

***DRAFT***  
**Meeting Summary**  
**Soil and Water Conservation Council**  
**The Marriott Resort**  
**Marco Island, Florida**  
**July 17, 2006**  
**1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

**Meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Rep. Richard Machek, Chairman, with Commissioner Charles Bronson in attendance.**

**Members Present:**

Rep. Richard Machek, Acting Chair  
Mr. Ken Harrison  
Ms. Carol (Cammy) Hinton  
Mr. Rick Roth  
Mr. Mike Branch  
Mr. Jerry Brooks, Deputy Director, DEP  
Mr. George Hackney, FNGLA  
Mr. David Still, for Jerry Scarborough, SRWMD  
Mr. Doug Barr, Executive Director, NFWWMD  
Mr. Kirby Green, Executive Director, SJRWMD  
Mr. David Moore, Executive Director, SWFWMD  
Ms. Carol Wehle, Executive Director, SFWMD  
Dr. Jimmy Cheek, Dean for Research, IFAS  
Mr. Niles Glasgow, State Conservationist, USDA/NRCS  
Ms. Marianne Gengenbach, for Mr. Lee Killinger, The Nature Conservancy  
Mr. Eric Draper, Audubon of Florida  
Mr. Brad Purcell, Florida Association of Counties  
Mr. Chuck Littlejohn, for Ms. Dianne Zipperer-Streid  
Ms. Deborah Kynes, Commissioner, City of Dunedin

**Members Absent:**

Sen. Nancy Argenziano  
Rep. Marty Bowen  
Mr. Tom Jones  
Mr. Bud Bronson

**FDACS Staff Present:**

Mr. Charles Aller, Director, OAWP, FDACS  
Mr. Clegg Hooks, OAWP, FDACS  
Mr. Rich Budell, OAWP, FDACS  
Mrs. Brittany Mayock, OAWP, FDACS  
Mr. John Costigan, FDACS

**Sign in Sheet:** Chair Machek instructed everyone to fill out the sign-in sheet for future mailings.

A list of others who were present and signed the attendance roster is on file with the Office of Agricultural Water Policy

**Welcome:** The meeting opened at 1:00 pm when Chair Machek welcomed everyone and reiterated the purpose of the council-to inform and advise the Commissioner of Agriculture on issues dealing with soil and water in Florida. This goal is achieved through open discussions and informative presentations conducted during the meeting.

**Introductions:** Each Council member introduced themselves and explained their personal background. The audience followed by giving their name and affiliation.

In the Commissioner's opening remarks he emphasized the importance of today's discussion on the 100 Innovative Ideas for Florida's Future. This is an excellent opportunity to voice the concerns of the agriculture and environmental groups. He mentioned that one idea-gathering forum had already been conducted and was quite productive. Other topics remarked on by the Commissioner included the issue of how land is valued by county property assessors and agricultural exemptions.

**Administrative:** Mr. Chuck Aller, Director, Office of Agricultural Water Policy, presented the minutes of the previous meeting for approval; Mr. Ken Harrison moved and Mr. Brad Purcell seconded a motion to approve the minutes, motion passed. Mr. Aller explained the administrative procedures such as travel, etc., and reviewed the agenda and meeting packet for Council members. A review of the changes to Florida Statute 582.06 that allows all members of the Council to vote was presented. Ms. Dianne Zipper-Streid, the newest appointee to the Council was introduced by Mr. Aller, and Ms. Cammy Hinton was recognized for her receipt of the Florida Agri-Women's Founder's Day Award.

**Legislative Perspectives:** Mr. Chuck Aller reviewed four pieces of legislative action from the spring 2006 legislative session that were relevant to the Council. These four bills include House Bill 7075, Section 7, Section 8, and Section 10 and House Bill 1015, Section 8.

Mr. Kirby Green spoke in response to the review of H.B. 1015, Section 8, which in Florida Statute 373.407 directs FDACS to enter into memorandums of agreement with the five water management districts for assistance with determining agricultural exemptions. He stressed that this relationship with FDACS is very important, and will be useful for successfully mediating situations without resorting to litigation. Mr. Aller clarified that FDACS will only assist when asked in unusual circumstances and will not always agree with the water management district.

Following the legislative actions discussion Mr. Eric Draper gave an update of the Babcock Ranch conservation situation. At the time the Sierra Club was intervening in the sale of the land to the state and time was running short. Mr. Draper expressed his

appreciation to the Commissioner for his support along with the Audubon Society of Florida. Ms. Marianne Gengenbach stated that the Nature Conservancy has also been very active in trying to push through the sake of the Babcock Ranch.

