

Highlands Soil Water Conservation District 2023-2028 Work Plan

Goals, Resources, Success Measures

Update to the Plan October 29, 2024 Update to the Plan November 18, 2025

Target Area: Conservation of Natural Resources & Agricultural Sustainability

Goal	Time Line	Partners	Resources Needed	Success Measures	Performance Evaluation 11/18/2025
Education and outreach of FL SWCDs Value in an effort to remain relevant and to continue to exist through legislative actions.	Oct. 2023- Sept. <u>2025</u> 2026	Legislators Lobbyist Active SWCDs in State Producers	HSWCD staff hours Funding for Lobbyist Data /Annual Report	SWCD still existing in Florida Statute.	Annual Goal Achieved: SWCDs still exist in Florida Statute.
Dependent on adopted Legislation, assist in development of Regional SWCDs work plan with FDACS-OAWP	Oct. 2023-Sept. <u>2025</u> 2026	General Counsel FDACS-OAWP leadership AFCD & SWCD leaders	HSWCD staff hours Funding for staff travel	Have at least one staff member or supervisor provide feedback on the status of the future of SWCDs. Provide staff support of implementation of changes.	Annual Goal Achieved: Staff and Board are monitoring legislation developments & providing information to legislators to ensure they are able to make informed decisions.
Pursue Grants or Administrative contracts with various conservation & natural resource entities beyond FDACS-OAWP	Oct. 2023-Sept. 2028	Leaders of other organizations and entities Established network	HSWCD staff hours Supervisor involvement with potential entities	Secure at least 1 new grant/ contract every two years	Annual Goal Achieved: USDA-NRCS: Contribution Agreement
Expand on data systems of the Mobile Irrigation Lab Management of dissolution of HSWCD Mobile Irrigation Lab	Oct. 2023 - Sept. <u>2028</u> 2026	Producers Statewide MIL staff FDACS-OAWP	IT knowledge & funding HSWCD MIL staff hours Statewide MIL staff hours FDACS-OAWP	Have at least one staff member participate in FDACS-OAWP trainings and assist with SOP for Data Systems	Annual Goal Achieved: Staff participation in all trainings offered. Completion and presentation of Data Systems SOP
Grower education of alternative practices promoting conservation	Oct. 2023-Sept. 2028	IFAS USDA-NRCS FDACS-OAWP	Vendor/Supplier participation Budgeted funding for supplies and refreshments HSWCD staff hours	Partner on at least one producer education/outreach event per Fiscal Year	Annual Goal Achieved: Partnered with CFRPC for the Landowner Assistance Expo. Partnered with IFAS on Soil Testing Program
Management of FDACS-OAWP Regional Projects per Contract	Oct. 2025 - Sept. 2027	FDACS-OAWP Landowners Okeechobee SWCD	HSWCD, FDACS-OAWP, Landowner, OSWCD Staff	Completion of Tasks according to Contract	
Monitor and participate with the County & Landowners on IMWID	Oct. 2025-Sept. 2027	Legislators HCBCC IMWID Landowners	Legislative, HCBCC and HSWCD Staff	Define role of HSWCD with IMWID if a Hybrid IMWID funding mechanism is developed.	

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Target Area: Special Projects**

