

**KOOCHICHING SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
MONDAY, JUNE 2, 2025**

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

MEMBERS PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE: None.

MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

OTHERS PRESENT IN PERSON: Pam Tomevi, Jolen Simon, James Aasen, Austin Wallin (SWCD); Jody Peek (NRCS); Tom Dougherty (RLPOA)

OTHERS PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE: None.

Chair Voigt called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m.

**2025/6-1 Motion by Lewis, seconded by Reller to approve consent agenda items as presented: 6/2/2025 Agenda, 5/5/2025 Minutes, Ratification of paid bills for March and April 2025 totaling \$153,996.38, Treasurer Reports ending 3/31/2025 and 4/30/2025, and to allow payment of ordinary and necessary bills not to exceed budget.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller. Motion carried.**

Guest Introductions:

Tom Dougherty, member of the Voyageur Country ATV Club, introduced himself to the Board and described the Club and the trail system. There is a desire to connect other trail systems to those here in the north. The first trail to be constructed (other than the Blue Ox Trail), is from County Road 122 in St. Louis County to County Road 3 (Ray North Road). Trail funding is typically through Grant in Aid funds, with some Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board (IRRRB) funds in St. Louis County. There will be some wetlands credits which will need to be purchased. Within Koochiching County, using school forest land, county and forest roads, and one private property and a bridge, plans are being made to put in the trail from County Road 3 to 119 (roughly 5 miles).

A grant application has been submitted to the Federal Highway Administration. Dougherty requested the SWCD to possibly assist with engineering fees and/or construction fees. Dougherty will send information to the District Administrator for review. Project timeline: July 2026.

Supervisor Reports

Lewis reported that the MN SWCD Forestry Association meeting was canceled.

Aitchison reported on planning for the Little Fork River 1W1P meetings. A suggestion was made that SWCD alternates be allowed to be present at some meetings to keep up with happenings in the process.

**2025/6-2 Motion by Aitchison, seconded by Reller authorizing alternate Supervisors to attend 1W1P meetings to remain up to date.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller. Motion carried.**

Committee Reports

None.

NRCS District Conservationist Report

Peek reported on operations updates. Reduction in Force plans have not yet been put into place. It is now confirmed that the Baudette office will not be closing as had previously been seen on the DOGE website. A reorganization plan could be rolled out on June 6th.

A process is being created to cover field checks between all staff available. Renewal applications are also being completed for landowners in Koochiching County. Future IRA money is confirmed to be unavailable.

Program Coordinator

Highlights included the Envirothon event (97 students), STEAM Night Event (macroinvertebrates), Outdoor Ed Days, assistance with Native Plant Sale and Tree Sale, participation in 1W1P meetings, NERSDP Board meetings, Big Fork partner public participation meetings, social media posts, the Hubbard SWCD subgrant, and Household Hazardous Waste Collection surveys.

Forest Resource Report

Discussion included the tree sale, which had over 100 orders this year. Tree plantings included one on the bank of the Littlefork River for stabilization and one for the 319 grant using the tree planter.

A request was made to reimburse Supervisor Aitchison for his planting assistance time and mileage, as a crew was not able to be secured for planting.

**2025/6-3 Motion by Voigt, seconded by Reller authorizing per diem and mileage for Supervisor Aitchison's time assisting with tree planting for the 319 project.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller. Motion carried.**

Discussions on Jackfish Bay cattail project have continued; a native planting on South Jackfish bay will be happening soon and CCM will be able to assist with this; a forestry tour was planned in Beltrami Island, but with the fires, it needed to be postponed to fall; a work plan for MFRC is currently be prepared to fund Northern Landscape Committee activities for the next year; a work plan for a new contract with DNR to assist with PFM work is being developed.

Resource Conservationist Report

Discussion included working with the Trimble device on the Jackfish Bay area to assess elevation; Koochiching County Highway will be removing the remaining material from the bypass road; the new agricultural drone has been purchased and is being registered/insured - because the drone is so large, an enclosed trailer will be purchased to transport it as part of the approved budget for the drone package under the Rainy River-Rainy Lake WBIF funding; a lack of rain has meant less water sampling and the ability to catch up on other things; the native plant sale was a success with roughly 20 orders and the native plant pop-up sale was popular and was nearly sold out - next year, the plan will be to order more to expand the program as there is a clear need in the community for local sources.

District Administrator Report

Discussion included significant amount of time spent this month on the 1W1P grants and the 2024 District and 1W1P financial audit with Peterson Company; BWSR 1W1P Rainy River Rainy Lake grant reconciliation is complete and approved; Koochiching County Commissioner Hell contacted the Administrator regarding a complaint from a resident near the Jackfish Bay cattail removal project. The Administrator will continue to keep the Board updated on future communications related to this project.

OLD BUSINESS

Update on Vacant District IV Supervisor Position

No submissions were received. Outreach will continue for applications. Staff will update the website and reach out on social media.

Update on Vacant Water Resource Specialist Position

The Budget and Personnel Committees will be contacted in the next few weeks to discuss the Water Resource Specialist position description.

NEW BUSINESS:

Teleconference Change from GoTo Meeting to MS Teams Meeting

Tomevi discussed having researched the possibility of changing from the GoTo Meeting platform to MS Teams for online meetings. This change would mean no cost to the District and would be easier to use.

**2025/6-4 Motion by Voigt, seconded by Reller authorizing the District Administrator to move the District from GoTo Meeting to MS Teams Meeting.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller. Motion carried.**

Border Bank Account

**2025/6-5 Motion by Voigt, seconded by Reller authorizing the District Administrator to open a new checking account through Border Bank for 1W1P funds and designate signers, Tomevi, Simon, Supervisor Voigt, Supervisor Lewis.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller. Motion carried.**

Conservation Contracts

**2025/6-6 Motion by Reller, seconded by Aitchison authorizing an amendment of contract CCCS24-1 (increasing from \$15,000 to \$18,000) as presented and to approve CCC25-1 for critical area planting on the basis of 75% in the amount of \$3,750 as presented.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller. Motion carried.**

Upcoming Contracts

2025/6-7 Motion by Voigt, seconded by Lewis authorizing the District Administrator to enter into the following contracts and to act as a designated signatory:
1. MFRC – Northern Landscape Committee Support (no match)
2. MN DNR – PFM Grant (no match)
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller. Motion carried.

Upcoming Meetings:

None.

Permits:

None.

Informational: Ranier dock permit was approved.

General Business:

**2025/6-8 Motion by Voigt, seconded by Aitchison authorizing the District Administrator as the signatory on “Addressing Rural Environmental Education Capacity as Part of the Forest Regeneration for Water Quality, Climate Resiliency Curriculum”.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller. Motion carried.**

Public Comment:

None.

Confirm Next Meeting Date:

The next regular board meeting of the Koochiching SWCD will be held on **Monday, July 7, 2025, at 8:30 a.m. at the Cobblestone Hotel & Suites.**

Adjourn Meeting:

Meeting adjourned at 10:11 a.m.

Approved:

Chair, Eldon Voigt

Date