

**Highlands Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisors:**

Jimmy Wohl, Chair  
 Ida Jackson, Secretary/Treasurer  
 John Causey, Supervisor  
 Gregg Hartt, Supervisor  
 Wayne Zahn, Supervisor

**District Staff :**

Jackie Bailey - Office Manager  
 Clell Ford - Lakes Manager  
 Erin McCarta - Lake Management Assistant  
 Corine Burgess -Natural Resource Specialist

**NRCS Staff:**

Carlos Torres -District Conservationist  
 Jennifer Abbey - Soil Conservationist

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer

We are located at the west end of the Bert J. Harris, Jr. Agricultural Center at US 27 and George Blvd., 3 miles south of Sebring at the flashing yellow light.

What was the worm doing in the cornfield?  
 Going in one ear and out the other. ☺



4505 George Blvd.  
 Sebring, Florida 33875-5837

Phone: 863-402-6545  
 Fax: 863-385-7028

We're on the Web!  
[www.highlandsswcd.org](http://www.highlandsswcd.org)



**Soil and Water Sentinel**

SUMMER 2010

**Natural Resources Conservation Service**

**AFCD Area VI Meeting**

**Inside this Issue**

Lake Projects	2
Community Activities	2 and 3

**Event Calendar**

- ♦ July 4 Independence Day
- ♦ July 6 HSWCD Board Meeting
- ♦ July 29 through Aug. 1, 2010 AFCD Annual Conference
- ♦ July 30 State Speech Contest
- ♦ July 30 State Poster Contest
- ♦ July 30 FCDEA meeting
- ♦ Aug. 3 HSWCD Board Meeting
- ♦ Aug 24, Highlands County School Board Garden Workshop
- ♦ Sept. 7 HSWCD Board Meeting
- ♦ Sept. 28 Rain Barrel and Composter Workshop



Louise King, South Dade Supervisor, Eva Webb, President AFCD and Jeff Schmidt, NRCS Area Conservationist share information at the Area VI meeting.



Carlos Torres, District Conservationist and Corine Burgess, Natural Resources Specialist from Highlands County enjoy lunch provided by South Dade SWCD.

South Dade SWCD hosted the AFCD Area VI meeting on May 4, 2010 at the Alton Chandler Civic Center in Bassinger.

Eva Webb, President of the AFCD informed participants of a by-law change being considered to reduce the AFCDs areas from six to four. Jackie Bailey, President of the FCDEA updated attendees of the activities of the employees association.

Jeff Schmidt, NRCS spoke about the partnerships between NRCS and

SWCDs and projects and programs coming to the Northern Everglades Estuaries Protection Act area in the near future.

Highlands SWCD shared educational success stories and South Dade SWCD showed a composting presentation highlighting fund raising possibilities for other districts.

A tour of Butler Oaks Dairy was offered after the meeting.



**Benjamin Kielbasa from Okeechobee won the Area Speech Contest that was held at the Area VI meeting. He will represent Area VI at the State Speech Contest on July 30 at the AFCD Annual meeting. Good Luck Benjamin!**

### Florida Lakes Management Society Annual Meeting



Erin stands by the FLMS display at the Annual Meeting held in Crystal River. FLMS contributed \$6,000 to the Lake Jackson Shoreline Restoration Project.

Erin McCarta, Lakes Management Assistant, attended the Florida Lakes Management Society (FLMS) Annual Meeting in Crystal River. She presented The Lake Jackson Shoreline Restoration Project Report to the members. FLMS contributed \$6,000 to this project through the Love Your Lake Cost-Share Program.

Erin stated the Lake Jackson Project was a successful project that provided abundant data and

observations that will be used to implement similar projects on other waterbodies in Highlands County.

Erin attended a workshop at the conference hosted by FDEP regarding a new type of lake assessment called The Lake Vegetation Index. This training will help the Lakes Management Program to assess the health of the lakes and support water quality improvement in the lakes of Highlands County.

### Florida Envirothon

The Sumatran Rhinocerii of John Carroll High (Fort Pierce) won first place at the Florida Envirothon held on April 24, 2010, at Silver River State Park. The Sumatran Rhinocerii also took first place in the Wildlife and Forestry divisions! Sponsor Beau Roberts prepared his team well and we wish them safe travels and great success at the Canon Envirothon, at California State University, on August 1 – 6.

The Awesome Possums from Avon Park High represented Highlands County at the competition.



Sumatran Rhinocerii Team L to R: Beau Roberts (Advisor), John James, Brandon Paige, Taylor Tench, Mary Catherine Brown, Victoria Delaporte

### HSWCD Annual Speech Contest



Back row L to R: Jimmy Wohl, Chair, Ida Jackson, Secretary/Treasurer, Keat Waldron, Nisha Patel, Taylor Crutchfield, Megan Stein, Rachel Shattler, Alexis Merlo, John Causey, Supervisor, Front Row L to R: Jordan Baker, Connor Angell, Elton Gargano, Laine Daum, Royce Abela and Brock Yates

The 2010 HSWCD Speaking Contest was held on April 6, 2010. This year's topic was "How Can Conservation Habits = Healthy Habitats?"

First-place contestant, Megan Stein, was presented a cash prize of \$150.00; the \$100.00 prize went to second-place contestant, Laine Daum and \$50.00 to third-place contestant, Alexis Merlo.

### Community Activities

#### Day at the Lake

HSWCD hosted a very successful Day at the Lake event on April 10, 2010. The event was made possible with a Community Education Grant from the Peace River Basin Board of the Southwest Florida Water Management District. More than 500 people attended the first Day at the Lake event.

The event was held at the City of Sebring Pier. The pier was chosen as the location to reach citizens that may not usually spend their leisure time at a lake. Many governmental and environmental agencies joined with HSWCD to encourage the community to explore Highlands County's lakes by participating in an educational and interactive shoreline experience. The event was held in conjunction with National Environmental Education Week.

As children arrived, they received a "Passport to Fun". The children

and families were encouraged to participate in each activity and also to



A crowd gathers to "try out" snorkeling.

and their families were encouraged to participate in each event and to visit the educational booths. When the passport was full it was redeemed at the HSWCD booth where participants received a prize. Activities included an angler's challenge; bait casting, canoeing, dip netting, an insect roundup, safe boating, snorkeling, a scuba demonstration and a lake clean

up. Clowns were also making balloon shapes for the children. The event encouraged families to get outdoors and enjoy the natural resources of Highlands County.

The weather for the event was ideal and the number of Highlands County citizens that attended the event confirms that there is an interest in enjoying and recreating at the local lakes. Hopefully, this will be the first of many Day at the Lake events.



A young boy tries his hand at casting.

### Earth Day at Highlands Hammock State Park



Left: Before Above: After

Over 50 volunteers from Sebring High School, Ridge Rangers, NRCS, HSWCD staff and Park staff participated in a working Earth Day on April 22nd to remove exotic plant. In three hours over 2,400 pounds of plants were removed.

### Volunteer Proclamation



Jimmy Wohl reads the proclamation to the Board of County Commissions.

On April 21, 2010, Jimmy Wohl, Chairman of HSWCD, presented a Proclamation to the Highlands County Board of County Commissioners recognizing April 18 through 24, 2010 as National Volunteer Week. Jimmy recognized the many volunteers and volunteer groups that selflessly give their time to Highlands SWCD for the good of the entire County.