



Association of Florida Conservation Districts AFCD

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OFFICERS:

Andrew Jackson, President
Earl Ziebarth, Vice-President
H. Marcus Edwards, 2nd Vice-President
John Chamberlain, Secretary/Treasurer

Don Walters Area I Vice-President
Blas J. Gomez Area II Vice-President
James D. Williams Area III Vice-President
Mark Cross Area IV Vice-President
John O'Connor Area V Vice-President
Eva Webb Area VI Vice-President

FEBRUARY 25, 2005

PRESENT: Norma Ziebarth, Barbara Gill, Suwannee County CD, Charlene White, Wilbur Dean, Levy Soil and Water, John Chamberlain, Alachua Soil and Water, Earl Ziebarth, Vice-Chairman Volusia Soil and Water, Andy Jackson, Suwannee County CD, Teresa Owens, Suwannee County CD, Ken Murray, NRCS, Marcus Edwards, Gadsden Soil and Water, Phil Giorno, Volusia Soil and Water, Phylis Vandevere, NACD, Andy Kelly, Volusia Soil and Water Conservation District.

Phylis was introduced to those present. She is the NACD-AFCD liaison

- 1. Finance Report:** John Chamberlain, Secretary-Treasurer gave the finance report. There were three bills that were brought before the board for approval of payment. First was the annual state required non-profit corporation report fee of \$61.25, Suwannee County Conservation District reimbursement of \$7.46 for the tape recording tapes, mileage reimbursement of \$314.50 from vice-president Ziebarth who attended the National Convention. There were also forms that needed approval of the board. These forms would thank the districts for joining the State Committee. There is also a Recognition Certificate that would also be sent to the districts that send in their dues. A suggestion was made by Teresa Owens regarding the Recognition Certificate. Her suggestion was to print the certificate on bonded paper so that it looked more professional. Bill Ziebarth informed the committee that there is software available with certificates and all you have to do is fill in the blank and print the certificate on whatever paper you would like. It was further discussed that instead of sending second notices to the districts who don't pay, we should send them a letter informing that they will only be able to vote on issues if they have paid their dues. Bill Ziebarth made a motion to approve payment of the above mentioned bills and also any expenses to print the letter of thanks and also the Recognition Certificate, this motion was seconded by Marcus Edwards. Motion passed unanimously by the board.

A suggestion was made to put a box on the registration form to the state meeting to pay dues and join the AFCD. Andy Jackson stated that he did not want to do that because he thought several counties would come to the state meeting and pay only the \$25.00 dues because they cannot pay the full dues of \$250.00. He states that in order to only pay \$25.00 districts had to submit in writing why they could not afford to pay the full \$250.00 and then the board would vote on whether to accept their explanation. Charlene White stated she was going to encourage her districts to join the AFCD so that students could participate in the speech and poster contests on a state level. Andy stated that not

paying their dues does not eliminate them from either contest, it only affected their voting rights. John Chamberlain commented that as more districts join the state association our budget will increase to approximately \$8,000.00-\$10,000.00 per year. It was suggested by John that we needed to think about budgeting issues.

2. Approval of previous minutes.

Andy Jackson made some changes to the minutes of the January meeting, namely he corrected the contact information for Phylis Vandevere, office number is 601-859-3440. There is an answering machine on both the mobile telephone number and the office number so if you can't get in contact with her please leave a message. It was further noted that her office is in Mississippi. Motion was made and seconded with full board approval of the minutes with the noted changes.

REPORTS:

1. NACD Board of Directors Annual Meeting.

It was stated by Andy Jackson that at the time of the Executive Board meeting in Atlanta, NACD decided that they would hold their summer board meeting the weekend of July 29-August 1, 2005. It was brought to their attention that that was the weekend of our state meeting and NACD decided to have their summer board meeting in Florida that same weekend.

Phylis mentioned that she thought that the NACD wanting to have their board meeting in Florida was a great compliment to our state and we just needed to work out some details. She felt this would be a great showcase of our districts and also show the districts that have not joined the AFCD that the NACD is concerned and interested in Florida. She felt this would be a tremendous help to the AFCD.

There were several concerns regarding logistics for both the Executive Board meeting of the NACD and also the AFCD meetings and being able to coordinate everything.

2. Barbara Gill gave a report on the District Employee Association. She stated that she is still contacting everyone. She stated that she was planning on having a break-out session during the state meeting for district employees. She is in the process of polling them about the help they need. She is also reminding them about the speech and poster contest and giving them information about those two contests. Barbara also noted that while talking to the Okeechobee District Administrator she mentioned the AFCD meeting and she knew nothing about the meeting. Barbara stated that the Okeechobee representative stated that if they would have had more notice about the February meeting they would have had a representative present.

