



**Hillsborough
Soil & Water**
Conservation District
Florida

**STRATEGIC PLAN
2025-2030**

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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS SIGNATURE PAGE

STATEMENT

Supervisor District Seat 1, Signature

Supervisor District Seat 2, Signature

Supervisor District Seat 3, Signature

Supervisor District Seat 4, Signature

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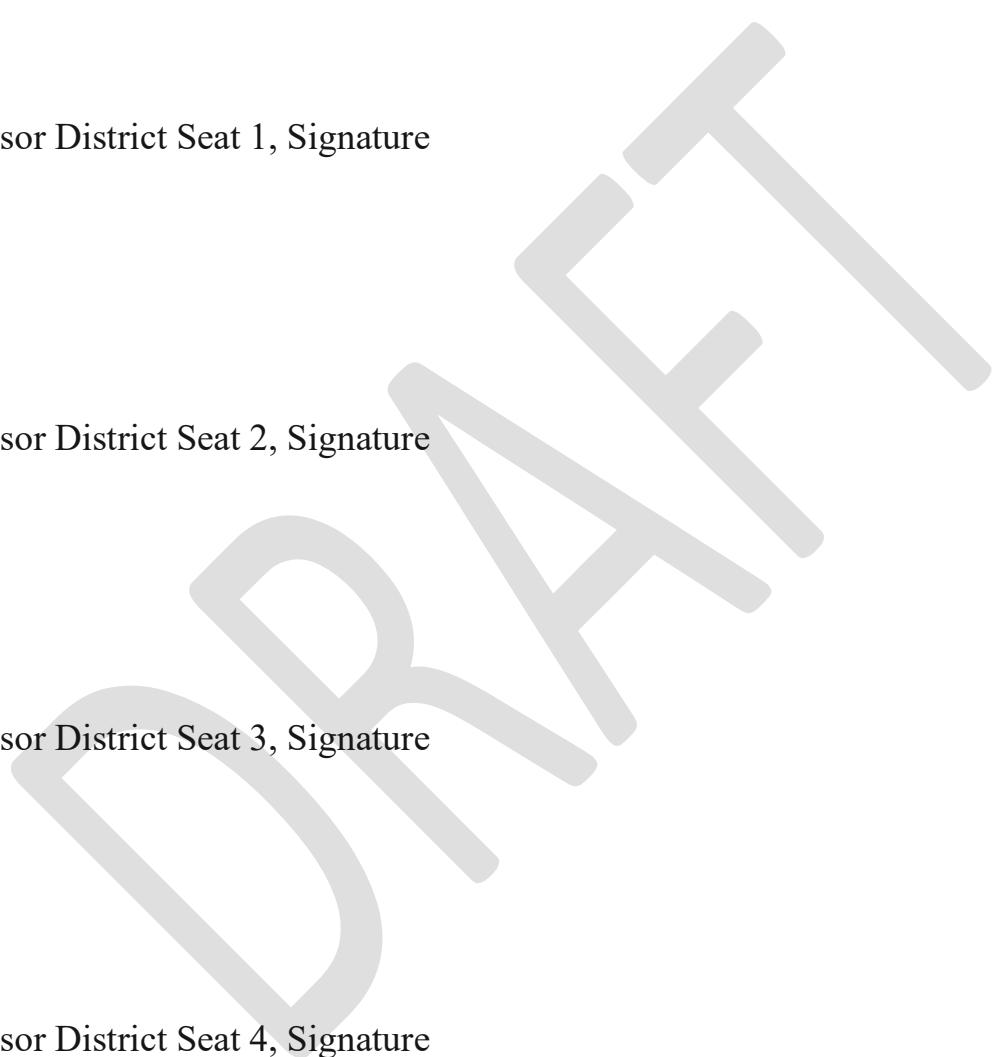


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FOREWORD

Hillsborough Soil and Water Conservation District (“the Conservation District”) is one of over forty conservation districts in Florida, organized under Title XXXV, Agriculture, Horticulture, and Animal Husbandry, Chapter 582 (F.S.), known as the “Soil and Water Conservation Act”. The conservation districts operate as governmental subdivisions of the State of Florida, as locally organized special districts, with a strong historical connection to local agriculture and rural working lands.

