



# “Building a Strong & Effective AFCD”

Strategic Planning Webinar Work Session  
Association of Florida Conservation Districts  
July 15, 2020 – 8:00 am to 5:00 pm (Eastern)

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### Session Objective:

- Develop a new strategic plan for AFCD with priorities, goals and 12-month action plan with commitments and time schedule for priority initiatives and methods to build support among members and partners

### Describe AFCD the way you want the association to be (responses to registration question)

- An engaged partner who wants to work toward getting good conservation projects on Florida lands.
- Self-sufficient serving the districts of Florida
- An independent association, independent of any financial restrictions
- AFCD works with all Districts/FCDEA to offer quality programming and engage public /public officials in CONSERVATION 1st
- To lead and strengthen the network of Florida SWCDs to accomplish their mission and objectives, and to thrive in the state.
- Be efficient in providing value & service to local Districts & effective in implementing FDACS/NRCS initiatives.
- INDEPENDENT and a standalone organization made up of the 57 SWCD's in Florida

### AFCD Accomplishments – Past 3 Years

- Hiring the Executive Director and employees of AFCD
- A better job reaching out to districts
- Training on what is expected, how AFCD can help what's available to them
- Annual meeting excellent sessions – public records law, general procedures issues, following legislation the state puts forth, partner organizations
- Area meetings are comprehensive
- Hosting the annual meeting, bringing partners together for networking and sharing ideas and the new supervisors training, ethics
- Relationships and building of partner relationships very successful and what AFCD needed to work on
- Building a network for our districts, contact information, a place for districts to call for information – helpful for a lot of districts
- Built up an office with training room, meetings, and others to meet
- Have office and staff and done a lot of training over the years
- Major strides - keeping our districts in compliance on reporting and things required by the state and helping understanding Chapter 582
- Mutual aid 'society' for information through AFCD...districts requested for information
- Entering the Florida Dept of Ag and Consumer Agency contract for deliverables
- NRCS agreement(s) for deliverables
- More emphasis on reaching out partners

### Greatest Future Accomplishments of AFCD

Individuals identify up to 3 future accomplishments for AFCD in the next 3 years

Format "By {date} AFCD will {outcome}

- Continuously protect vital program funding to accomplish conservation efforts throughout Florida and the nation
- Continue to help children to understand the importance of reducing/eliminating runoff into our waterways, clean water through AFCD speech contest, poster contest, photo contest
- Ongoing, partner on Farm Day at Capital activities
- Continue the training for District Supervisors on roles & responsibilities, ethics, effective ways for reaching out to agriculture organizations, reaching out to elected officials, policy development, partner relationships
- By September 2020 a system implemented assisting districts with public outreach and education activities and combining districts accomplishments into statewide reports, and talking points of natural resource work being done for key audiences...outreach system with statewide information and messaging (eg working with Local Work Groups)
- By September 2020 assist districts with Local Work Group activities
- By Dec 2020, AFCD will have a measure of financial stability through agreements, grants, dues structure, other...diversified revenue stream
- By Dec 2020, AFCD will have dealt with the threat of eliminating Conservation Districts in Florida
- By Dec 2020, work with District Employees Association to utilize information gathered in the survey about what districts do and vital role they have with partners
- By Dec 2020 AFCD officers and directors all know their role and responsibilities
- By July 2021, AFCD will have an improved outreach and communication system implemented with Districts, and people acting for the association (contacts by AFCD board members to districts, website, talking points, policy positions)
- By Dec 2021 AFCD will determine what they will be known for and perform that
- By January 2022 expand the number of areas in state from 4 to 6 areas so people did not have as far
- By July 2022, AFCD will double their delivery capacity by increasing staffing to meet the demand on the association
- By July 2022 individual Supervisors all know their role, responsibilities as an elected officials, helping them understand relationships with NRCS, State Conservation Agency, Extension and related working knowledge of natural resources
- By July 2022 AFCD will be assisting districts with volunteer programs
- By July 2023 AFCD will have 75% of county districts active and participating in AFCD
- By July 2023 AFCD will become more visible by fostering and developing a relationships with other associations to promote industry and commerce (eg Citrus Association, Fish and Wildlife, Cattlemen, Farm Bureau, Forestry, Water Management Districts, and other) – let associations know the value added for AFCD

