

May 27 Meeting of the Union County Soil and Water Conservation District

Present:

Delbert Smith -- Chair

Pete Cameron -- Deputy Chair, Secretary

Duke Emerson -- Treasurer

Scott Tucker -- FDACS Representative

Monica Jones -- NRCS Representative

(There was no quorum present at last month's meeting due to schedule conflicts of members and hence there were no minutes recorded. Delbert Smith gave an account of the meeting, with he and Jon Croci present, in which Jon previewed a presentation that he has assembled to explain the workings of our water board to the public).

The current meeting opened with Delbert Smith expressing optimism about the plan to move storm water down to the aquifer at the four Union County sites for which he has secured the initial participation of owners. Progress, he said, is currently on hold until Hugh Thomas becomes un-busy, probably after July/August. {Hugh Thomas' participation is necessary to get support for the project from the Water Management District (WMD)}. In answer to a question about what will be the first actions of the WMD should the project be entertained, Delbert replied that a core sample of the soil on each site will be taken to ensure that the soil composition is such that proper filtering of the storm water can be accomplished before it leaches down to the aquifer.

Delbert noted that this season has been very wet and people will become complacent about water conservation. Scott Tucker said that despite the current high water table, the water problem is still with us and the WMD does not intend to slow down its efforts to plan for shortages in the years to come.

Scott Tucker reported on his activities for the prior month, which included visiting farms to check compliance with BMP requirements. Scott visits the earliest sign-ons to the BMP program (some from as early as 2006) and reports that there is a lot of work to do just to bring records up to date on changes in crops and acreage. Also, he has helped administer \$100K of cost share projects, such as fertigation or installation of GPS devices.

The Florida legislature, he reports, may fund two new agents to cover the northwest counties (including Madison) and the Dunellon area.

He mentioned that a poultry processor (Pilgrim) is looking for startup chicken farmers to supply broilers for its business.

Monica Jones (NRCS) said that it was a routine month of taking applications for funding (mostly forestry projects, like longleaf pine growing).

Delbert reported that this year the Columbia and Union County water boards would do a joint venture in producing the conservation-focused art books for students in the respective counties. The coloring books have been a Columbia County project in the past and had a Columbia county flavor. This year will see some mention of Union County in the books.

The meeting closed at 8 PM.