

HIGHLANDS SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT - BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

MEETING MINUTES

MEETING DATE: 6/16/2026

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

FINAL – Approved 8/18/2026

Recorded by: Kayla Nickerson

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

PUBLIC MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT READ BY CHAIRMAN

I. Welcome & Introductions

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	N
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	Y
Michael Lebron	District Conservationist	USDA-NRCS	Y
Don Buchanon	Rangeland Specialist	USDA-NRCS	N
Vanessa Bauzo	Policy Planning Coord. Liaison	FDACS-OAWP	N
Dr. Kate Calvin	Professor	South Florida State College	Y
Brooke Chapman	Stakeholder	Istokpoga Marsh Watershed Improvement District	Y

- II. Approval of Agenda** - Motion to approve as presented (Smith/Deen). Unanimous approval.
- III. Water Quality Project Funding Request** – Dr. Kate Calvin presented on the Lake Glenada project proposal and requested \$3,500 to fund the project. Board consensus to delay consideration to next budget year, if still appropriate.
- IV. IMWID Update & Request** – Mr. Brooke Chapman updated Board of IMWID status and urgent need for approximately \$35,000 to address overgrowth prior to expected rain events. S. Kirouac shared state appropriations are expected but delayed. Hybrid taxing district is moving forward and will likely take effect late July, with income generation beginning in November. District may request to borrow funds from the

county on July 7th, assuming inclusion in final state appropriations bill. Motion to approve \$8,000 for urgent IMWID spraying and ditch cleaning, contingent on ability to begin work on or before June 30th (Wohl/Smith). Unanimous approval.

V. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- a. Board of Supervisors Meeting Minutes – May 19, 2026:** Motion to approve minutes as presented (Smith/Wohl). Unanimous approval.
- b. Board Meeting Schedule Update –** Review of proposed changes. Motion to approve as presented (Wohl/Smith). Unanimous approval.

VI. Financial Activity

- a. Overview & Approval of Financial Reports – May 2026:** Review of financial reports. Motion to approve financial reports as presented (Smith/Deen). Unanimous approval.
- b. FY 2025-2026 Budget Amendments –** Review of budget amendments. Motion to approve adopt Resolution 03 and FY 2025-2026 Budget Amendment #2 with the addition of \$8,000 in special projects (\$18,000 total) (Smith/Deen). Unanimous approval.

VII. Agency Partner Updates

- a. FDACS –** K. Deuberry reported FY 2026-2027 cost share will return to 75/80/90 percentages with \$150k cap and ability to apply year after year. All FY 25-26 BMP cost share projects have been completed. Field staff is working on lengthy list of IVs and training Fruit and Vegetable staff. Hiring field staff in Polk and Hendry, looking to fill Highlands BMP Tech vacancy as well. No action.
- b. MIL –** C. Harmon reported all contract deliverables are completed. Awaiting contract closeout instructions. No action.
- c. NRCS –** M. Lebron reported 7 of 18 total Highlands CSP applications are preapproved. 43 EQIP applications received; preapproval process has not begun. No action.
- d. HCBCC –** S. Kirouac burn ban expires today. No action.

VIII. Drone & Water Quality Program Update – K. Nickerson shared information regarding grant programs, applications and deadlines. She expressed desire for assistance with administrative duties over next three weeks. Motion to retain Susie Bishop for consultant/administrative services up to 40 hours at \$50/hr as needed (Wohl/Smith). Unanimous approval.

IX. Executive Director's Report – K. Nickerson reported she graduated Leadership Highlands C/O 2026. K. Nickerson attended FASD annual conference last week, receiving training and continuing education credits for CDM certification. Okeechobee SWCD District Administrator was elected to FASD Board of Directors and Florida SWCDs are excited to have the representation. AFCD will host annual meeting on August 25th in Gainesville, FL. The association has a strong need for new executive board members; elections will be held at annual meeting. REPI-DWM Landowner Engagement event went well; recommendation to share opportunity to participate with colleagues. All HSWCD reelection candidates qualified and were unopposed. Annual Financial Disclosure (Form 1) filing deadline is July 1st.

X. Citizens Not on the Agenda – None

XI. Supervisors Comments

Smith – None
Deen – None
Sebring – None
Wohl – None
Causey – None

Meeting Adjourned at 5:30p.m.
 Next Board Meeting: August 18th, 2026 – 3:00 p.m.

John Causey, DVM Chairman

Doug Deen, Secretary

POST MEETING ACTION ITEMS

Action	Assigned To	Deadline
<i>EPA Farmer to Farmer grant application submittal</i>	<i>K. Nickerson, C. Harmon, W. Smith</i>	<i>June 19, 2026</i>
<i>Communication with IMWID Stakeholders regarding status/issuance of check</i>	<i>K. Nickerson</i>	<i>June 30, 2026</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>MIL Contract Closeout</i>	<i>K. Nickerson</i>	<i>June 30, 2026</i>
<i>REPI Challenge grant proposal development and submittal</i>	<i>K. Nickerson, C. Harmon, W. Smith</i>	<i>July 2, 2026</i>
<i>USDA-NRCS Conservation Innovation grant proposal development and submittal</i>	<i>K. Nickerson, C. Harmon, W. Smith</i>	<i>July 27, 2026</i>
<i>FCDEA/AFCD Annual Meeting Planning/Facilitation</i>	<i>K. Nickerson</i>	<i>August 25, 2026</i>
<i>HSWCD Water Quality Program Development & Additional Grant Applications</i>	<i>K. Nickerson, C. Harmon, W. Smith</i>	<i>ongoing</i>
<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>REPI Partnership DWM Program outreach and meeting facilitation</i>	<i>K. Nickerson</i>	<i>Until Complete</i>
<i>Review and updates to Employee Handbook</i>	<i>K. Nickerson</i>	<i>Until Complete</i>