

**KOOCHICHING SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 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, Austin Wallin (SWCD), Jody Peek (NRCS), Jim Hanson, Lloyd Skogstad, Georgia Growette, Al Meadows, Myrna Meadows, Dave Amerud.

OTHERS PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE: None.

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

2025/9-1 Motion by Reller, seconded by Lewis to approve consent agenda items as with additions to the agenda and corrections to the minutes: 9/8/2025 Agenda, 8/4/2025 Minutes, Ratification of paid bills July 2025 totaling \$86,226.99, Treasurer Report ending 7/31/2025, and to allow payment of ordinary and necessary bills not to exceed budget.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller. Motion carried.

Guest Introductions:

North Jackfish Bay property owners Hanson, Skogstad, Growette, A. Meadows, M. Meadows, introduced themselves and explained that they are present to discuss the cattail project on County Road 134 and request assistance with submitting a Conservation Partners Legacy (CPL) grant application to address their concerns outlined in their June 10, 2025 letter to the Board.

Voigt recapped the project and the concerns previously heard. Voigt informed the Board that he had engaged in multiple discussions with members of the North Jackfish Bay property owners since the August board meeting regarding their work on a draft CPL grant application.

Myrna Meadows provided an overview of their draft grant application totaling \$125,000 plus the \$35,000 match and stated that the required match would come from Koochiching County through their cost to remove the remaining bypass road materials from both sides of the new culvert.

Tomevi reported that she had met with CPL grant staff on 9/2/2025 to review the grant objectives as provided by Meadows and Growette and, according to CPL staff, the stated objectives do not meet the eligibility requirements for CPL grant funding.

2025/9-2 Motion by Lewis, seconded by Reller to deny the request from North Jackfish Bay property owners for SWCD assistance on the draft CPL grant application as presented due to ineligibility.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller. Motion carried.

2025/9-3 Motion by Voigt, seconded by Aitchison for the Resource Conservationist to call the DNR area hydrologist to reiterate the Board's request for a site visit to the cattail project area.
Voting yes: Aitchison, Voigt, Reller. Voting no: Lewis. Motion carried.

Supervisor Reports

Voigt reported on attending the MASWCD Resolutions Committee meeting where the resolution making SFIA a legislative priority did not pass. Aitchison reported on his attendance at the Personnel Committee interviews for the staff vacancy, the Little Fork 1W1P meetings, and the Big Fork River Board meeting in Big Falls.

Committee Reports

The Personnel Committee reported they had interviewed 5 candidates for the Water Resource Specialist position on August 15 but have not yet made a hiring decision.

NRCS District Conservationist Report

Peek reported on operations updates. EQIP application deadline was August 1st and 5 applications were received in Koochiching County. The Baudette open position was listed as a “mission critical” vacancy, meaning an NRCS employee could transfer from a lateral position but has not yet been filled.

Program Coordinator

Discussion included Little Fork River (LFR) and Big Fork River (BFR) 1W1P meetings, well testing clinic (22 nutrient samples and 15 arsenic samples), interim reporting for 319 and final reporting for MPCA Big Fork WRAPs contract. A wood ash meeting took place between partners where staff met new PCA staff. There is a need for more permits-please spread the word. Lake of the Woods SWCD is promoting the program via a newspaper article and handing out samples.

Forest Resource Report

Discussion included 1W1P meetings for the LFR and BFR watersheds, working with contracted consultants to coordinate the Landscape Stewardship Plan for the LFR watershed, organizing a peatland restoration project tour, developed a pollinator planting, working on 319 projects and work plan modification, assisting with new hire discussions, coordinating with wild parsnip control for the fall – the County has contracted an herbicide sprayer for private properties who can utilize CWMA cost-share, working on a Clean Water Forestry Grant to help fund technical forestry work, tree program planning has begun, Emerald Ash Borer has been identified in the city of Virginia and Beltrami County – Koochiching County has some of the highest concentration of black ash which will drastically affect the water table.

Resource Conservationist Report

Discussion included a site visit on the Rat Root River on a possible 319 project, wood ash permitting, WCA, and wild rice seeding prep for the cattail removal project area.

District Administrator Report

Discussion included leave/remote work, data request, cattail project wrap up, Water Resource Specialist interviews, and grants management. Tomevi stated that, in light of the power outage during today’s meeting, future board packets will now be sent out electronically and hard copy to avoid dependency on internet connections for meeting material access during board meetings.

2025/9-4 Motion by Voigt, seconded by Lewis to commend staff for doing an excellent job managing the cattail project and for meeting and/or exceeding expected outcomes. Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

Update on Vacant District IV Supervisor

Tomevi reported that no applications have been received to date and reviewed current district boundary lines. Tomevi presented copies of the proposed boundary changes for District II and District IV and the breakdown of the potential change in eligible members to serve on the Board.

2025/9-5 Motion by Voigt, seconded by Aitchison to approve the revised district boundaries as presented and adopt resolution 2025-2 Nomination Districts Resolution as follows:

2025-2 NOMINATION DISTRICTS RESOLUTION

(REVISED)

Be it resolved by the Koochiching Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisors that pursuant to M.S. 103C.311, the district be divided into five areas for nominating candidates for the positions of Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisors to be elected at-large as follows:

DISTRICT I

From a point located at the NW corner of Sec.7 – T 160 N – R 29W, thence South along a line on the Western boundary of Koochiching County to a point located at the SW corner of Sec. 31 – T 156 N – R 29W, thence East along a line to a point located at the SE corner of Sec. 36 – T 156 N – R 25W, thence North to a point located at the NE corner of Sec. 13 – T 158 N – R 25 W, at its junction with Rainy River, thence West along the United States border to the point of beginning.

