

HIGHLANDS SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT MINUTES  
December 6, 2005

The regular meeting of the Supervisors of the Highlands Soil and Water Conservation District was called to order by Chairman Don Bates at 3:10 p.m., Tuesday, December 6, 2005 in Conference Room 3 at the Highlands County Agri-Civic Center, Sebring, Florida.

**Supervisors present:** Chair Don Bates, Charlie Filler, Joan Hartt, Ida Jackson and Wayne Zahn

**Staff present:** Larry Sharpe, District Conservationist  
Jackie Bailey, Office Manager  
Jennifer Donze, Natural Resources Specialist  
Clell Ford, Lakes Manager Specialist  
Eric Harper, Soil Conservation Technician

**Guests:** Ed Ayen, Don Linton, Paul Orth, Jack Ritchie and Ray Royce

DEPOSIT:

One deposit was made totaling \$315.00 for sales.

CHECKS WRITTEN:

Check 1191 for \$138.96 was written to Jackie Bailey for mileage and reimbursement.  
Check 1192 for \$175.00 was written to Fla. Dept. of Comm. Affairs for Special District Fees.  
Check 1193 for \$150.00 was written to Highlands Fair Association for booth rental.

HSWCD balances as of November 28, 2005:

Highlands Independent Bank	Checking	\$6,647.97
Highlands Independent Bank	CD	\$1,500.00
Highlands Independent Bank	CD	\$1,500.00
Highlands Independent Bank	CD	\$2,000.00
<u>Citrus Ridge VRT Grant account</u>		
Check 1007 to Ben Hill Griffin		20,400.00
Check 1008 voided		
Balance as of November 28, 2005		\$29,610.00
<u>Lake Okeechobee Restoration Grant</u>		
Balance as of November 28, 2005		\$37,727.28
<u>Lake Okeechobee Storage and Treatment</u>		
Balance as of November 28, 2005		\$500,000.00

Minutes of November 1, 2005 were approved as written.

Don Bates noted the BMP Workshop held earlier in the day was not as well attended as he would of liked. Jackie stated that the CPA had been contacted and the audit is in process of being completed.

The staff has reviewed the presentation that Bob Stobough from NRCS helped us create. A few changes were needed. It should be completed by January. The purpose of the presentation is to thank the Board of County Commissioners for supporting HSWCD.

The CCC Festival was held on Saturday, November 5 at Highlands Hammock State Park over 3,000 people attended the event. The Envirothon competition will be held on December 9. Avon Park has two teams this year. Lake Placid will have one. Alan Jay and Archbold Biological Station were recognized as sponsors. Ida Jackson made a motion that we reimburse mileage up to \$150.00 for the Avon Park Envirothon Teams to travel to the competition. Seconded by Joan Hartt. Motion passed unanimously.

The Supervisor's decided that this year's Speech Contest topic is, "Wise Use of Florida's Water Resources". Our Speech Contest will be held in April.

We will participate in the Lorida Round Up again this year. Ed Ayen from Florida's Yards and Neighborhoods and Connie Steele from Florida Freshwater Frontier will join us for the event. Freddy the SFWMD mascot will also be there.

We have paid the rent for our booth at the County Fair; it will run from February 10 through 18<sup>th</sup>.

Long Range Plan Review. One of our goals is to educate people concerning protection and improvement of lake and surface water resources. Many citizens are confused by what agencies are responsible for what projects within Lake Istokpoga watershed management. A matrix will be created by Clell showing agencies and their responsibilities for projects to help the citizens understand the complexities of lakes management.

Larry received an email from Camilo Gaitan expressing interest in Highlands County obtaining a Mobile Irrigation Lab (MIL). Our next step would be to develop a Scope of Work and a budget. Ed Ayen said he was very interested in the MIL also and could educate the public about fertilizers and plants. The MIL would be used in both the agricultural and urban setting. The MIL would be used in both WMDs. Education should be an important part of a new program. The Board will look into funding possibilities. Jack Ritchie thinks with a proactive approach the MIL would be well received and a great asset to the County. Eric and Larry will work on a Scope of Work.

Citrus Ridge VRT Grant. We have two applications. One is for Lykes Brothers to retrofit a third machine. The cost will be \$26,733.00; the cap payment of \$10,200 will apply to the retrofit. Ida Jackson made a motion that we accept the application for Lykes Brothers. Seconded by Joan Hartt. Motion passed. Wayne Zahn abstain because of conflict of interest. The second application was for Davis Citrus Management, Inc. They will be doing a low technology retrofit at a cost of \$2,675.00 or 60% cost share will be \$1,605.00. Ida Jackson made a motion that we accept the application for Davis Citrus. Seconded by Wayne Zahn. Motion passed unanimously.

Lake Okeechobee Restoration Act. Don Linton presented a letter from Congressman Foley to Mr. Arthur Lewis in reference to the water levels of Lake Istokpoga.

Lake Okeechobee Water Storage and Treatment Grant – The second draft of the Landowner Working Contract was included in the meeting packet. The Board felt that some of the wording was very vague. Don Bates and Larry will study the contract and make suggestions for the wording. This item was tabled until our January meeting.

District Conservationist Report –Two Conservation Plans were completed. Meet with representatives of the Nature Conservancy regarding Lygodium infestations in the County. Seven people were served through conservation planning, five people were served through conservation application, and seventeen people were served through inventory and evaluations. Three governmental agencies were served.

Natural Resources Specialist Report –Over 700 students have crawled through the Soil Tunnel. The contract for the Shower head/Toilet Rebate Grant from SFWMD has been received. The wording states that 21% of the cost of shower heads will be our responsibility. There is no set amount on how many we buy. All monies must be spent on this project and then we are reimbursed. A letter will be written to the Board of County Commissioners requesting a loan.

Eric showed the Board a piece of the Fish Habitat. It is made out of the recycled fishing line. The habitat is much bigger than anticipated. We will contact Fish and Wildlife and place the habitat in one of the counties lakes.

The Lake Manager Report – Clell requested names for the outstanding citizen for conservation concerns. He toured the Istokpoga residential canals being considered for the maintenance project with SFWMD staff. Istokpoga hydrologic performance measures presented to Lake Okeechobee Watershed Project Delivery Team. Staff monitored water quality during the dewatering activities for the Little Lake Jackson Alum Injection System. Comments returned to FDEP regarding the revised “Verified List” of water bodies needing TMDL development. Lake Josephine is being dewatered to allow scraping 600 acres of shoreline in the center and west basins.

The next board meeting was set for January 3, 2006 in Conference Room #3 at 3p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted:

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Recording Secretary

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Chairman