

July 28, 2015 Meeting of Union County Soil and Water Conservation District

Present:

Pete Cameron – Chair  
Buddy Finley- Deputy Chair  
Duke Emerson- Treasurer  
Laurel Schaafsma- Secretary  
Monica Jones- NCRS Representative  
Cedric Seawood – NCRS Representative (in training)  
Scott Tucker- Santa Fe River Partnership

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 pm, and opened with Buddy Finley discussing the outcome of the last County Commissioner meeting he attended, in regards to the UCSWD board needing a key to conduct their monthly meetings in a public building, and asking the county's permission to give the UCSWD a bank account to use budgeted funds when needed. In both cases the commission decided to refuse UCSWD requests. The commission wants to control access to public buildings by only allowing use of the key on meeting dates and they want to control expenditures by retaining approval authority on a case-by-case basis.

Buddy Finley also brought the board's attention to the Florida State Statute, 582, focusing on the need for Soil and Water Conservation District projects to conform to certain regulations. He pointed out the possible legal consequences of not adhering to the statute. Mr. Cameron, as chairman, asked Buddy to email the statute to him as the regulation is important for projects the group might have down the road.

Laurel Schaafsma briefly discussed the board's long term plan for the years of 2013-2023. Mrs. Schaafsma indicated that much of the board's responsibility involves education of the public.

Buddy Finley gave a speech on his Alachua County DEP meeting regarding water, where most attention was directed at agriculture being the main source of Alachua's water quality and water reduction problems.

Laurel Schaafsma briefed the board on her 3 day attendance of the UF/IFAS Extension Alachua County Water Quality Tours. The first day's main focus was of the Sweatwater Branch Watershed. Day two, agriculture. Day 3, springs. It was pointed out that in each of these areas there were high levels of contaminants in the waters, some natural and some artificial, making the water quality not suitable to return to runoff areas without being treated first. All three locations set up methods to reduce the amounts of contaminants of the waters that would otherwise return to aquifers or rivers. Best Management Practices are being utilized to achieve goals set by the state.

Scott Tucker informed the board that all Soil and Water Conservation Districts are required to have a working website by October 1, 2015.

Buddy Finley raised some issues concerning the creation of the website which we will deal with in upcoming meetings.

Monica Jones announced that NCRS is still accepting EQIP applications for the many conservation options available to landowners in Union County.

The meeting closed at 8:10pm.