Bill Ziebarth stated that the minutes from the last meeting had the meeting date on it, it was noted that the minutes were only mailed to the Executive Board, not all the districts. It was suggested that when a date was decided on the next meeting it needed to be sent to all the districts so that they can attend.

Marcus made a suggestion that we needed to have a newsletter informing all districts who are participating of all meetings that were going on, the contests that were going on, etc., just something to keep everyone informed. John informed the board that as soon as the website was up and going all the information would be on the website. Marcus noted that not everyone has a computer or access to a computer and that mail-outs still needed to be done.

Teresa Owens stated that she is really swamped with her districts financial reports, etc and she was doing the best that she could with getting the minutes typed and out. Andy Jackson said that they needed to get a part-time employee just for meeting minutes, newsletters, etc.

- 3. NACD Annual meeting was held in Atlanta on February 10, 2005. It was felt that the convention was very informative and educational. Andy Jackson asked Andy Kelly to comment about the committee meeting he attended. Andy Kelly indicated that no Southeastern states had representation on the Water Resource Committee and discussion was largely regarding watershed resources dealing with dam safety and sanitary health issues. Basin watershed types like Florida=s were not discussed until**
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visitor participation at the end of the meeting. There is now a better understanding as to why it is imperative for Florida to be involved on a national level, Florida holds a lot of votes in the legislature. Florida can rule the Southeast with the number of Senators and representatives. Out of 104 votes in the Southeast United States, Florida has 27 of those. The NACD would like for Florida to be more involved on a national level because of those votes. The Farm Bill is currently "Under construction" and our State Representatives could affect the Farm Bill. At the Annual Meeting John Redding from Georgia was elected to the Executive Board, as Secretary/Treasurer. John has helped the State of Florida in the past and is on our side 100%. Billy Wilson was elected President of the NACD. Every state in the Southeast wants to help Florida back into the National Association. It was noted that there are several committees on the national level that need to have some input from the State of Florida.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Website planning and Development:

Phil Giorno informed the board that David Cummings, an employee of Volusia Soil and Water Conservation District would develop the AFCD website. He stated that the charge would be \$350.00 for first 10 hours of work to develop the website. The website would initially be a clone of the Volusia Soil and Water Conservation website with all the association information on it. John Chamberlain made a motion to authorize payment for website development, the motion was seconded by Wilbur, and there was unanimous approval of the board. Barbara made a suggestion that at the AFCD annual meeting there needed to be a session on how to access the website not only for district employees but also for the NRCS and District Conservationists.

2. Planning for 2005 AFCD meeting at Howey in the Hills:

As stated above, the NACD has decided to hold their summer meeting in Florida. NACD has expressed a concern about having the meeting at Howey in the Hills because of its distance from the

airport and attractions. Howey in the Hills is an exclusive site with not much around it and this was a major concern for the NACD. Phil Giorno stated that the airport does have a transportation system that can be contracted to bring everyone to the site.

There were several discussions held with regards to the various topics of the annual meeting. Barbara Gill felt that \$25.00 for an employee lunch was too much money. She felt that districts would not pay \$25.00 for their employees to go to lunch and the employees themselves would feel that \$25.00 was too expensive for a lunch.

There was great scrutiny over the contract with Howey in the Hills, the price of the contract, the possibility of extending the deadline for the contract, etc. Phil Giorno was going to contact the management of Howey in the Hills and see about the possibility of extending the deadline for having the contract signed.

It was decided that the opening session and AFCD board meeting would be Friday morning, with a banquet Friday night and a luncheon meeting on Saturday with the winners of the speech contest being announced at the luncheon on Saturday.

It was decided that the board of the AFCD would have a conference call with the “Convention Connection” representative who is the company that works with the NACD to plan all of their meetings and conventions. This conference call would be at 2:00 p.m. on March 15, 2005. Phylis is going to forward all necessary information to the company so that they will have time to come up with some ideas for our annual meeting.

Andy announced that at the AFCD annual meeting he would like to recognize someone who has been active in Soil and Water Conservation Districts; Dorothy Lewis. She had a lot to do with the old association and she has been a strong advocate for Soil and Water Conservation Districts. John Chamberlain suggested she be recognized as an Outstanding Conservationist and given a Distinguished Service Award. Andy suggested that board members think of someone they felt should be recognized instead.

