

**HILLSBOROUGH SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

**Board of Supervisors District Regular Meeting**

**Wednesday, August 4, 2021**

**5:00 PM**

**Supervisors in attendance:**

Sonja Brookins – Treasurer  
Karen Cox Jaroch, Supervisor  
Mark Proctor – Supervisor

**Others in attendance**

Betty Jo Tompkins, HSWCD, Executive Director  
Leslie Diaz- Alvarez, NRCS District Conservationist  
Simon Bolin, Agribusiness Development  
Ken Griner, SWFWMD, Ag Team Manager - ZOOM  
Linda Chion, HSWCD, Computer Graphics Designer  
Stephanie Collins HSWCD – Community Outreach

**INTRODUCE MEMBER(S) OF THE PUBLIC**

Sonja Brookins, Treasurer, led the meeting due to Chair and Vice Chair being unable to attend.

**REVIEW OF MINUTES**

Minutes reviewed. Supervisor Jaroch moved to approve. Supervisor Proctor 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. Motion passed.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Treasurer Brookins reviewed report with the Board. Supervisor Jaroch moved to approve and file for Audit.. Supervisor Proctor 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. Motion passed.

**NRCS REPORT**

Leslie Diaz-Alvarez gave report. NRCS actively recruiting growers as the Sept. 1st deadline approaches. \$200,000 cost/ share was approved for Lonesome G Ranch. The money is for five years. \$40,000 per year to be utilized for prescribed burns and improving habitat on 28,000 acres of pasture. Currently working on contracts for other growers also.

Request made by Diaz-Alvarez for non-discrimination form to be signed by all Board members. Annual form states that Hillsborough Soil and Water Conservation District does not discriminate with any of their programs. Supervisor Proctor moved that all Board members sign. Supervisor Jaroch 2<sup>nd</sup> motion. Motion passed. Copies located in Supervisors' books were signed.

### SWFWMD REPORT

Ken Griner gave report via ZOOM. Mini farms out of funds until October. FARMS still has project money available for participants. Griner requested the Board assist in spreading the word as SWFWMD is looking for more growers who might be interested in FARMS projects.

Director Tompkins asked Griner to explain FARMS program in more detail for new Supervisors. FARMS is a cost share program for growers who, conserve or utilize an alternate water supply. They have worked on water supply projects for strawberries and blueberries, as examples. FARMS helps with pump recovery and pond filters all the way to manifolds, irrigation and fertigation. The cost share is 50% for some projects and 75% for others. Mini Farms helps with weather stations, soil moisture probes and other items as well. Money is still available, and Griner reiterated SWFWMD wants to discuss with anyone cost share project benefits.

### AGRI-BUSINESS REPORT

Simon Bolin gave report. Upcoming ADC meeting on the August 10<sup>th</sup> from 2-4 PM. Agendas are available. Continued working with research station on hops program. Florida brewers are interested. When research began at UF GREC 6 years ago there were 42 Florida brewers, while today there are about 368 with 100 in Tampa Bay area.

Gulf Coast Research and Education Center has a new project area with focus on developing an Ag Technology and Innovation Center. Currently hiring two new faculty members, one for AI and one for engineering. Their job is to work on technology application and research with a focus on ag. GREC plans to build a new building at the research station.

### NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Supervisor Jaroch said there is a school interested in getting involved in the poster contest and other resources. Executive Director Betty Jo Tompkins provided her the information.

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

AFCD – Area 4 meeting held in Tavares June 18, 2021, with Supervisors Eckdahl, Brooks and Brookins in attendance with Director Tompkins. Congratulations to Supervisor Brookins for her election as Area 4 Vice-President. HSWCD Resolution approved and will be presented at AFCD Annual Meeting. Continued planning for AFCD and FCDEA Annual meetings September 9 and 10 at the Plaza Resort and Spa in Daytona Beach

Note: New COVID guidelines restrict all travel for NRCS. AFCD is currently considering changing event format to a virtual or hybrid one. Decision will be announced shortly.

Tompkins participated in AFCD quarterly June 4, 2022, in Daytona for planning and secured Annual Meeting speakers.

NACD Summer Meeting and 75th Anniversary Celebration – Chicago, Illinois – July 24 – 27, 2021 attended by Director Tompkins. Distributed Hillsborough 100 tabloids and presented information on HSWCD programs, projects, and activities to members of the Communications Committee, Education and Stewardship Committee, Southeastern Regional Committee and NACD Foundation Trustees.

Reviewed NACD Executive summary of America's Conservation Delivery System, "Locally Led, State Centered and Nationally Consistent". Also discussed federal issues regarding definition of Conservation, etc.

Visited Elkhart County 4-H Fair in Goshen, Indiana to review their Conservation District activities at the Fair.

NACD SE Regional Meeting – Gulf Shores, Alabama– August 8 -10, 2021 – Participating with HSWCD materials.

GS Fest – September 18, 2021, at Florida State Fairgrounds. HSWCD will have exhibit and youth activities at the event.

Hillsborough County Fair – September 23 – 26 and September 30 – October 3, 2021.

HSWCD will participate in the following programs at the Fair: 1) Educational Conservation exhibit and display of 500 + posters; 2) Sponsorship and presentation of Youth Plant Show; 3) Sponsorship of Youth Rain Barrel Decorating Contest; 4) Presentation of 5th Annual Great Plant Auction, 5) Participation in Harvest Awards Luncheon- Supervisors invited to attend and will receive 2 tickets each.