The Conservation District’s governing body consists of a Board of five locally elected Supervisors. Each Supervisor must qualify for office as being directly involved in controlling the means of agricultural production, whether that be in agricultural production itself or agricultural land management/ownership. The office of District Supervisor is non-salaried and nonpartisan, and qualified candidates are elected in a general election to a 4-year term. Mid-term vacancies are filled via appointment of qualified individuals by the remaining supervisors until the next regular election. A District Supervisor receives no compensation for his or her services, although they may be reimbursed for travel expenses incurred in support of the Conservation District’s mission. A District Supervisor may be removed from office by the Governor for neglect of duty or malfeasance in office, but for no other reason.

Beginning in January 2023, the Conservation District experienced significant changes to its Board composition, funding sources, and legal obligations. Recent efforts to redirect the Conservation District’s commitments have paralleled to the State Legislature’s efforts to demand and enforce more accountability on all special districts of the State. In September 2024, the Board received a performance audit from the State’s Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (“OPPAGA Report”), which reflected its own findings in 2023. The OPPAGA Report emphasized a connection between the Conservation District’s deficiencies and its failure to maintain a Long-Range Plan with specific performance criteria. Further, the State Legislature clarified its expectation under Chapter 189, F.S. that all special districts establish, beginning October 1st, 2024, goals, objectives, performance measures and standards to govern their activities. All Florida special districts also must publish their performance achievements and deficiencies toward those expectations by December 1st, 2025.

This FY2025-2030 Strategic Plan is the first significant effort at developing a

Strategic Plan for this Conservation District’s operations in decades. The Board of Supervisors recognizes that as of the beginning of FY 2024-25, the Conservation District has very limited capacity to deliver the technical services it envisions as the core value of the District’s legislative purpose. Therefore, the Board intends that this Strategic Plan be implemented in phases. To meet the expectations of the public, the Board will solicit input from its local stakeholders and institutional partners through mass emails, public workshops and surveys and will, beginning October 1st, 2024, will maintain the development of the plan on its website.

PURPOSE

The Hillsborough Soil and Water Conservation District was organized on August 5th, 1946, following a local referendum and administrative approval by the State Soil Conservation Board (*citation, Agr. Ext. Svs., Administrative Record, 06/21/46-75-TKM, page 198, record #33*). The efforts of the Conservation District were directed toward the preparation of work plans and the establishment and maintenance of soil and water conservation practices within the Conservation District.

Today, the legal purpose of the conservation districts is set forth under the Florida Soil and Water Conservation Act, which in its original form and intent was enacted to reciprocate the U.S. Farm Bill of 1935. Section 582.02 (4) F.S., states that *“The purpose of the conservation districts is to provide assistance, guidance, and education to landowners, land occupiers, the agricultural industry, and the general public in implementing land and water resource protection practices. The Legislature intends for conservation districts to work in conjunction with federal, state, and local agencies in all matters that implement the provisions of this chapter”*. The federal commitment is codified under Title 7, Volume 6, Section 610 of the Code of Federal Regulations, to deliver technical and financial resources through the local conservation districts. Active partnership between each conservation district and their USDA/NRCS assigned staff resources is provided for through Cooperative Agreements between the US Department of Agriculture, the governor of the State of Florida and each local conservation district.

VISION and MISSION STATEMENTS

Vision - The Hillsborough Soil and Water Conservation District envisions a sustainable agricultural economic sector participating in the Hillsborough County economy throughout the 21st Century; and a robust system of rural working lands

that receives positive recognition for the natural resources its supports in the Tampa Bay region.

Mission - The Hillsborough Soil and Water Conservation District develops and delivers programs in support of sustainable management of agriculture and natural resource values associated with rural working lands and educates the public on the importance of maintaining these values in Hillsborough County.

CORE VALUES

As a locally operated special district, having a long-established working relationship with Hillsborough County, the Conservation District's Core Values for public service align with those of the County Administration:

Customer Commitment – Conservation District staff proactively seek to understand the needs of customers and provide the highest standards of service.

Dedication to Professionalism and Integrity - Conservation District staff demonstrate and promote fair, honest, professional, and ethical behaviors that establish trust throughout the organization and with the public we serve.

Organizational Excellence - Conservation District staff take ownership for excellence through personal effectiveness and dedication to the continuous improvement of our operations.