**Recommendations to the Commissioner on the Use of Controlled Release Fertilizers (CRF):** Mr. Chuck Aller reviewed the final list of proposed recommendations by the Council to the Commissioner regarding the use of controlled release fertilizers (CRF). Rick Roth asked if economic incentives are addressed by the recommendations because he believes they will be essential to increasing the use of CRFs. Mr. Aller described the cost share assistance programs for CRF research in the Tri-County Agricultural area, and the possibility of further cost share. Mr. Kirby Green relayed the success of the research and education regarding CRF in the Tri-County Agricultural area. Representative Machek and the Commissioner both spoke of the need to increase CRF use in urban areas as well as agriculture. A motion was made by Mr. David Still to formally present the recommendations to the Commissioner. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kirby Green (?).

**100 Innovative Ideas for Florida's Future:** Mr. Chuck Aller explained the 100 Innovative Ideas for Florida's Future program, and the importance of making suggestions. A document containing the ideas from the Commissioner's first meeting with agricultural representatives on June 26, 2005 in Kissimmee was presented and reviewed with the Council members. The following suggestions were made by SWCC members during the discussion of ideas for the new program.

*Economic Sustainability for Agricultural Production-Legislative Strategies*

1. Tax on cruise ships/airline arrivals and departures to raise funding for eradication of invasive species. (Rick Roth)
2. Encourage other states to push USDA to do more with port inspections, and enact tougher requirements for exotic pets in Florida. (Commissioner)
3. Develop a rapid response system based on Australia's to counter invasive/exotic species introduction. (Marianne Gengenbach)
4. Incentives for diversifying florida agriculture. (Eric Draper)
5. Increase cost share funding (TMDL) for conversion from overhead to microirrigation and for holding ponds for irrigation water. (George Hackney)
6. Fund the Rural and Family Lands Protection Act. This would provide economic incentive for staying in agriculture as well as ensure agricultural practice maintenance for lands that help protect environmental resources. Protecting such lands would also help in the growth management area. (As provided by Marianne Gengenbach)
7. Use money from the Document Stamp Tax for land acquisition for preservation or for the Rural and Lands Protection Act.
8. Continue to fund UF-IFAS for its research on new crops in Florida, for example blueberries and peaches. (Jimmy Cheek)
9. Resolve the problem farmers in the Orlando area have had with their use of reclaimed water and enact legislation that will prevent this from happening again. (Kirby Green)

10. Migrant labor needs should be considered for the valuable labor they provide. (Commissioner)

*Growth Management Policies and Agricultural Production-Legislative Strategies*

1. Clarifying item #1 on the June 26<sup>th</sup> summary: Enact a clear State policy that positively recognizes the importance of a viable Agricultural sector for the state's future and establishes a bold goal of getting 20% of Florida's Agricultural lands to become rural land stewardship areas within 20 years. (Chuck Littlejohn)
2. Clarifying item #2 on the June 26<sup>th</sup> summary: Make sure the funding for the rural land stewardship areas is a steady, reliable source. (Chuck Littlejohn)
3. Encourage local stewardship goals to count toward the goal of 20%. (Brad Purcell)
4. Create a new classification for tax exemption (eg. open space) to stop the abuse of the greenbelt classification. (Rick Roth)
5. Remove the words "coastal" and "inland" from item #6. (David Moore)
6. Can TDR programs be used to more efficiently control density? (Carol Wehle and Ken Harrison)

*Energy Policy and the Agricultural Community-Legislative Strategies*

1. Continue to fund the research of new biofuels by IFAS. (Jimmy Cheek)
2. Research the possibility of using harvested invasive plant species and hurricane waste to produce energy. (Cammy Hinton)

*Acquisition and Management of Public Lands and the Agricultural Community*

1. Recognize the State's efforts in helping the federal government manage public lands, and realize that private enterprises can help with land management. (Commissioner)

**Closing Comments Made by Council Members:** The following issues were commented on by Council members:

Mr. Mike Branch-Suggested invasive species are discussed at the next meeting.

Ms. Marianne Gengenbach-Stated the statewide Invasive Species Working Group continues to meet.

Mr. Kirby Green-Suggested that reports on research by IFAS and water management districts be discussed next meeting.

**Public Comment:** Earl Ziebarth, Jr. addressed the Council about the recent activities of the Association of Florida Conservation Districts (AFCD). He reported that Florida was represented at the National Association of Conservation Districts Annual Meeting in San Antonio. The second annual meeting of the AFCD will be held in August in Orlando. The AFCD is encouraging the SWCDs to meet with their local legislatures to discuss state funding of the districts. A youth conservation education fund has been established by the AFCD.

**Future Meeting Schedule:**

January 2007 at the Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association Headquarters in Maitland, Florida.

**Adjournment:**

**4:00 pm**

**Note:** *If in reviewing this meeting summary you discover something is missing please submit the information so it may be included in the final draft for approval at the next SWCC meeting.*