## **Effective Organizations**

- See presentation slides

## **Associations & Their Importance**

- See presentation slides

## Who AFCD Serves & Their Needs?

“Who we serve”

- Individual Conservation Districts
- Florida citizens
- Partners

“What are their needs/priorities”

Districts

- Guidance (sometimes)
- Greater understanding of their role
- Understand who they serve and some overlap – avoid duplication and look for ways to do things with AFCD

Florida Citizen

- Up to date information on issues of concern dealing with natural resources and agriculture – education about how vital protecting natural resources are
- Know what a SWCD is and their purpose that serve them as constituent
- Promoting and education public on program availability

Partners

- Have association help themselves before helping a partner – become a successful organization that partners can depend on
- Collaboration
- A voice when needed
- Assistance to districts in any way possible to strengthen them

“Why AFCD exists - our purpose”

- To strengthen Florida's Conservation District
- Be a centralized, consistent resource for districts
- Represent the interests of Conservation District
- Provide training for people

## Mission Statement (revised version 7.15.20)

The Mission of AFCD is to provide leadership, [training](#), and coordination for Florida's Soil and Water Conservation Districts [in their role and responsibilities](#) for addressing [natural resource concerns and issues](#)

## Core Values - AFCD

- Reliable
- Knowledgeable
- Conservation of Natural Resources
- Operate with integrity and consistency in all our services
- Service
- Trust
- Effectiveness

## How does AFCD create unique value?”

- Specific education to have supervisors perform their responsibilities to provide services and protect natural resources in their district
- Collective Voice for Florida Conservation Districts
- To work with agriculture industry to maintain food supply for nation

## Goals Grid

<p><b>Achieve</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Better communication</li> <li>▪ More participation</li> <li>▪ Educate</li> <li>▪ Enrich lives</li> <li>▪ Become more visible</li> </ul>	<p><b>Avoid</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Miscommunication</li> <li>▪ Irrelevant</li> <li>▪ Duplication of efforts</li> </ul>
<p><b>Preserve</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Funding sources</li> <li>▪ Natural resources</li> <li>▪ Florida's rich agriculture heritage</li> <li>▪ Conservation efforts</li> <li>▪ Partnerships</li> </ul>	<p><b>Eliminate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conservation &amp; Environmental abuse</li> <li>▪ Duplication of efforts</li> <li>▪ Distractions</li> <li>▪ Dissention</li> </ul>

**Use of Goals Grid**

- Use to determine what we address in meetings and work
- Help us focus our work
- Help with our goals & priorities

**'Lines of Business' of AFCD**

- Policy & Legislative Advocacy
- Information & Training for Districts
- Outreach, Education, & Events
- Partner Relations & Services
- AFCD Operations & Funding

**Measures of Success, Measurable Goals, Early Actions**

**Policy & Legislative Advocacy**

Measures of Success

- Produce / secure document to share with districts before & after legislative session highlighting bills and policies effecting Conservation in Florida
- Funding level for SWCDs
- Items AFCD advocated for are passed, enacted, or policy change

Measurable Goals

- Continuously protect vital program funding to accomplish conservation efforts throughout Florida and the nation
- Ongoing, partner on Farm Day at Capital activities
- By Dec 2020, AFCD will have dealt with the threat of eliminating Conservation Districts in Florida

Early Actions (next few months)

- Take the employee association survey results and develop a communication to show legislators the value of districts and work they doing (before and during session)
- Get a group of supervisors organized to meet with key legislators before and after Farm Day regarding key proposed legislation (advocacy not lobbying)
- Partner with Farm Bureau & Forestry Association to use some legislative update materials for update materials for districts
- Continue to meet and work with FDACS leaders on key legislation, policies and on-going work

**Information & Training for Districts**

Measures of Success

- Training sessions held and well attended
- New supervisors trained
- Attendance at meetings and events
- Email & website traffic & content

#### Measurable Goals

- Continue the training for District Supervisors on roles & responsibilities, ethics, effective ways for reaching out to agriculture organizations, reaching out to elected officials, policy development, partner relationships – all new Supervisors receive training within one year
- By July 2021, AFCD will have an improved outreach and communication system implemented with Districts, and people acting for the association (contacts by AFCD board members to districts, website, talking points, policy positions)
- By July 2022 individual Supervisors all know their role, responsibilities as an elected officials, helping them understand relationships with NRCS, State Conservation Agency, Extension and related working knowledge of natural resources
- By July 2022 AFCD will be assisting districts with volunteer programs