Success through Teamwork - Conservation District staff collaborate and build partnerships through trust and the open exchange of diverse ideas and perspectives to achieve organizational goals.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In addition, the following Guiding Principles are used to direct the development of this Strategic Plan, associated work plans, partnerships, and the selection of projects:

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 1 – Solicit and weigh the input of vested stakeholders and partners in good faith, toward developing strategies, priorities, goals, work plans and commitments.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 2 – Adopt and use SMART goals (Specific, Measurable,

Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) to prioritize opportunities and to assess and improve work plans and projects.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 3 – Identify and prioritize specific rural land management and water quality needs in the watersheds that drain through Hillsborough County to Tampa Bay.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 4 – work synergistically with and leverage the resources of government agencies, major stakeholder groups, and public, private and nonprofit land management entities in meeting priorities and achieving goals.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 5 – Expend program funds in a responsible manner, to meet the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan, and to the benefit of the natural resource values supported by Hillsborough County’s rural working lands.

DRAFT

PRIORITIES

PRIORITY - the Conservation District places importance on acquiring resources and developing a rural Hazard Mitigation component to the Hillsborough County Hazard Mitigation Plan.

PRIORITY – DETERMINE THE CONSERVATION DISTRICT’S OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP A ROLE AND EXPERTISE PURSUANT TO ADDRESSING DATA GAPS IN THE TBEP’S NUTRIENT MONITORING CONSORTIUM PROGRAM – UNDER REASONABLE ASSURANCES, THE NMC IS MISSING A DATA REPORTING COMPONENT FOR THE UPPER WATERSHEDS OF HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY.

PRIORITY – Work with partner agencies, natural resource management and planning departments to identify GAPS BETWEEN MISSIONS AND EFFORTS. Look for: mission synergies; gaps as relates to lands operated for agricultural purposes, with the complementary goals of “keeping rural working lands, working,”; opportunities to reduce the tax burden associated with fee simple acquisition associated with conservation of natural resource values.

LOCATION AND SETTING

The Conservation District encompasses all lands lying within the boundaries of Hillsborough County, Florida, on latitude 28° north and longitude 82° west. The County is located in the west central part of peninsular Florida and is bounded on the north by Pasco County, on the east by Polk County, on the south by Manatee County and on the west by Pinellas County. At its broadest point it is 36 miles from east to west and equal distance from north to south. The County occupies approximately 1,267 square miles or 810,880 acres. Of this total, 1,048 square miles (83%) is dry land, including Egmont Key and several dredge spoil islands in Tampa Bay. Approximately 195 square miles (15%) is comprised of Tampa Bay and 24 square miles (2%) is comprised of inland waterways. Hillsborough County is the tenth largest county in the state.

Watersheds that collect through the Conservation District to Tampa Bay consist of the Anclote-, Blackwater-, Hillsborough-, Alafia-, and Little Manatee rivers. As of January 2023, the population of Hillsborough County exceeded 1.5 million people, making it the most populous Florida county outside of the lower east coast metropolitan area. Hillsborough County and its three municipalities (Plant City, Tampa, and Temple Terrace) each maintain Urban Service Areas (USA) to manage growth and public services in their jurisdictions. The Hillsborough County USA includes the lower portions of the Anclote River and Blackwater River basins extending to Old Tampa Bay, and the lower portions of the Hillsborough and Alafia Rivers extending westward to Hillsborough Bay as well as the northern boundaries of the Little Manatee River.

Rural working lands are concentrated to eastern Hillsborough County, although a smaller rural community persists in the northwestern part of the County, contiguous to rural lands in Pinellas and Pasco counties.

CLIMATE

Situated in Peninsular Florida, Hillsborough County's climate is described as subtropical. Weather conditions have changed dramatically since last described by the Soil Survey of the County, published in 1983. The 2023 average yearly temperature of 76 degrees (F) is 3.8 degrees (F) higher than it was then, and temperatures frequently exceed 90 degrees (F) and approach 100 degrees during the months of July and August. While global climate change has implications for every agricultural area in the United States, it has predictable implications for land and water resources in Central Florida. Unlike much of the country, Peninsular Florida's seasons are limited to just two - a dry season and a wet season. The historic growing season ranges from 301 to 348 days per year. Although the dry season encompasses the cooler months from October through May, with the coolest month being January, the area rarely experiences hard freezes.

