

# Conservation Considered

Indian River Soil and Water Conservation District's "NEWSLETTER"

\* 6th Edition \*



November 2006

Signup continues for the **Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)** and the **Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP)**, USDA cost-share programs. Applications received by December 15, 2006 will be grouped for 2007 funding. Participants may signup at any time during the year.

Eligibility is extended to persons who are engaged in agricultural production. Eligible land for EQIP & WHIP includes cropland, range land, pasture, forestland and other farm or ranch lands used for agricultural purposes. All EQIP & WHIP activities must be carried out according to a conservation plan. The programs offer 1 to 10 year contracts that provide up to 75% cost sharing for current agricultural producers and 90% for new producers.

The following are examples of best management practices that may be eligible for **cost sharing through EQIP**: artesian well decommissioning, flash board riser water control structure, micro-irrigation system, cross fencing, and livestock watering facility.

The following are examples of best management practices that may be eligible for **cost sharing through WHIP**: Wildlife Upland Habitat Mgt, Wildlife Wetland Habitat Mgt, Prescribed Burning, and Conservation Buffers.

**Contact our office or the USDA-Farm Services Agency office to see if you qualify, for more details about eligible conservation practices, and to apply during the signup period.**

## Cost Share Programs for Best Management Practices

The Indian River Soil and Water Conservation District (IRSWCD) Supervisors and Staff in co-operation with Indian River County and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) Office of Agricultural Water Policy (OAWP) have been assisting the agricultural growers of Indian River County in implementing Best Management Practices (BMPs) throughout 2006. These practices are essential in solving and managing our natural resources. Through FDACS the District has provided area citrus growers the opportunity to implement BMP's through a 1 year \$75,000 cost-share program in 2006. Additional BMP funding may be available in 2007 for sod, nursery, vegetable and cow/calf as well as citrus.

**Interested citrus growers should contact the district office to learn how to qualify and apply for this program. Eligible practices are: aquatic weed barrier, chemigation infrastructure, conversion to flashboard riser water control structure, conversion to low volume irrigation, grade stabilization, on-site water retention/detention, permanent agrichemical mixing facility, portable agrichemical mixing station. Precision application equipment, and water table observation well.**

Ralph & Sean Sexton – Treasure Hammock Ranch  
Proclaimed Cooperator of the Year for 2006 by the Indian River Soil and Water Conservation District

On September 11, 2006 the Indian River Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors selected Ralph and Sean Sexton and Treasure Hammock Ranch as Cooperator of the Year. Treasure Hammock Ranch has been a cooperator since 1957. Over the years they have worked with several SWCD and NRCS staff to maintain and improve the soil, water, air, plants and animals while living and raising families on their property. The 600+ acre property can produce enough meat each year to feed 3,000 people, according to Ralph in a recent local newspaper story. The Sextons are currently attempting to place the ranch into a **permanent agricultural easement**. If successful this would be the first property in Indian River County to achieve this status. This demonstrates the ultimate commitment to conservation.

## Conservation Education

The District sponsors a variety of educational programs for the students of Indian River County.

Diane McCabe, Earth Team Volunteer, provided 48 Thank -A-Farmer, Backyard Conservation, and Agriculture in the Classroom programs to over 3,375 students in fiscal year 2006. She also gave 10 programs to local Boy Scout and Girl Scout Troops.

She is the heart of the SWCD's conservation education program.



The **Indian River Lagoon Envirothon** is a multi-county competition for high school students. Teams are provided with a hands on test in five disciplines (soil, water, wildlife, forestry and the Indian River Lagoon). Winning teams may compete at the state and national level.

This year the Vero Beach High School team, although they were a person short, finished first in Aquatics and fifth overall in the State competition in the Silver River State Park in Ocala. Team members were: Cole Sullivan, Ben Weisman, Nick Rocha and Josh Schmidt. The same team won the 4-H State Land judging competition the previous day in Levy Countv.



## POSTER CONTEST

**“Conservation’s Power”** is the topic for this year.

The winners are eligible to compete in the state and then the national contest if they win at the state level.

The Poster contest is open to all Indian River County students in grades K through 12.

Entries will be divided into five categories: K-1, 2-3, 4-6, 7-9 and 10-12 grades. Prizes will be awarded for first, second and third place finishers.

Deadline for entries is November 8, 2006

The Indian River Soil and Water Conservation District is sponsoring this local poster contest under the guidelines of The National Association of Conservation Districts.



## POETRY CONTEST

The Poetry Contest is being offered to Indian River County students in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades.

The Poetry Contest is designed to increase grade 3 - 4 students' awareness of the need to conserve all of our natural resources.

Prizes will be awarded for first, second and third place finishers.

Deadline for poem entries is January 26, 2007.

“A true conservationist is a man who knows that the world is not given by his fathers but borrowed from his children.

-Audubon

## **Water Requirements/Savings**

Crown Flood	930,296 gallons/acre/year
Micro Irrigation	275,616 gallons/acre/year
Water Savings	654,680 gallons/acre/year

## 2007 Indian River Soil and Water Conservation District Meetings

The Indian River Soil & Water Conservation District meetings will be held the second Monday of each month. The meetings will be held at 1:00 PM in Conference Room A of the Indian River County Administration Building, 1840 25<sup>th</sup> Street, Vero Beach, FL.

