

**SUPERVISORS & STAFF
OF THE
KOOCHICHING SWCD**



Koochiching SWCD Board of Supervisors

Ralph Lewis, Birchdale
District I

George Aitchison, Littlefork
District II

Eldon Voigt, International Falls
District III

Richard Dreher, Northome
District IV

Al Linder, Ray
District V



Koochiching SWCD Staff

Pam Tomevi
District Administrator

Eric Olson
Resource Conservationist

Sam Soderman
Water Resource Specialist

James Aasen
Forest Resource Specialist

Jolen Simon
Program Coordinator

Questions?



Contact the SWCD at
218-283-1174 or
pam.tomevi@co.koochiching.mn.us

Additional information available at:
<https://bwsr.state.mn.us/swcd-board-supervisors>

Filing Open May 19 – June 2, 2020

**WHAT YOU NEED
TO KNOW ABOUT
RUNNING FOR
SUPERVISOR
OF THE
KOOCHICHING
COUNTY
SOIL & WATER
CONSERVATION
DISTRICT
(SWCD)**

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Soil and water conservation district supervisors are elected officials who have been entrusted with some of Minnesota's most precious assets: our natural resources. Your primary responsibility is to ensure that your community uses its natural resources wisely, with an eye toward the future. To do this, you must seek and achieve a delicate balance between people and the land we inhabit.

In order to be an effective board member and feel a sense of accomplishment for the people you serve, you must have a good working knowledge of your responsibilities as (1) an SWCD board member, (2) an elected official, and (3) a community leader.

There are three key aspects to the role of a supervisor as an SWCD board member: policy development, annual and long-range planning, and working with the district staff.

Policy Development

The SWCD board of supervisors is a policy board, meaning that its primary focus is not on running the day-to-day activities of the SWCD, but on setting overall policy and long-term objectives. The staff then uses these policies and objectives to ensure that the SWCD is proceeding in the general direction laid out by the board.

Board policy is a key element in the smooth operation of the SWCD. The board should develop policies on items ranging from expenditure of cost-share funds to the election of officers. Do not wait until a

situation arises requiring a policy; develop a policy beforehand so that guidelines are available if a question is raised. (See box on the previous page for examples of the types of things for which policies should be developed.)

Although it is the board's responsibility to develop policy and the staff's responsibility to implement it, you will find that the fairest and most useful policies are developed with the help of significant staff input.

Planning and Budgets

Because board members focus on long-range objectives and goals, one of the most important parts of your job is developing your SWCD's plans. Plan types include annual or biennial plans and budgets, comprehensive plans, water plans, etc.

Supervisors must be involved in all aspects of plan development and implementation, particularly in determining the long-term objectives of the SWCD. When working on the annual and long-range plans, supervisors should take a strong leadership role in the following areas:

- **Definition of purpose:** Supervisors must determine the purpose of the SWCD in the community.
- **Prioritization of resource problems:** Supervisors must decide which resource problems the SWCD will address and their relative importance. Supervisors should look at the big picture and develop broad policies that address the resource as a whole in their SWCD area. Staff can work within these broad policies to address individual concerns.

- **Development of objectives:** Supervisors must adapt the objectives they feel the SWCD should pursue to meet the resource needs of the SWCD area.
- **Determination of actions:** Supervisors must outline the actions to be taken by the board and staff to carry out their stated objectives. These actions should be consistent with their stated purpose and will result in a more effective conservation program.
- **Adoption of plan:** The board must formally adopt the plan. To achieve full participation in the planning process by both board and staff, a planning committee may be formed to develop the plan for recommendation to the board. The chair may appoint one or two board members to work with staff to develop the plan.

All plans and budgets should be reviewed on a regular basis to determine if goals are being achieved. The stated goals can be compared with actual performance and dollars available. Supervisors can use this information to decide what changes, if any, may be necessary to keep the SWCD on track.

Training and Leadership Opportunities

As a supervisor, you need orientation and ongoing training to perform your duties effectively. The Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) offers the Leadership Institute that provides individuals with skills to excel as leaders in conservation. Each supervisor should have a training plan, which is reviewed and updated regularly.