Hillsborough County Fair Fall Festival – October 29 – 31, 2021. HSWCD will participate in this new Fall event with exhibit and youth activities.

Hillsborough County Farm Bureau Dinner & Annual Meeting – October 7, 2021 – HSWCD will participate with an exhibit. Supervisors invited to attend and will receive 2 tickets each.

NACD – 2022 NACD Annual Meeting scheduled for February 12- 16 as a live event at Hilton Orlando Disney Springs. Tompkins serving on the Host Committee. Events will include a "Fresh from Florida" commodity dinner sponsored by AFCD at the hotel on Saturday, February 12, 2022. In addition, two tours are planned by AFCD/FCDEA to feature Hillsborough County. Tour 1) Florida State Fair tour scheduled for Sunday, February 13, 2022, with tour 2) strawberry operations, slated for Tuesday, February 15, 2022. Participated in Urban Ag zoom meetings.

AFCD – Continue work with AFCD to coordinate tours/other activities related to 2022 NACD meeting.

FCDEA – Chaired monthly FCDEA teleconference. Continued planning for upcoming events (if held).

Florida State Fair – February 10 – 22, 2022 – HSWCD has been given 30' x 60' complimentary exhibit space in the center of the Ag Hall of Fame for duration of the Fair. Exhibit theme will be: "Conservation is Everybody's Business" and the exhibit will include painted characters of bees, bats, birds, and butterflies (all pollinators), along with costumed live characters, exhibit pods on soils, water, air, forestry, recycling, conservation issues, etc.

NRCS has agreed to provide \$3,000. in financial support for the exhibit and the Tampa Bay Beekeepers have agreed to purchase and wear a bee costume, as well as beekeeper outfit, for the exhibit. Exhibit will also include display of decorated rain barrels (from HSWCD contest at the County Fair), as well as blankets made of recycled clothing. Youth will also be giving demonstrations during certain days at the Fair. Supervisors, staff, and volunteers will be asked to volunteer at the exhibit during Fair. HSWCD will also participate in "Fresh from Florida" Breakfast, Governor's Lunch, Woman of the Year in Agriculture Luncheon and Ag Hall of Fame Dinner.

Lipman Garden Challenge –Planning for upcoming Challenge underway. This year's participating groups, which will be the largest to date, will include school ag programs, science clubs, ESE classes, 4-H Clubs, Scouts, and others.

"Let's Plant Some Trees" event held on June 12, 2021, Tree planting (approx. 20,000 long leaf pine trees) were planted at the Lower Green Swamp Preserve, 3540 East Knights Griffin Road, Plant City 33565 by youth and adult volunteers, Sponsors for this HSWCD event included Sustany Foundation, TREE, Inc., Rotary, Hillsborough County Conservation and Environmental Lands Management and Hillsborough Sustainability. Supporters included Florida Strawberry Growers Association, Odiorne Insurance, Mosaic, Hillsborough Democratic Environmental Caucus. Hillsborough County Republican Executive Committee and others. Participants received colorfully printed t-shirts featuring the NACD logo theme "Healthy Forests = Healthy Communities" on the front with sponsors on the back. Everyone also received a gift bag with all types of conservation items, as well as refreshments throughout the day.

Local Working Group –Another Local Working Group meeting will be held in November to review NRCS plans and set priorities for 2023. Details to follow.

NRCS State Technical Committee – 6/22/2021

Hillsborough 100 Conservation Challenge – April 17, - May 8, 2022 – Plans are underway for the 2022 Challenge, with multiple events covering road and river cleanups, recycling of paper, plastic and electronics, pollinator gardens, tree plantings, other events, and contests. Official kickoff luncheon will be in November, with details to follow.

FDACS – Extended 2020 – 2021 Cost Share Contract until September 30, 2021, with 2022 contract already signed for \$150,000.

Florida Ag Expo – November 18, 2021 – HSWCD to participate with complimentary exhibit space.

Farm Bureau Legislative Day – January 12, 2022 – Supervisors encouraged to attend day long legislative event at beginning of 2022 session. Details to follow.

Wrote articles for In The Field magazine and other publications.

Continue visits to area agricultural operators to determine possible programs (HSWCD cost share or NRCS) they may be eligible to participate in.

Reviewed checklist for participation in upcoming activities and events. Logo and printed materials. Assisted with grant proposals.

Other Activities: Chamber events with Greater Plant City Chamber - Annual non-profit luncheon (with display – 6/10/2021) and Plant City non-profit Roundtable (6/22/2021) \* Speaker for Brandon Kiwanis (6/3/2021) \* Community Roundtable Board (Trustee – 7/14/2021) \* Hillsborough County 4-H Foundation Board/Committees – 6/8/2021,7/12/2021,7/13/2021,7/22/2021) \* Hillsborough County Fair Board (6/24/2021) \* Ag Tool Kit Webinar (6/22/2021) \* Tampa Bay Beekeepers (Presentation 7/8/2021)\* Rotary Club of Brandon Eco Global (6/14/2021, 7/12/2021) \* Rotary District College of Governors (6/9/2021) DG's event (7/7/2021) \* T.R.E.E. Inc. Quarterly (7/10/2021) \* Center Place Executive Board and Board (6/15/2021, 7/20/2021) \* Tampa Tiger Bay (7/16/2021) \* ESRAG (6/23/2021)

Supervisor Tompkins requested Supervisors indicate which events they plan to attend so tickets and rooms can be reserved.

Meeting adjourned.