

Spring 2020



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Koochiching Conservation

NATIVE PLANT AND TREE SALE

Annual Tree Sale:



We've brought back some favorites from previous years, including the Wildlife Packet (a mix of Chokecherry, Villosa Lilac, Crabapple, Juneberry, Redosier Dogwood, and American Plum). We will also offer new species from last year such as Bur Oak and Red Oak. For the best selection, be sure to get your orders in early as **quantities are limited**. A 10% discount will be given on orders totaling \$250 or more.

We also carry a broad selection of Plantskydd® deer repellent products to protect your investment. A huge **THANK YOU** for your continued support!

For the order form, see our website at: <https://koochichingswcd.org/tree-sales/>

Native Plant Sale (*see order form in this mailing!*):

Do you like to plant beautiful flowers and forbs to improve the look of your yard or property? Would you like to help improve pollinator habitat and support native plant species in the process? Then maybe our native plant sale is right for you. New for 2019, the Koochiching SWCD will be offering native plant kits for purchase this spring. Kits come in custom seed packs and immediately plantable plug starters. Each kit comes with a variety of flower, forb, and grass species specially selected for site conditions and your project goals. Whether hoping to attract butterflies, or looking for an aesthetically nice seed mix for your septic field, the Koochiching SWCD Native Plant sale has a kit for you.

For more information: <https://koochichingswcd.org/nativeplantsale/>



LITTLEFORK RIVER IMPAIRMENT IDENTIFICATION

In fall of 2019, a sediment fingerprinting study began in the Little Fork River Watershed. This project is being led by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) and the Minnesota Pollution and Control Agency (MPCA) with support from the Koochiching Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and North St. Louis SWCD to address a 105 mile stretch that is impaired for turbidity (suspended soil particles in water).

What is Sediment Fingerprinting?

The sediment fingerprinting process is an approach to attribute sediment to different watershed sources. The procedure establishes a set of physical and/or chemical properties (tracers) based on samples collected in upland or channel locations identified as potential sources of sediment. These properties are unique for each source within the watershed. Fluvial sediment samples (sediment transferred by a river system) also are collected that exhibit a composite, or “fingerprint” of source properties. Through statistical procedures, the target sediment properties can be matched to their respective upland or channel source “fingerprints”.

Determining the sources (erosion sites) and sinks (deposit locations) of sediment is important in developing strategies to reduce sediment loads to water bodies impaired by sediment.

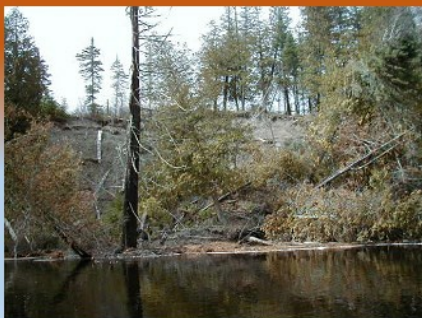
What Will This Mean in the Little Fork River?

Sediment sampling will occur throughout the watershed in 2020 to help distinguish where sediment in the Littlefork River Watershed is coming from. Staff from all four organizations will be collecting samples starting at ice out and continuing throughout the summer.



This segment is -509, Nett Lake River to Cross River, most likely impaired as well, but there is zero data in this segment mainly due to road access. We are trying to get in there for Cycle 2 work.

Bank Failure, Near Silverdale (Al Anderson, DNR)



While it has been established that there is an excess of sediment present in the Little Fork River, it's been unknown how to proceed in reducing it to acceptable levels. Identifying sediment sources is the first step in targeting sediment-laden stream reaches for projects. Updates will follow as more information is gathered on this very important project.

District Supervisors

George Aitchison	Chair
Eldon Voigt	Vice-Chair
Richard Dreher	Secretary
Al Linder	Member
Ralph Lewis	Treasurer

Regular meeting times:

May to October: 7:00 p.m.
November to April: 6:00 p.m.

