



Florida Folks

Florida Conservation District
Employees Association

Volume I, Issue I
Fall/Winter 2008

SECDEA Annual Conference in Pigeon Forge, Tn

Jackie Bailey, President and Corine Burgess, Treasurer attended the South East Conservation District Employee Association (SECDEA) annual board meeting and conference on November 10 - 13, 2008 in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. The Board meeting was held on Monday, the business meeting was held on Tuesday and learning sessions were held on Wednesday. Jackie gave the Presidents report at the general meeting. Corine shared the success of our composter workshops and demonstrated the Composter from Highlands SWCD at the conference.

We made many contacts and brought back great educational ideas.

Guest speaker Joetta White from AgrAbility a program in many states that help producers with handicaps.

Phylis Vandervere from National Association of Conservation Districts spoke about the importance of Districts and Eric Dupree from Western KY University spoke about conservation motivation. The Kentucky CDEA provided snacks and those women can cook.

Speaking of cooking. The SECDEA is selling cook-books as a fundraiser. The books consist of 661 recipes by SECD employees. They cost \$20 each.



To the right: Our flag pole is now bigger than the others. May have to cut a foot off from it.



Corine Burgess, Treasurer and Jackie Bailey, President of FCDEA with Mendel Wade President of SECDEA



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Look what we have accomplished in three short years:

- Our bank account has a balance of \$1,157.05
- We have paid stipends of \$150 for three district employees to attend the AFCD Annual meeting.
- We have been present at the SECDEA annual meeting each year.
- We have been present at the NCDEA annual meetings.

New Officers



New slate of officer and area representatives Left to right:

- Lola Allard-Area II (Jackson)
- Laura Fincannon-Secretary (Palm Beach)
- Melody Hugh-Area I (Choctawhatchee)
- Audrey Driggers- Area VI (Okeechobee SWCD)
- Barbara Gill-Past President
- Darlene Smith - Area III (Dixie, Gilchrist and Levy)
- Jackie Bailey-President (Highlands)
- not pictured: Corine Burgess-Treasurer (Highlands), Becky Tindale-Area IV, (Marion) and Deborah Prestridge-Area V, (DeSoto Hardee) .

Mellody Hughes—Area I Representative

Orange Hill SWCD... Enters into contracts with the NW Florida Water Management District to repair and vegetate serious erosion issues identified by the WMD. Funds generated from these contracts are used to purchase college scholarships through the Take Stock in Children program. Along with local and State matching, 40-- \$10,000 scholarships have been awarded.

Santa Rosa County participated in the 42nd annual farm tour, hosted by the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Cooperative Extension Service, this past September. Blackwater SWCD was excited to assist in this event, the longest running farm tour in the state. Over the years it has become a very popular activity, especially for those that are not as familiar with agriculture and its role in our county.

With excellent company and good food approximately 200 people participate in this all day tour.

This year's event focused on peanut production from planting to harvest and looked at its influence to our local economy. Other topics covered included sod production, the future of biodiesel, and the award presentation to the farm family of the year.



Santa Rosa County Commissioner Bob Cole discussed the various aspects of biodiesel production and its potential future roll in Santa

Lola Allard—Area II Representative

Chipola River SWCD hosted its annual land judging contest on November 21st.

In a Soil Judging contest, participants judge the soils based on slope, erosion, texture, depth, and drainage.

After judging the actual soil pit, students decide on the land capability, land use and

the recommended conservation practices.

Teams and students from each County that participated were competing for First, Second and Third places awards.

Special thanks this year goes to the Farm Bureau Board.

The State Contest will be held in Alachua County on March 27, 2009.



Dylan Paramore checks out the pit.

Lola Allard at **Jackson County SWCD** has offered to help sell the cookbook for the SECDEA. Please contact her and get your copy today.

The books consist of 661 recipes by SECD employees. They cost \$20 each.

Darlene Smith—Area III Representative



Subcontractors recovered derelict clam bags

Derelict Clam Bags Removal and Recovery

Cedar Key Aquaculture Association approached the **Levy SWCD** to distribute funds in the amount \$40,000.00 from FDACS and Suwannee River Conservation & Development Council to assist the clam industry to recover from the adverse impact of hurricanes and increase production.

This year, Old Town Elementary celebrated Arbor Day on January 17, 2008. The fifth grade class joined the **Dixie SWCD** and the Division of Forestry and planted a Laurel Oak tree with classmates and teachers. The students dug the hole, prepared the sapling, planted the tree and mulched around it. The students used this opportunity to replace a tree that was lost.

