

**HIGHLANDS SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT MINUTES**  
**December 3, 2009**

The regular meeting of the Supervisors of the Highlands Soil and Water Conservation District was called to order by Interim Chair, Wayne Zahn at 3:10 p.m., Thursday, December 3, 2009 in Conference Room 3 at the Bert J. Harris, Jr., Agricultural Center in Sebring, Florida.

**Supervisors present:** John Causey, Gregg Hartt, Ida Jackson and Wayne Zahn

**Supervisors absent:** Jimmy Wohl

**Staff present:** Carlos Torres, District Conservationist  
Jackie Bailey, Office Manager  
Corine Burgess, Natural Resources Specialist  
Clell Ford, Lakes Management Specialist  
Erin McCarta, Lakes Management Assistant

**Guests:** Don Bates (HCBCC), Leroy Crockett (RC&D) and June Fisher (County Admin)

Today's agenda was approved with changes. June Fisher distributed a more traditional agenda. She stated the format may help the Board conduct their business. Wayne Zahn stated we would try the new format. He would like all action items to board members one week in advance of the meeting.

Minutes of November 3, 2009 were approved as written.

This is the Financial Report for November 25, 2009

**DEPOSIT:**

Two deposits of \$1,924.30 were made. The funds were admin fees for Contract 14811.

**CHECKS WRITTEN:**

Check 1438 for \$59.00 to Comcast for internet service.  
Check 1439 for \$300.00 to Rader Accounting for bookkeeping and end of year journal entries.  
Check 1440 for \$2,350.00 to NACD for sponsorship (\$1,500) and Jimmy Wohl's and Jackie's registrations.  
Check 1441 Voided  
Check 1442 for \$475.00 to NACD for Jimmy Wohl's registration for the New Orleans conference.

**HSWCD balances as of November 25, 2009**

Highlands Independent Bank	Checking	\$ 4,261.99
Highlands Independent Bank	CD	\$ 1,500.00
Highlands Independent Bank	CD	\$ 1,500.00
Highlands Independent Bank	CD	\$ 2,000.00

**Money Market Account**

Balance as of October 26, 2009	\$ 390,866.99
IWMID encumbered	50,000.00
Interest	<u>360.27</u>
Balance as of November 25, 2009	\$391,227.26

**Lake Okeechobee Storage and Treatment**

Balance as of October 26, 2009	\$211,166.36
Interest	<u>172.59</u>
Balance as of November 25, 2009	\$211,338.95

FHREDI Contract

Balance as of October 26, 2009	\$ 0.00
Dep State of Fl	2,723.11
Check 1509 FHREDI (Check 1508 VOID)	<u>2,723.11</u>
Balance as of November 25, 2009	\$ 0.00

BMP Contract #14811

Balance as of October 26, 2009	\$ 83,708.33
Deps State of Fla	3,791.67
Checks 751-758	<u>40,410.11</u>
Balance as of November 25, 2009	\$ 47,089.89

Petty Cash

Balance as of October 26, 2009	\$ 74.44
11/12/09 Sweet Bays – Ag Venture	6.18
11/14/09 Winn Dixie – Ag Venture	6.32
11/19/09 Publix – Air Potato Grant	<u>15.78</u>
Balance as of November 25, 2009	\$ 46.16

Jackie checked out interest rates on CDs. The Supervisors discussed buying 12 month CDs maturing on various dates. Be aware banks only insure up to \$250,000. Jackie stated that Wayne Zahn had helped her to prepare a profit and loss comparison to help accomplish developing a budget. The budget will be discussed at our next meeting. The bookkeeping will be consolidated into one company and refined making reports easier to create and understand. Wicks, Brown and Williams are conducting the audit at this time. We will pay them on June 30, 2010.

**MIL** - Corine has applied for F/Y2011 funding from SWFWMD for the MIL. The request is for \$20,000 to be used for marketing and rebates. Corine brought the Funding/Ranking letter to the meeting for Wayne Zahn to sign. The letter states that HSWCD is committed to funding \$6,665.00 towards the MIL. Corine stated that more than likely she would not be asking for money from the Board; the committed funds can be In-Kind services. Corine is also seeking funds from the community. She and Dee Dee have already raised \$1,000 for the MIL. Gregg Hartt made a motion to submit the Funding/Ranking letter to SWFWMD for FY2011 funding for the MIL. John Causey seconded the motion. Motion Passed.

