

Indian River County Florida

*Indian River County Administration Complex
1800 27th Street, Building B
Room B1-501
Vero Beach, Florida*



Meeting Minutes – Final

Monday, March 13, 2023

1:30 PM

Indian River Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisors

*Robert C. Adair, Jr., Chairman
Dr. David L. Cox, Secretary/Treasurer
William Marine, Member*

Linda Caggiano, District Staff Assistant II: IRSWCD

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Robert C. Adair, Jr. called meeting to order at 1:44 PM.

Supervisors in attendance: Robert C. Adair, Jr., Chairman
Dr. David L. Cox, Secretary/Treasurer
William Marine, Member

Staff in attendance: Linda Caggiano, Staff Assistant II, IRSWCD
Jennifer Abbey, District Conservationist, USDA/NRCS
Adel Peña, Environmental Specialist III- OAWP-FDACS

Public in attendance: Ken Hendrix, Indian River County Farmer
Mike Johannsen, Indian River Neighborhood Association
Sean Lieske, Director of Indian River County Utility Services
Honey Minuse, Vero Beach Resident
Laura Moss, IRC Commissioner
Herb Whittall, Indian River Neighborhood Association

2. ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA/EMERGENCY ITEMS:

Dr. David L. Cox asked for the Board's consideration to add Item 8.A. Ducks Unlimited Magazine Article: The Future of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) (No Action Required.)

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. The Minutes for Board Meeting of February 13, 2023 were approved as written.

Motion: A Motion to approve minutes was made by William Marine and Seconded by Robert C. Adair, Jr. Motion carried unanimously.

4. FINANCIAL REPORT:

A. The Financial Report for February 2023 was available and presented by Dr. David L. Cox.

Motion: A motion to accept the financial report as presented was made by William Marine and Seconded by Robert C. Adair, Jr. Motion carried unanimously.

5. REPORTS:

- A. **Jennifer Abbey, United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) Reports:**
- ❖ **News:** Application deadline March 24, 2023 for EQIP Conservation Incentive Contracts, EQIP Inflation Reduction Act, Conservation Stewardship Program
 - ❖ **Farm Bill Programs:** 19 of 53 Active contracts totaling approximately \$900,000 over approximately 11,000 acres
 - ❖ **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP):** 14 Active Contracts; 14 FY 2023 applications
 - ❖ **EQIP Hurricane Ian:** 3 of 9 applications
 - ❖ **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP):** 5 Active Contracts FY 2023 application deadline February 24
 - ❖ **Agricultural Conservation Easement Program - Wetland Reserve Easements (ACEP – WRE):** 1 application

- ❖ Conservation Applications: February - March
 - 1440 sq. ft – High Tunnel
 - 1 – Solar Livestock Water System with 2 troughs
 - ❖ **Other:** Started fund obligation of Hurricane Ian EQIP applications; Conducted active contract status reviews; Continue conservation implementation field inspections; Continue EQIP application evaluations; Planning meeting for BMP outreach event to Equine operations in Martin County led by UF IFAS
 - ❖ **Next Month:** Continue conservation implementation field inspections; Continue EQIP application evaluations and ranking; Presentation at BMP outreach event to Equine operations in Martin County led by UF IFAS
- B. Adel Peña, Environmental Specialist III, Office of Agricultural Water Policy- Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (OAWP-FDACS):**
- ❖ No Report.
- C. Andrea Lazzari, Indian River County (IRC) Agricultural Extension Director/ University of Florida/Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF IFAS) Report:**
- ❖ No Report.
- D. Linda Caggiano, Staff Assistant II:**
- ❖ **Office of Agricultural Water Policy – Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services: (OAWP-FDACS):** Contract 27690: \$100,000.00 for 2022-2023; Received 6 Cost-Share Agreements: Totaling \$78,297.73 balance available of \$21,702.27; Paid 3 Cost-Share Agreements \$9,308.46; Enrollments in Cost-Share will continue.
 - ❖ **Florida Conservation District Employee Association (FCDEA):** Meeting March 21, 2023 Teleconference
 - ❖ **Association of Florida Conservation Districts (AFCD):** No Updates
 - ❖ **Envirothon:** Competition held Friday, February 24, 2022 @ Dale Wimbrow Park: Volunteers – NRCS-USDA, Jennifer Abbey; IRC-Agricultural Extension: Nickie Munroe, Kaitlyn McCarty. Invited to state: Edgewood Jr/Sr High School (Team 2), St Edward's High School (The Seamen), and St Andrew's Episcopal Academy (The Monkeys); Thursday, March 16, 2023 2:30 Zoom Event Debrief Meeting
 - ❖ **OFFICE:** 2022 Audit: Patrick Graham sent draft Monday with JE's - updates; FDACS Cost-Shares; Poster Contest sent to Public Schools. Still need to get to Private Schools; List of Producers from Bob Adair to see where in the County they reside; Monthly Meetings Agenda, Minutes. New Supervisor documents to send to State of Florida.