Darlene Smith, **Gilchrist SWCD's** Secretary and lower Suwannee River and Santa Fe River Basin Conservation Technician John Stubblefield visited

Mrs. Geiger's 4th grade class at Bell Elementary School and discussed the topic "Water is Life" on March 28, 2008.

Becky Tindale—Area IV Representative

Becky Tindale, an employee with **Marion SWCD** since February was awarded this year's stipend of \$150 to defray travel expenses so she could attend the AFCD meeting in August. Becky attended many workshops including the How to Keep Your District Legal Workshop. She enjoyed meeting the employees from around the state and learning about the diversity of programs districts are involved in.

Marion SWCD held their Poster Contest this month.

145 entries were received and judged.

The contest is co-sponsored each year by NACD and the NACD auxiliary.

The poster contest provides kindergarten through twelfth grade students an opportunity to convey their thoughts about soil, water and related natural resources

issues through art.

Each year the contest starts at the district level, the winner advance to the area , state and onto the National level.

This year's topic is, "Dig It, The Secrets of Soil". NACD is using the Dig It! theme in partnership with the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History and the Soil Science Society of America.



Deborah Prestridge—Area V Representative

The Southwest Gulf Coast Regional Envirothon competition took place on December 12 at the

Caloosahatchee Regional Park in Alva. Seventeen teams from Charlotte, Collier and Highlands participated. Teams from

Barron Collier won first place and third place and Naples High won second place. The winning team from each county will go to the state competition that will be held on April 25 at Hillsborough River State Park.

Pictured is First Place Team from Barron Collier!!



Audrey Driggers—Area VI Representative

The **St. Lucie SWCD** has been very busy this year even though it has been a difficult budget year.

We are actively involved in the Indian River Lagoon Envirothon, which is a

multi-county event with Indian River, St. Lucie, Okeechobee and Martin Counties competing. We are proud of the 2008 Envirothon State Champions from John Carroll High in St. Lucie County.

The St. Lucie SWCD presented our annual Outstanding Conservationist Award to rancher

Ruben Wayne Carlton this year at the 40th Annual Farm-City Ag Lunch for his work in creating wildlife habitat on his ranches.

St. Lucie SWCD is searching for Floridan Aquifer wells in neighborhoods which are built on old agricultural fields. We are able to offer 100% cost-share to most residents to decommission these wells through grants held by the Treasure Coast RC&D. So even in a difficult year, we continue to put soil and water conservation on the ground in St. Lucie County.

Indian River SWCD

awarded a plaque to the Cooperator of the year 2008 to local farmer Louis Schacht during the Indian River County Board of County Commissioners' meeting.

Indian River SWCD approved the first of three annual Arbor Day Free Tree Planting projects proposed by District Staff. 1,500 Bald Cypress trees will be planted over a three year period around storm water retention ponds in at least fifteen subdivisions.

Area VI Morgan Levy from **South Dade SWCD** was awarded the Positive Aging Award from the State of Florida



Okeechobee SWCD has started a Monofilament Recovery and Recycling Program placing collection bins at 19 boat ramps.



Florida Conservation District Employees Association

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FCDEA

Officers:

President: Jackie Bailey

Past-President: Barbara Gill

President Elect: vacant

Secretary: Laura Fincannon

Treasurer: Corine Burgess

Representatives:

Area I Mellody Hughes

Area II Lola Allard

Area III Darlene Smith

Area IV Becky Tindale

Area V Deborah Prestridge

Area VI Audrey Driggers

Mission Statement

To strengthen and promote the conservation district programs by providing assistance, information and representation and by supporting the professionalism of conservation district employees.

Proposed Vision

A professional accepted and intergrated work force dedicated to the cause of conservation.

Pictures from the AFCD meeting in Panama City, Florida, August 14 through 19, 2008



Winners of the State Speech Contest. First Place winner won \$500, second place received \$250 and third place was awarded \$100.

Would your district like to sponsor a speech contest next year?

Poster Contest entries were displayed at the conference.

Would your district like to hold a poster contest next year?



One of the ways we make money is the silent auction held once a year at the AFCD meeting. Do you have an item you would like to donate? We sure would appreciate it.

Gail Hendricks from NRCS held a class for FCDEA to improve our skills taking digital photographs.



Have you paid you 2009 memberships due of \$10?