

Indian River County Florida

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



**Indian River Soil and Water
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

Meeting Minutes – Final

Monday, August 11, 2025

1:30 PM

Indian River Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisors

Robert C. Adair, Jr., Chairman: Seat 1

Christine Kelly-Begazo, Vice Chairman: Seat 4

Dr. David L. Cox, Secretary/Treasurer: Seat 2

Adam W. Honour: Seat 3

George F. Hamner, Jr., Legislative Liaison: Seat 5

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Robert C. Adair, Jr. called meeting to order at 1:34 P.M

Supervisors in attendance: Robert C. Adair, Jr., Chairman – Seat 1
Dr. David L. Cox – Seat 2
Adam W. Honour – Seat 3
Christine Kelly-Begazo – Seat 4
George F. Hamner, Jr. – Seat 5 (*Arrived 3:23 p.m.*)

Staff in attendance: Linda Caggiano, Staff Support Assistant II

IRC Staff and

Partners in attendance: Jennifer Abbey, District Conservationist, USDA/NRCS
Eric Charest, IRC Natural Resources Assistant Director
Stephen Wright, Environmental Specialist II- FDACS-OAWP

Public in attendance: Honey Minuse, Vero Beach Resident

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

A. Chairman Adair would like to add at the end of the Agenda to Supervisor Matters: Special Call Meeting scheduled for Tuesday, August 12, 2025 the 2025 Indian River County Comprehensive Plan Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) Based Amendments.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. The Minutes for the Board Meeting of July 14, 2025 were approved as written.

Motion: A Motion to approve the July 14, 2025 Minutes as presented was made by Dr. David L. Cox and Seconded by Adam W. Honour. Motion carried unanimously.

4. FINANCIAL REPORT:

A. The Financial Report for June 2025 was available and reviewed by the Board.

Motion: A Motion to accept the June 2025 Financial Report as presented was made Christine Kelly-Begazo and Seconded by Adam W. Honour. Motion carried unanimously.

5. REPORTS:

A. Jennifer Abbey, United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS)

- ❖ **NEWS: FY 2026 EQIP and CSP Program application deadline October 3, 2025.**
- ❖ **Farm Bill Programs: 32 of 72 Active contracts totaling approximately \$1,618,000 over approximately 13,600 acres**
- ❖ **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP): 17 Active Contracts | 18 2025 Applications | 1 Preapproval (Applicant declined)**
- ❖ **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP): 15 Active Contracts | 15 2025 Applications | 2 2025 Applications Obligated**
- ❖ **Conservation Application: July – August**
 - 128 ac – Prescribed grazing
 - 10.3 ac – Mulching (wood Chips)

- 19.3 ac – Forage and biomass planting
 - ❖ **Other:** Contract creation and obligation for 3 preapproved CSP applications. Completed active contract status reviews. Completed environmental reviews for new contracts. DC participation in internal workgroup to develop Livestock Watering Facility design templates.
 - ❖ **Next Month:** Continue conservation implementation field inspections as needed. Continue contract status reviews. Complete and deliver implementation requirements for activities planned in 2025. Complete environmental reviews for new contracts.
- B. Andrea Lazzari, Indian River County (IRC) Agricultural Extension Director/ University of Florida/Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF IFAS) Report:** *(Not in attendance – Report Provided.)*
- ❖ Small & Beginning Farmers Mini-Conference will be held on Friday, August 22nd at the IG Center from 9 AM – 4 PM. If any Indian River SWCD Board Supervisor would like to attend and/or speak, please let Andrea know.
- C. Matthew Cox, Environmental Specialist III, Office of Agricultural Water Policy- Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (OAWP-FDACS) Report:** *(Not in attendance – Report Provided.)*
- D. Stephen Wright, Environmental Specialist II, Office of Agricultural Water Policy- Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (OAWP-FDACS) Report:**
- ❖ Best Management Practices program continues with FDACS. Complete implementation and verification site visits. FDACS does have a Cost-Share Portal for Farmers to submit applications online through a portal.
- E. Eric Charest, Indian River County Natural Resources Assistant Director:**
- ❖ Linda’s resignation is a shock to the County as well as Indian River SWCD. In the Agenda packet is a Generic Staff Assistant II description for the County which is what I have the ability to fill with that position. As you see in the Staff II description is not expected to do any of the accounting or financial management that Linda has been performing for the District. A list of Month-to-Month breakdown of what needs to be done for the District.