3. Budget Planning:

Bill Ziebarth put together a sample form for budgeting purposes. This form breaks the budget into categories ie, awards, office supplies, etc. Andy noted that the state association dues to the NACD were a minimum of \$775.00. Bill asked if there were any old budgets from the old association, Andy said he had an old budget and would get a copy to everyone to look at. Bill suggested that all board members take a copy of the sample budget form he prepared and Andy will get everyone a copy of an old budget and for everyone to look at both and come up with changes and/or options.

A discussion was then made with regards to Andy Jackson going to the NACD Legislative meeting in Washington, D.C. Bill felt that the AFCD should pay for this trip. Andy announced that airline tickets went up one-third since the time he had first looked into them. There is also a state registration fee of \$275.00, the rooms are \$235.00 per night plus tax, and that the meeting lasts three nights. Andy did not have an agenda to announce at the meeting. He thought he recalled that on Monday there was a group meeting; Tuesday there was a meeting on the hill to meet with legislative representatives. The

Southeast Regional Board of Directors will be having their meeting on Sunday afternoon. The approximate cost of this trip will be \$1,300.00-\$1,500.00 total. A motion was made by Bill Ziebarth for the AFCD to pay for Andy's trip to Washington, D.C. which includes airfare, hotel reservations, registration fees and meals. If there are any other expenses incurred, Andy is to bring back a receipt and the board will vote on reimbursement of those expenses. The motion was seconded by _____ and there was full board approval.

There was also a discussion had with regards to sponsorship. Phylis made a suggestion that it is very easy to get sponsorship for youth activities such as the speech and poster contests and that these sponsors would pay for the prizes of each youth activity so this would not be a burden on our budget. It was further discussed that we needed to either be a 501(c) (3) or a function in order to accept sponsorship monies. Andy noted that there needed to be a different board of directors for a 501(c) (3).

Bill suggested that the Board of Directors be comprised of the first Vice-President from each area, the Secretary/Treasurer from the board to keep the minutes, and the President of the association to vote only in a tie. Phylis questioned whether we wanted to be a 501(c) (3) or a foundation. A change also needs to be made to the bylaws which do not address the 501(c) (3) status.

Marcus asked if we become a foundation how we would transfer money for prizes and awards at the various youth activities. Bill explained that the Board of Directors for the foundation would approve transferring the foundation money to the AFCD for sponsorship of a youth activity. Also if a district cannot afford to pay for awards for their youth functions, the foundation board can also approve sending that district money to pay for those activities. The advantage of the foundation versus the 501(c) (3) is that the 501(c) (3) is a non-partisan, non-political group that cannot back any "partisan" activities. John Chamberlain asked Phylis to look into finding an old 501(c) (3) that had been approved and possibly formatting it to fit our needs. Andy Kelly informed Phylis that he had worked on several 501(c) (3) s in the past.

4. Mission Statement:

Everyone received a copy of the sample mission statement made up by Bill Ziebarth. If approved, this mission statement needs to be sent out to all districts with a copy of the minutes and a short newsletter. John Chamberlain made a motion to accept the mission statement and goals, the motion was seconded by Bill Ziebarth with full board approval.

Andy Jackson brought to everyone's attention that each of the six Areas needed to have an Area meeting at least 90 days before the opening of the AFCD annual meeting.

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NEW BUSINESS:

1. Miscellaneous New Business:

Tax ID number:

Bill Ziebarth did not have the form with him. He will fill out this form, have Andy Jackson sign the form and send it back. Bill did have a question if we had a tax exemption, he said he would figure it out and fill in the application.

2. AFCD Auxiliary.

Norma Ziebarth has volunteered to start-up an auxiliary for the AFCD. A motion was made to authorize the formation of this organization, seconded with full board approval. The information regarding the formation of the auxiliary will also be sent out with the minutes. Norma Ziebarth was appointed the chairwoman for the formation of this organization. The bylaws also needed to be revised to include the new AFCD Auxiliary.

Phil Giorno announced that the Florida Soil and Water Conservation Council meeting was coming up and he felt that the AFCD should have a representative attending that meeting, unfortunately it was not known when that meeting was going to be held. He also made the suggestion that Commissioner Bronson be sent an invitation to the AFCD annual meeting in July and also Mr. Maychek.

Phylis made a suggestion that as well as the minutes, new mission statement, announcement about the auxiliary and the other things we are sending out, could we possibly send out an agenda for the state association meeting.

Andy announced that the Southeastern Regional Board of the NACD meeting is in Louisville, KY July 15-18, 2005. Andy encouraged anyone/everyone to attend if they could.

The next meeting of the AFCD will be held on March 25, 2005 at 10:00 a.m. Phylis stated that she can attend any meetings via conference call as opposed to coming to Florida for each meeting.

There being no further business, John Chamberlain made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Bill Ziebarth.