Goal	Time Line	Partners Needed	Resources Needed	Success Measures	Performance Evaluation 11/18/2025
Continue support & facilitation of the Landowners Expo. <i>Re-Assess holding 2026 Event</i>	Oct. 2023 - Sept. <u>2028</u> 2026	Central Florida Regional Planning Council, Natural Resource & Conservation Entities	HSWCD staff hours CFRPC staff hours Budgeted Funding - Sponsorship	Increase attendance by at least 1 attendee year over year. <i>2026 Assessment to be based on reduction of agriculture production and attendance</i>	Goal Not Achieved: Decrease in attendance, from 128 in 2024 to 89 in 2025
Funding of educational programs (ex. ROTC, Ag-Venture, Ag-Angels, Scholarships)	Oct. 2023 - Sept. <u>2025</u> 2028	Organizations Applicants	HSWCD staff hours Budgeted funding	Funding awarded to at least three educational programs each year	Annual Goal Achieved: Funding awarded to Ag Venture, Ag Angels, Warner Scholarships
Explore special projects focused on conservation of natural resources in Highlands County for potential funding	Oct. 2023 - Sept. 2028	Work with County staff, WMD, DEP, Div. of Forestry, FDACS to identify areas of concern. Determine funds needed and if HSWCD can provide funds for locally identified projects	Budgeted funding Highlands County Commissioners & staff hours HSWCD staff hours	Continued involvement in events and meetings of affiliate organizations focusing on Conservation and protection of natural resources	Annual Goal Achieved: Funding for IMWID operation and maintenance following legislative change limiting the District's ability to self tax.
Work with FDACS-OAWP to increase salaries awarded to high performing staff in effort to be competitive	Oct. 2023-Oct. <u>2024</u> 2025	FDACS-OAWP	Timely negotiations with OAWP leadership HSWCD staff hours	Increases awarded or alternatives approved.	Goal Completed in FY 2024-2025
Re-evaluate staffing of the District succession plan. Prepare for potential Regional Leadership at Highlands SWCD.	Oct. 2023-Oct. <u>2024</u> 2026	Legislators Lobbyists FDACS - OAWP	HSWCD Board of Supervisors HSWCD Executive Director Leadership in Tallahassee Other SWCDs in State	New Administrative Specialist Position filled as part of adopted Succession Plan. Monitor Legislation to determine if Regional Leadership will be needed	Partial Goal Acheived FY 2024. Conituning to monitor potential for Regional Leadership needs.

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Cross training of staff. 2026-Reassess based on FDACS Re-organization & legislation	Oct. 2023-Oct. <u>2024</u> 2026	HSWCD FDACS-OAWP USDA-NRCS UF-IFAS County & State Government	Staff from each partner to conduct trainings HSWCD staff for internal cross-training	<u>2+ observation days with other fellow employees and/or entities with similar program/services.</u> Pending filling the Admin. Specialist position in 2026, conduct cross training with Executive Director .	Goal Completed in FY 2024-2025
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Target Area: Board of Supervisors & Public Outreach/Education

Goal	Time Line	Partners Needed	Resources Needed	Success Measures	Performance Evaluation 11/18/2025
Continue success of Community Garden. Incorporate technology as learning tools.	Oct. 2023-Sept. <u>2025</u> Sept. 2028	Gardeners UF-IFAS Vendors	Budgeted Funding HSWCD staff hours to manage Donations of technology	75% Full Capacity of available plots. Implementation of one new farming technology.	Goal Partially Achieved: only 3 vacant plots at year end. No new technology implemented.
Create and implement producer survey to be completed as an evaluation of SWCD performance. Revise and conduct annually.	Oct. 2023-Sept. 2028	Producers	HSWCD staff hours FDACS-OAWP field staff input Website & e-mail	Development of survey with at least 10 responses received	Goal Completed in FY 2023-2024.
Solicit testimonials from producers to share their experience with HSWCD for BMP Enrollment, Cost-Share Projects, Implementation Verification. Revise & solicit testimonials to focus on value of HSWCD and services provided.	Oct. 2023-Sept. <u>2028</u> Sept. 2026	Producers FDACS-OAWP field staff USDA-NRCS Staff	HSWCD staff hours FDACS-OAWP field staff hours USDA-NRCS staff hours	Five or more positive testimonials to be used as validity/value of the District and the services provided	Goal Progress: 3 Testimonials provided regarding MIL services
Maintain and increase involvement in conservation & agriculture events	Oct. 2023-Sept. <u>2025</u> Sept. 2028	Conservation & agriculture organizations	Budgeted funding for travel HSWCD staff hours HSWCD Supervisor hours	3 events attended per HSWCD employee, 1 per Board Supervisor annually	Annual Goal Acheived: Staff taught Highlands Co. Ag Venture, attended FL Citrus & Specialty Crop Expo, FL Citrus Growers Institute and Landowner Assistance Expo. Supervisors attended Statewide Supervisor Workshop, Local Working Group Meeting, Highlands County Farm Bureau & Cattlemen's Meetings.