Drought Conditions - to be filled in collaboration with subject matter experts from within resource management agencies.

The wet season generally begins by June and tapers off in September. A major concern is the corresponding hurricane season, starting in June, which peaks between mid-August and mid-November.

During the typical year, 50 inches of rain falls with 60% (30 inches) of this falling during the rainy season of June through September. Excessive amounts of rainfall can occur as the result of tropical storms and hurricanes. These storms usually develop during the summer months in the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean, and the Atlantic Ocean.

Storm Damages - to be filled in collaboration with subject matter experts from within resource management agencies.

The Fifth National Climate Assessment (Hoffman, et. al., 2023) recognizes the complexity of demands and risks, which areas such as Hillsborough County face. Although the County is part of a highly urbanized, coastal metropolitan area, it also has a robust rural agricultural economic sector. Furthermore, while the urban areas receive much attention in terms of climate-based risk modeling and mitigation planning, the rural agricultural community in the eastern part of the county is under-served for that category of work.

PRIORITY – Recognizing that: a) climate driven hazards pose a tremendous negative impact on the County’s rural community and agricultural resources in any given year; b) a Hazard Mitigation Plan is recognized as an important step in making FEMA and Florida Department of Emergency Management (FDEM) funds more readily available to rural landowners, businesses and residents; and c) no other local government agency has taken the lead in developing a rural Hazard Mitigation Plan as a component of the overall Hillsborough County Strategic Mitigation Plan...

PRIORITY - the Conservation District places importance on acquiring resources and developing a rural Hazard Mitigation component to the Hillsborough County Hazard Mitigation Plan.

GEOLOGY AND SOILS

The geology of Hillsborough County is characterized by sedimentary deposits associated with the rise and fall of ancient seas. There are four ancient shorelines represented in Hillsborough County, and twelve major soil mapping units, lumped into four general mapping groups, based on historical drainage patterns, ecological communities and land use changes.

Uplands and Low Ridge soil mapping units are common in the north-central part of Hillsborough County and along the Alafia River. These soils are sandy and range from somewhat poorly drained to excessively drained. Much of this mapping group has been converted to urban and suburban land uses within the Urban Service Areas of Tampa, Temple Terrace and Hillsborough County Public Utilities Administration.

The Flatwoods mapping group consists of nearly level to gently sloping areas comprised of moderately well-drained-, poorly drained and very poorly drained soils. The historical vegetative communities were pine flatwoods, and although scattered throughout the county, they were most extensive in the southern part.

Wetland and Coastal mapping units make of the historical flood plains, sloughs, swamps and marshes throughout Hillsborough County, but particularly occurred in the lower river basins adjacent to Tampa Bay. Notably, the Myakka soil type(s), which are the official “Florida State Soil” fall into this group and largely have been converted to urban land uses.

The Arents soils mapping group is a catchall group for heavily disturbed/displaced soils associated with mining activities, primarily for

phosphate. Although there have been reclamation mandates in place for inactive mining units for decades, most of these areas are outside of the urban service areas. Typically, reuse has focused on agricultural redevelopment and habitat restoration projects. Cattle operations are a common rural practice on reclaimed mine lands.

WATER RESOURCES

Water Resources are discussed in the context of the Conservation District's ability to proactively contribute to planning and management actions. Tampa Bay National Estuary – *to be filled in collaboration with subject matter experts from within resource management agencies.*

BMAPs – There are nine Basin Management Action Plans adopted for watersheds that flow through the Conservation District to Old Hillsborough Bay. *to be filled in collaboration with subject matter experts from within resource management agencies.*

Hillsborough River - *to be filled in collaboration with subject matter experts from within resource management agencies.*

Alafia River, North- and South Prongs - *to be filled in collaboration with subject matter experts from within resource management agencies.*

Blackwater River - *to be filled in collaboration with subject matter experts from within resource management agencies.*

Anclote River - *to be filled in collaboration with subject matter experts from within resource management agencies.*

Little Manatee River - *to be filled in collaboration with subject matter experts from within resource management agencies.*

ECOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Historical ecosystems supported by the mapped soils can be briefly described here, and on the coastal/estuarine values.

