

HIGHLANDS SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT MINUTES

January 6, 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 3:05 p.m., Tuesday, January 6, 2009 in Conference Room 3 at the Bert J. Harris, Jr., Agricultural Center in Sebring, Florida.

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

Staff present: Jennifer Abbey, Soil Conservationist
 Jackie Bailey, Office Manager
 Corine Burgess, Natural Resources Specialist
 Clell Ford, Lakes Management Specialist
 Erin McCarta, Lakes Management Assistant

Guests: Don Bates, Mark Clifford, Leroy Crockett, Bo Griffin, Jesse Markle, Benita Whalen

This is the Financial Report for December 29, 2008

DEPOSIT:

Two deposits were made this month totaling \$1,842.41. \$1,166.67 is Admin Fees. \$650.00 in bid package sales and \$25.74 from CD interest. An adjustment of \$.44 was made to Check #1373.

CHECKS WRITTEN:

Check 1379 for \$59.00 to Comcast for Internet.
 Check 1380 for \$67.00 to Highlands County School Board for the Avon Park High School substitute fund.

HSWCD balances as of December 29, 2008

Highlands Independent Bank	Checking	\$ 6,153.24
Highlands Independent Bank	CD	\$ 1,500.00
Highlands Independent Bank	CD	\$ 1,500.00
Highlands Independent Bank	CD	\$ 2,000.00

HSWCD Money Market Account		
Balance as of November 25, 2008		\$407,570.38
Interest		<u>784.76</u>
Balance as of December 29, 2008		\$408,355.14

Lake Okeechobee Storage and Treatment

Balance as of November 25, 2008	\$299,116.80
Interest	<u>575.23</u>
Balance as of December 29, 2008	\$299,692.03

Avon Park Air Force Range Grant

Balance as of November 25, 2008	\$272,830.98
Interest	<u>524.68</u>
Balance as of December 29, 2008	\$273,355.66

FHREDI Contract

Balance as of November 25, 2008	\$ 0.00
Dep State of Florida	5,373.63
Check 1501 FHREDI	<u>5,373.63</u>
Balance as of December 29, 2008	0.00

MiniFarms 13882
Balance as of December 29, 2008 \$ 6,250.00

BMP Contract #13929
Balance as of November 25, 2008 \$ 9,043.59
Two Dep State of Florida 57,873.09
Checks 685-689 24,500.00
Balance as of December 29, 2008 \$42,416.68

Minutes of December 2, 2008 were approved with the correction of the January meeting date. Today's agenda was approved with the Envirothon report being removed until next month and the Long Range Plan to be discussed if time permitted.

The Awesome Opossums from Avon Park will represent Highlands County at the State Envirothon competition. The Lake Symposium was held December 13. On January 6, HSWCD hosted a field trip at Highlands Hammock State Park for the Career Academy. Jimmy Wohl and Gregg Hartt were the grill masters and prepared lunch for the students. Hendrick's Corner donated the hamburgers and hot dogs. The students enjoyed tram rides and the scavenger hunts while learning about the environment. Corine and Erin have been working with the Academy to showcase the environmental field and the career opportunities available to the students. The County Fair will be held earlier than usual this year. The event runs from January 23 through the 31st.

Jimmy Wohl will attend the NACD conference in New Orleans on January 31 through February 3, 2009. He will be representing the SWCDs of the State of Florida. He will participate on a panel discussing the topic, "Creating Opportunities in Challenging Times". Next month's meeting date will be move to February 10, 2009 so that Jimmy Wohl can bring a report from the conference.

Bo Griffin presented a proposal for the Istokpoga Marsh Watershed Improvement District (IMWID) project. He came to the Board asking for \$50,000 to be used for engineering and design.

An Evaluation of Phosphorus (P) Reduction Scenarios for IMWID has been developed by Del Bottcher from Soil and Water Engineering Technology, Inc in cooperation with the SFWMD and FDACS to implement BMPs to meet TMDL standards set by DEP for the IMWID. The IMWID has chosen Scenario 3 from the evaluation as the most effective at removing P capturing seven tons a year. The project consists of two natural reservoirs that store irrigation water, reducing the discharge and creating the ability to reuse the water. The estimated cost of the project is 13 million.

The project encompasses the entire IMWID area, because of the diverse uses of the land, the area doesn't lend itself to individual BMP conservation plans. The TMDLs are set at 105 metric tons per year. The goal is scientifically impossible to obtain, EPA needs to be made aware of the impossibility of the law. Many factors contribute to the phosphorus concentration. The first phase of the project is acquisition of land at a cost of three and a half million dollars. The projected start date is June 2009. The second phase would be design and survey.

Benita from SFWMD stated six or seven projects were evaluated and the IMWID project was determined to be the best project to fund at this time. This project is unique in the fact that the canal systems let us compare the inflow and outflow of P.

SFWMD is working on finding funding and partnerships for the project. FDACS has earmarked \$60,000 for design. EPA staff members from Jacksonville and Atlanta are interested in the project. The project may qualify for 319 funds. NRCS is a possible funding source through the Alternative Water Supply program. There is a short timeline for securing funding.

Discussion of concerns included: with all of the variables to be considered with the scenario including, irrigation, soil types, rainfall, topographical concerns there is a 20% room for errors leaving a 50/50 chance of success. Seven tons equates to two trailer loads; small amount of P control for the money. To spend 13 million without implementing BMPs seems premature. BMPs are a quick way to see results. Six years at 20% participation of BMPs would give same results as project. Why is the request \$50,000 and how will the funds be spent? Will this project be part of Highlands County's Long Range Plan? Board members would like to see more information before making a decision. IMWID, which is a special taxing district will pay for Operation & Maintenance cost after project is completed.

John Causey made a motion to table the discussion until next month, giving supervisor's time to gather more information from landowner's in the Istokpoga Marsh Watershed Improvement District and other people involved in the project. Motion failed for lack of a second.

Gregg Hartt made a motion that we not fund the project at this time. The cost of the project was too much money for too little gain. The project maybe discussed at a later time if more information is brought to the table. Ida Jackson seconded the motion. Motion past with three yeas and one nay.

Ten bids were received for the Avon Park Air Force Range Contract. Benita Whalen will go to the SFWMD Governing Board for approval of Amendment #3, increasing funding by \$250,000. Target date for the selected contractor to start working on the project is March 5, 2009. The shell cap phase has been removed from the project. Ida Jackson made a motion to approved Wayne Zahn signing Amendment #3 if it is ready before our next meeting. John Causey seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

The Contract Activity, Lake Management Specialist, the Lake Management Assistant, the District Conservationist and the Natural Resources Specialist Reports were in the meeting packet.

Corine informed the board that the Natural Resources Department has been tasked with facilitating the Natural Resources Advisory Commission.

Mark Clifford invited all members to join the Toastmaster's club on the first and third Wednesday of the month.

The next board meeting was set for **February 10, 2009** in Conference Room #1 at 3p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:00p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Recording Secretary

Chairman