

**KOOCHICHING SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
MONDAY, AUGUST 4, 2025**

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

MEMBERS PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE: None.

MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

OTHERS PRESENT IN PERSON: Pam Tomevi, James Aasen, Jolen Simon (SWCD), Eve Hemstad; Jim Hanson, Lloyd Skogstad, Georgia Growette, Al Meadows, Myrna Meadows, Brian Mathews, Harlan Schauer.

OTHERS PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE: None.

Chair Voigt called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

**2025/8-1 Motion by Reller, seconded by Aitchison to approve consent agenda items as presented: 8/4/2025 Agenda, 7/7/2025 Minutes, Ratification of paid bills June 2025 totaling \$37,924.08, Treasurer Report ending 6/30/2025, and to allow payment of ordinary and necessary bills not to exceed budget.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller. Motion carried.**

Guest Introductions:

Hanson, Skogstad, Growette, Meadows, Meadows, Matthews, and Schauer introduced themselves and explained that they are present to discuss the cattail project on County Road 134.

Supervisor Reports

Voigt reported on the forestry meeting where moose habitat was discussed as well as the future of SFIA. There is concern about an option to opt out of SFIA contracts.

Committee Reports

None.

Public Comment:

Voigt read aloud a draft letter from the Board to property owners in response to their June 10, 2025 letter to the Board and a draft letter from the Board to the MN Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR) requesting they perform a site visit on waters adjacent to County Road 134.

Several landowners reiterated their concerns related to cattail debris and silt around their docks and commented that MN DNR had already been onsite but did not identify additional solutions to address their concerns.

**2025/8-2 Motion by Lewis, seconded by Aitchison to approve and send the letter to the property owners east and west of County Road 134 and the letter to the MN DNR as presented and read (copies on file).
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller. Motion carried.**

NRCS District Conservationist Report

Peek reported on operations updates. Federal IRA funding has been canceled. Out of 4,000 practice/project applications, 400 may be able to be funded. Screening and priority setting are being developed. Staffing losses will make processing difficult. Aitchison inquired on Baudette office staffing and Peek explained that limits on travel have affected the ability to staff that office.

Program Coordinator Report

Discussion included invoicing, grant reporting, and well testing clinic.

Forest Resource Report

Discussion included completed accessibility requirements regarding Northern Landscape Plan, grant ended July 1st. Organizing Little Fork Landscape Stewardship Plan for forestry portion for 1W1P, meeting held in Cook for this; participated in Public Kickoff meetings for Big Fork River Watershed and Little Fork River Watershed 1W1P, funds remain in Cooperative Weed Management grant, although there is limited availability for CCM crews due to recent cuts so other options are being looked into; follow up reporting being done for cost-share projects; discussed wild parsnip management.

Resource Conservationist Report

Absent, no report.

District Administrator Report

Discussion included a data request, 1W1P work, staff vacancy.

OLD BUSINESS

Update on Vacant District IV Position

No official applications have been received although one person has shown interest but lives just outside the District IV boundary line.

Tomevi recommended the Board review current boundary lines with current population numbers and stated she would work with staff to prepare the information for their review at the next board meeting.

Update on Vacant Water Resource Specialist Position

Six applications have been received to date. Proposed interview date would be August 15th, with a proposed start date of September 15th.

NEW BUSINESS:

Big Fork River Watershed MOA

2025/8-3 Motion by Voigt, seconded by Lewis authorizing the Koochiching SWCD to sign an updated Memorandum of Agreement recognizing Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe as a signator on the Big Fork River Watershed One Watershed, One Plan.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller. Motion carried.

2024 Financial Audit

2025/8-4 Motion by Lewis, seconded by Reller approving the 2024 Financial Audit and to approve the Chair's and Administrator's signatures on the Management Representation Letter.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller. Motion carried.

Cost Share Vouchers

2025/8-5 Motion by Lewis, seconded by Reller authorizing the amendment and approval of payment in the amount of \$6,000 for SHCS25-6 and authorizing approval of payment for CCCS-1, pending technical signoff. Details on file.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller. Motion carried.

Discussion also included creating a future BWSR Cost-share authorization standard.

Upcoming Meetings:

Informational only:

- Koochiching SWCD Well Testing Clinic: August 26th
 - Pickup Locations: Koochiching SWCD Office and Birchdale Community Center
- Voigt to attend
 - IJC Adaptive Management August 14 and Resolutions meeting on August 21st

2025/8-6 Motion by Voigt, seconded by Aitchison authorizing Supervisors and staff to attend the Area VIII tour and meeting in Bemidji September 18-19 and for Voigt to attend the meeting virtually on the 19th.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller. Motion carried.

General Business:

2025/8-7 Motion by Lewis, seconded by Voigt authorizing the District Administrator's signature on the FY25-26 Northern MN Healthy Forests for Clean Water Service Delivery grant with the MN DNR.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller. Motion carried.

CCM intern:

The Conservation Corps of MN and IA is looking for sites in to host CCM interns for six months in 2026. Koochiching SWCD staff have expressed an interest in serving as a host site, pending Board approval if selected.

Open Meeting Law:

During Public Comment, meeting guests complained of outside noise and requested the meeting room door be closed. Citing the open meeting law, the District Administrator indicated the door needed to remain open but agreed to look into how to reduce noise in the meeting room while still complying with the open meeting law.

Confirm Next Meeting Date:

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

Adjourn Meeting:

2025/8-8 Motion by Lewis, seconded by Voigt to adjourn the meeting at 10:06 p.m.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller. Motion carried.

Approved:

Chair, Eldon Voigt

Date_____