Inland wildlife habitat in Hillsborough County is closely tied to wetlands. Wetland soil types cover 182,277 acres or 29.3% of the County's land area. This wetland acreage includes stream and river flood plains, cypress and bay

head swamps, freshwater marshes and lakes. Artificial wetlands, resulting from phosphate mining and other forms of excavation, have made a positive contribution to wildlife habitat. The freshwater wetland habitat supports wildlife suited to the wet areas and provides protection for adjacent upland species. Fresh water sport fishing is an important recreational pursuit in Hillsborough County.

The 83 miles of coastline support a variety of estuarine habitats. Many are vital to the survival of marine fish species, marine mammals and sea birds. Mangrove covered wetlands, tidal estuaries and shallow bay waters serve as nurseries for commercial and sport fish such as snook and redfish. They provide nesting habitat for native bird species. The endangered Florida Manatee moves into the Hillsborough River, Alafia River and other local tributaries during the winter months in search of the warm water necessary for its survival. The elimination of inshore netting by commercial fisherman is sure to improve the populations of many fish species and may reduce damage to sea grass beds currently making a comeback in Tampa Bay.

Within the Urban Service Areas, the local governments have green space and tree conservation rules in place which are implemented via permitting rules and development orders. In addition, they have committed resources to outreach programs and project funds to support voluntary conservation efforts by homeowners, homeowner associations and volunteer conservation groups.

PRIORITY – DETERMINE THE CONSERVATION DISTRICT’S OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP A ROLE AND EXPERTISE PURSUANT TO ADDRESSING GAPS IN THE TBEP’S NUTRIENT MONITORING CONSORTIUM’S ABILITY TO DOCUMENT REASONABLE ASSURANCES IN THE UPPER WATERSHEDS OF HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY.

COMMERCE

The Conservation District includes within its geopolitical boundary a highly urbanized and strategically important commercial center. Florida’s economy recently ranked as the 15th largest economy in the world. Further, Hillsborough County’s population ranks as third among counties in the third most populated state in the nation. However, while most Hillsborough County residents view the area as entirely cosmopolitan, the County also is an international and national focal point for economic activity deeply entrenched in the County’s rural working lands. Eastern Hillsborough County’s rural working lands generate both major food

commodities and phosphate, primarily used to produce agricultural fertilizers. Additionally, Hillsborough County is home to Port Tampa Bay, through which much of these products are shipped. That economic activity coupled with the County's watershed contributions to the Tampa Bay National Estuary, drives the need for strong local leadership in land and water resources management.

MINERALS AND MINING

Phosphate is a key component in agricultural fertilizers as well as other commercial products. However, phosphate cycles through the environment via sedimentary processes, which means that all the phosphate used in manufactured fertilizers and other products, ultimately comes from mining processes. It is estimated that 50% of global food production is reliant on the fertilizer industry and 90% of the phosphate mined in Central Florida is used to produce agricultural fertilizers. Phosphate mine lands occupy about 55,000 acres of Hillsborough County's rural working lands, concentrated in the upper watersheds of the Alafia and Little Manatee rivers.

Notably, Central Florida's phosphate is the number 1 export shipped through Port Tampa Bay. After consolidating much of Central Florida's mine lands under their portfolio, The Mosaic Company, a dominant producer of phosphate in both the American and global economies, moved its North American headquarters to Hillsborough County. In 2022, the estimated direct financial impacts of the phosphate industry on the local economy included 46,000 jobs and \$3.1 billion in personal income. Mosaic paid approximately \$18.9 million in severance taxes and spent over \$1 billion through Florida-based suppliers and contractors. In 2023, the Mosaic Company accounted for 12% of global fertilizer supply and 50% of North American agricultural fertilizer supply.

These figures do not include Mosaic's impact on either Hillsborough County's or Florida's agricultural commodities. What is clear is that Central Florida and Hillsborough County together are a major strategic supplier of raw material to both the American and global food supply. What is not self-evident to most of Hillsborough County's residents, however, is the importance of conserving rural working lands and the agricultural sector as part of the County's national and global economic strategic position.

