

MARION SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
2012-2017
LONG RANGE PLAN

In 1937, the Florida Legislature enacted the Soil and Water Conservation Law, Florida Statute, Ch. 582, which authorizes the creation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Districts were organized for the purpose of developing and carrying out a program of conservation of the state's soil, water, and related natural resources. There are currently 57 Soil and Water Conservation Districts in the State of Florida.

The Ocklawaha Soil Conservation District was created on December 13, 1941 by landowner petition and included part of Sumter County. The name of the District was changed on April 22, 1947, to Marion Soil Conservation District. In 1969 the Florida Legislature amended Chapter 582 stating that all districts would be known as Soil and Water Conservation Districts, thus the present name of Marion Soil and Water Conservation District.

The United State Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service provides technical assistance to land users in cooperation and oversight from the Soil and Water Conservation Districts. The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Office of Agriculture and Water Policy assist's the Districts in all matters relating to the requirements of the statute and other administrative duties. The District is under the control of five (5) elected supervisors. The office of supervisor is a non-paid, non-partisan office, with each supervisor representing the entire County.

The Marion Soil and Water Conservation supervisors meet monthly, the second Tuesday at 9:00 AM, at the USDA Service Center in Ocala. The meetings are open to the public.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Marion Soil and Water Conservation District (Marion SWCD) is to provide leadership in the conservation of the County's soil, water and related natural resources, through local involvement and community education.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES NOT LIMITED TO:

- Conduct surveys, investigation, research, and publish results
- Conduct demonstration and presentation of projects
- Carry out engineering operations, cultivation practices, and control measures

- Cooperate, enter into agreements and furnish financial or other aid to any agency, owner, or occupier of land when applicable
- Make equipment and materials available
- Assist in developing Comprehensive Plans

LONG RANGE PRIORITIES

NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION & PROTECTION

- I. Water Resource Protection
 - a. Water Conservation
 - b. Water Quality
- II. Community Outreach and Education
 - a. Community Outreach
 - i. Farmland Preservation Day
 - ii. Springs Festival
 - iii. Summer Camp Programs
 - iv. School Presentations
 - v. Community Group Presentations
 - vi. Springs Working Groups
 - b. Youth Conservation Education Programs
 - i. Poster Contest
 - ii. Essay Contest
 - iii. Envirothon
 - iv. Land Judging
 - v. Conservation Landscape Tray
 - vi. Public Speaking Contest
 - c. Farms of Environmental Distinction Program

LONG RANGE GOALS

NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION & PROTECTION

- I. Water Resource Protection
 - a. Water Conservation – continue to promote water conservation
 - i. Promote participation in USDA, NRCS programs (WHIP, EQIP, CSP, etc); making landowners aware of deadlines and application process
 - ii. Educate the public on the Water Management District(s) water use policies
 - iii. Continue to promote planting native and providing free native trees through the Annual Arbor Day Native Tree Giveaway

- iv. Appoint a Comprehensive Land Use Plan Committee to establish a relationship and work with the County representatives on the County Comprehensive Plan
- v. Appoint a Consumptive Use Permit Committee to establish a relationship and work with local water management districts on consumptive use permitting – request a monthly list of CUP applications
- vi. Continue relationship and working with Florida Department of Environmental Protection as advisors for local land management reviews.
- b. Water Quality – establish water policy to address conservation within the County
 - i. Work with and educate the public about its water resources
 - 1. Conduct river clean-up utilizing local volunteer groups
 - 2. Provide soil testing kits to landowners
 - 3. Provide soil survey information
 - 4. Continue to promote composting through dissemination of literature and composting material at workshops, events, and presentations

II. Community Outreach and Education

- a. Continue to expand the six (6) existing youth conservation education programs
 - i. Develop PowerPoint presentation to target teachers, advisors, and community program leaders.
 - ii. Determine annual contest dates with careful review of school testing calendar
 - iii. Develop literature to distribute at local youth events and areas of youth gatherings
 - iv. Promote contests via email to teachers, advisors, and community program leaders, monthly and send reminders before deadlines
 - v. Make an annual presentation to the School Board
 - vi. Invite neighboring counties to participate in Envirothon and Land Judging Contests
- b. Continue to promote natural resource conservation to the community by providing demonstrations, setting up informational booths, and giving presentations at area festivals, events, community forums, and area working groups.
- c. Continue to provide Best Management Practice (BMP) education to land owners through the Farms of Environmental Distinction Program – expanding program to include all BMP manual compliance
 - i. Hold community workshops offering technical advice from BMP experts

- ii. Continue farm inspections to insure compliance with Florida Department of Ag Water Policy BMP manuals and encourage landowner to sign letter of intent
- iii. Identify natural resource concerns through farm inspections
 - 1. evaluate qualification in USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service programs (WHIP, EQIP, CSP, etc)
 - 2. assist landowner with application process if applicable
- iv. Provide input and technical support to local, state, and federal government working groups to identify local resource concerns
- v. Provide input and technical support to designing program to address local resource concerns

ADOPTION OF PLAN

The purpose of the Long Range Plan is to state Marion Soil and Water Conservation District’s priorities, objectives, and goals. Actions to achieve these goals will be listed by date and appointment of supervisor responsible for the work carried out. These actions will be reviewed routinely at regularly scheduled board meetings to evaluate the effectiveness of the actions. This plan is in effect through December 2017 and is not all inclusive and is subject to modification at any time by a majority vote of the Marion Soil and Water Conservation District Board. This document supersedes all earlier Long Range Plans. With this Plan, Marion Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors expects to have a major, positive, impact on land use and the conservation of natural resources in Marion County over the next five (5) years.

Adopted this 9th day of July, 2012 by majority vote;

MARION SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

Chairman, Dr. Thomas J. Lane

Richard McGinley, Vice Chair

Treasurer, Robert Walla

Secretary, Katherine Green

Supervisor, Robert Stenstream