **Conservation Application: February – March**
 - 326 ft – Fence

- ❖ 1.0 – Livestock water system (pipeline, 2 troughs, 2 heavy use areas)**Other:** Continue site visits to EQIP and CSP applicants to develop conservation plans and process applications for funding consideration and began ranking CSP applications.
- ❖ DC attended NRCS State Conservationist Advisory Committee meeting in Gainesville
- ❖ **Next Month:** Continue conservation implementation field inspections as needed. Continue site visits to EQIP applicants to develop conservation plans and process applications for funding consideration. Complete application processing for CSP applicants. Plan Local Working Group Meeting before end of May.
- ❖ USDA-NRCS has had 30 people in the State of Florida laid off, which includes eight (8) people in Area 4.

Supervisors discussed and agreed to hold the Local Working Group immediately after the May 12, 2025 Board Meeting.

B. Andrea Lazzari, Indian River County (IRC) Agricultural Extension Director/ University of Florida/Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF IFAS) Report:
(Andrea not in attendance.)

- ❖ No Report.

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

- ❖ OAWP-FDACS Best Management Practices Rules/Manuals available online and in effect: Sod, Cattle, Poultry, Small Farms and Specialty Livestock, and Specialty Fruit and Nuts.
- ❖ VAC effective 02/27/2025; Citrus effective 03/04/2025; Dairy effective 03/05/2025; Nursery effective 03/12/2025; and Equine effective 03/12/2025.

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

- ❖ No Report.

E. Sheila Kitaif, Environmental Manager, Office of Agricultural Water Policy- Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (OAWP-FDACS) Report:

- ❖ FDACS mailout letter on the Indian River Lagoon (IRL) Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) was very successful.
- ❖ Sheila to provide update of enrollments and compliance information to Eric Charest, Indian River County Assistant Natural Resources Director.

F. Steve Smith, Bureau Chief, Office of Agricultural Water Policy- Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (OAWP-FDACS) Report:

- ❖ Updated manuals are available online. Getting the new manuals adopted and out has been the main focus lately. Waiting to determine how many manuals are needed prior to printing. Indian River County needs approximately 50 of the Small Farms and Specialty Livestock Manuals. Producers do not need to do anything regarding the new manuals. As Producers have their next implementation and verification, a close out IV and Old Manual will occur. Enroll with the Updated Manual, but same Notice of Intent.

G. Kylie Yanchula, Indian River County Natural Resources Director:

- ❖ Morning Star Fields filed the paperwork for the Flood plan on March 4, 2025.

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

- ❖ Sheila to provide update of enrollments and compliance information regarding the Indian River Lagoon (IRL) Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) to Eric Charest, Indian River County Assistant Natural Resources Director.

F. Linda Caggiano, Staff Support Assistant II:

- ❖ **FDACS:** Contract 27690: Two (2) Cost-Share Agreements pending RFR \$48,290.17. Balance of funds available - \$150,441.78. Per FDACS, “There has been a pause on new cost share applications being submitted for FY24-25. There are still a number of cost share applications that were submitted and still need to be reviewed, and it is looking like those projects are going to use up the remaining cost share money to be allocated throughout the state once agreements have been generated for them. If that turns out not to be the case, then FDACS will continue accepting new applications in areas that end up still having money to be allocated.”
- ❖ **FCDEA:** Next Teleconference March 18, 2025.
- ❖ **AFCD:** No updates.
- ❖ **OFFICE:** Monthly Meetings Agenda, Minutes. FCDEA Agenda and Minutes. Monthly updates to IRC Webmaster for website. Audit in process. Poster Contest: Deadline Friday March 7, 2025 – No Posters received.

6. DEPARTMENTAL MATTERS:**A. Financial Audit FY 2024.**

- i. Wicks, Brown, Williams & Co., CPA’s LLP has required documents. *(No action required.)*

B. 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.

C. Supervisor for Seat 3 Vacant: *(Tabled until next meeting.)***7. OLD BUSINESS:****A. Indian River Lagoon STEM Advisory Committee Update: *(Supervisor Dr. David L. Cox not in attendance – No update.)*****B. Short discussion on consideration of issuing grants to small farmers in the County with SWCD funds. *(Supervisor Dr. David L. Cox not in attendance – Tabled until next meeting.)*****8. PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE:**

- A. Kelly Jackson, Indian River Pioneer Farms spoke about her frustrations concerning support for her farm. *(No action was taken.)*

9. NEW BUSINESS:

10. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 2:09 PM.


Robert C. Adair, Jr., Chairman

04/14/2025
Date


David L. Cox, Secretary/Treasurer

04/14/2025
Date