DISTRICT II

From a point located at the NW corner, Sec. 13 – T 158 N – R 25 W, thence South along a line to a point located at the SW corner of Sec. 23– T 67 N – R 27 W, thence East along a line to a point located at the SE corner of Sec. 24 – T 67N – R 25 W, thence North along a line to a point located at the NE corner of Sec. 24 – T 70 N – R 25 W, at its junction with Rainy River, thence West along the United States border to the point of beginning.

DISTRICT III

From a point located at the NE corner of Sec. 24 – T 70 N – R 25 W, thence South along a line to a point located at the SW corner of Sec. 31 – T 70 N – R 24 W, thence East along a line to a point located at the SE corner of Sec. 36 – T 70 N – R 22W, thence North along a line following the Eastern boundary of Koochiching County to its junction with the United States border, thence West along the United States border to the point of beginning.

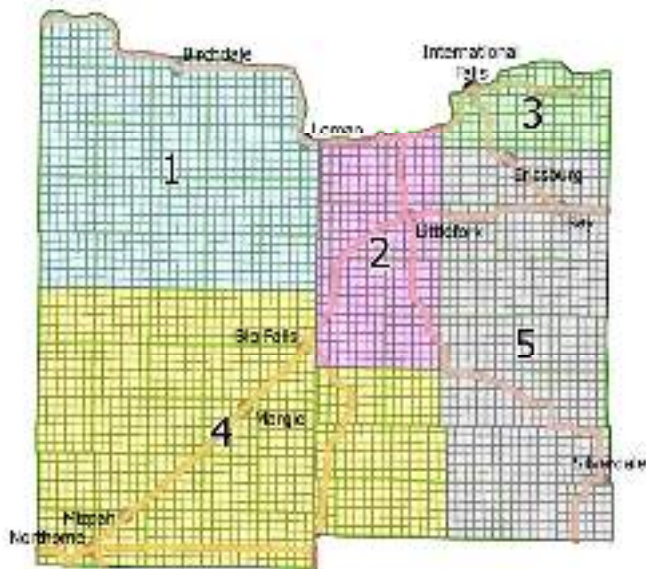
DISTRICT IV

From a point located at the NW corner of Sec. 6 – T 155 N – R 29 W, thence along a line South, following the West boundary of Koochiching County to a point located at the SW corner of Sec. 31 – T 151 N – R 29 W, thence East along the Southern boundary of Koochiching County to a point located at the SE corner of Sec. 36 – T 63 N – R 25 W, thence North along the Eastern boundary of Townships on R 25 W to a point located at the NE corner of Sec. 25 – T 66 N – R 25 W, thence West along a line to the point of beginning.

DISTRICT V

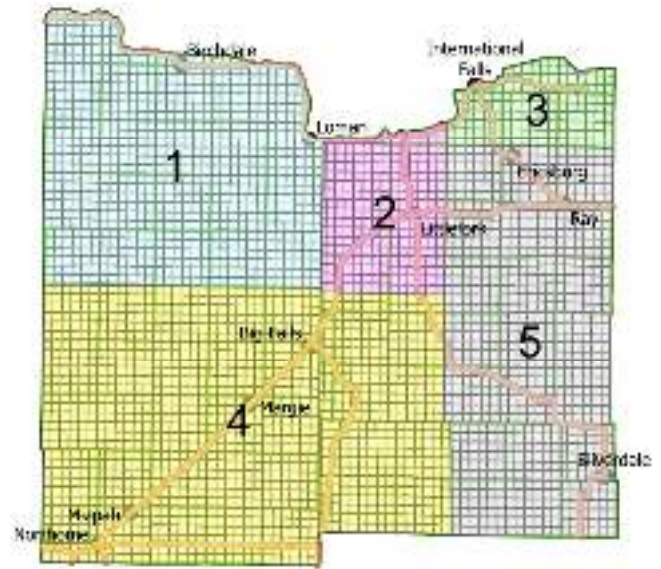
From a point located at the NW corner of Sec. 6 – T 69 N – R 24 W, thence along a line South to a point located at the SW corner of Sec. 31 – T 63 N – R 24 W, which follows the Western boundary of Townships on R 24W, thence East along the Southern boundary of Koochiching County to a point located at the SE corner of Sec. 36 – T 63 N – R 22 W, thence North along the Eastern boundary of Koochiching County to a point located at the NE corner of Sec. 1 – T 69 N – R 22 W, thence West along a line to the point of beginning.

Current District Lines



District II eligible candidates over 18 – 1203
District IV eligible candidates over 18 – 882

Proposed District Lines



District II eligible candidates over 18 – 1152
District IV eligible candidates over 18 – 933

Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller. Motion carried.

Update on Vacant Water Resource Specialist Position

Tomevi reviewed the interview process and discussions with the Personnel Committee and staff. Discussion included updated work plans and staffing need changes.

2025/9-6 Motion by Voigt, seconded by Reller authorizing the Personnel Committee to make changes to staffing structures and duties as needed to meet the needs of the District and proceed with the hiring process.

Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller. