

**KOOCHICHING SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD MEETING HELD VIA TELECONFERENCE
MONDAY, JULY 3, 2023 at 7:00 P.M.**

MEMBERS PRESENT IN PERSON: Supervisors Lewis, Voigt, Aitchison, Reller.

MEMBERS PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE: None.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dreher.

OTHERS PRESENT IN PERSON: Jolen Simon, Pam Tomevi, James Aasen, Marcie Peeters

OTHERS PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE: Will Lee

Chair Lewis called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

**2023/7-1 Motion by Aitchison, seconded by Reller to approve the agenda with additions.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller. Motion carried.**

**2023/7-2 Motion by Voigt, seconded by Reller to approve the minutes dated June 5,
2023 as presented.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller. Motion carried.**

**2023/7-3 Motion by Reller, seconded by Aitchison to ratify paid bills, check numbers 11403 to
11418 including electronic transfers, in the total amount of \$42,857.53. (details on
file).
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller. Motion carried.**

**2023/7-4 Motion by Reller, seconded by Voigt to approve the Treasurer's report ending May
31, 2023 as presented.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller. Motion carried.**

**2023/7-5 Motion by Aitchison, seconded by Reller to approve accounts payable in the amount
of \$198.36 (details on file), and authorize payment of ordinary and necessary bills
between July 4, 2023 and August 7, 2023, not to exceed budget.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller. Motion carried.**

Guest Introductions

None.

REPORTS

Supervisor Reports:

Voigt reported on his attendance at the MN SWCD Forestry Meeting and noted that NRCS is now hiring many new staff; Voigt also attended the Area VIII meeting and noted a request from MASWCD Director Buck that board members review a goal of accomplishment for this year and what change they'd like to see in their board meetings.

Committee Reports:

None.

NRCS District Conservationist Report:

See attached.

District Administrator Report:

See attached.

Resource Conservationist:

See attached.

Water Resources Specialist Report:

See attached.

Forest Resource Specialist Report:

See attached.

Program Coordinator:

See attached.

OLD BUSINESS**Policy and Handbook Updates:**

- 1. Operational Policy Handbook**
- 2. Employee Handbook**

The District Administrator described the need for updates to each of the handbooks listed above.

**2023/7-6 Motion by Voigt, seconded by Reller authorizing Supervisors Voigt, Aitchison, and the District Administrator to meet once in August and in September 2023 to draft the updated Operational Policy Handbook and Employee Handbook to be voted upon at a future board meeting by the full board. If/when three Supervisors are planned to be present, this meeting will be posted publicly.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller. Motion carried.**

NEW BUSINESS**Resolution “2023 Guidelines on Use of SWCD Aid Payments”.**

The District Administrator reviewed new guidelines required for online compliance regarding Local Capacity or SWCD Aid Payments.

**2023/7-7 Motion by Voigt, seconded by Reller authorizing the Chair’s signature on the Resolution “2023 Guidelines on Use of SWCD Aid Payments” as presented.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller. Motion carried.**

BWSR State Cost Share

The District Administrator discussed changes to engineering assistance previously utilized through TSA8 and reviewed potential projects.

After a discussion of options on how to structure engineering cost assistance, it was decided to continue the discussion at the August meeting when more information will be available.

Upcoming Meetings

2023/7-8 **Motion by Voigt, seconded by Reller authorizing the District Administrator to attend the IRLWWB Basin Meetings between August 15-17 in Baudette/Kenora, Ontario and authorizing all Supervisors to attend the U.S. Public meeting in Baudette on August 16; to authorize the Resource Conservationist to attend Basic Wetland Deliniation Training September 11-15 in Brainerd.**
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Dreher, Reller. Motion carried.

Permits

None.

General Business

None.

Public Comment:

None.

Confirm Next Meeting Date:

The next regular board meeting of the Koochiching SWCD will be held on **Monday, August 7, 2023, at 7:00 pm in the Koochiching County Courthouse Boardroom** with teleconference option available for guest attendance.

Adjournment:

2023/7-9 **Motion by Reller, seconded by Aitchison to adjourn the meeting at 9:07 p.m.**
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller. Motion carried.

Approved:

Chair Ralph Lewis

Date



United States Department of Agriculture

Koochiching Board Report

July NRCS Report
Completed By: William Lee

07/03/2023

General Business

- New forester set to start in Mid-August in Bemidji but will cover entire team
- Local work group meetings in progress throughout the team, Koochiching and LOW final documentation is complete and ready for Jody to forward on
- Jody's tribal work with NOFO grant has continued through the month
- New administrative Assistant position in Bemidji that be hired directly with NRCS, not contracted, not filled yet posting/hiring process is ongoing
- New planners have been working with ARCs for JAA and working toward completing certified planner requirements
- Completed soil health inventory for all field offices across Minnesota so the state office can order what is missing

CSP (Conservation Stewardship Program):

- Planners are beginning to meet with participants and plan CSP classic applications. Baudette had 17 applications ranked at the ranking deadline, currently 13 are preapproved for funding

EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentives Program):

- Additional EQIP Dollars were provided to the state again and the Baudette office picked up one additional application, in Koochiching County, bringing Baudette office total to 9 applications moving forward. All other field offices on the team also had additional preapprovals

Upcoming Workload/General Items:

- Soil health field day in Williams on July 5, 2023
- Approval deadline for CSP is July 14, 2023
- Obligation deadline for CSP is August 18, 2023
- EQIP applications need to be obligated ASAP as more become preapproved
- Many field visits need to be completed for applied practices on current contracts

Koochiching SWCD District Administrator Report

June 2023

- **BWSR Conservation Delivery**
 - 319 Nine Element Plan for Rat Root River review/ finalize and send to MPCA staff for final review; written authorization from Ed Lombard to use photos; landowner visit re: his ideas for dams/reservoir construction for water control; review legislative update summary report
- **BWSR Local Capacity**
 - Staff oversight/assistance; IJC/IRLWWB/WLC meetings; Post flood report updates; Visit with Congressman Stauber's staff; presentation to Rainy Lake Property Owners Association on basin governance and water management
- **County/District**
 - Staff meetings/workload updates; Board Meeting; Follow up Audit documents to CPA; Onboarding for new staff; updated billing rates; County computer security training
- **DNR/CPL**
 - CPL Cattail project partner/contractor updates
- **MPCA/Other Contracts**
 - Contracts for consultants on Northern Landscape plan update (MFRC); correspondence with Bois Forte/MPCA re: potential collaboration on future 319 grant;
- **Natural Resource Block Grant**
 - eLINK updates; 1W1P Policy Committee meetings / document prep / follow-up and Consultant updates; Wetland coordination with ESD, DNR conservation officers and BWSR;

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

June 2023

WCA

- Completed BWSR self-study online training section
- Shadowed Lynda Ponting (BWSR) in site visit

Wood Ash

- Basic overview of Wood Ash Permitting process
- Reviewed current soil test results and proceeded to next steps
- Trained on GIS mapping to update ash delivery status
- Engaged with landowner follow up questions

Other Business

- Completing County Technology Policies and training
- Onboarding paperwork and training
- Introduced to overview of Cost Share Program

Upcoming Work/Training

- Anticipate training with Whitney Sims on Wood Ash procedure

Submitted by: Marcie Peeters

Water Resource Specialist Report

June 2023

AIS

- Inspection program management
- NSL and VNP collaboration
- AIS call-in
- Equipment prep
- AIS online workshops
- Supervising inspectors, site visit
- Decon prep, fill, deploy
- AIS training for inspectors

LCCMR

- Sample collection
- Passive Sampler installation
- Sample prep with USGS, LOTW SWCD
- Site prep, equipment prep
- Sample filter, syphon, analyze
- Sample drop off and equipment pickup

LF WRAPS/BF WRAPS

- Geomorph data review
- Sediment fingerprinting proceedings paper review
- Spring survey work and BF watershed planning
- Watershed document review
- BF Watershed field work plan
- BF professional judgment meeting

LWM/Local Capacity

- Rapid River WRAPS conversations
- GIS User Group Meeting
- Grant budgets
- DNR assistance for Rat Root

WPLMN

- Sampling, spring and rain event
- WPLMN call-in
- Hydrograph analysis

Miscellaneous

- Emails
- Staff meeting

Koochiching SWCD Forest Resource Specialist's Report

June 2023

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...
- Conducted many forest planning discussions and coordinated plan writing.
- Conducted fieldwork on two properties and began developing forest stewardship plans.
- Attended the SWCD Area 8 Meeting in Bemidji.
- Helped with new staff training.
- Continued assisting Ranier with EAB grant deliverables. Presented on the City Tree Management plan to City Council and helped suggest appropriate trees for removal and replacement trees at area nursery.

MFRC-Northern Landscape Committee

- Continued to identify regional stakeholders and extend invites for NLC management plan update
- Began organizing the first large partner meeting for NLC management plan update.
- Selected a plan writing contractor and helped get contracts signed.
- Presented on management plan coordination accomplishments to the MFRC Landscape Advisory Committee.

Cooperative Weed Management Area

- Discussed leafy spurge spread along highway 71 with county partners.
- Discussed parsnip control with several landowners, exploring cost-share options.

SWCD Tree and Native Plant Sale

- Inquired into tree tube distribution with Traverse SWCD.

Submitted by: James Aasen

Forest Resource Specialist

Koochiching SWCD Program Coordinator Report

June 2023

Local Capacity:

- eLINK data entry
- Website updates and outreach materials sharing for LoW SWCD, social media posts

MPCA BF WRAPS Cycle 2

- Monthly call-in
- Outreach planning meeting
- Attend Northern Progressive meeting in Northome to deliver Big Fork River Watershed preliminary results and general SWCD information
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BWSR 1W1P

- Attend Policy Committee meeting, take notes

BWSR Conservation Delivery:

- Assist walk-in and call-in landowners

PCA Wood Ash

- Customer assistance
- Process hauling report items
- Assist in mapping and landowner communication for permitting
- End user letters sent to landowners for completed fields
- Update brochures and website with updated staff information

MFRC-Northern Landscape Committee

- Steering Committee Meeting and minutes
- Planning items for informational meeting on July 20th.

NRBG Grants

- Customer service for walk-ins
- eLINK data entry
- Local Working Group prep and attend
- Attend and teach at Outdoor Education Days at VNP Headquarters plus prep and cleanup
- Climatology volunteer organization – parts replacements and

General Administration

Board meeting prep; minutes; website maintenance; credit card tracking; eLINK reporting; board meeting follow up; staff meetings; timesheet coding; staff report.

Submitted by:

Jolén Simon

Program Coordinator