



HARDEE
SOIL & WATER

CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Yours for Life

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Hardee Soil and Water Conservation District

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Mission Statement:

To provide leadership with the objective to help people conserve, improve, and sustain the natural resources and environment of Hardee County, Florida.

Board of Supervisors

Chairman – Charles Matheny
Vice-chairman – Larry Davis
Treasurer – Roy Petteway
Supervisor – Steve Johnson
Supervisor – Cindy Weinstein

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Introduction

The Hardee Soil and Water Conservation District was organized in 1944 as a Governmental Subdivision of the State of Florida, Governed by Florida Statutes, Chapter 582, enacted in 1937, to allow local Districts to develop and carry out a program of conservation for Florida's soil and water resources.

The Conservation District was established by local initiative. It is governed by five supervisors elected at the General Primary Election, who serve without pay. The District is much more than a governmental entity: civic minded individuals direct it with local grass roots interest in resource conservation.

Agriculture plays a major role in Hardee County's Economy. The District's agricultural program currently includes the conservation planning and application, efficient irrigation water management, animal waste management, wildlife management, and soil erosion control.

Through the years, the District has also taken an active interest in natural resource planning and environmental issues other than agriculture, but very important to an urbanizing Hardee County, such as:

1. Soil Survey use and application in land use planning.
2. Wetland identification and use.
3. Environmental education.
4. Development of soil potentials and their application for specific land uses.
5. Public information through newsletter, presentations, workshops and media.

The District works very closely with the Hardee Board of County Commissioners. They are one of the main sources of funding for the District. We also work with local, state, and Federal Governments as well as other agencies to produce and overall inner relationship to further our goals. The district has a staff two full time employees. Our office is located behind the library at 316 North 7th Avenue, Suite 101. We are in the USDA office.

A close working relationship exists between the district and the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Through a formal Memorandum of Understanding, the NRCS staffs a District Conservationist who provides local guidance and assistance for NRCS programs and provides additional technical staff.

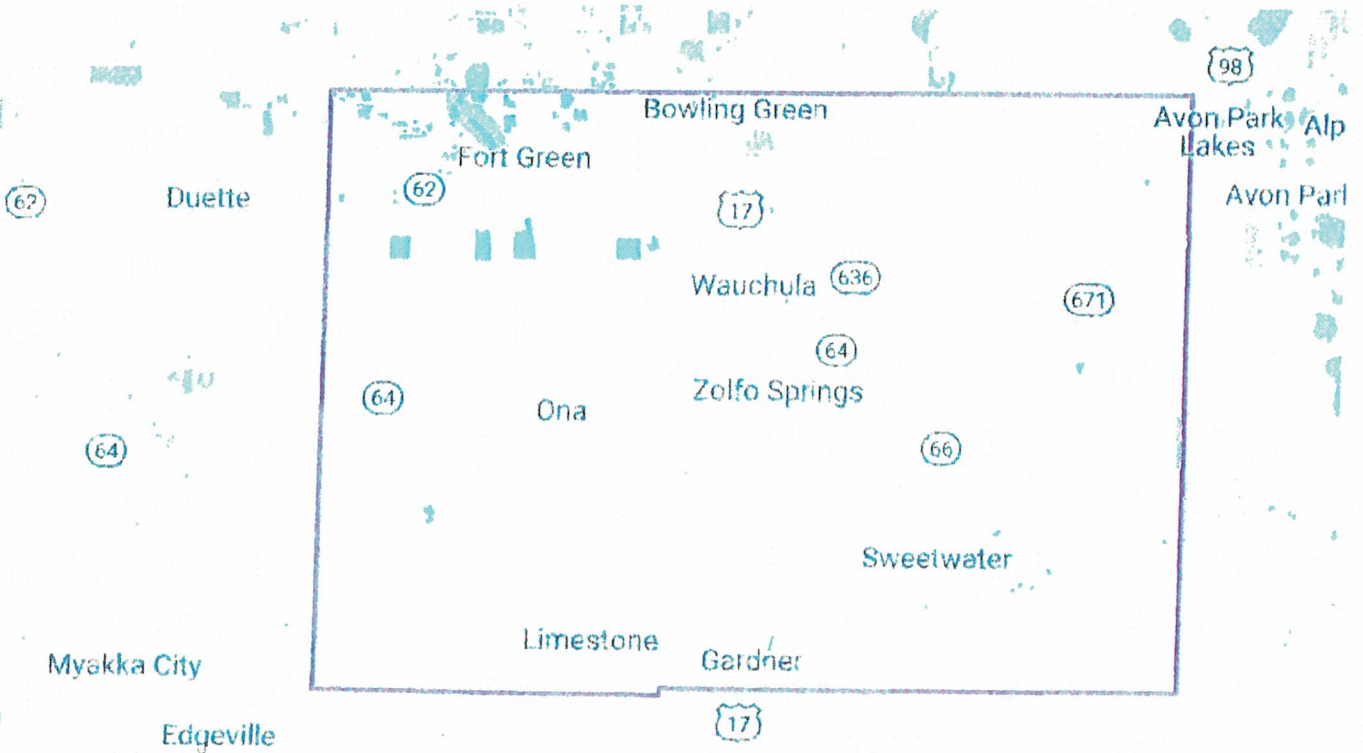
The District Supervisors have set forth the following long-range objectives based on the total soil and water needs of the county. The objectives are based upon the desire to make Hardee County a better place in which to live, to work and to enjoy life.

DESCRIPTION

The Hardee Soil and Water Conservation District includes all of Hardee County in Florida.

It is bounded on the North by Polk County; on the East by Highlands County;
on the South by DeSoto County and on the West by Manatee County.

The District comprises 630 square miles or 403,200 acres.



