

**KOOCHICHING SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
REGULAR BOARD MEETING HELD VIA TELECONFERENCE  
MONDAY, APRIL 5, 2021 at 6:00 P.M.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT IN COUNTY BOARDROOM:** None

**MEMBERS PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE:** Supervisors Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Linder

**OTHERS PRESENT IN COUNTY BOARDROOM:** None

**OTHERS PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE:** Pam Tomevi, Jolen Simon, Eric Olson, Sam Soderman, Wayne Skoe (Koochiching County Commissioner), Kevin Adee (Koochiching County Commissioner); Jody Peek (NRCS); Matt Gouin (Koochiching County ESD); Chad Severts (BWSR)

Chair Voigt called the meeting to order at 6:13 p.m.

**2021/4-1 Motion by Lewis, seconded by Voigt to approve the agenda as presented.**

**Voting yes by roll call: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher. Members Absent: Linder. Motion carried.**

**2021/4-2 Motion by Lewis, seconded by Voigt to approve the minutes from the March 1, 2021 regular meeting as presented.**

**Voting yes by roll call: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher. Members Absent: Linder. Motion carried.**

**2021/4-3 Motion by Lewis, seconded by Linder to ratify paid bills, check numbers 11150 to 11158 including electronic transfers, in the total amount of \$54,295.33 (details on file).**

**Voting yes by roll call: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Linder. Motion carried.**

**2021/4-4 Motion by Lewis, seconded by Dreher to approve the Treasurer's report ending February 28, 2021 as presented.**

**Voting yes by roll call: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Linder. Motion carried.**

**2021/4-5 Motion by Linder, seconded by Lewis to allow payment of ordinary and necessary bills between April 6, 2021 and May 3, 2021, not to exceed budget.**

**Voting yes by roll call: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Linder. Motion carried.**

**Guest Introductions**

Chad Severts, BWSR Board Conservationist, provided an overview of various SWCD no-till drill programs and provided information on different funding options for program startup. Further discussion included assessing community need/interest in a local no-till drill program, staff capacity needs to run the program, and erosion reduction benefits. Staff will generate a map of potential sites/landowners in the county where no-till drill application would be beneficial and draft a landowner survey to assess program interest for the Board's review at a later date.

## **REPORTS**

### **Supervisor Reports:**

Voigt reported on:

- his attendance at the SWCD Area VIII meeting where it was discussed that a face-to-face meeting will be held at the end of June;
- his attendance at a meeting to review the FEMA Flood Area Change Map being led by Koochiching County Environmental Services. Gouin commented that potential adjustments may be needed for the current designated flood areas;
- his attendance at the Lake of the Woods TMDL meeting where discussion included sediment reductions needed in the Little Fork River Watershed.

### **Committee Reports:**

None.

### **NRCS District Conservationist Report:**

Peek reported on:

- Conservation Stewardship Program: 161 applications were received from 5 counties with 31 ranking as “high”. Of the 161 applications received, 20 were from Koochiching County with 6 ranking as “high”;
- EQIP: 2 applications received from Koochiching County with a ranking of “high”;
- NRCS offices are still closed to the public and are operating at 50% staff capacity in the office.
- A new staff person was hired for the Baudette NRCS field office and will begin to attend Koochiching SWCD Board Meetings.
- Attended the team planning meeting for the Rat Root River 319 grant where National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) funding was discussed.

### **District Administrator Report:**

See attached.

### **Resource Conservationist Report:**

See attached.

### **Water Resources Specialist Report:**

See attached.

### **Forest Resource Specialist Report:**

See attached.

### **Program Coordinator:**

See attached.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Resolutions Supporting 1W1P Applications and Boundary Changes**

Tomevi reviewed with the Board three (3) resolutions supporting One Watershed, One Plan applications and modified planning area boundary changes for Rapid River, Lower Rainy River, Rainy River-Rainy Lake, Rainy Headwaters, and Vermilion River watersheds and reported that each resolution is supported by adjacent counties and SWCDs within the various watersheds. Gouin commented that he will be presenting similar resolutions for County Board approval.

- 2021/4-6 Motion by Lewis, seconded by Voigt to adopt the following resolutions as presented:**
- **RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT A RAPID RIVER AND LOWER RAINY RIVER WATERSHED ONE WATERSHED, ONE PLAN PROJECT (Resolution 04-05-2021-01);**
  - **RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT A RAINY RIVER-RAINY LAKE AND LOWER RAINY RIVER WATERSHED ONE WATERSHED, ONE PLAN PROJECT (Resolution 04-05-2021-02);**
  - **RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT A RAINY HEADWATERS AND VERMILION RIVER WATERSHED ONE WATERSHED, ONE PLAN PROJECT (Resolution 04-05-2021-03).**

**Voting yes by roll call: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Linder. Motion carried.**

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **COVID Updates**

Discussion included individual board and staff member preferences for continuing to hold SWCD board meetings via teleconference or transition to in-person meetings and the possibility of compensating staff and supervisors who agree to receive the COVID-19 vaccination with paid time off.