#### Early Actions (next few months)

- Work hard to develop a tremendous 2020 annual meeting for education and entertainment (September 2020)
- On-line training developed for Florida supervisors (Examples - Georgia, Utah, Washington State, Oklahoma)

### **Outreach, Education, & Events**

#### Measures of Success

- How many districts doing outreach activities and related impact
- Participation in Speech, Poster, Photo contests
- Attendance at meetings and events
- Website traffic & content

#### Measurable Goals

- Continue to help children to understand the importance of reducing/eliminating runoff into our waterways, clean water through AFCD speech contest, poster contest, photo contest
- By September 2020 a system implemented for assisting districts with public outreach and education activities and combining districts accomplishments into statewide reports, and talking points of natural resource work being done for key audiences...outreach system with statewide information and messaging (eg working with Local Work Groups)

#### Early Actions (next few months)

- Begin work with NACD on hosting 2022 Annual Meeting and can showcase the work of districts in Florida
- AFCD speech contest, poster contest, photo contest
- Develop the system for assisting districts with public outreach and education activities and combining districts accomplishments into statewide reports

**Partner Relations & Services**

Measures of Success

- Contracts | agreements with partners with demonstrated collaboration
- Grant deliverables completed
- Repetition and continuing of contracts | agreements(confidence)

Measurable Goals

- By September 2020 assist districts with Local Work Group activities
- By Dec 2020, work with District Employees Association to utilize information gathered in the survey about what districts do and vital role they have with partners
- By July 2023 AFCD will become more visible by fostering and developing a relationships with other associations to promote industry and commerce (eg Citrus Association, Fish and Wildlife, Cattlemen, Farm Bureau, Forestry, Water Management Districts, and other) – let associations know the value added for AFCD

Early Actions (next few months)

- Finalize the contract revisions with FDACS (deliverables)
- Complete the NRCS agreements (scope of work, deliverables and budget)
- Develop a uniform, boiler plate Local Work Group agenda to be used in 67 counties working with Extension Service
- Work with District Employees Association on reporting of information gathered in their recent survey and sharing with other districts

**AFCD Operations & Funding**

Measures of Success

- Sources and diversity of funding (not dependent on single source)
- Staff workload and accomplishments
- Funding in budget
- Board members with knowledge of their role and responsibilities

Measurable Goals

- By Dec 2020, AFCD will have a measure of financial stability through agreements, grants, dues structure, other...diversified revenue stream
- By Dec 2020 AFCD officers and directors all know their role and responsibilities
- By Dec 2021 AFCD will determine what they will be known for and perform that
- By January 2022 expand the number of areas in state from 4 to 6 areas so people did not have as far
- By July 2022, AFCD will double their delivery capacity by increasing staffing to meet the demand on the association
- By July 2023 AFCD will have 75% of county districts active and participating in AFCD

Early Actions (next few months)

- Contracts completed NDACS and NRCS
- Officers and Directors training on role and responsibilities for AFCD
- Complete AFCD bylaw revisions

**Action Register** (template)

**Line of Business:**

Action	Timeline	Lead Person

**Things that AFCD should not do any longer**

- None Offered

**AFCD Innovations**

- More outside the box thinking for ways to get things done
- New approach to area meetings to get more participation
- AFCD bylaw revisions completed

**General Discussion & Next Steps**

- Association Structure – area vice presidents need filled and increase level of participation...work through chairs to nominate 3 good candidates for area position...make sure you have a current job position.
- Recruiting good supervisor candidates to run...commodity and natural resource organizations



# Appendix A

## Registration Responses & Notes

### Association of Florida Conservation Districts District Input for AFCD Strategic Planning

July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 – 6:00 pm (Eastern)  
(16 Responses)

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#### Webinar Purpose:

Your Association of Florida Conservation Districts Officers, Board Members and Staff are developing a new Strategic Plan for the association. Part of the planning process includes membership input from each Florida Conservation District and partner leaders regarding future accomplishments, issues to address and your recommendations for the AFCD. The registration process and webinar are developed to collect your input on AFCD future direction. AFCD Board Members, Officers and Staff are looking forward to your participation!