**Revised MOU** – June Fisher’s final revision of the MOU, an MOU with changes from the County’s Attorney and a clean copy of the revised MOU after the attorney’s comments were included in the packet. Gregg Hartt made a motion that the Board approve and sign the revised HSWCD and BCC MOU. John Causey seconded the motion. Motion passed. June Fisher would like to present the MOU to the BCC at their December 15, 2009 meeting.

**Unique and Locally Important Farmland Evaluations** - Carlos informed the state office of the concerns of the Supervisors to identify unique and locally important farmlands in Highlands County. The definition of unique farmland is land other than prime farmland that is used for the production of specific high value food and fiber crops. These units are either more than 500 acres or greater than 10% of the map unit or used for high value crops. The objective of establishing this designation is purely programmatic for NRCS. This is the methodology used Nationally by NRCS to determine the quantity and quality of farmlands. The information may be used in ranking WRP projects. There are no adverse land value effects. Has nothing to do with the tax base in a County. The information will show up certain databases, such as Web Soil Survey and the Soil Data Mart. This information is available to the public. The strategic goal is

to conserve farmland on a nationwide scale. Designation will help report the services of NRCS. This has nothing to do with regulations. Will designation affect the lands value? What would be the consideration if a developer wanted to change zoning to a non-ag use? The Board members would like to have the time to read the entire document. Item tabled until the next meeting.

**NACD Conference** will be held January 31 through February 3, 2010 in Orlando. Please consider going to the conference.

**Lake Jackson Shoreline Restoration Project** – The draft Final Report with photo station pictures were in the packet. Erin showed a short PowerPoint showing the tasks completed, the results of the restoration project and photo stations from the project. Erin would like to share the report with the other funding agencies; the Tourist Development Council, the Recreation and Parks Advisory Commission, the City of Sebring and the Florida Lakes Management Society.

This project has improved wildlife habitat, recreation on the lake and the appearance of the centerpiece of our county, Lake Jackson. The project was successful and was completed within budget. The board approved the final report with the modification of the lagoons reducing the amount of phosphorus reaching the lake to the water coming into the lake has more nutrients than the lake proper.

**Istokpoga Marsh Watershed Improvement District's Project (IMWID)** – Clell stated that 79 acres of land had been signed into long term lease agreements. 62 acres would be a good candidate for cover crop. This acreage is not being managed at this time. Extension staff has been asked to help research cover crop idea. Randy from the Extension will contact a doctor at the Ona Research Center to see if there is interest in a demonstration site in Highlands. To prepare the area and seed would probably cost about \$4,000; if the crop is harvested for cattle feed some money could be made. Harvesting would also reduce the amount of phosphorus in IMWID. Leroy stated RC&D may be interested. Research must be done making sure exotic cover crops; that may become invasive are not introduced to the area. A site visit for interested parties needs to be planned. The Habitat Conservation Plan is having a stakeholders meeting on January 13, 2010.

**Community Activity report** – January 8, 2010 will be our Holiday Luncheon Day. The video has been sent back to Bob Stobaugh for editing. Tentatively, showing the video to the BCC in January. The video features the strength of partnerships.

**Contract Activity report** – Producers and contractors were paid \$41,208.92 for the month of November 2009.

**Lakes Management Assistant report** – Erin informed the Board that the TDE had made a \$500.00 donation to our MRRP project.

**District Conservation Report** – Three people were served through conservation application, four people were served through conservation planning and ten people were served through inventories and evaluations. Three producer received payments totaling \$56,265.00 in November 2009 through EQIP and WHIP.

Ida Jackson complemented Corine on her weekly News from the Watershed articles.

The next board meeting was set for **Tuesday, January 5, 2010** in the **General Services Board Room at 3p.m.**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:30p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

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Recording Secretary

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Chairman

DRAFT