



**Lake Soil & Water
Conservation District**

**Presentation for the
Lake County Board of County
Commissioners
February 11, 2014**

Board of Supervisors

- Elected five-member, nonpartisan board of supervisors, who volunteer their services.
- Non-taxing and non-regulatory special districts.



Seat 1
Melanie
Rose
Treasurer



Seat 2
Linda
Bystrak



Seat 3
Daniel
Osborn



Seat 4
Frank
Paulhamus
Vice Chairman



Seat 5
Betsy
Farner
Chairman



Lake Soil & Water Conservation District

VISION

Conserve and improve soil and water resources in Lake County for today and the future.

MISSION

To provide services for soil and water conservation, and proper utilization of natural resources, and to promote the continued use of land for agricultural purposes.



Association of Florida Conservation Districts

The History of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

- The dust storms of the 1930s was the effect causing soil and water conservation districts.
- Soil and water conservation a ***national policy and priority.***

- 1930s: agricultural damage, drought and windstorms, in the Plains states – the Dust Bowl.



- Modern day dust storm



Conservation District Services

- Connect private landowners with federal and local cost share programs;
- Teach conservation best management practices;
- Reach out to communities and schools to teach the value of natural resources and encourage conservation efforts;
- Assist communities and homeowners to plant trees and other land cover to hold soil in place, clean air, provide cover for wildlife and beautify neighborhoods;
- Help developers control soil erosion and protect water and air quality during construction;
- Serve as a liaison between landowners and regulatory agencies;
- Support Mobile Irrigation Labs (MILs) to facilitate water conservation in agricultural and home site irrigation systems by providing free irrigation evaluations.

Annual Events

Each Soil and Water Conservation District sponsors a variety of events. Below are some examples.

LAND JUDGING Future Farmers of America (FFA) and 4-H students take turns examining soil in pits dug especially for the contest, to judge adaptability of land for various purposes including farming, range management, and home site construction. The first place team has the opportunity to go on to the state and national competitions.



The skills tested at the contest involve principles that can be valuable in career fields like environmental and agricultural management, natural resources conservation, home building, engineering, and construction.

ENVIROTHON Envirothons are a natural resource education event where students work in teams to answer written questions and conduct hands-on investigations relating to aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife, and current environmental issues. The first place team in each participating county has the opportunity to go on to the state and national competitions.



Soils Station

POSTER CONTEST The poster contest provides kindergarteners through twelfth graders with an opportunity to share their thoughts about water and related natural resource issues. Winning posters proceed from the local contest to regional, state, and national competition.

SPEECH CONTEST The speech contest is designed to develop leadership and stimulate interest in conserving natural resources. From the local contest, the first place winner can advance to regional and state contests.

TREE GIVE-AWAY



Free tree seedlings are given in honor of Arbor Day.

Mobile Irrigation Laboratory

- Serves the agriculture community.
- Evaluation of the growers' irrigation equipment, optimizing production of their crop.
- Conduct a series of measurements of water pressure and water flow – determine problems and localize them.
- Report back to the grower identifying deficiencies and making recommendations.
- Since the fall 2006, the Mobile Irrigation Lab team has evaluated more than 9,756 acres and identified *Potential Water Savings* of nearly 1.1 billion gallons per year.

Actual Water Savings from September 2006 through December 2013 is 270 million gallons per year.



Mobile Irrigation Laboratory

(continued)

- They can save significant amounts on fuel and energy costs.
- Who funds this Lab?
- For more information about the Mobile Irrigation Lab, call (352) 742-7005, ext. 4.



Measuring Flow



Checking pressure

Are We REALLY Practicing Water Conservation?



