

# HIGHLANDS SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT MINUTES

## September 1, 2009

The regular meeting of the Supervisors of the Highlands Soil and Water Conservation District was called to order by Supervisor, Gregg Hartt at 3:05 p.m., Tuesday, September 1, 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 Jimmy Wohl

**Supervisors absent:** Wayne Zahn

**Staff present:** Carlos Torres, District Conservationist  
 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 (HCBCC), Mark Clifford and June Fisher (County Admin),  
 Jesse Markle (SFWMD)

This is the financial report for August 24, 2009

DEPOSIT:  
 No deposits

CHECKS WRITTEN:  
 Check 1423 for \$3.51 to Fla Dept of Revenue for quarterly taxes.  
 Check 1424 for \$59.00 to Comcast for internet service.  
 Check 1425 for \$412.50 to Radar Accounting for quarterly reconciliation and journal entries.  
 Check 1426 for \$500.00 to Ag Venture for donation.  
 Check 1427 for \$100.00 to Okeechobee Farm Bureau for donation to the CARES program.  
 Check 1428 was voided.

HSWCD balances as of August 24, 2009

Highlands Independent Bank	Checking	\$ 7,399.04
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 July 28, 2009	\$379,194.19
IWMID encumbered	50,000.00
Three dep. Admin Fees	2,729.18
Interest	<u>376.06</u>
Balance as of August 24, 2009	\$382,299.43

Lake Okeechobee Storage and Treatment

Balance as of July 28, 2009	\$210,619.39
Interest	<u>186.12</u>
Balance as of August 24, 2009	\$210,805.51

Avon Park Air Force Range Grant

Balance as of July 28, 2009	\$ 77,410.02
Interest	135.23
Check 2017to URS	<u>11,173.61</u>
Balance as of August 24, 2009	\$ 66,371.64

FHREDI Contract

Balance as of July 28, 2009	\$ 0.00
Dep State of Fla	8,582.20
Check 1507 FHREDI	<u>8,582.20</u>
Balance as of August 24, 2009	\$ 0.00

MiniFarms 13882

Balance as of August 24, 2009	0.00
-------------------------------	------

BMP Contract #13929

Balance as of July 28, 2009	\$21,829.14
Checks 725-730	<u>\$21,829.14</u>
Balance as of August 24, 2009	\$ 0.00

BMP Contract #14811

Deps State of Fla	\$106,070.42
Checks 731-735	<u>35,487.09</u>
Balance as of August 24, 2009	\$ 70,583.33

Petty Cash

Balance as of July 28, 2009	\$ 200.93
Postage for rain sensor grant	43.20
Office supplies batteries	<u>8.55</u>
Balance as of August 24, 2009	\$ 149.18

Today's agenda was approved with the following changes: Jesse Markle presented the Lake Okeechobee Storage and Treatment Contract and Revise MOU was removed and a workshop was set for September 15, 2009 at 3p.m. Minutes of August 4, 2009 were approved as written.

Along with the Financial Report, a draft 2009-10 budget, a blank list of accounts to be used as a blank budget form and the proposed County budget for the cost center that supports HSWCD were in the packet. Clell explained the budgeting process for the Lakes Management projects. Jackie stated she had placed an ad requesting proposals to perform the single act audit for F/Y 2008-2009. We have received four requests for information. The deadline is September 25, 2009.

**Lake Okeechobee Storage and Treatment Contract** Jesse Markle from SFWMD presented two amendments. The drier than normal conditions during the past three years have created a need for additional time and funding to evaluate the FRESP model projects to develop a payment plan for environmental services provided by producers. The amendment to the Buck Island project extends the contract by two months with an ending date of September 30, 2010 and increases the funding amount by \$68,250 bringing SFWMD total to \$415,000. The amendment to the Lykes Brothers project extends the contract by one year with an ending date of September 30, 2010 and increases the funding amount by \$393,750. Both amendments state that Jesse Markle will be the project manager. John Causey made a motion that the amendments be signed. Ida Jackson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**Istokpoga Marsh Watershed Improvement District's Project (IMWID)** Don Bates stated the purchase of six parcels totaling 312.09 acres by the County is on the agenda for the BCC meeting on September 8, 2009. Environmental Assessments by SFWMD are scheduled for tomorrow. The purchase of the first parcel failed. The target date for closing on all property purchases is September 30, 2009. The land will be leased back to the owners. BMPs may be implemented by landowners. Landowner's will be allowed to discharge water. The AWEP application to NRCS was not approved. The AWEP program is for individual landowners not districts. John Causey presented an article about cover crops as an alternative way to reduce

nutrients in the soil. Forty acres of cover crops would reduce 6 tons of phosphorous and the product could be transported to an area where it would be useful. This idea is much cheaper than buying acres of land and building reservoirs. Have alternatives been looked at in the Istokpoga Marsh Watershed Improvement District?

