

Present:

Laurel Schaafsma - Chair

Pete Cameron - Secretary

Buddy Finley - Supervisor

William Schretzmann - Supervisor

Barton Wilder - FDACS/WMD Environmental Specialist III

David Nistler - Union County Ag. Extension Agent

Jay Tucker - Forestry Agent

The meeting opened with Laurel reporting on a discussion of our budget with Karen Cossey of the Union County Commission. Our budget was reduced from \$3000 to \$1500 in fiscal year 2015 - 2016 and will be \$1500 for 2016-2017 starting October 1.

In discussions with the AFCD's Charlene Richberg and Union County's webmaster Nathan about a host and domain for our website, Laurel learned that the cost to create and maintain an independent website would be over \$1,000, whereas if we use Union County's website as host for our own (our website would be accessed via a link on the UC website), there would be no cost to us. This idea won unanimous approval.

Laurel brought up the possibility of a Union County waterways cleanup, with our board sponsoring the event and 4-H youth doing the cleanup. The Lake Butler Beach was mentioned as the main area needing cleanup but Buddy Finley said that most of the trash was in the reeds and that area could not be accessed except by air boat. The issue was tabled for the next meeting pending a check of the lakefront area and other public areas near water to determine if 4-H kids could get at them and clean them.

William Schretzmann suggested using an Eagle Scout to head up the cleanup as a way of gaining a merit badge.

David Nistler suggested contacting the trash pickup people in Lake Butler to see if they would provide snacks and water for the event, thereby gaining some positive PR for themselves.

Buddy Finley cited his reading of the Florida statute governing soil and water conservation districts. The statute, he said, is a hard read and there are many areas of confusion. This will be a topic for future meetings as members try to clarify the charter and purpose of our district.

Buddy mentioned a July meeting in High Springs featuring two lawyers talking about water law enforcement. The meeting will be on July 25th at 7 -9 PM.

Jay Tucker talked about the pine beetle problem and efforts of his office to combat it. Foresters have identified 38 beetle infestation spots in two counties in need of tree thinning, burning, vegetative control, and planting. Landowners with 10 acres or more of pine can apply by 29 July for cost share (@ 50%). In the selection process for who will get the cost share, points are awarded for those with an existing stewardship plan or designation as a certified tree farm. Not all applicants need to have an active infestation; the program is preventive also.

Barton Wilder pointed out that he, Scott, and Hugh will be opening an office in Trenton.

Also, Barton mentioned a \$35M allotment of state money for working ranch or farm owners who will sign on to an agreement that their land can never be developed. The applications by landowners have been submitted and the selection will be announced soon.