

HIGHLANDS SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT - BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

MEETING MINUTES

MEETING DATE: 3/12/2026

Meeting Location: HSWCD Conf. Rm.– Bert J. Harris Jr. Ag. Center
4505 George Blvd., Sebring, FL 33875

FINAL – Approved 4/21/2026

Recorded by: Kayla Nickerson

MEETING SCHEDULED START: 3:00 P.M. CALL TO ORDER: 3:21 P.M.

PUBLIC MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT READ BY CHAIRMAN

I. Welcome & Introductions

List of Attendees			
Name	Title	Organization	Present
Dr. John Causey	Chairman	Highlands Soil & Water	Y
Steve Smith	Vice-Chairman	Highlands Soil & Water	Y
Doug Deen	Secretary/Treasurer	Highlands Soil & Water	N
Sara Sebring	Supervisor	Highlands Soil & Water	Y
T.J. Wohl	Supervisor	Highlands Soil & Water	N
Scott Kirouac	Liaison	Highlands County BCC	N
Kayla Nickerson	Executive Director	Highlands Soil & Water	Y
Chad Harmon	MIL Manager	Highlands Soil & Water	Y
Wade Smith	MIL Technician	Highlands Soil & Water	Y
Lauren Ahrens	Environmental Specialist III	FDACS-OAWP	N
Michael Lebron	District Conservationist	USDA-NRCS	N
Don Buchanon	Rangeland Specialist	USDA-NRCS	N

II. Approval of Agenda – Motion to approve agenda as presented (Sebring/Smith).
Unanimous approval.

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes

a. Board of Supervisors Meeting Minutes – February 17, 2026: Motion to approve minutes as presented (Smith/Sebring). Unanimous approval.

IV. Financial Activity

a. Overview & Approval of Financial Reports – February 2026: Review of financial reports. Motion to approve financial reports as presented (Sebring/Smith). Unanimous approval.

b. Investment Opportunities – Nickerson provided additional information regarding public fund investment pools available in Florida which are competitive with special-offer CD rates and offer more liquidity. Discussion. Motion to withdraw funds upon maturity from the three CDs maturing on March 27th and reinvest in Florida PRIME. Authorizing Resolution for Participation in the Local

Government Surplus Funds Trust Fund (Florida PRIME) read. Motion to adopt Resolution as presented (Sebring/Smith). Unanimous approval.

V. Agency Partner Updates

- a. **FDACS** – Nickerson reported staff was informed of proposed changes to the 2026-2027 BMP Cost Share Program including removal of 80 and 90 percent cost share options, reduction of cost share cap to a maximum of \$75,000 per project, limit of one application every two years per NOI, and no longer accepting in-house labor for reimbursement. No action.
- b. **MIL** – Team is ahead of required evaluations for the month and quarter. Discussion regarding transition to FDACS-Division of Fruit and Vegetable and potential grant opportunities. No action.
- c. **NRCS** – No report.
- d. **HCBCC** – No report.

VI. Old Business

- a. **Legislative Updates** – Nickerson reported no companion bill has been filed for HB123. FDACS-OAWP is instead continuing to issue letters of dissolution to districts out of compliance with Chapter 582. AFCD is sending new membership letters with reduced dues notice and announcement of statewide annual membership meeting in August.

VII. Executive Director's Report

- Nickerson will be on annual leave March 30th - April 3rd.
- Nickerson will be planning and facilitating FCDEA Mid-Year meeting April 27-28 in Gainesville, FL.
- Landowner Expo – date changed to Wednesday, May 6th.
- Nickerson will meet with Archbold and other partners for REPI grant next steps April 7th.
- Nickerson has been nominated for Wedgworth Leadership Institute for consideration of acceptance in the program beginning in the Fall.
- Corridor Alternatives Evaluation document provided.
- Florida Heartland Regional Trail information provided.
- No action.

VIII. Citizens Not on the Agenda – None

IX. Supervisors Comments

Smith – None
Deen – N/A
Sebring – None
Wohl – N/A
Causey – None

Meeting Adjourned at 3:57 p.m.

Next Board Meeting: April 21st, 2026 – 3:00 p.m.

John Causey, DVM Chairman

Doug Deen, Secretary

POST MEETING ACTION ITEMS

Action	Assigned To	Deadline
<i>Monitor, review and discuss FDACS-OAWP operations, revised procedures, policies, contract language, scopes of work.</i>	<i>K. Nickerson</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
<i>AFCD Committee Work</i>	<i>K. Nickerson</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
<i>Press release for Bishop's NCDEA Outstanding District Professional Award</i>	<i>K. Nickerson</i>	<i>March 2026</i>
<i>Complete enrollment in FL PRIME and transfer investments</i>	<i>K. Nickerson</i>	<i>April 17, 2026</i>
<i>FCDEA Mid-Year Meeting Planning</i>	<i>K. Nickerson</i>	<i>April 27, 2026</i>
<i>2026 Landowner Expo Planning</i>	<i>K. Nickerson</i>	<i>May 6, 2026</i>
<i>Cooperation on Annual Financial Audit</i>	<i>K. Nickerson</i>	<i>June 30, 2026</i>
<i>Internal MIL program consideration/planning</i>	<i>K. Nickerson, C. Harmon, W. Smith</i>	<i>June 30, 2026</i>
<i>REPI grant outreach and meeting facilitation</i>	<i>K. Nickerson</i>	<i>Until Complete</i>
<i>Develop HSWCD Public Records and Purchasing Policies</i>	<i>K. Nickerson</i>	<i>Until Complete</i>