

UNION COUNTY SOIL & CONSERVATION DISTRICT

GOVERNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES

June 25, 2013

Present:

Mr. Delbert Smith, Chair (Board Member)
Mr. Pete Cameron, Deputy Chair (Board Member)
Mr. Jon Croci, Secretary (Board Member)
Mr. Duke Emerson (Board Member)
Mr. Basil Bactawar, Union County Extension Officer
Mr. Al Oliver, USDA
Mr. Jay Tucker, FDOT
Mr. Scott Tucker, FDACS

CALL TO ORDER: Called to order by the Chair, Delbert Smith at 1835

CORRESPONDANCE: March 2013 Meeting Minutes read by Jon Croci and approved at 1840 by board.

OLD BUSINESS: No Old Business

- Al Oliver brought up the approval of one USDA application to facilitate repair of a fence line. Another USDA application regarding the construction of a water trough was pulled back.
- Jay Tucker discussed forestry thinning operations and the focus on stand and site health in Northeast Florida and the impact of invasive pests like the Southern Pine Beetle. Planting forest stands more tolerant to the Southern Pine Beetle is an example of proactive stewardship.
- Pete Townsend and Jay Tucker discussed differences between slash and loblolly pine stands management, and the means by which carrying capacity can be calculated.
- Pete Townsend discussed information gathered at the June 2013 meeting of the Santa Fe Working Group: Impact of the hydrologic cycle and how the density of pine trees can either positively or negatively impact evapotranspiration and impact stand health.
- Jay Tucker reminded the board that forestry operations not only involve the hydrologic cycle but appropriate burn cycles to reduce ground cover and maintains stand health and how forestry operations determine how to remove pine trees which are not conducive to stand health (i.e. diseased, crooked or forted trees).
- Jay Tucker discussed the inter-relationship between basal area and pine tree concentration. Tree concentration is based on both the number of trees and the tree diameter (i.e. stands of ninety 12" pines vs. five-hundred 4" pines) with diameter being measured roughly 4' above the ground.
- Board members then discussed the current concentration of pine flat woods (estimated at 65-68%) within Union County.
- Delbert Smith discussed a need to gather hard-copy data to include aerial imagery to determine the current concentration of silviculture operations as related to other crops in Union County.

- Basil Bactawar discussed the recent changes in farming operations and how this impacted both the sale of crops at feedlots. The number of natural herd cattle is at its lowest since the 1950's and this will cause an increase in beef prices within the next five years.
- Delbert Smith brought up that Plum Creek's impact on silviculture operations in Union County. There is the potential through initiatives in other nearby counties (i.e. "Alachua Forever") to sponsor new start up businesses that may impact agribusiness in Union County.
- Scott Tucker wanted to remind board members of the Suwannee River Water Management District's current water monitoring program and the importance of placing a notice within the local paper announcing current groundwater BMPs.
- Scott Tucker also discussed the usage of monitoring devices associated with groundwater BMP's (Best Management Practices) that would gauge the amount of water through the use of water meters and monitoring the amount of electricity (e.g. computing number of gallons pumped per hour vs. kW hour) used at a particular well pump.
- Scott Tucker informed board that agricultural producers are not only encouraged to seek out information on BMP's but also Basin Management Action Plans which currently address nutrient loading in surface water.
- Scott Tucker also discussed the restoration focus within Gilchrist County, Florida and the utilization of 23 monitoring wells to measure nitrogen levels as related to nutrient loading.
- Board discussed that current BMP's in place by the Suwannee River Water Management district along with Basin Management Action Plans through the FDEP may eventually see a need to gather both water consumption and water quality data (i.e. nitrogen and phosphorus levels).
- Twenty-five farmers are already involved in groundwater BMP's in Union County.
- Board agreed to place a notice in the local paper regarding the need for agricultural producers in Union County to seek out and promote BMP's that would impact county agribusiness. Jon Croci agreed to work with Scott Tucker to create the appropriate verbiage and provide a draft for all board members to review before release.
- Basil Bactawar announced that meeting minutes could be placed on the IFAS web site as early as July 2013.
- Board Members also requested that the Union County Soil and Water Conservation District Long Range Plan be placed on the IFAS web site.

REPORTS:

- Members at the board meeting were furnished with meeting minutes from May 2013

OTHER:

- NA

ADJOURN/NEXT MEETING: Meeting adjourned at @ 2012.