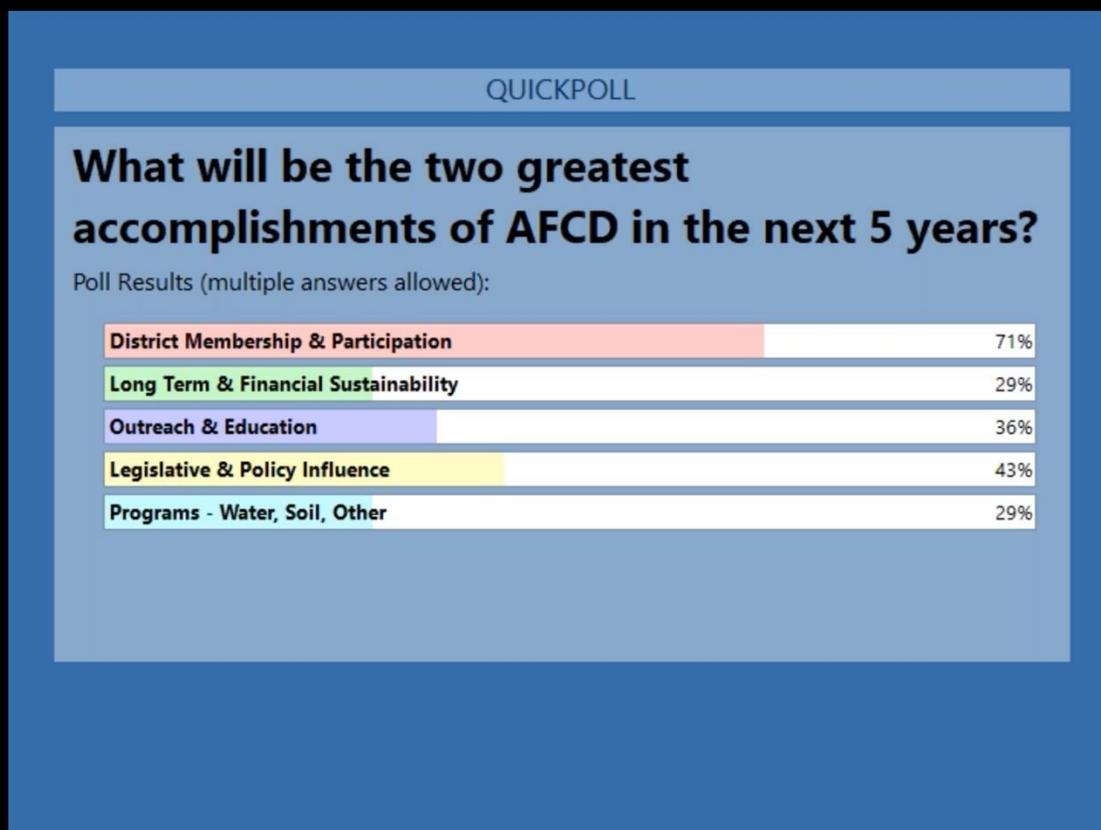
#### What will be the greatest accomplishment of AFCD in the next 5 years? Format “By what (date) will AFCD (accomplish)?”

- By December 31, 2020 AFCD will accomplish 50% participation from all Florida Counties.
- To get more supervisors involved in AFCD and show that it has a purpose.
- By December 2025, AFCD will secure membership in 75% of the counties.
- By 2025, AFCD will have 80% of Districts participating and will assist them to be more effective in providing assistance and...
- For the AFCD to understand who they are and what they as their own association can do to help strengthen Florida's SWCD's
- Successful outreach, enhanced opportunities for SWCD
- Financial independence
- Self-funded
- Funding for long term sustainability of the organization and to provide enriched serves to the local districts.
- To protect vital program funding to accomplish conservation efforts throughout Florida and the nation
- Continue to educate the public and students in Marion County about the importance of soil and water conservation.
- By 2025 Help children to understand the importance of reducing/eliminating runoff into our waterways, clean water.
- Reduce the amount of water drawn from Florida's Aquifer - Ongoing
- Web Page among others
- Assist SWCD's with group SWCD Directors and Officers Liability Insurance, and possibly group medical insurance, SWCD credit card
- By
- Not sure at this time.
- TBD

#### Notes from Webinar:

- Make sure the membership is aware for what AFCD is doing
- Get input from the member districts on what is needed and report back on what was
- When joining AFCD...new got attention, then faded away
- Annual or semiannual visit to the counties – may be done by Zoom or conference call
- Really lead us and be their for us when we ask for assistance
- More training when we have ideas
- Share information with us
- Raise the level of relevance and importance of conservation in Florida
- Noting the recent budget issues – 18 pages of defunded budget in Florida