The dates are as follows:

January	8 <sup>th</sup>	May	14 <sup>th</sup>	September	10 <sup>th</sup>
February	12 <sup>th</sup>	June	11 <sup>th</sup>	October	8 <sup>th</sup>
March	12 <sup>th</sup>	July	9 <sup>th</sup>	November	12 <sup>th</sup>
April	9 <sup>th</sup>	August	13 <sup>th</sup>	December	10 <sup>th</sup>

### **Soil Surveys are now available on the Web!!**

The United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service has completed The Web Soil Survey (WSS).

The WSS provides agricultural producers, agencies, Technical Service Providers, and others electronic access to relevant soil and related information needed to make land-use and management decisions.

This web address for this information is:  
<http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov>

### Are you Planning on Purchasing Property/ Building?

With the owner's permission, we can do on site evaluations of the property. Here are some of the questions we can help you answer.

- ✓ What soil types are on this property?
- ✓ How can I locate this property on a soils or wetland map?
- ✓ Where is the best location for structures?
- ✓ Does this land have adequate drainage?
- ✓ Is this property located in a flood zone?

**The service is free of charge to the community. If we can assist you, please call or come by.**

### **USDA 2002 Farm Bill Programs**

- ❖ **EQIP** – The Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) has changed for the **current sign up which ends December 15, 2006**. Eligibility is extended to persons who are engaged in agricultural production. Eligible land for EQIP includes cropland (including citrus), rangeland, pasture, forestland and other farm or ranch lands used for agricultural purposes. All EQIP activities must be carried out according to a conservation plan. EQIP offers 1 to 10 year contracts that provide up to 75% cost-sharing for current ag producers and 90% for new ag producers. The maximum amount an ag-land owner may obtain for the 6 year life of the US Farm Bill is \$450,000. Approved contracts can provide cost sharing for conservation practices such as: well decommissioning, micro-irrigation system installation, structure for water control, livestock watering facility, noxious and invasive plant control, among others. Contact the SWCD office for more information.
- ❖ **WHIP**- The Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) provides financial incentives to develop habitat for fish and wildlife on private lands. Participants agree to implement a wildlife habitat development plan and USDA agrees to provide cost-share assistance for the implementation of wildlife habitat development practices
- ❖ **WRP**- The Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) is a voluntary program to restore and protect wetlands on private property. Participants enter into a conservation easement and/or enter into a cost-share restoration agreement with the USDA to restore and protect wetlands. The landowner voluntarily limits future use of the land, yet retains private ownership. An ag-land owner may sign up any time during the year.

The Indian River Soil and Water Conservation District provides services to individuals and others without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age and disability.

## FARMERS' TAX GUIDE:

IRS Publication 225 Cat. No. 11049L: If you are in the business of farming on property in the U.S.A., you can choose to deduct your expenses for soil or water conservation, or for the prevention of land erosion of land used in farming. Otherwise, these are capital expenses that must be added to the basis of the land. The deduction cannot be more than 25% of your gross income from farming. For more information, obtain a copy of IRS Pub. 225, Farmer's Tax Guide at your local library or on the Internet at [www.irs.com](http://www.irs.com)

## ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

- ◆ On-site soil investigations
- ◆ Excavated pond designs
- ◆ Conservation planning assistance for agricultural property, (a free service)
- ◆ Irrigation and drainage designs that improve water quality or quantity
- ◆ Free consultation of, and/or copies of the Indian River County Soil Survey
- ◆ Historical aerials

The Indian River Soil & Water Conservation District office has a reference library of Soil Surveys of 48 Florida Counties available.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR 2006-2007

### 2006:

- Nov 8:** Poster contest deadline  
**Nov 13:** Poster contest judging  
**Nov 29-30:** National Cooperative Conservation Leadership Conference (TN)

### 2007:

- Jan 26:** Poetry contest deadline  
**Feb 4-8:** NACD Annual Meeting (CA)  
**Feb 12:** Poetry contest judging  
**Mar 16:** Literacy Day  
**Apr 2:** Public speaking contest deadline  
**Apr 9:** Public speaking contest judging  
**Apr 14:** Earth Day Celebration  
**Apr 26:** Arbor Day  
**July 26-31:** National Envirothon (MD)  
**July 29-30:** NACD SE Region Mtg (VA)

Visit the web-site at <http://fl.nacdnet.org/indianriver/> to learn about our services, programs, and activities. You may, also, come by our office or phone for more information and/or a soil survey.

### SUPERVISORS

David Gunter, **Chairman** - Robert Adair, **Vice Chair** - Marvin Carter, **Supervisor**  
Bobby Lindsey, **Supervisor** - Lex Kromhout, **Treasurer**

### DISTRICT STAFF

Mark Pomar, **Conservation District Coordinator** - Brenda Davis, **Staff Assistant**

### NRCS STAFF

Kay Nickel, **District Conservationist** - Elwood Holzworth - **Conservation Technician**  
Diane McCabe - **Earth Team Volunteer** - Kevin Sullivan - **Soil Scientist**

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