6. DEPARTMENTAL MATTERS:

A. Financial Audit for Year Ending 2022:

- i. Review Draft Audit from Kmetz, Elwell, Graham & Associates, PLLC.

Motion: A motion to approve the Audit was made by Robert C. Adair, Jr. and Seconded by Dr. David L. Cox. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Indian River SWCD – Need to find Supervisor for District 3 and 4 (Discussion):

- i. District 4: Open
- ii. District 3: Ken Hendrix has provided the signed documentation. A package will go out by tomorrow to the State of Florida for his Commission.

- C. Staff Assistant Emails to Supervisors:** Discussion which emails Supervisors want to receive (No action taken.).

7. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Indian River Lagoon STEM Advisory Committee Update:

- i. Dr. David L. Cox reported: No meetings since February 7, 2023;** Heather Stapleton, Central IRL Community Engagement Coordinator

B. IRSWCD 2023 Goals - Urban Agriculture as presented to the Board of Supervisors.

- Consider procurement of outside funding to put a Mobile Irrigation Lab (MIL) in place for Indian River County.(Discussion)
- MIL goals include: Educational Program, vehicle, calibrate irrigation systems. Does Indian River County need a MIL? Can a MIL make a difference? Do we educate to: A) prevent the problem or B.) fix the problem?
- Target Audience: HOA Boards/Committees and Property Management Association.
- SJRWMD stopped advertising the Water Conservation efforts via Commercials/TV Ads; e.g.: Irrigate twice a week; Promotion of media ads and radio.
- Will need funding to secure a staff member to operate the MIL and vehicle.

Robert C. Adair, Jr., Chairman: Contacted Dr. Michael Dukes, Director of the Center for Land Use Efficiency (CLUE) with University of Florida/IFAS. St. Augustine grass does not require a large amount of water, people are over irrigating the grass. How we prioritize urban ag and conserve water. For Board Consideration: Should we set up a water conservation forum, that targets the-stake-holders in the County including: BOCC, SJRWMD, COVB Utilities, County Utilities, HOA, Turf grass growers, landscapers, landscape organizations with key note speakers, such as Dr. Dukes and UF Extension experts. Goals would be for households and communities to adopt and practice better irrigation techniques that would save billions of gallons a day. Priority would be to hold Forum prior to seek Cost-Share funding of the MIL. (Two-Three months to put on a calendar.) Forum - Water Use in the County to be put together by Robert C. Adair. Dr. David L. Cox will oversee the funding for the forum and will work together with Andrea Lazzari, Jennifer Abbey, and Adel Peña.

After the April 10, 2022 IRSWCD Board Meeting, a date will be scheduled for a meeting to discuss the list of objectives/goals and why IRSWCD wants a new Hydrological Study of the County. Meeting will include: Robert C. Adair, Jr., Sean Lieske, and Commissioner Moss.