- 2021/4-7 Motion by Lewis, seconded by Aitchison to hold the May board meeting via teleconference and, beginning with the June board meeting, transition to a hybrid of in-person and teleconference attendance, with the understanding that in-person attendance will be limited to the maximum allowed in the Koochiching County board room.**

**Voting yes by roll call: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher. Abstain: Linder. Motion carried.**

- 2021/4-8 Motion by Aitchison, seconded by Voigt authorizing one paid day off for staff and one paid per diem for supervisors to receive a COVID-19 vaccination.**

**Voting yes by roll call: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher. Abstain: Linder. Motion carried.**

### **Set Date to Convene Annual Local Working Group Meeting**

- 2021/4-9 Motion by Voigt, seconded by Lewis to hold the Local Working Group Meeting on Monday, June 14th at 7:00 p.m. via in-person and teleconference, with the understanding that in-person attendance will be limited to the maximum allowed in the Koochiching County board room.**

**Voting yes by roll call: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Linder. Motion carried.**

**Upcoming Meetings:**

Voigt explained to the Board that a meeting conflict prevented him from attending the virtual MASWCD legislative meeting in March and asked for Board approval to hold a conference call with Representative Rob Ecklund and Senator Tom Bakk to discuss current legislative agenda items.

**2021/4-10 Motion by Aitchison, seconded by Lewis authorizing Chair Voigt to hold a conference call with Representative Ecklund and Senator Bakk.**

**Voting yes by roll call: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher. Abstain: Linder. Motion carried.**

**Permits**

None.

**General Business**

None.

**Public Comment:**

Gouin reported that ESD is working on a geological atlas project with the MN Geological Survey over the next four years and requested SWCD assistance with mapping of approximately 1,000 wells.

Commissioner Skoe reported that a meeting regarding Bartlett Lake will take place in the near future.

**2021/4-11 Motion by Voigt, seconded by Lewis authorizing all supervisors to attend the Bartlett Lake meeting once scheduled.**

**Voting yes by roll call: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher. Abstain: Linder. Motion carried.**

**Confirm Next Meeting Date:**

The next regular board meeting of the Koochiching SWCD will be held on **Monday, May 3 at 7:00 p.m. via teleconference.**

**Adjournment:**

**2021/4-12 Motion by Lewis, seconded by Voigt to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 p.m.**

**Voting yes by roll call: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher. Absent for Vote: Linder. Motion carried**

**Submitted by:**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Board Secretary, George Aitchison**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Date**

**Approved:**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Chair, Eldon Voigt**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Date**

# Koochiching SWCD District Administrator Report

March 2021

- **BWSR Conservation Delivery**
  - eLINK updates; 1W1P discussions/resolution reviews; landowner assistance; website compliance file uploads; no till drill discussion/info with BWSR
- **BWSR Local Capacity**
  - Staff oversight/assistance; IRLWWB WebEx/WLC meetings; FY18/19 Local Capacity reconciliation files (search/scan/prepare reports for BWSR); Local Capacity story development and upload for MASWCD
- **County/District**
  - COVID-19/Legislative updates; staff meetings/work load updates; Board Meeting; County Board minutes; Legislative Days webinar; annual report
- **DNR Contracts:**
  - Expense tracking; program communications with project managers; website updates
- **MPCA Contracts**
  - Partner communications; expense tracking; change orders; Letter of support for upcoming LCCMR application;
- **Natural Resource Block Grant**
  - Discussions with landowners/staff/County Commissions/MPCA re: pink foam issue on Rainy River (PCA mill issue); Shorewood Drive discussions/invoices/geotechnical report review; eLINK updates; 319 NKE work plan development with staff/MPCA; National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) discussions
- **Wood Ash**
  - Landowner assistance

## **General Administration**

- Board meeting prep/follow-up items; Board minutes/agenda; calendar update/time tracking; Payroll; PERA/FWT/SWT; bank statement reconciliation; QB transactions/updates; Treasurer Report; Accounts Receivable; Accounts Payable, budget updates; bank deposits/online banking; file/record maintenance; general phone/mail/email

Submitted by:

Pam Tomevi, District Administrator

# Resource Conservationist Report

## March 2021

### WCA

- Assisting landowners with permit process and identifying areas of wetlands on possible wetland properties in the area.
- Working with DNR, BWSR, and ACOE on getting information for permits and actual project implementation.
- Continued work on WCA tasks and updating Koochiching ESD on in-progress projects.
- Work with various landowners on regulations and upcoming projects.

