

HIGHLANDS SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT MINUTES  
July 5, 2005

The regular meeting of the Supervisors of the Highlands Soil and Water Conservation District was called to order by Ida Jackson at 3:10 p.m., Tuesday, July 5, 2005 in Conference Room 3 at the Highlands County Agri-Civic Center, Sebring, Florida.

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

**Supervisors absent:** Chairman Don Bates

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

**Guests:** Don Linton, Paul Orth and Benita Whalen

DEPOSIT:

Three deposits were made totaling \$2,584.02. \$204.25 for sales and \$2,379.77 for administrative fees for the VRT grant.

CHECKS WRITTEN:

Check 1178 for \$266.76 to NACD for "Wonder of Soils" Books for Ag Venture. This check was voided.

Check 1179 for \$129.64 to NACD for "Wonders of Soils" Books for Ag Venture.

HSWCD balances as of June 27, 2005:

Highlands Independent Bank	Checking	\$7,106.17
Highlands Independent Bank	CD	\$1,500.00
Highlands Independent Bank	CD	\$1,500.00
Highlands Independent Bank	CD	\$2,000.00

Citrus Ridge VRT Grant account

Balance as of May 27, 2005	\$ 2,404.58
Reimbursement from State of Fla	<u>47,595.42</u>
Balance as of June 27, 2005	\$50,000.00

Lake Okeechobee Restoration Grant

Balance as June 27, 2005	\$ 500.00
Savings Account	<u>37,000.00</u>
Total	\$37,500.00

Minutes of June 7, 2005 were approved as written.

Lake Okeechobee Water Storage and Treatment on Private Lands Project. Benita Whalen from SFWMD was present to answer any questions the Board has about the pilot project. She stated the purpose of the project was to find options for storage and treatment of water. Presently water is stored in lakes. This can be detrimental to lakes because water levels are not allowed to fluctuate naturally. Also when releases are necessary the water is released into estuaries and coastal waters. The pilot program is to develop an incentive payment program to see if it would be economically feasible for landowners to store water on private lands. Designing and installing structures would be done through the contract. Treatment of the water will be done naturally; as water is stored for hours or days; nutrients will settle out, much like retention ponds in an urban setting. One of the goals of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) is to keep producers on their lands, which conserve natural resources better than small ranchettes that fracture the landscape.

Being a pilot program, we may find out that this concept will not work. Hopefully the program will be a success and will be implemented in other areas throughout the state. As the program proceeds we could use the project as an educational tool.

Lykes Brothers and Buck Island are the producers that are mentioned in the contract because of the vast amount of land they own. Wayne Zahn explained how the program would work on both properties.

Questions specific to the contract included. Audit cost will be out of our 5% administrative fee. Interest made from the money would be put back into the program. Deliverables would be received, and then invoices would be paid. Quarterly reports are required. Producers would be responsible for certifying engineering work done on their properties.

Concern was voiced if SWFWMD would make all producers store water. Who would have the rights to use the water?

Wayne Zahn made a motion that the Board sign the contract with SFWMD for the Pilot Program for Lake Okeechobee Water Storage and Treatment on Private Lands Project. Charlie Filler seconded the motion. Motion passed. Wayne Zahn abstained due to conflict of interest.

Ag-Venture organizers have picked up the 1,300 copies of "Wonders of Soil", "For the Good of the People" and the FSA Coloring books for the event. The activities books were on sale when ordered, at a cost of \$129.64.

The AFCD Annual Meeting will be held on July 29-31, 2005 at the Mission Inn at Howey-in-the-Hills, Fl. Don Bates, Larry and Jackie will attend.

Lake Okeechobee Restoration Act and Florida Watershed Restoration Act. No report.

District Conservationist Report – Larry attended the Istokpoga Marsh Watershed Advisory Board meeting to consider hiring a consultant to model the watershed to determine effectiveness of BMPs for phosphorus reduction. He met with SO staff to review the Boney WRP site. He developed an electronic index for new 2005 digital aerials for office use. The office received 27

referrals for the ECP from FSA to cover damage to culverts and drainage systems from last year's hurricanes. Two people were served through conservation planning, five people were served through conservation application, and twenty-one people were served through inventory and evaluations.

A cooperater agreement for MK Hall was presented to the Board for approval. It is a 3-1/2 acre parcel that the producer wants an irrigation evaluation for growing grapes. Joan Hartt made a motion to approve the agreement. Seconded by Charlie Filler. Motion passed unanimously.

Natural Resources Specialist Report – Jennifer and Eric worked on four requests for irrigation planning from grape growers in the County. She attended a workshop at Archbold and gave a presentation about trends in Highlands County lakes. She displayed the soil tunnel for the Supervisors. She submitted her first article to the paper.

The Lake Manager Report – Clell's report was in the packet for review. Jennifer reported for Clell. She informed the Board that there is a concern about an invasive snail that has been found in Lake Olivia. She stated more information needs to be collected on the snail.

The next board meeting was set for August 2, 2005 in Conference Room #3 at 3p.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