- Get public to understand the importance of conservation and the role they play...must be engaged
- Do the job we need to do to engage with other groups – commodity groups as an example...note the survey by district employees that will be available to AFCD for outreach
- Form a solid bond between FCDEA and AFCD
- Training for supervisors on what employees do, standards or policies for supervisors via zoom annually or semiannually or quarterly
- Put together our strategic plan focused on our members and more districts involved and provide the services the members need
- Do not have to get in car and travel to get input from our districts
- Funding and defunding programs...make sure the programs that we still have are shining stars
- AFCD being there for us...liaison for all the districts...a lot of us are one staff districts needing assistance...direct constituents to AFCD on statewide issues
- Show what districts get from AFCD dues and membership “our voice” throughout the state and national level”
- Executive Director work on forecasting and seeing things that are coming that effect districts

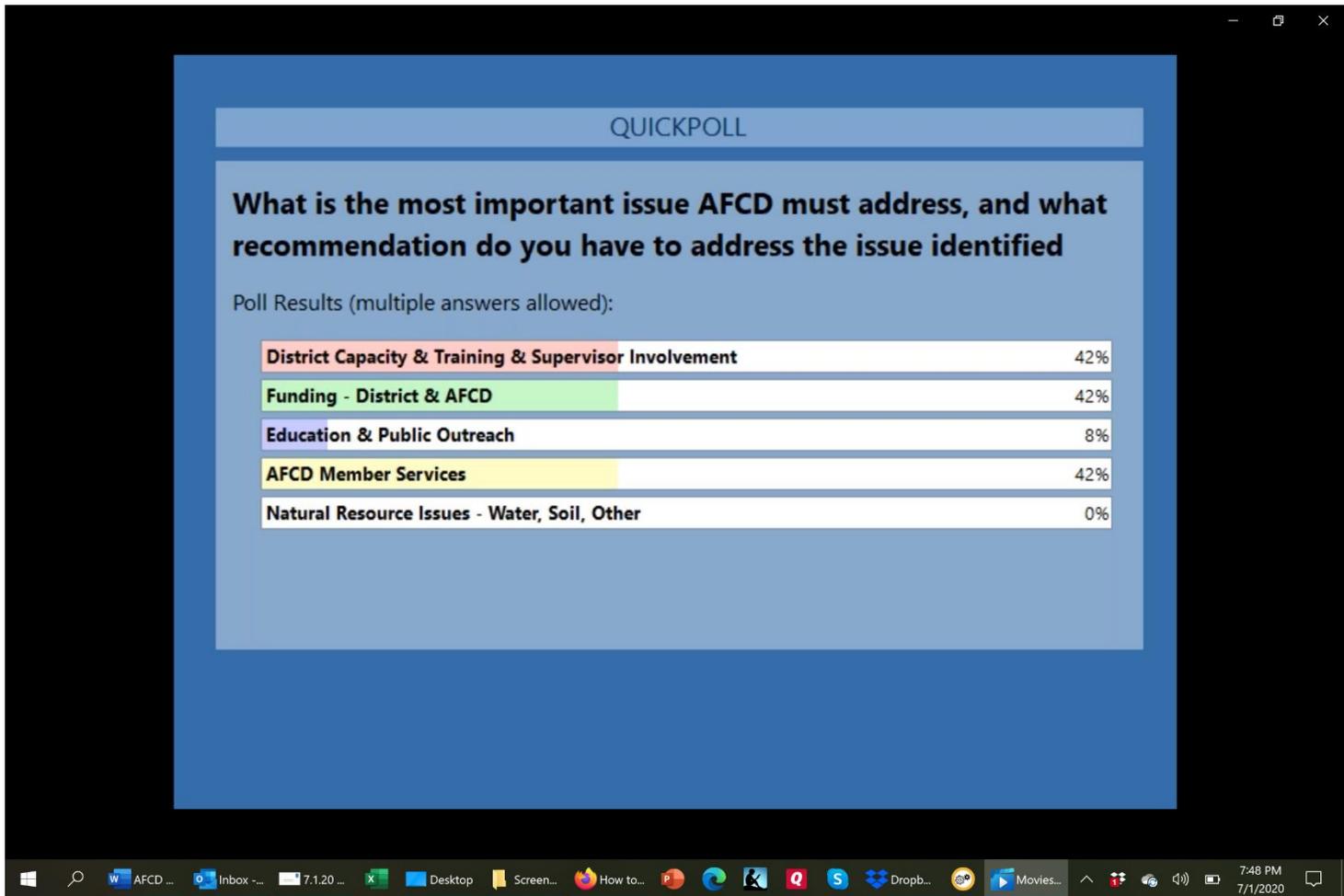


## **What is the most important issue AFCD must address, and what recommendation do you have to address the issue identified?**