### Wood Ash

- Assisting landowners with process/working with DH contracting.
- Ash production is on average lower (~2 loads/day). New ENP results of 969.
- Working with DH contracting on permits and areas to dump/spread with current conditions.

### CPL Grants

- Assisting RLPOA on feasibility of obtaining a grant for increasing water flow, removing cattails, and restoring native veg.

### Water Quality

- Calls to project manager and other agencies to check river level status.
- All major and sub watershed sites open as of 3/30/2021 and are being sampled on a regular basis.

### Miscellaneous

- Various meetings, program changes, office coverage, mainly due to covid-19 responses to programs.
- 319 grant meetings and discussion on how to proceed with grant process with staff.
- Findings on Shorewood Drive from WSB engineering for a geotechnical report. Findings too be discussed between City of Int'l Falls, SWCD, Kooch County, and JPB.
- LOTW watershed forum.

Submitted by: Eric Olson

## Water Resource Specialist Report

### March 2021

#### AIS

- Calls/emails w/ Always There Staffing
- Inspection program documents filed
- 2021 NSL contract review/budget
- Watercraft inspection program planning
- AIS webinar series (3)

#### SWAG

- 2021 monitoring call

#### RBW

- Geomorph work w/ DNR MPCA
- Sediment fingerprinting field work
- Field work prep
- EQUIS Data entry, photolog, field notes
- BF watershed work planning, emails with MPCA staff
- BF call w/ MPCA, Itasca
- Rat Root River conversation with MPCA
- Rat Root River document review
- Stressor ID review
- Stormwater/WWTP chats with MPCA

#### LWM

- Rapid River WRAPS conversations
- Staff meeting
- Watershed field work planning
- Water plan watershed work
- 1W1P Call
- Jackfish Bay grant planning
- 319 grant
- Watershed Forum

#### WPLMN

- Sampling

#### Miscellaneous

- Emails
- Staff meeting

Submitted by: Sam Soderman

# Koochiching SWCD Forest Resource Specialist's Report

*March 2021*

## **Local Capacity-Forestry**

- Researched general forestry and forest health topics.
- Many landowner discussions involving native plant programs, FSP's, CAP's, SFIA, 2C tax designation, tree planting etc...
- Continued to write outreach articles for social media pages.
- Worked with multiple landowners to coordinate forest plans.
- Conducted field work on a property and completed a forest plan.
- Assisted a landowner in developing a large tree planting plan and map.
- Attended the LOW/Rainy Watershed Forum
- Continued to help organize a TSA 8 Tree and Shrub Site Prep and Planting Training
- Participated in the EPA 319 Grant development discussions.
- Participated in the MN DNR Cooperative Forest Management annual meeting.

## **Tree and Native Plant Sales**

- Processed and ordered trees for requested custom orders for spring sale.
- Worked with other staff to update and distribute order forms.
- Continued fielding calls regarding the regular spring sales and updating inventories.

## **Big Fork River LSP**

- Discussed LSP's and Clean Water/Forestry Initiatives with MPCA Big Fork Group.

## **NIPF Wrap-up Grant**

- Discussion and planning with BWSR stewardship coordinator on existing and future grants.
- Worked with staff to develop the forestry/PFM page for website.
- Demonstrated the use of the Access Forestry Database with partners from Beltrami SWCD.

## **Northern Landscape Committee**

- Coordination and correspondence with participants and speakers.
- Chaired the Northern Landscape Committee meeting, collected and sent follow-up materials to committee.
- Attended the MFRC and Northeast Landscape Committee quarterly meetings.

## **MN Buffer Initiative**

- Updated BuffCAT compliance tracking page and BWSR staff on county compliance progress.
- Continued to use new county aerial photography for buffer compliance web review.

Submitted by: James Aasen

*Forest Resource Specialist*

# **Koochiching SWCD Program Coordinator Report**

## **March 2021**

### **Local Capacity:**

- RSDP board meeting
- Website page development and updates
- Social media
- Web updates with eLINK numbers for website compliance
- Annual activity report
- 319 review and meeting
- Northern Landscape Committee Meeting prep and attend.

### **MPCA Rainy Basin Watershed Grant**

- Coordination regarding Lower Rainy and Rapid River Watersheds with LOW and EOR
- Big Fork Team Meeting
- Little Fork discussions and charter document
- International Watershed Forum

### **PCA Wood Ash**

- Updated summary, hauling reports and spreading reports
- Invoicing
- Coordination with DH and PCA

### **NRBG Grants**

- eLINK data entry
- website work
- Climatology reporting

### **General Administration**

Board meeting prep; minutes; plat book customer assistance; website maintenance; credit card tracking; vacation; weekly staff meetings and email cleanup, internet safety training

Submitted by:

Jolén Simon

Program Coordinator