KOOCHICHING SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD MEETING HELD VIA TELECONFERENCE
MONDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2022 at 7:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT IN PERSON: Supervisors Voigt, Lewis, Aitchison, Dreher, Linder.
MEMBERS PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE: None.
MEMBERS ABSENT: None.
OTHERS PRESENT IN PERSON: Jolen Simon
OTHERS PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE: Pam Tomevi, Whitney Sims, Sam Soderman, Wayne Skoe (Koochiching County Commissioner); Mike Hirst (Lake of the Woods SWCD); Will Lee (NRCS); Chad Severts (BWSR Board Conservationist)

Chair Dreher called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

2022/10-1 **Motion by Lewis, seconded by Voigt to approve the agenda with subtractions (remove treasurers report and ratification).**
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Linder. Motion carried.

2022/10-2 **Motion by Lewis, seconded by Voigt to approve the minutes dated September 12, 2022 as presented.**
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Linder. Motion carried.

2022/10-3 **Motion by Aitchison, seconded by Lewis to authorize payment of ordinary and necessary bills between October 3, 2022 and November 7, 2022, not to exceed budget.**
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Linder. Motion carried.

Guest Introductions

Mike Hirst of the Lake of the Woods SWCD introduced himself and reviewed the status and governance structure for the Rainy-Rapid One Watershed, One Plan. Hirst explained that the plan is nearing completion and asked the Board if they had interest in partnering on implementation through a formal structured agreement.

2022/10-4 **Motion by Voigt, seconded by Lewis to decline signing on as a governing agency for the Rainy-Rapid One Watershed One Plan implementation phase.**
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Linder. Motion carried.

REPORTS

Supervisor Reports:
Linder reported on his attendance at the Buckthorn and Emerald Ash Borer Workshop in Ranier on September 21st and Littlefork Sediment Fingerprinting Meeting on September 28th.
Voigt reported on his attendance at the MN SWCD Forestry Association Meeting where discussion included balsam and birch diseases and insect die-off as well as replacement species.

NRCS District Conservationist Report:
See attached.

District Administrator Report:
See attached. Discussion also included SWCD furniture and equipment no longer needed in the new office space and a request to work remotely during the next 2 months for family needs.

2022/10-5 **Motion by Voigt, seconded by Lewis to authorize the District Administrator to work remote as needed over the next two months and to sell one (1) Hon desk with return and hutch and two (2) black 4-drawer file cabinets, with funds from the sale deposited into the District's Bremer account.**
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Linder. Motion carried.

Resource Conservationist Report:
See attached.

Water Resources Specialist Report:
See attached.

Forest Resource Specialist Report:
See attached.

Program Coordinator:
See attached.

OLD BUSINESS
None.

NEW BUSINESS
FY2023 BWSR Grants
2022/10-6 **Motion by Voigt, seconded by Lewis to authorize the District Administrator's signature to execute the 2023 Buffer Law and 2023 Local Capacity Services grants and to administer the work plans.**
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Linder. Motion carried.

2022/10-7 **Motion by Voigt, seconded by Aitchison to authorize the District Administrator's signature to execute the 2023 Soil Health Cost Share grant and to administer the work plan.**
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Linder. Motion carried.

Management Representation Letter for 2021 Financial Audit
2022/10-8 **Motion by Voigt, seconded by Lewis to approve the proposed Management Representation Letter for the 2021 Financial Audit.**
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Linder. Motion carried.

Koochiching SWCD Clothing Allowance Policy (Amendment to Personnel Policy Handbook)

2022/10-9 **Motion by Voigt, seconded by Lewis to amend the Koochiching SWCD Personnel Policy Handbook to include the following: "Clothing Allowance - Subject to annual Board approval as an included expense in the operating budget, $100 maximum will be provided each year, per employee or supervisor, to purchase District-approved apparel with embroidered or screen-printed District logo; All costs above this amount will be paid by the employee or supervisor." Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Linder. Motion carried.**

2022 MASWCD Resolutions

The staff and board discussed the 14 proposed MASWCD resolutions for 2022 and voted on each.

Upcoming Meetings

None.

Permits

The Board reviewed DNR Permit Number 2022-2982, there were not comments or concerns.