- AFCD needs to rid the thought from members that they do not provide vital services.
- Regaining the trust of the people they serve.
- For the AFCD to understand who they are and what they are capable of doing on their own.
- Transparency, minutes should be taken since all Boards must answer to the constituents on things that they decide at meetings
- Survival and effectiveness of Districts. Somehow get better people elected to these boards
- Generate Fla SWCD's shared information list, training sessions of all sorts, and guidance when SWCD's look to AFCD for help.
- Engaging the districts and retaining Supervisors
- Active participation among Supervisors
- Funding for local conservation districts so they can meet unfunded mandates.
- Seek multiple sources of funding that will enhance the funding from the State. Local and National funding can support goals.
- Outreach & Education of the General Public of the function of the SWCD and the importance of these organizations.
- Districts need to continue to educate the public about the importance of water quality and BMPs for the producers.
- AFCD/Districts must undertake an effort to engage public officials/public on role of Districts to Conservation success.
- Limit the destruction of wetlands to minimize flooding resulting from storms. Revamp the mitigation system.
- Over population in many areas of Florida.
- TBD & Not sure

### Notes from Webinar:

- See more involvement in community...getting younger generation involved to take over
- Be transparent as an association...everyone needs to know what makes them essential...foundation has to good...involvement of supervisors and employees
- Major issue is community involvement...created Hillsboro Conservation Challenge...about 100 conservation projects in 3 weeks...had supervisor seats sought out...visibility in urban, ag, youth education...fairs and other community events...publish a 24 page tabloid distributed to 60,000 citizens...belong to organizations
- Outreach and make sure people know who we are...publicize in local media...every district probably needs a person
- Elected officials invited to participate in events, workshops, etc
- Being visible...like the thinking of mitigation issue
- Water wars between Florida and Georgia
- Our county has a part time person that works for the board, project person...hard to get information out...Wendy taking on my position
- Needing to get information out to our county
- Getting information to public and show what we are doing in conservation districts
- AFCD work with employee association on outreach programs
- Differentiate CDs from Extension...not a duplicate of services and information
- Example – waiver on sales tax...property appraiser for green belted properties...rebate on sales tax...only direct