Soil and Water Conservation Needs

Projected population growth in Hardee County will result in tremendous pressures on the land and water resources. The Hardee Soil and Water Conservation District will continue to emphasize the careful use of the soil and water resources through conservation planning and application. Meeting the conservation needs of Hardee County will require solutions which are economically, socially, and environmentally feasible.

We will continue to encourage the public to participate in identifying conservation needs as more participation will be needed to implement this plan and a well balanced soil and water conservation program.

Each year, many acres of agricultural land are converted to other non-agricultural uses. The majority of this has come from unimproved rangeland and woodland. However, there is a need to encourage the protection and preservation of valuable and unique farmlands in the district. It is important that attention is given to agricultural producers to conserve and protect soil and water resources while encouraging high levels of crop production. Emphasis will be placed on the importance of local agriculture to the economy of Hardee County and the State of Florida.

A. Water Quality and Quantity

1. Irrigation/Water management

The efficient use of irrigation water will be promoted within the District. Irrigation system reorganization to achieve higher efficiency, resources recovery and reuse, and irrigation water management will be needed to conserve valuable water.

2. Water Control Systems

Improvements of existing agriculture drainage systems are needed to promote increased crop production. They are also necessary to meet surface water control standards established by regulatory agencies. Provisions must also be made for the protection of wetlands within the design of water control systems.

Agricultural Land and Water Resources

Goal Number 1: Keep soil erosion losses and off-site sediment damage at low levels in Hardee County.

- Strategy:
- A. Support the continued application of soil conserving practices on Hardee County's agricultural land.
 - B. Help implements TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) EPA Clean Water Act) program requirements.
 - C. Participate in plant materials center field testing program with the soil conservation service.

Goal Number 2: Improve delivery of technical and financial assistance programs to Hardee County farmers.

- Strategy:
- A. Continue to support Hardee County Cooperative Extension Service, Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and other State and Local Agencies which provide direct services to Hardee County farmers. Encourage adequate staffing and funding for the above.
 - B. Working with local farmers to obtain state permitting, and land conservation technical assistance.

Goal Number 3: Conserve Irrigation Water.

- Strategy:
- A. Encourage water conservation by emphasizing low volume emitter irrigation systems for citrus, closed practical and provided assistance in developing an irrigation water management plan conveyance trickle systems for pasture and row crops where for each irrigation system.
 - B. Working to promote MI labs for improvement of irrigation efficiencies.

Goal Number 4: Improve Water Quality

- Strategy:
- A. Work with landowners to improve water quality through conservation planning, proper natural resources management, and BMP implementation through non-regulatory, incentive-based programs.

- B. Work with the FOACS, WMDS, adjacent SWCD's, and other to implement the TMDL (EPA-Clean Water Act) water quality improvement program on public and privately owned lands in Hardee County.

Goal Number 5: Orderly Development

Strategy

- A. Review impact statements and development plans on projects effecting the resource base or environment of the Hardee District and respond appropriately.
- B. To improve quantity and quality of the forages produced on pasture and rangeland, while practicing soil and water conservation measures. Assisting ranchers with forage and rangeland improvements, with increased caring campasitet improve wildlife habitat.
- C. Promote the installation, operation, and maintenance of animal waste management systems as needed to reduce non-point source pollution on local dairy, beef, swine, and poultry producing operations.
- D. Wildlife values through habitat management need to be retained and improved on agriculture lands. Wetlands will be protected as they provide an important component of wildlife habitat. The endangered and threatened species of Hardee County will be protected as to enhance habitat for their survival.
- E. Soil erosion resulting from wind and water forces shall be Minimized for increased crop production and problems Associated with soil erosion, such as sedimentation and water pollution.
- F. The Hardee SWCD will assist state agencies in the management of state owned property through conservation planning, implementation, and management services.

Goal Number 6: Continue to strongly emphasize the need to use the Hardee County soil survey in land use planning and developing.

Strategy:

- A. Formally participate in the county subdivision and site plan review process.

Goal Number 7: Control soil erosion and offsite sediment damages from land development activities in Hardee County.

- Strategy:
- A. Explore need for Hardee County soil erosion and sediment control ordinance. Implement if needed.
 - B. Work with plant materials center field trails on eroding construction sites when appropriate.

Goal Number 8: Conservation education and information

- Strategy:
- A. Inform the public of soil and water conservation district activities and concerns with news articles and other available means.
 - B. Promote conservation education in the schools.
 - C. Sponsor contests, tours, and other activities that promote conservation.

Goal Number 9: Reclamation of mined land

- Strategy:
- A. Cooperate with the phosphate industry and governmental agencies in developing and implementing a program of reclamation of mine lands in accordance with county regulations.

Goal Number 10: Support programs aimed at conserving and increasing Hardee County's water resources.

- Strategy:
- A. Reinforce Southwest Florida Water Management District and in the water conservation aspects of their programs.

Goal Number 11: Continue district operations planning

- Strategy:
- A. Conduct annual, or as needed, local working group meetings to outline district priorities and plans regarding local conservation needs. Involve public agencies, private organizations, and the general public in these planning efforts.

Adoption

Recognizing the Hardee Soil and Water Conservation District as a governmental subdivision of the State of Florida, a body corporate and politic, organized in accordance with the provisions of the Florida Soil Conservation Districts Act of 1937, Chapter 18144, as amended by the Act of 1939, Chapter 19473, and as amended by the Act of 1953, Chapter 28094, for the purpose, with the power, and subject to the restriction set forth therein, the supervisors hereby adopt this program.

Hardee Soil and Water Conservation District Adopted Board of Supervisors

PRINT NAME	SIGNATURE	POSITION
Charles Matheny		Chairman
Larry Davis		Vice-Chairman
Roy Petteway		Treasurer
Steve Johnson		Supervisor
Cindy Weinstein		Supervisor