

HIGHLANDS SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT - BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

MEETING MINUTES

MEETING DATE: 5/19/2026

Meeting Location: HSWCD Conf. Rm.– Bert J. Harris Jr. Ag. Center
4505 George Blvd., Sebring, FL 33875

FINAL

Approved June 16, 2026

Recorded by: Kayla Nickerson

MEETING SCHEDULED START: 3:00 P.M. CALL TO ORDER: 3:00 P.M.

PUBLIC MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT READ BY CHAIRMAN

List of Attendees			
Name	Title	Organization	Present
Dr. John Causey	Chairman	Highlands Soil & Water	Y
Steve Smith	Vice-Chairman	Highlands Soil & Water	Y
Doug Deen	Secretary/Treasurer	Highlands Soil & Water	Y
Sara Sebring	Supervisor	Highlands Soil & Water	Y
T.J. Wohl	Supervisor	Highlands Soil & Water	Y
Scott Kirouac	Liaison	Highlands County BCC	Y
Kayla Nickerson	Executive Director	Highlands Soil & Water	Y
Chad Harmon	MIL Manager	Highlands Soil & Water	Y
Wade Smith	MIL Technician	Highlands Soil & Water	Y
Lauren Ahrens	Environmental Specialist III	FDACS-OAWP	N
Michael Lebron	District Conservationist	USDA-NRCS	N
Don Buchanon	Rangeland Specialist	USDA-NRCS	Y
Vanessa Bauzo	Policy Planning Coord. Liaison	FDACS-OAWP	Y
John Davis	Auditor	Wicks, Brown, Williams & Co.	Y

- I. **Welcome & Introductions**
- II. **Approval of Agenda** - Motion to approve agenda with the insertion of Agency Partner Updates as item IV. (Smith/Deen). Unanimous approval.
- III. **Approval of Meeting Minutes**
 - a. **Board of Supervisors Meeting Minutes – April 21, 2026:** Motion to approve minutes as presented (Sebring/Wohl). Unanimous approval.
- IV. **Agency Partner Updates**
 - a. **HCBC – S. Kirouac** reported public hearings are underway regarding impact fees; encouraged residents to attend next public hearing on June 2nd. No action.

- b. **FDACS** – V. Bauzo introduced herself. Announced OAWP Director, West Gregory, has resigned effective Friday, May 22. Jessica Ferris is interim director. Discussed status of Letters of Dissolution issued to certain SWCDs. No additional letters are expected to be issued at this time. No action.
- V. **Financial Activity**
 - a. **Overview & Approval of Financial Reports – April 2026:** Review of financial reports. Motion to approve financial reports as presented (Smith/Sebring). Unanimous approval.
- VI. **Old Business**
 - a. **Office Staffing and Future Grant Opportunities** – K. Nickerson presented proposal to fund HSWCD Drone and Water Quality Program, including the employment of one program manager and one program technician. Motion to fund Drone and Water Quality Program up to \$150,000 through December 31st, 2026. (Smith/Sebring). Unanimous approval.
- VII. **Presentation of FY 2024-2025 Financial Audit** – J. Davis presented the Audit Management Letter and the Independent Accountants' Audit/Financial Report. No findings reported. Motion to accept the Annual Financial Report as presented and submit to the Auditor General (Smith/Sebring). Unanimous approval. Auditor recommendation to complete budget amendments at next meeting.
- VIII. **Local Working Group Priority Selection** – K. Nickerson presented state list of resource concerns for priority selection. Board consensus to keep same priorities as identified in 2025 Local Working Group.
- IX. **Executive Director's Report** – K. Nickerson reported 2026 Landowner Assistance Expo went well. Event hosted 90 attendees, 29 of which were agricultural producers. AFCD asked if Highlands SWCD would be willing to host the 2027 State Land Judging Contest. Due to staff time and funding constraints, board consensus to decline request. Attention drawn to upcoming dates and reminder to file Form 1 and complete reelection requirements. Discussion regarding July meeting date. Motion to cancel July Board of Supervisors meeting (Wohl/Sebring). Unanimous approval.
- X. **Citizens Not on the Agenda** – None
- XI. **Supervisors Comments**
 - Smith – None
 - Deen – None
 - Sebring – None
 - Wohl – None
 - Causey – None

Meeting Adjourned at 4:48p.m.

Next Board Meeting: June 16th, 2026 – 3:00 p.m.

John Causey, DVM Chairman

Doug Deen, Secretary

POST MEETING ACTION ITEMS

Action	Assigned To	Deadline
<i>Monitor, review and discuss FDACS-OAWP operations, revised procedures, policies, contract language, scopes of work.</i>	<i>K. Nickerson</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
<i>AFCD Committee Work</i>	<i>K. Nickerson</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
<i>Complete Filing of Annual Financial Audit</i>	<i>K. Nickerson</i>	<i>June 30, 2026</i>
<i>Complete Annual Financial Disclosure – Form 1</i>	<i>Supervisors</i>	<i>June 30, 2026</i>
<i>HSWCD Water Quality Program Development & Grant Applications</i>	<i>K. Nickerson, C. Harmon, W. Smith</i>	<i>June 30, 2026</i>
<i>MIL Contract Closeout</i>	<i>K. Nickerson</i>	<i>June 30, 2026</i>
<i>FCDEA/AFCD Annual Meeting Planning</i>	<i>K. Nickerson</i>	<i>August 2026</i>
<i>REPI grant outreach and meeting facilitation</i>	<i>K. Nickerson</i>	<i>Until Complete</i>
<i>Develop HSWCD Public Records and Purchasing Policies</i>	<i>K. Nickerson</i>	<i>Until Complete</i>