

# **Indian River County Florida**

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



## **Meeting Minutes – Final**

**Monday, May 8 , 2023**

**1:30 PM**

### **Indian River Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisors**

*Robert C. Adair, Jr., Chairman: District 1*

*Dr. David L. Cox, Secretary/Treasurer: District 2*

*Charles Kennon Hendrix, Member: District 3*

*Vacant: District 4*

*William Marine, Member: District 5*

**Linda Caggiano, District Staff Assistant II: IRSWCD**

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman Robert C. Adair, Jr. called meeting to order at 1:36 PM.

**Supervisors in attendance:** Robert C. Adair, Jr., Chairman  
Dr. David L. Cox, Secretary/Treasurer  
Charles Kennon Hendrix, Member

**Staff in attendance:** Linda Caggiano, Staff Assistant II, IRSWCD  
Jennifer Abbey, District Conservationist, USDA/NRCS  
Andrea Lazzari-Estevez, IRC Extension Director; UF/IFAS

**Public in attendance:** Honey Minuse, Vero Beach Resident  
Laura Moss, IRC Commissioner

**2. ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA/EMERGENCY ITEMS:****3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

A. The Minutes for Board Meeting of April 10, 2023 were approved as written.

**Motion: A Motion to approve minutes was made by Dr. David L. Cox and Seconded by Charles Kennon Hendrix. Motion carried unanimously.**

**4. FINANCIAL REPORT:**

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

**Motion: A motion to accept the financial report as presented was made by Charles Kennon Hendrix 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:** USDA NRCS is hiring entry level Soil Conservationists across the nation to help implement 19.5 billion from the Inflation Reduction Act for conservation programs including critical climate-smart practices. [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov)
- ❖ **Farm Bill Programs:** 18 of 54 Active contracts totaling approximately \$850,000 over approximately 11,000 acres
- ❖ **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP):** 13 Active Contracts; 14 FY 2023 applications; 4 Preapprovals
- ❖ **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP):** 5 Active Contracts; 8 applications FY 2023 applications
- ❖ **Agricultural Conservation Easement Program - Wetland Reserve Easements (ACEP – WRE) :** 1 application
- ❖ **Conservation Applications: April - May**
  - 0.4 ac – Brush Management
- ❖ **Other:** Completed EQIP application evaluations and rankings; Attended Citrus Show, Ft. Pierce; Attended Florida Envirothon event in Gainesville, FL; Assist with second level review for Hurricane Ian EQIP obligation.
- ❖ **Next Month:** Continue conservation implementation field inspections; Start CSP application evaluations and ranking; Start EQIP contract obligations.

- B. Adel Peña, Environmental Specialist III, Office of Agricultural Water Policy- Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (OAWP-FDACS):**  
❖ No Updates.

- C. Andrea Lazzari, Indian River County (IRC) Agricultural Extension Director/ University of Florida/Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF IFAS) Report:**  
❖ Small Farms: Big Opportunities – Monthly Online Seminar Series.

**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 7 Cost-Share Agreements: Totaling \$100,255.73 balance available of - \$255.73; Paid 3 Cost-Share Agreements \$21,702.27; Audit will be paid from FDACS Funds.
- ❖ **Florida Conservation District Employee Association (FCDEA):** Meeting May 16, 2023 Teleconference 2:00 PM.; Thursday, May 18, 2023 State Speech & Poster Contest in Trenton, FL; Monday, September 25, 2023 3:00 p.m. Annual Meeting UF Hilton, Gainesville, Florida
- ❖ **Association of Florida Conservation Districts (AFCD):** Thursday, May 11, 2023 - Area 4 Meeting Everglades Research & Education Center: 3200 E Palm Beach Road, Belle Glade, FL 33430; Area Poster Contest Judging; Tuesday, Wednesday, September 26 and 27, 2023 - 2023 AFCD Fall Partner Workshop and Training at the UF Hilton, Gainesville, Florida
- ❖ **Poster Contest:** Received One (1) from Osceola Magnet Elementary– Did not qualify: No title “One Water” on poster. Received 8 from Pelican Island Elementary. Received a total of 19 from Sebastian Elementary: 2 – Did not qualify: No title “One Water” on poster; 16 posters with scribble and title not legible on most; 1 decent poster; Only One (1) Category submitted: 4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade; 1<sup>st</sup> Place - \$75.00, 2<sup>nd</sup> Place \$50.00, 3<sup>rd</sup> Place \$25.00; Teacher that submits the most eligible posters will receive a \$50.00 Gift Card; *Gift Cards \$200.00 + \$6.95 (4) Activation Fee = \$227.80*
- ❖ **Office:** 2022 Audit: After today’s Board Meeting the emails and U.S. Mail packages will be sent out to all parties involved. The Audit Invoice has not been received as yet; Poster Contest Awards to school; OPPAGA Survey; Monthly Meetings Agenda, Minutes; Staff to be reimburse \$15.00 for Registered Voter Information from 04/06/2023.

Dr. David L. Cox mentioned that IRSWCD use to be involved in Envirothon. We do not participate in awards or funding for Envirothon. Would like to be more directly involved.

**Motion: A Motion to have IRSWCD be more directly involved in Envirothon and have Staff Assistant find out ways that we can facilitate/promote a more successful Envirothon and have IRSWCD name associated with it and directly participate in it help to get to State and Regional Competitions was made by Dr. David L. Cox and Seconded by Charles Kennon Hendrix. Motion carried unanimously.**

**Discussion:** Chairman Robert C. Adair, Jr. would like to have Dr. David L. Cox take the lead and contact Kevin Sullivan and anyone else to help work with Staff Assistant to have IRSWCD be more involved in Envirothon. Committee meeting to be set up; Dr. David L. Cox, Linda Caggiano, Jennifer Abbey, and Andrea Lazzari .