Phosphate mining by itself poses large scale environmental problems. Phosphate mining is a heavy user of water resources, and without appropriate engineering, a source of downstream nutrient enrichment. Also, due to the potential for

environmental impacts with human health implications, phosphate mining is not treated in land use planning as a compatible land use in close adjacency to housing developments. However, the modern planning paradigm calls for phosphate mined lands to be “reclaimed”. The goal of mine reclamation is to establish a more natural, rural condition, which includes extensive land contouring and revegetation, with the intention of managing soil and water quality conditions over the long term. There are agricultural uses that are compatible with reclaimed mined lands, and agriculture lands serve as a vital buffer between mining operations and suburban land uses in Hillsborough County. Hence, the Conservation District views phosphate mining and agriculture as irrevocably linked in the “mosaic” of rural land uses and the Hillsborough County economy.

PRIORITY - TBD

AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

As of 2023, Hillsborough County was the third largest contributor to Florida’s food and related market services, with over 180,000 acres occupied by farms and ranches, which produce an estimated market value exceeding \$1 billion annually (citation: <https://www.fdacs.gov/Agriculture-Industry/Florida-Agriculture-Overview-and-Statistics>).

Agriculture's Impact to the County's Economy- Locally, agriculture generated over \$551 million in annual sales in 1998. Besides the sales, agriculture generates additional local economic impact in related businesses such as banking, real estate, legal services, transportation, packaging, equipment, seed, agricultural supplier and services, and marketing firms.

The majority of agricultural goods produced in Hillsborough County are sold outside of the county. For every dollar sold outside of the county, it is estimated that \$1.98 is added to the local economy (1998 figures).

Old information (any update?) In a recent study commissioned by the Hillsborough County Agricultural Task Force (now Hillsborough Agricultural Economic Development Council), it is calculated that agriculture effectively subsidizes the urban residential population by contributing 6 times more in local taxes than they use in county services. Each year, it is estimated that agriculture and its related businesses in Hillsborough County generate over

\$1.5 billion in sales and employ approximately 19,000 people.

In summary, Hillsborough County's agricultural community is very diverse, with many large components. The District is concerned that agriculture remains strong in this rapidly developing county.

Stress the economic stability and importance of agriculture in Hillsborough County but also acknowledge the contributions that agricultural lands support such as “ecological services” associated with rural working lands. include isolated wetlands and floodplains of the river sheds, and touch on the historical significance of agricultural runoff, the establishment of the BMAPs and their landscape level importance to Tampa Bay Estuary.

STRAWBERRIES
OTHER ROW CROPS
CATTLE
OTHER LIVESTOCK
ORCHARDS AND GROVES
SOD
PLANT NURSERIES
AQUACULTURE

Strawberries - Plant City is the winter strawberry capital of the world, with strawberries shipped throughout national and international markets. Strawberry acreage continues to increase with each growing season. In 1995 approximately 5,800 acres were in production. Strawberry production typically begins in October, when fields are plowed, bedded and planted. Strawberries are grown in ten-inch beds covered with black plastic and usually irrigated with low-volume drip tube, which runs down the center of each bed. Sprinkler systems are used to water in new plants and provide freeze protection during the winter months. Strawberry production costs, exclusive of harvest, average \$5,000 per acre. Production rates of 1,800 - 2,000 flats per acre are typical for strawberries. The 1998 strawberry crop yielded approximately 118 million dollars. Roadside stands and u-pick operations help offset operational costs when market demand is low.

Vegetable and Strawberry Operations - Hillsborough County's vegetable industry is quite diverse. In 1998, approximately 12,900 acres of vegetables were in production. The main vegetable crops include tomatoes, squash, cucumbers, and peppers. Smaller crops of snapbeans, cabbage, eggplant, sweet

corn, okra, collard greens, broccoli, cauliflower and various oriental vegetables were also produced. Vegetable crops are typically grown to take advantage of late fall and early spring markets. Most crops are irrigated with seepage irrigation, low-volume drip tube and overhead sprinklers. The District continues to work with farmers to increase irrigation efficiency and manage stormwater run-off. The 1998 vegetable crop was valued at 91.5 million dollars.

Citrus - The citrus acreage in Hillsborough County has declined since 1967, when 61,000 acres of grove were in production. A disastrous freeze in 1989 and urban expansion have reduced the acreage to 28,200 acres (1998). A potentially damaging form of leaf miner entered the State in 1993 courtesy of Hurricane Andrew. By 1994, this variety of leaf miner had entered Hillsborough County. The long term effects of this leaf minor are not known at this time, but if it proves difficult and/or expensive to control, citrus production will continue to decline.