Discussion between Supervisors and Natural Resources Assistant Director on the level of support the County is allowed to provide versus what the District wants a Support Staff to provide.

Chairman Adair: Plans to speak to County Administrator John Titkanich and explain that we need a Staff Assistant that can manage the FDACS Contract.

Eric Charest: A Staff II and the County 's commitment would be to pretty much commit to giving the District space to have your meetings whether they go monthly or quarterly as well as minutes for the meetings and so forth. But we would also have to come up and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Interlocal Agreement (ILA) to get approved by the Board of County Commissioners. Based on that memorandum of understanding, on-going support for the District would be defined and memorialized. We've never memorialized this group that's the problem so when I was looking at it you know that's how Linda 's position morphed you know from a program administrator. The County is willing to support the District with a Staff II position. The Staff II position as identified in qualifications of a Staff II position instead of a program administrator that was never really in the position. The position will be split of 60% Natural Resources Department and 40% - Indian River SWCD. A Staff II can help the District by typing a letter that the District authors. But a Staff II will not have the responsibility of informing/notifying the District of deadlines that need to be met.

Chairman Adair: I cannot commit to signing the FDACS Contract. With the delay of not signing, my plan is on Monday a week from today to speak with the County Administrator to see if he would provide. The current salary that Linda 's getting, versus getting a Staff II assistant now I don't know if it's out there but if we get people to help us look for this position and they're willing to work with full benefits for \$50,000.00 a year.

Linda Caggiano: I do not make that amount of money.

F. Linda Caggiano, Staff Support Assistant II:

- ❖ **Staff Assistant:** Gave resignation to the County August 6, 2025. Last day will be August 21, 2025. County will still provide a Support Staff Assistant to the Indian River SWCD, but the work will not be at the level of what the current Staff has provided over the past eight (8) years.
- ❖ **FCDEA:** Teleconference Meeting, August 19, 2025 @ 2:00 pm. Annual Meeting in Gainesville, September 23 – 24, 2025.
- ❖ **AFCD:** AFCD is reorganizing with the help of FCDEA. FCDEA formed an AFCD Committee and will be assisting AFCD in the process. Andy Jackson is the President, Eva Webb 1stVP, Michael Brown (Gadsden) 2nd VP, Burlin Findley Treasurer (with Joni's assistance). Moving forward without a State Supervisor Association.

6. DEPARTMENTAL MATTERS:

- A. **BOCC 25-26 General Fund Budget Hearing @ 1:00 P.M. August 11, 2025 - Commission Chambers:**
- B. **FDACS-OAWP Contract 27690 – Close-Out Completed 07/231/2025. (No action required).**
- C. **FDACS-OAWP Contract 32774:** New Contract in the amount of \$377,500.00 per year for three (3) years. \$10,000.00 Audit. Board needs to make a decision as to whether they will continue and handle the work until a Support Staff is hired. FDACS has been informed that the Board was meeting today to review the New Contract. Will contact Misty after meeting today to see how long FDACS will wait for Indian River SWCD to decide if they will sign a contract or not.

Motion: A Motion was made by Christine Kelly-Begazo and Seconded by David L. Cox to table the contract with FDACS until the next Board Meeting scheduled for September 8, 2025. Motion carried unanimously.

7. OLD BUSINESS:

- A. **Indian River Lagoon STEM Advisory Committee Update: (Supervisor Dr. David L. Cox)**
 - i. IRL Council STEM Advisory Committee Update. Next meeting to be held Tuesday, August 19, 2025.

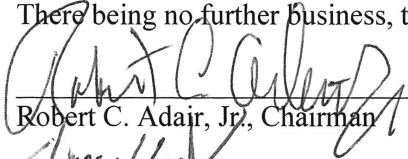
8. NEW BUSINESS:

- A. **2025 Indian River County Comprehensive Plan Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) Based Amendments.**

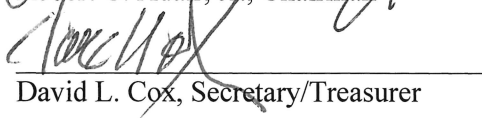
Chairman Adair handed out the Natural Groundwater: Sub-Element, Goal and Objective Policies. Robert C. Adair, Jr. will be attending the meeting tomorrow.

2. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 3:26PM.



Robert C. Adair, Jr., Chairman



David L. Cox, Secretary/Treasurer

10-06-2025
Date

10/6/2025
Date