General Business

None.

Public Comment:

None.

Confirm Next Meeting Date:

The next regular board meeting of the Koochiching SWCD will be held on **Monday, November 7, 2022, at 6:00 pm in the Koochiching County Courthouse Boardroom** with teleconference option available for guest attendance.

Adjournment:

2022/10-10 **Motion by Voigt, seconded by Lewis to adjourn the meeting at 8:39 p.m. Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Linder. Motion carried.**

Approved: _____ _____

Chair, Richard Dreher **Date**

United States Department of Agriculture

NRCS Report - Koochiching County SWCD Board Meeting October 3, 2022

Report Completed by William Lee, Soil Conservationist.

General/Partnerships:

- Cultural Resources Part #2 Field Day in Merrifield, MN – Sept. 7
- State Leadership Team Meeting and Tour – Sept. 13 – 15
- New Employee Orientation at St. Paul Office - Sept. 20 & 21
- New Employee, SINEW contractor started in Bemidji – Sept 26

Covid Updates/Status:

- Same guidelines as last reported no new changes
- If you have any questions about how USDA is handling Covid or the policy requirements please contact Jody

CSP *(Conservation Steward Program):*

- Work on CSP Renewals is ongoing. Baudette has 16 applications total (6 – KOO, 10 LOW) (9 NIPF, 7 Agland)
    - 6 were found to be ineligible, 2 have cancelled leaving 8 applications
- Assessment and ranking deadline October 21

EQIP *(Environmental Quality Incentives Program):*

- Currently taking applications, have interest from 7 applicants not all have applied. No official deadline for submitting applications this cycle. Last year was November 15

RCPP *(Regional Conservation Partnership Program):*

- No new updates

CRP *(Conservation Reserve Program):*

- LOW County had one Continuous CRP offer go to contract this month
- Continuous CRP signup is ongoing

WC/HELC *(Wetland Compliance/Highly Erodible Land Compliance):*

- Multiple requests for HEL determinations/WC projects came in for both KOO and LOW
    - 1026s are now processed at the field level and elevated to the wetland team in Thief River Falls as needed.

Upcoming October Workload/General Items:

- CSP & CRP regular annual payments
- EQIP payment for practices scheduled
- Work on field checks for all scheduled practices
- Complete assessment and Ranking of CSP renewals – October 21

Natural Resources Conservation Service
119 1st Ave NW Baudette, MN 56623
Phone: *218-634-2757 ext 3* Fax: *855-543-4409*
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Koochiching SWCD District Administrator Report

September 2022

- **AIS**

- **BWSR Cooperative Weed Management Area**
  - CCM contract

- **BWSR Conservation Delivery**
  - Board meeting prep/attendance/follow-up; erosion control assistance/TSA8 communications; office pack up/IT cable installs with IS Dept/office move; new staff training/updates; landowner erosion calls/follow up

- **BWSR Local Capacity**
  - Staff updates/oversight; IJC/WLC meetings/communication plan, CN Railroad discussions

- **County/District**
  - Website updates; change of address forms; 2021 financial audit follow up

- **DNR/CPL**
  - Work plan revisions and partner communications

- **MPCA Contracts**
  - Expense tracking and invoicing; partner communications

- **Natural Resource Block Grant**
  - eLINK updates; Water Levels Committee meetings and document review; high water/flooding updates/data and public meetings/presentations; with RLPOA/City of Ranier re: potential water flow restrictions; New staff hire/orientation and training; Border Lakes Association presentation/meeting re: 2022 flood

- **Wood Ash**
  - Landowner assistance/soil reports

- **Other**
  - Leave to care for dad

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

Koochiching SWCD Resource Conservationist Report
September 2022

WCA

- Worked with ESD on landowner questions and concerns with wetlands regulations
- Attended WCA training in Cass County
- DNR permit – landowner would like to extend his beach and use rocks that are located in the water as cribbing for a dock.