In 1998 approximately 10.3 million boxes of citrus were produced in Hillsborough County, with an estimated value of 38.1 million dollars. The average yield was 370 boxes per acre, with production costs of approximately \$825 per acre. The District will continue to work with citrus growers to maintain or reduce production costs through efficient irrigation designs, irrigation water management, fertigation and stormwater management.

Dairy - In 1979 there were 51 dairies scattered throughout Hillsborough County. In the last 16 years, urban encroachment and tougher environmental regulations have impacted smaller dairies, forcing many to close. The District continues to work with the existing 20 dairies to improve waste management systems and provide pasture assistance where applicable. Dairy production in 1998 exceeded 14 million dollars in Hillsborough County.

Beef Production - In 1998 over 80,000 acres in Hillsborough County were dedicated to beef production. The District office works with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service's Range Management Specialist to develop conservation plans for pasture and range management. Annual sales in Hillsborough County's beef industry were 8.8 million dollars in 1998.

Ornamental Horticulture - In recent years, ornamental horticulture has become Hillsborough County's fastest growing agricultural crop. In 1979 this industry had annual sales of approximately 8 million dollars. By 1998, sales

had increased by over 1700%, to 142.5 million dollars. Production includes woody ornamentals, shade grown and greenhouse foliage plants, cut flowers (roses and gladiolas), potted flowers, bedding plants and young citrus trees. The District provides assistance to horticulturists in irrigation system design, irrigation water management, stormwater management and wind erosion control.

Tropical Fish - Tropical fish farming is a specialized aquacultural enterprise in Hillsborough County. In 1998 tropical fish farms occupied 2,000 acres in the County and had annual sales of 53 million dollars. The District aides farmers in locating appropriate sites for fish ponds and occasionally works with farmers to insure that water being discharged from the site meets permitting requirements established by the Department of Environmental Protection.

Minor crops/commodities - Minor crops/commodities are those crops/commodities which, individually, do not produce a large amount of annual sales. However, if you combine all of these minor crops together, they provide a major contribution to the County's overall agricultural sales. These crops/commodities can serve small niche markets, or they are trial evaluations to increase the diversity of future crop/commodity production. Many of these operations are expanding as they are better understood and localized production methods are figured out. These commodities include: herbs, worms, blueberries, sod, and others. Overall, when combined together, these minor crops generated annual sales in excess of \$59 million in 1998.

Forest Resources - Commercial forest resources of Hillsborough County are limited. Low tree growth rates in County soils and low natural stocking rates limit the woodland potential when compared to North Florida. Forestry best management practices, are geared toward pine flatwoods communities, and emphasize prescription burning where practicable. Proximity to major roads and housing developments constrain the use of these tools.

Ecological Resources –

RECREATION AND TOURISM

Natural Resource-based Recreation and Tourism - The County's subtropical

climate encourages many forms of outdoor recreation. Recreational resources are extensive including all of the warm climate activities of fresh and salt water. The urban park system consists of over 3,200 acres of neighborhood parks, playgrounds, and athletic facilities. Conservation parks and preserves constitute approximately 80,000 acres. These facilities are managed by Hillsborough County's Parks & Recreation and Conservation & Environmental Lands Management Departments. In particular, the Conservation District sees the potential for synergy with Conservation & Environmental Lands Management Department, which is engaged in planning for future land acquisitions.

Priority – Work with Hillsborough County natural resource management and planning departments to reduce the tax burden associated with fee simple acquisition, in favor of long-term conservations easements, with the goal of “keeping rural working lands, working”.

DRAFT

MAJOR STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS

- HCBOCC/CAD
- HC EPC
- HC Planning and Development
- USDA-NRCS
- USDA-FSA
- USDA Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service
- HC AEDC (Agricultural Economic Development Council)
- UF/IFAS Cooperative Extension Service
- FDACS – Office of Agricultural Water Policy
- SWFWMD
- TBEP
- UF Gulf Agricultural Research Center
- Hillsborough County Chapter of Florida Farm Bureau
- Nat. Association of Conservation Districts
- Florida Assoc. of Conservation Districts
- Florida Strawberry Growers Association
- Hillsborough Cattlemen’s Association
- Florida Nursery Growers and Landscapers Association
- FDACS - Fresh From Florida
- FDEP
- AFCD
- NACD