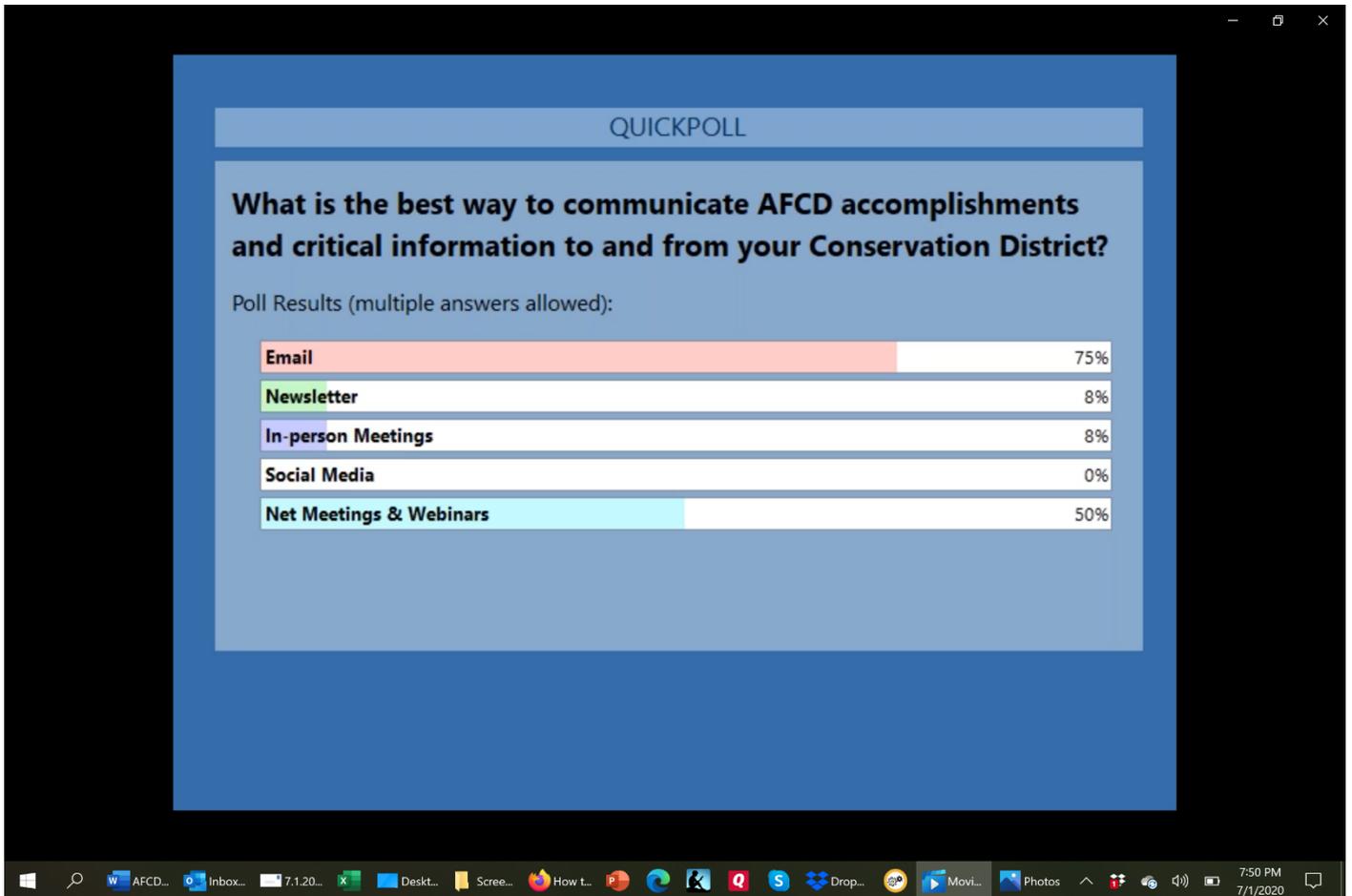


**What is the best way to communicate AFCD accomplishments and critical information to and from your Conservation District?**

- by email
- Email at swcd.madison@outlook.com
- Email
- Probably email
- Email
- Email, conference calls/Zoom
- Email to all supervisors
- Emails, calls, communicating through the District Employees who have District Employees.
- Weekly email updates and monthly email newsletters which highlight district and state success stories that can be duplicated.
- Newsletters, face to face meetings, word of mouth
- Electronically via email blasts, newsletters, Facebook page, etc.
- Email
- Having a newsletter, quarterly, combining all districts, educating them about the accomplishments that each district has done.
- Get the community involved and working with them in their neighborhoods. Start small.
- AFCD web site and develop a monthly newsletter
- Use of all media platforms, plus regular engagement activities
- Annual Report, email, website, e-newsletter (quarterly)

Notes from Webinar:

- Ways to communicate we have not done before...Zoom, webinars, other than in-person.
- Overreaching...conservation as everybody's business...sell to public officials
- Thank AFCD for having employees give input to strategic plan (xx)
- Brainstorming on funding
- Using Zoom and other media for communication...is fundamental to be successful at association
- Overwhelming...take first bite...utilize all the 327 supervisors and employees as the association...share among each...what talents could be used in the system
- Look forward to working with everyone
- Glad for the communication and better understanding
- Proud to be a part of this group



Districts Registered & Responding (11 of 57)

- Clay Soil and Water Conservation District
- Seminole Soil and Water Conservation xx
- Gadsden County Soil & Water Conservation District xx
- Lake SWCD
- Highlands Soil & Water Cons. District
- Marion Soil and Water Conservation District xx
- South Dade Soil & Water Conservation District
- Sarasota Soil & Water Conservation District (SSWCD)
- Manatee River Soil and Water Conservation District (MRSWCD)
- Madison Soil & Water Conservation District
- Hillsborough Soil and Water Conservation District
- Okeechobee SWCD
- AFCD
- NACD