

# HIGHLANDS SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT MINUTES

## March 2, 2010

The regular meeting of the Supervisors of the Highlands Soil and Water Conservation District was called to order by Jimmy Wohl at 3:05 p.m., Tuesday, March 2, 2010 in Conference Room 3 at the Bert J. Harris Agricultural Center, 4509 George Blvd. in Sebring, Florida.

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

**Supervisors absent:** Wayne Zahn

**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:** Commissioner Bates (HCBCC) and Bo Griffin (FDACS)

Today's agenda was approved. Minutes of February 2, 2010 were approved as written. Financial Report was approved as presented.

The Contract Report was presented. A more comprehensive document was suggested. Supervisors would like to see more detail of what BMPs are being implemented and why the producer is being paid. How many government agencies are partnering with the producer? What percentage did the producer pay? Were FDACS, NRCS and SFWMD funds responsible for stimulating the economy of Highlands County? A spreadsheet listing all business, landowners and people employed because of the funds from FDACS, NRCS and other government agencies would be a useful tool to record government funds being spent and the benefit to economy of the county.

### **Action Items:**

A draft budget was presented. Discussion included Travel being renamed Continuing Education. The addition of a line item named Contingency for project not yet name in the amount of \$1,000. It was stated that a budget would make decisions easier when unbudgeted requests come before the Board. John Causey made a motion to accept the budget with the addition of the Contingency line for \$1,000. Ida Jackson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Day at the Lake event - The City of Sebring Council approved and was excited about the event; with the provision HSWCD purchase special event insurance. The lowest quote for insurance was \$349.31 from HUB International. The event is planned for April 10<sup>th</sup>. Many governmental and environmental agencies will be joining with HSWCD. Canoeing, dip netting, boating, snorkeling, a lake clean up and many more activities will be available to the citizens to enhance awareness of recreation at the lake. The goal is to instill stewardship of the environment. Gregg Hartt will check prices on hot dogs and buns. Erin stated that the HCLA will kick in \$100 for the food through the TDC. All Supervisors are encouraged to participate in the event. John Causey made a motion to purchase the special event insurance for the Day at the Lake event. Gregg Hartt seconded the motion. Motion passed.

State Envirothon - Jackie asked for the regional team, "Awesome Opossums" to travel to the state competition. The budget reflects \$1,500 per year be used for the Regional Envirothon. All costs up to that amount have been approved.

Speech Contest - Jackie reminded the Supervisors of the teacher that wanted to bring 24 students to the Speech Contest. The teacher wants to narrow the field to five contestants at her school. Gregg Hartt volunteered to help at Sebring Middle School at 8:30 on March 22, 2010. Ida Jackson will check with her husband to see if he would also like to volunteer.

Land Judging -Lake SWCD had sent a letter requesting funds for the State Land Judging Contest. The Board decided not to support the contest. HSWCD supports Envirothon that has a soils component to its competition.

Ag in the Classroom – Corine is requesting approval to apply for a new grant. With the funds from the grant a Pollinator Garden will be created by the second graders at Memorial Elementary School. NRCS will donate plants for the garden. Students will learn about pollinators, soils, plants, composting, the water cycle, photosynthesis, the watershed and stewardship of the environment. This is a \$2,500.00 reimbursable grant with a deadline to apply of March 8, 2010. The work on the garden will begin in September. John Causey made a motion to approve Corine applying for the Ag in the Classroom Grant. Gregg Hartt seconded the motion. Motion passed.

### **Old Business**

Istokpoga Marsh Watershed Improvement District's Project (IMWID) –BCC approved purchase of 400 more acres. Should HSWCD apply for 319 Grant money? Usually a large funding match is requested with 319 funds. The 62 acres we visited for a possible cover crop test plot will be managed by Happiness Farms. There are still other small areas available. Cover crop discussion tabled until the next meeting.

Northern Everglades/Estuaries Protection Act (NEEPA) Clell spoke of the new USEPA proposed numeric water quality standards. Looking at the proposed numbers 2/3 of muck lakes all ridge lakes would be classified as impaired; under current rules a total of 9 lakes in Highlands are considered impaired. The numbers set for TMDLs by USEPA are unattainable. Clell participated in USEPA's first Listening session which was also attended by the general public and local governments; comments for the agricultural community were made by FDACS and the Farm Bureau. Clell is reviewing the proposed rule and will make comments to the BCC to be sent to EPA. Supervisors requests Clell also make comments for HSWCD, emailing his comments to the Supervisors, than submitting comments to EPA before the March 29, 2010 deadline.

MIL contract with SWFWMD – Corine stated that the Invitation to Bid has been advertised and sealed bids are due by March 8, 2010. She requested the presents of at least one Supervisor at the opening of the bids.

### **New Business**

April 18 – 24, 2010 is National Volunteer Week. Corine would like to write a proclamation and requests a Supervisor present it to the BCC to celebrate volunteer week. Our EarthTeam volunteers should also be invited to the meeting.

Jackie received a quote from Office Depot to scan all the mylars and make an index. Office Depot also stated they would help us find a Historical Grant to pay for the project. Item tabled until next month.

### **Updates**

Jackie prepared a report for the NACD conference. Meeting Supervisors from other states and experiencing the strength of the partnerships with Districts, NRCS and the Department of Ag demonstrated the clout NACD has on agricultural issues.

Carlos shared the Conservation Across America signs with the Board. When EQIP projects are completed Carlos would like to present the farmer with a sign. NRCS, HSWCD and BCC as partners would present the sign to the producer.

### **Announcement**

The second draft of the video is in the office.

Ag in the Classroom- Ag Literacy Day March 2010.

Speech Contest April 6, 2010

Day at the Lake April 10, 2010

State Envirothon April 24, 2010

The next board meeting was set for Tuesday, April 6, 2010 at **2pm** in the Conference Room 3. The Speech Contest will follow at 3:30p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:15p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

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Recording Secretary

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Chairman