

Polk County Soil and Water Conservation District

20th REGULAR MEETING

Tuesday, August 21th 2018

The twentieth meeting of the Polk County Soil and Water Conservation District board of supervisors was held on Tuesday August 21th, 2018 at Polk State College campus in Lakeland, Fl. Room LTB 1124.

- I. **Call to Order:** Chairman Upthagrove called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.
- II. **Pledge of Allegiance**

Guests in Attendance:

Ed Sheehan	-	NRCS
Matt Warren	-	FDACs
Matt Vincent	-	SWFWMD – Farms
Kietha Bennett	-	Florida Farm Bureau
Cheryl Miller	-	Tiger Creek Preserve

PC SWCD SUPERVISORS in Attendance:

Brett Upthagrove	Chairman
Dr. Sharon Masters	Vice - Chair
Mike Darrow	Secretary
Kyle Carlton	Supervisor

Drew Pitts - BMP Technician - PCSWCD

III. Approval of the last meeting 7/17/18 minutes.

Electronic Minutes were available at this meeting and sent out prior to the meeting.

Motion to accept minutes; Approved 4- 0.

IV. NRCS Agreement discussion:

Mutual cooperative agreement – District Conservationist, Mr. Sheehan reported no progress on this item to date.

V. NRCS Conservation report:

Conservation report - District Conservationist, Mr. Sheehan presented a brief Conservation Report.

Ed talked US Farm Bill Programs for the Polk County Working Group meeting. Meeting is scheduled for August 30th 2018. Ed presented the proposed agenda and topics to be presented at the annual meeting. Ed also talked about for next year's EQIP program. He is reviewing applications for funding in farms and Ag in Polk County.

VI. Treasures Report:

Treasurer Garrison was absent; No Report.

VII. Chairman's report:

Chairman Uthagrove discussed the need for bookkeeping for the FDACs contract and district financial. He has been working with Angela with FDACs and is trying to get admin help for the district. He stressed the need to hire a book keeper. Talked about the need to track spending for future audits. The board recommended he bring a proposal for all cost to the next meeting to contract with someone.

Also mentioned the AFCD annual meeting August 23 -25 in Ocala. He will be attending the meeting.

Local working Group - Chairman Uthagrove mentioned the need help with the local working group meeting. He asked for all supervisors to attend. The date of August 30th, 2018 for area producers to hear about upcoming funding opportunities.

VIII. PCSWCD Report:

Mr. Drew Pitts - BMP Technician for PCSWCD, gave a brief report:

Drew talked about Ag producers on BMP's and cost share programs. He talked about the areas he would be working on and reporting to us on like weather stations, drip irrigation, Soil probe monitoring, Cost share contracts and customer service. He will be working now doing the same thing for all of Polk County. He is reaching out to area producers for enrollments or information on programs.

He talked about the Crisp funding program for citrus replanting was available for those who signed up previously up to 3 million dollars. He talked about attending the Citrus growers association.

He also talked about some type of marketing campaign or other ideas for the conservation district.

IX. AFCD - PCSWCD Website Update:

Supervisor Darrow reported he is trying to update the site. He needs a little help of a tech person, but believes he can get some stuff added. Like meeting time, minutes, and locations to the website. Hopes to get to it in the next 2 weeks. He is trying to find some time.

X. SWFWMD – Farms Program Report:

Matt Vincent of SWFWMD gave a report of that SWFWMD has over 2000 Water Use Permits in place. His program For FY2019 we will be getting \$150,000 to spend in our Mini FARMS program and \$6 million for FARM. He would like to work with all partners assisting in his mission of saving water. He can be contacted for program assistance to any in Polk County area. Matt gave an overview of our programs at the last meeting, below is a brief summary of the programs the District has available:

The **Mini FARMS** program is designed for growers with operations less than 100 irrigated acres located within SWFWMD's boundary. It is a cost share reimbursement program with a 75% reimbursement rate to a maximum of \$8,000 for water conservation BMPs. This could include; soil moisture systems, automation of pump stations, surface water pump stations, weather stations and telemetry. https://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/agriculture/mini_farms.php

The full size **FARMS** program is an agricultural cost-share reimbursement program that reduces groundwater withdrawals from the Upper Floridan aquifer through conservation and alternative water supply BMPs. <https://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/agriculture/farms/> The program is designed to serve as an incentive to the agricultural community to promote water quantity, water quality and natural systems to conserve groundwater use and promote resource sustainability. Reimbursement is typically 50% of the material goods, and the cap is based off of the water conservation potential of the BMP.

Essentially the more groundwater we are able to offset the more we are able to invest in a project. During the initial evaluation we estimate how much water the project will conserve and compare that to the total project cost over a 5-9 year contract period. If it meets the District's cost benefit for dollars/thousand gallons saved we can move forward. All FARMS projects must be approved by the District's Governing Board. It typically takes 6-8 weeks to get a project through this process.

X. FDACS Report:

Matt Warren of FDACS talked briefly about the contract and the interactions between FDACs and the PCSWCD. He clarified some issues with Chairman Uthagrove on the contract. He is working with our BMP technician to assist him enroll Ag producers and technologies in Polk county.

XIII. New Business:

Introduction of Ms. Cheryl Miller - TCP

Ms. Cheryl Miller came to the meeting to talk about the Tiger Creek Preserve and a water conservation project in the county. She also came to learn about the PCSWCD. She asked all the supervisors for input on the passion for conservation. She talked about a possible upcoming water conservation project to partner with, as well as many conservation ideas. Cheryl is located at the Nature Conservancy Tiger Creek Preserve 647 Pfundstein road in Babson Park.

XIV. The Next meeting:

The Next meeting is scheduled for 9/18/18 at the Polk State Lakeland Campus, Florida at 6:00 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Action items:

1. Future presentations by district conservationist on each program offered.
2. Develop a conservation district plan with goals and objectives for future. . **Partially complete.**
3. Look for grants and funding opportunities. **Partially complete**
4. Partner with other agencies to move conservation projects to Polk County. **Partially complete**
5. Employee funding decisions or partnerships. **Partially complete.**
6. Work to hoist a successful State land Judging contest in 2018. (FFA and 4H) **Completed in March 2018.**
7. Identify projects to partner with the committee for conservation projects.
8. Develop a business plan and plans for :
 - Community gardens
 - Rain Gardens!
 - Urban forest grants
 - Cost share projects
 - Community education
 - Speech contest
 - Envirothon
 - Land Conservation
 - Water Conservation
 - Youth education projects
 - Employee funding
 - Grants

Respectfully submitted, Michael Darrow