Gregg Hartt wanted to know, by opening an email from the County can a personal computer be confiscated under the sunshine law? Jackie asked this question to John Costigan, a lawyer for FCACS, his answer was no; only files pertaining to District business can be inspected.

**Community report** –The topic for this year’s Speech Contest is, “How can Conservation Habits equal Healthy Habitats?” Jackie attended the AFCD/FCDEA meetings her report is in the packet. NACD will be held January 31 through February 3, 2010 in Orlando. Bulrush was planted on the Lake Jackson Shoreline Restoration Project on August 27<sup>th</sup> by volunteers and the contractor. Bob Stobaugh from NRCS created a video for Ag Venture. Our Earth Team volunteers were awarded a plaque for their participation in several 4H projects. Our Earth Team volunteers were also featured nationally in NRCS’ VolunteerVoice and NRCS This Week.

The Canon National Envirothon contest was held August 2-8, 2009 in Asheville, North Carolina. The team from Florida placed 6<sup>th</sup> in the competition and received \$7,000 in scholarships. \$125,000 in scholarships was awarded at the national competition. The Regional Envirothon will be held on December 11, 2009. The Envirothon is a hands-on competition for high school students. They compete in five categories, wildlife, aquatics, forestry, soils and current event. Students participating in the event become more aware of environmental issues. John Causey made a motion that we donate \$1,000 to the regional competition. Jimmy Wohl seconded. Motion carried.

**Contract Activity report** – The Avon Park Bombing Range Levee project is complete. All invoices have been paid and the final report will be sent to SFWMD. The purpose of the levee is to store water. Water sampling will be performed by the Air Force to check the water quality leaving the bombing range. A field trip to the site has been tentatively scheduled for October 6 at 7am. Producers and contractors were paid \$74,339.14 for the month of August 2009.

**Northern Everglades/Estuaries Protection Act (NEEPA)** – No report

**Lake Management Specialist report** – Clell attended the SFWMD Peace River Board Basin meeting. HSWCD’s MIL project was funded. Four responses have been received from landowners for the Istokpoga Residential Canal Maintenance Project for storage of materials on upland properties. This represents 35 of the 1400 acres needed for storage. The permit application is being drafted. FDEP staff clarified that formal wetland determinations were required. Clell has been spending considerable time on the IMWID project as the project manager for the County.

**Lakes Management Assistant report** – The Lake Jackson Shoreline Restoration Project is finished. Erin continues to work on drafting a MOU with the City of Sebring for maintenance of site. Erin has applied to SFWMD for two educational grants. One for the Highlands County Lakes Association for funding to create the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of the Guide to Area Lakes brochure and the second one for HSWCD to fund Day at The Lake; an interactive lakeside event to promote use and care of our lakes and water bodies. Lakes Tulane and Denton Lake Clean Ups have been scheduled for September 19, 2009. These events are in conjunction with the Ocean Conservancy’s International Coastline Cleanup.

**District Conservation Report** –Carlos and Jennifer just finished training for the new Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). CSP encourages producers to improve conservation systems by installing additional activities and improving, maintaining, and managing existing conservation activities. Five people were served through conservation application, five people were served through conservation planning and nine people were served through inventories and evaluations. CSP application deadline is September 30, 2009. EQIP, WHIP, WRP, GRP application deadline is October 31, 2009. Two practices were certified and cost share provided in the amount of \$35,221.58 for the month of August 2009.

**Natural Resources Specialist report** – The final Rain Sensor Grant report has been sent to SWFWMD. Reimbursement of funds should be received soon. The GIS workshop for NRAC set for September 14<sup>th</sup> is a fact finding workshop. Corine facilitated the NRAC Resolution Revision meeting. The first Air Potato Workshop has been set for September 18, 2009. SWFWMD has approved \$10,000 Mobil Irrigation Lab grant. Corine and Jackie have worked on an outline for the presentation to the BCC. Bob Stobaugh, NRCS Public Affairs Specialist has offered to help in the making of the video. Would like Supervisor to view the outline and give guidance as to the content of the video. Gregg Hartt will meet with staff members.

The next board meeting was set for October 6, 2009 in Conference Room #3 at 3p.m. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:35p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

---

Recording Secretary

---

Chairman