District Staff

Pam Tomevi—District Administrator
pam.tomevi@co.koochiching.mn.us
218-283-1174

Eric Olson—Resource Conservationist
eric.olson@co.koochiching.mn.us
218-283-1175

Sam Soderman—Water Resource Specialist
sam.soderman@co.koochiching.mn.us
218-283-1176

James Aasen—Forest Resource Specialist
james.aasen@co.koochiching.mn.us
218-283-6742

Jolén Simon—Program Coordinator
jolen.simon@co.koochiching.mn.us
218-283-1180

COMMITTEES:

Budget Committee- *Ralph Lewis & Eldon Voigt*

Personnel Committee- *Richard Dreher & Ralph Lewis*

Education/Public Relations Committee- *Al Linder & Richard Dreher*

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES:

North Central MN Joint Powers Board- *Al Linder*

Laurentian RC&D Council- *Al Linder*

Big Fork River Board- *George Aitchison*

Littlefork/Rat Root River Board- *George Aitchison*

MN SWCD Forestry Association- *Eldon Voigt*

Int'l Watershed Advisory Committee- *Eldon Voigt & Ralph Lewis*

Wood Ash Committee- *Al Linder & Richard Dreher*

The mission of the Koochiching SWCD is to conserve and protect the soil and water resources by educating and assisting land users in Koochiching County in being good stewards of the land and its natural resources.

AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES UPDATE

Since 2015, the Koochiching (SWCD) has been working with Koochiching County's Environmental Services Department (ESD) to perform watercraft inspections on Rainy Lake, create education materials, attend local events, and plan for future use of the AIS funding in Koochiching County.

The summer of 2017 was the start of the watercraft inspection program in Koochiching County. The first year consisted of watercraft inspectors manning 5 boat landings on Rainy Lake with a decontamination unit being utilized offsite. In 2018, the Watercraft inspection program expanded to include spring fishing season on the Rainy River. This was a collaboration between Koochiching County/SWCD and Lake of the Woods County/SWCD to educate and inspect boaters coming from instate and surrounding states on aquatic invasive species and the threat they pose. In 2019, the watercraft inspection program utilized a decontamination unit at Bohmans Land and Voyageurs National Park and watercraft inspectors on Rainy Lake's public water accesses. This year the program is looking to partner with North St. Louis SWCD to provide inspections on Kabetogama and Ash River in addition to Rainy Lake. This will expand the education and outreach of proper techniques to stop the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species.

If interested in becoming a watercraft inspector, watch for job announcements coming soon on the Koochiching SWCD website or by contacting Sam Soderman (218) 283-1176.



KOOCHICHING COOPERATIVE WEED MANAGEMENT AREA (CWMA) PARTNERSHIP

Anyone who frequently travels along Northern Minnesota's highways and byways will likely recognize the broad yellow umbrella-like flower of wild parsnip. This non-native invasive plant colonizes open areas in our region and pushes out native grasses, forbs, and flowers degrading the natural biodiversity. Unfortunately, it's not the only noxious pest in Koochiching county that natural resource agencies are concerned about. Purple loosestrife, meadow and brown knapweeds, leafy spurge, European buckthorn, and a host of other unwanted



plant species have all slowly crept their way across the borders into Koochiching's field and forest. Effective management to reduce the occurrence of invasive weeds takes a concerted effort requiring mowing or herbicide application at precisely the right time to reduce the amount of seed being produced by the plants. This takes knowledge of the plant's behavior and the right removal techniques - experience that Koochiching County's resource managers have earned through diligent effort and extensive weed control campaigns on their respective land holdings over the years. In 2018, Koochiching's major land management agencies came together to form a Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) Partnership. The county's Minnesota DNR Divisions, MNDOT Districts, Voyageurs National Park, Bois Forte Band of Ojibwe, County Forestry and Highway departments, SWCD, and most recently the City of Rainier have joined forces in an effort to bolster more effective invasive weed control through sharing successes and coordinating cooperative weed mitigation.