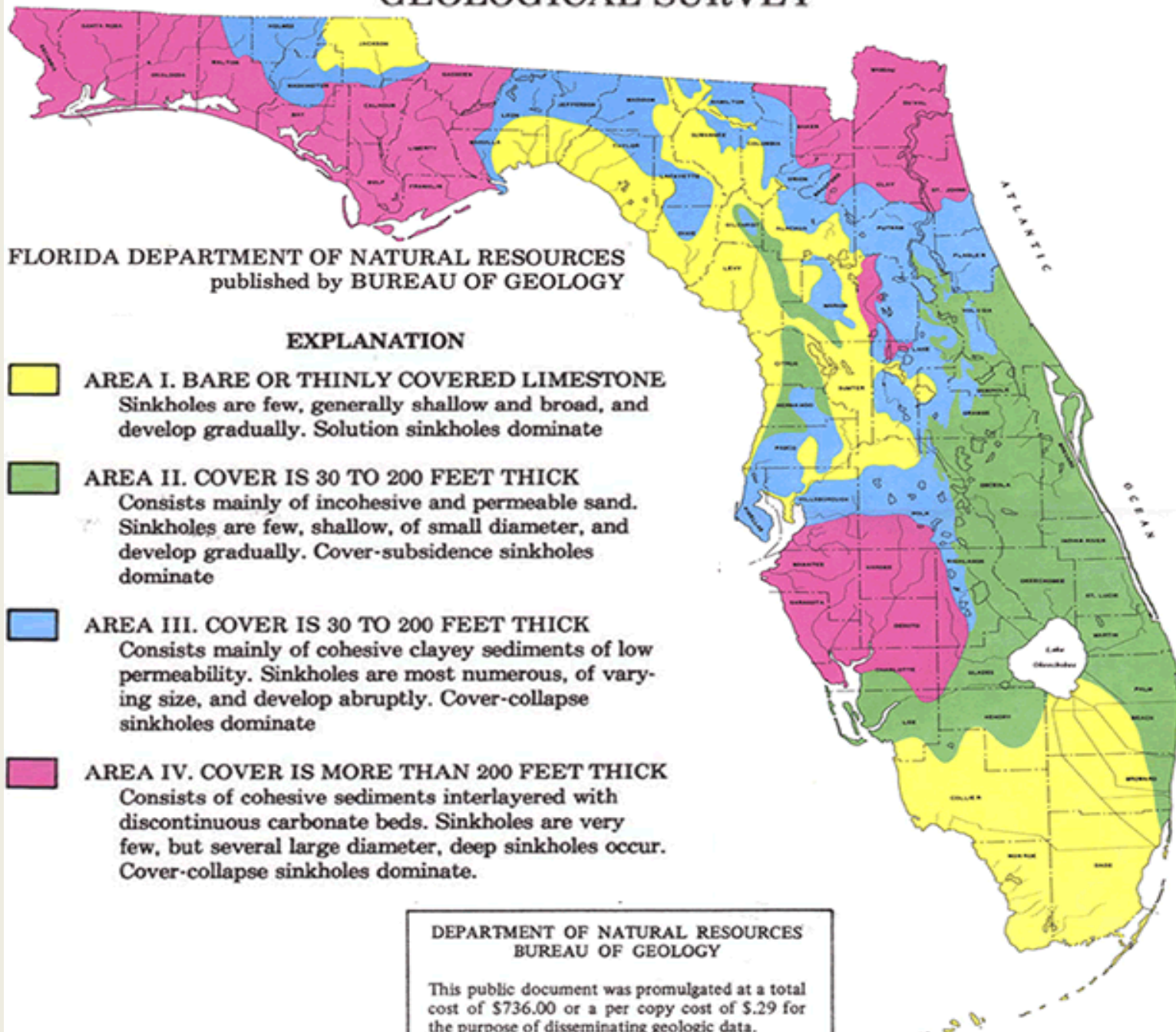
- How many times have you seen sprinklers going off when it's raining?



Are We REALLY Practicing Water Conservation? *(Continued)*

- Will our aquifer be sustainable enough to support growth and development in our state?
- Water consumption must be considered the ***serious reality*** that it is.
- This ***has to be dealt with*** if future growth and development goals are to be achieved.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR GEOLOGICAL SURVEY





- We ensure that local conservation concerns are met with a national conservation effort.
- LSWCD works closely with the NRCS to conserve Lake County's natural resources.
- Through budget and staff cuts, we lost two employees. The reduced assistance to NRCS has reduced the amount of Federal money that LSWCD has been able to bring into our county. We used to receive over a million dollars from the USDA-NRCS.

2011-2013

- **With funding for Soil and Water Conservation District present in the county**
- **Spent: \$111,822 for one full-time employee in a two-year period of time**
- **Return: \$862,988 of cost-share funding spent in Lake County**
- **772% return on investment within the county**



Working Relationship With Lake County Water Authority

- Grants us use of the Hickory Point/Envirothon
- Envirothon partner - Aquatic section of the contest.





Working Relationship With Lake County Government



- Salary and office space for key employee assisting Supervisors.
- Two grant-funded Mobile Irrigation Lab technicians hired as County employees and all expenses are reimbursed by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS).
- Vehicle and trailer for the Mobile Irrigation Lab (fuel and repairs/maintenance are reimbursed by FDACS grant).
- Advertise board meetings and news releases.
- Board meetings held at Lake County Agricultural Center.



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Mobile Irrigation Lab

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LAKE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

VISION

Conserve and improve soil and water resources in Lake County for today and the future.

MISSION

To provide services for soil and water conservation, and proper utilization of natural resources, and to promote the continued use of land for agricultural purposes.

Established by the Florida Legislature, the Lake Soil & Water Conservation District, a governmental subdivision of the State of Florida, was organized Sept. 21, 1944 by local people for the purpose of promoting and encouraging, by voluntary means, the wise use, management and general conservation of the County's soil, water and related natural resources. The District is committed to preserving and enhancing the quality of life in Lake County through conservation of its natural resources. The Lake Soil & Water Conservation District works closely with the [U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service](#) creating ways to conserve water, prevent soil erosion, convert irrigation systems and inform the public about conservation problems.



Sources of Funding for LSWCD

- Lake County Board of County Commissioners
 - One employee
- The Lake County Mobile Irrigation Lab annual grant is currently funded by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services/Office of Agricultural Water Policy (FDACS), and USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).
- Donations are given to support the annual Tree Giveaway and the Lake Regional Envirothon.



Biggest Challenges/Obstacles

- To fulfill our ***only mission***:
To provide services for soil and water conservation, and proper utilization of natural resources, and to promote the continued use of land for agricultural purposes.
- Support from our local elected officials for funding and maintaining staff.

Credits

- Lake County Board of County Commissioners
<http://www.lakecountyfl.gov>
- Association of Florida Conservation Districts
<http://www.afcd.us>
- US Geological Service
<http://www.usgs.gov>
- USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov>
- Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
<http://www.freshfromflorida.com>