Wood Ash

- Assisting landowners with the wood ash process
- Working with DH contracting on permits
- Permitting new fields
- Follow up on old ash piles that have not been spread – Destry has officially started
- Follow-up with NDSU on missing soil reports – still waiting for one
- Called landowners to verify if ash has been spread

CPL Grants

- Project is expected to begin in 2023 as permits, plans, and contracts are in place. Funds are good until 6/30/2025

ShoreLand

- Site visit to a landowner in Ranier who is interested in Cost Share
- Site visit to a landowner on Shorewood

Other Business

- Well index work with ESD and county staff
- Moving offices

Upcoming Work/Training

- BWSR Academy – 25-27th

Submitted by: Whitney Sims

Water Resource Specialist Report

Sept 2022

AIS

- Inspection program management
- NSL and VNP collaboration
- AIS call-in
- Equipment prep
- Inspector check

LF WRAPS/BF WRAPS

- Geomorph work w/ DNR MPCA
- Sediment fingerprinting field work, passive sampler check
- Sample storage and delivery to USGS
- Field work prep
- Rapid River and Lower Rainy mapping, project development
- Site review for sediment fingerprinting field work, USGS meetings and collab
- Lower Rainy stormwater meeting
- Stormwater planning
- Spring survey work and BF watershed planning
- Watershed document review
- BF Watershed field work plan
- Upland sampling
- Passive samples

LWM/Local Capacity

- Rapid River WRAPS conversations
- GIS User Group Meeting
- LCCMR grant planning, field work plan, feasibility
- Grant budgets

WPLMN

- Sampling
- WPLMN call-in
- Hydrograph analysis

Miscellaneous

- Emails
- Staff meeting
- Vacation

Submitted by: Sam Soderman

Koochiching SWCD Forest Resource Specialist's Report

September 2022

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…
- Worked on coordinating several large 20+ acre tree plantings and cost-share with landowners.
- Completed an FSP and submitted for DNR review.
- Began organizing a community forestry/invasive project coordination training as part of TSA 8 training team.
- Attended the Birchdale CON CON Committee meeting and presented on district projects and programs.
- Attended the MFRC PFM Working Group Meeting in Cloquet.
- Met with new MFRC landscape coordinator to discuss the northern landscape committee needs.
- Continued planning the next NLC meeting and securing speakers, Jennifer Corcoran from DNR will discuss the state Lidar imagery project and we'll review a video from a US Fish and Wildlife Bat Conservation Plan presentation.

Cooperative Weed Management

- Conducted outreach and secured landowner contracts for buckthorn removal.
- Worked with the County, MCC, DNR, International Falls, Voyaguers NP, and Ranier city staff to ensure all steps of the project are accounted for.
- Held a buckthorn/EAB public workshop on September 21st.
- Began planning and coordination for the Koochiching 2022 CWMA partner meeting.

Tree and Native Plant Sales

- Continued to order trees and coordination of 2023 sales.
- Began working with landowners on custom orders and special request species.

Buffer Law

- Conducted buffer field monitoring and desktop review.

District

- Worked on maintenance and prep for office move.

Submitted by: James Aasen

Forest Resource Specialist

Koochiching SWCD Program Coordinator Report
September 2022

Local Capacity:
- Plan for BWSR Academy Session, work with BWSR staff
- Landowner outreach and planning for community project
- RSDP Board Meeting

MPCA Little Fork WRAPS Cycle 2
- Planning for upcoming meetings regarding sediment fingerprinting work
- Held first meeting on September 28th in Littlefork
- Upcoming meetings October 4 (Effie), and October 6 (Cook).

CWMA
- Outreach to Ranier landowners for Buckthorn project, coordination for project.

Conservation Delivery:
- Outstanding Conservationist of the Year Award coordination and submittal
- Walk-in and phone customer assistance
- Social media posts and website updates

PCA Wood Ash
- Permit coversheets
- Customer assistance
- Met with hauling contractor
- End user forms

NRBG Grants
- Social media updates
- Customer service for walk-ins
- Enter climatology, print forms for volunteers, communications with NRCS on volunteer hours
- MASWCD Award interview/edit and submit
- Envirothon discussions with other districts
- Update writeup for Con-con meeting and Big Fork River Board Meeting

General Administration
Board meeting prep; minutes; holiday; website maintenance; credit card tracking; eLINK reporting; office move; vacation.

Submitted by:
Jolén Simon
Program Coordinator