Dr. David L. Cox mentioned that before school year starts have a training session /workshop on Envirothon. Set up grant supported program and pay the teachers daily for attending. Need to speak to School District: School Superintendent, School Board and Environmental Learning Center.

**6. DEPARTMENTAL MATTERS:****A. Financial Audit for Year Ending 2022:**

- i. Kmetz, Elwell, Graham & Associates, PLLC letter to the Governing Body of the Indian River Soil and Water Conservation District. Supervisors to sign the AFR, and then submit to State of Florida. Audit packages to be emailed and mailed as required in one or two days from meeting.

**B. Reimbursement of Poster Contest and Office Expenses:**

**Motion: A motion to reimburse Staff for out-of-pocket expenses paid for Office Expense and Poster Contest award. A maximum reimbursement of \$250.00 with receipts to be reviewed by Supervisor was made by Dr. David L. Cox and Seconded by Charles Kennon Hendrix. Motion carried unanimously.**

**C. Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) Survey:****D. Indian River SWCD – Need to find Supervisor for District 4 (Discussion):**

Chairman Robert C. Adair received report from Property Appraisers office – Misty Pursel. Need to separate the District 4 and Agricultural Owners.

- i. District 4: Chairman Robert C. Adair, Jr. spoke to the IRC Property Appraiser's office. Requested a report of Agricultural Owners in District 4. Filter to pull out Ag only in District 4 and merge both list together. When report is received send to all Supervisors.

**7. OLD BUSINESS:****A. Indian River Lagoon STEM Advisory Committee Update:**

- i. Dr. David L. Cox reported: Next meeting is scheduled for May 9, 2023.

**B. Information Video: Aquifer Performance Test. More Reason for a geohydrologic survey – Updated Hydrological Study of the County. (Discussion)**

Commissioner Laura Moss suggested that the Board send a follow-up letter explaining why we need the USGS (1-4). What we do not see in the SJRWMD report. Include the Video Aquifer Performance Test; Money available; Saltwater intrusion, Agencies involved in funding. Send letter to County Administrator and Sean Lieske. Invite environmental people to a meeting in June 2023 “?” Need item + funding, etc., Accessible to Public and focused.

Chairman Robert C. Adair there are more components than just a geohydrology study. We need a Water Supply Plan; Reusing Water, Alternative Water Supply Plan.

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

- ❖ How to bring Urban Agricultural into participation with BMP's, especially water conservation.
- ❖ SJRWMD Water Conservation month of April.
- ❖ IRSWCD to consider holding a Water Conservation forum with ALL stake-holders present :
  - Topics:
    - Water Conservation in the County, Water withdrawals from the Upper Floridan Aquifer system and Consumptive Use Permits (CUPs) for Indian River County.

- Water use in the County, water irrigation, future of water supply, are they going to keep pumping, what is the current situation is, problems with over withdrawal from Counties North of Indian River County, as well as our County how to avoid adverse impact. Why it may be a good idea to have a hydrology study; content for forum. Date to be determined. Chairman, Robert C. Adair, Jr. to put the content and speakers together. Dr. David L. Cox would oversee the funding working together with Andrea Lazzari, IRC Extension Director; UF/IFAS IRC Extension Agent II. Agency collective: Jennifer Abbey, USDA-NRCS, Adel Pena, FDACS, SJRWMD, and Indian River County Utilities to make the forum more focused.
- ❖ Commissioner Laura Moss, County Administrator John Titkanich, Sean Lieske, and Robert C. Adair, Jr. met and discussed the objective and goals as to why the County needs an updated USGS Geohydrological Study and to proceed.
- ❖ Key approach for SWCD outreach: social media. How our board can function better to educate new land owners and to protect the lagoon. The problem is not the current agricultural owners, but the new small farm owners that we need to make aware conservation and BMP's for their newly purchased agricultural land.
- ❖ Invite someone from FPL to discuss solar farms. How many more acres does FPL plan to install in Indian River County and adjoining counties? How and what practices are they using to maintain a weed free zone? Are they using - herbicides? Are they monitored?
- ❖ Receiving a lot of down play from people regarding the Mobile Irrigation Lab (MIL) in place for Indian River County. People prefer the Water Conservation forum. Leaning towards a Stakeholders Water Use, Alternative Water Supply, and Conservation forum.
  - 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: 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.
- ❖ Consideration for a native tree sale for county residents to promote water conservation and carbon sequestration.
- ❖ Pursue grants and funding to promote the conservation (and reduce the use) of irrigation water for urban areas.
- ❖ Pursue grants and funding to mitigate contaminants entering Indian River Lagoon.
- ❖ Pursue grants and funding to seek ways to increase carbon sequestration on county lands.
- ❖ Pursue grants and funding that accomplish our mission to provide resources, planning, assessment, assisting citizens to apply conservation and preservation technology, and to educate the citizens in these technologies.

Chairman Robert C. Adair, Jr. asked Dr. David L. Cox to handle and prioritize the above four grant topics items as he sees fit.

## **8. NEW BUSINESS:**

- A. SB 734: Saltwater Intrusion Funding:** Consider action on support for Board of County Commissioners to pursue funding from DEP for Saltwater Intrusion Vulnerability Assessments. Currently, the bill awaits action in the Senate Committee on Appropriations. Senator Erin Grall ( R) sits on committee.

Not signed by Governor Ron DeSantis as of May 8, 2023 @ 3:40 P.M.  
Last Action: May 5, 2023 – Died in Messages.

**2. SUPERVISORS MATTERS:****10. ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 3:53 PM.

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Robert C. Adair, Jr., Chairman

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Date

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David L. Cox, Secretary/Treasurer

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Date