C. Water Conservation in the County, Water withdrawals from the Upper Floridan Aquifer system and Consumptive Use Permits (CUPs) for Indian River County:

Robert C. Adair, Jr., Chairman: Update Sean Lieske, Director of Indian River County Utility Services of IRSWCD. IRSWCD previous recommendation to the County to obtain an updated county-wide geohydrologic survey as per the “2030 Comprehensive Plan that stipulates in Policy 2.6: the Community Development Dept./Public Works, will obtain updated county-wide geohydrologic (sic) survey” in 2015.” IRSWCD is on record for recommending to the County to conduct an Updated Hydrological Study of the County that would study the water availability to the County from the Upper Floridan Aquifer. The projected drawdowns computed in David Toth’s 2001 study (Professional Paper SJ2001-PP3) suggest that this goal would probably not be met in 2020. Concern was expressed that increased salinity was reducing water quality due to increased withdrawals from the UFA.

The Study would reveal where the flows are, so if you want to put new well fields in, you know where to locate them because it would be in the new Hydrological Study of the County.

Sean Lieske, Director of Indian River County Utility Services of IRSWCD: What is it that IRSWCD wants from the USGS. SJRWMD's task is the management of the water supply and ground water in the area. SJRWMD did a report that included a hydrology of the area/evaluated on a regional basis. Everyone has to go through SJRWMD for a CUP. We all have to go to SJRWMD for our water. It would take five plus (5+) years to get a report. When you do finally get a report, the information really is not a lot of value. What is it you are hoping to gain by doing additional localized studies, above and beyond what was already done by SJRWMD? What value is in it? We have to do the modeling, evaluate the modeling, who the existing legal user we may impact if we increase our CUP.

Dr. David L. Cox, Secretary/Treasurer: IRSWCD agrees to come up with a list of specific objectives/goals, cost-effective/cost benefit for the County. Maybe some kind of cost-share approach to this. Would like to take the next step in a positive way, we give you the objectives and you give us what the County thinks is a more regional approach. IRSWCD difficult to project what the additional CUP maybe with county's current local annexation, increase density on acreage, where we get the water. Our concern is for the impact to the County's water and natural resources.

Sean Lieske: SJRWMD is the regulatory agency that manages the usage of the water for Indian River County.

Robert C. Adair, Jr.: Are you aware that there is a fault line in Indian River County?

Sean Lieske: Personally no.

Robert C. Adair, Jr.: Well there is, it was revealed in the 1988 study. It goes through the barrier island near Rio Mar. If it were to shift, it would be an entrance point for saline water to enter into the Aquifer. Everything in the 1988 study has changed: population, usage demands, etc. I can provide letters in support of the updated Hydrological Study of the County, for you to review and look at.

What are your plans to accommodate the increasing population in 2040? Do you buy the SJRWMD advise that we can meet our water demands for a 25% increase in population using conservation? Shouldn't we be looking at an alternative water supply, or even converting reuse water back to potable water?

Sean Lieske: Yes, all of the above, all need to look at.

Dr. David L. Cox: I suggest we sit down and meet to discuss and review this topic.

Motion: A motion to send all letters and prior USGS Hydrological Study of the County and list of objectives/goals and why IRSWCD wants a new Hydrological Study of the County to be sent to Sean Lieske, Director of Indian River County Utility Services of IRSWCD was made by Dr. David L. Cox and Seconded by Robert C. Adair, Jr. Motion carried unanimously.

8. NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Request to Add Item 8.A. – Ducks Unlimited Magazine Article:** The Future of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Conservation organizations to preserve the viability of the CRP program. 2023 Farm Bill flexibility will remain vital component of this legislation.

How do we make CRP more desirable for producers? The Farm Bill is not only vital to conservation, but also to the overall sustainability of farming and ranching operations. .

Motion: A motion to have Dr. David L. Cox write a letter to Ducks Unlimited in support of CRP. The CRP should be the CORE of the Farm Bill. Send letter to: Adam Putnam, CEO of Ducks Unlimited; Natural Resources Conservation Service Natural Resources-Conservation Reserve Program run through Farm Service Agency. was made by Robert C. Adair, Jr. and Seconded by Dr. David L. Cox. Motion carried unanimously.

2. SUPERVISORS MATTERS:

10. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 3:29 PM.

Robert C. Adair, Jr., Chairman

Date

David L. Cox, Secretary/Treasurer

Date