Koochiching SWCD understands the ecological impact that invasive weed infestations can have on the county's public as well as private lands. The Koochiching SWCD is dedicated to assisting Koochiching County landowners in improving natural resource conditions on their property. In the fall of 2019, the SWCD staff wrote and submitted a Board of Water and Soil Resources CWMA grant application designed to do just that. The district was proud to hear that their grant application had been successful in January of 2020, just in time to prepare for weed control efforts this spring. The grant will help fund KCWMA spring meetings to bring partnering agency staff together to plan conjunctive weed control for the 2020 season. Public outreach will be conducted to help citizens identify and find ways to control invasive species on their property. An invasive species inventory will be collected to record sites of new or extensive weed occurrence, this can then be shared and updated making tracking of infestations more effective. Finally, to ensure that effective management is available to private property owners that may need assistance, the grant will fund a cost-share program to help landowners in priority areas of heavy weed infestation setup and pay for professional management services.

If you need help identifying or coordinating the best management practices to control terrestrial invasive species, the Koochiching SWCD is here to help. We have resources to help private landowners address these concerns. For more information, see the CWMA portion of our website at: <https://koochichingswcd.org/cwm/> To contact our Forest Resource Specialist, call 218-283-6742 or email at james.aasen@co.koochiching.mn.us.

BENEFICIAL USE WOOD ASH PROGRAM

The Beneficial Use Wood Ash Program is a free, voluntary program for landowners and operators made available by the Packaging Corporation of America (PCA), the Koochiching Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) and D.H. Contracting. This industrial by-product is mainly comprised of wood waste and residuals from the facility's on-site wastewater treatment plant from paper making within Packaging Corporation of America and is land-applied as an agricultural liming material. The ash is delivered up to 90 (road) miles from International Falls free of charge and mileage is charged beyond that distance. Spreading of the delivered ash is done at no cost to the landowner by D.H Contracting within 50 miles of the Int'l Falls based facility. To be eligible to receive ash, the process is very simple:

- The landowner takes a soil sample 0"-6" deep on the desired field;
- The landowner sends the soil sample to the North Dakota State University (NDSU) soil testing facility (test kit available at Koochiching SWCD) or other qualified soil testing facility;
- Sample results are then sent to both the SWCD and the landowner;
- Samples at a pH of 7.1 or below will qualify to receive ash and the landowner will be contacted by Koochiching SWCD for mapping and permitting;
- D.H Contracting will haul to an agriculture field where the nutrient and waste material will be absorbed by a given crop and soil to yield a higher crop production.

If it weren't for this program, the ash material would be taken to a landfill where it would take up space equaling higher costs and loss of farm field production. In 2019, a total of 19,112.41 tons of ash were applied to 3,957 acres of agricultural fields at an average rate of 4.84 tons per acre. If you're interested in joining the program please stop in the SWCD office or reach us by telephone at 218-283-1175.



**BENEFICIAL USE
WOOD ASH PROGRAM**

- Cost savings for farmers
- Reduces purchased lime and fertilizer usage
- Improves crop economics

PROGRAM DETAILS:

- Soil tests done year round
- Soil packets available at the SWCD office

CONTACT: Eric Olson (SWCD) 218-183-1175
Whitney Junker (PCA) 218-285-5264
Destry Hell (D.H. Contracting, LLC) 218-244-2234

The beneficial use wood ash program is a free program for farmers offered by:





SOIL & WATER

CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Serving Koochiching County since 1954

501 3rd Street, Suite 201
International Falls MN 56649

www.koochichingswcd.org



Native Plant Sale
Order Form Inside!

2019 ENVIROTHON

In 2019, Koochiching County sent 3 teams from Northome School to the 2019 Envirothon competition—an outdoor learning event where high school students (grades 9-12) and junior high students (grades 6-8) attend five sessions on environmental issues. Jim Schneider led the teams again where Seniors placed 4th and 9th, and Juniors placed 11th in their respective divisions.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to our local 2019 sponsors for their very generous contributions to this event: Coca-Cola Bottling Co. of International Falls, Rainy Lake Sportfishing Club, Stewart's Super One Foods, Packaging Corporation of America, Bremer Bank of International Falls, Ridge Runners Snowmobile Club, and the Koochiching County Farm Bureau.

The 2020 North Central Envirothon will be held at Bemidji State Park on May 6, 2020.



2019 Northome Teams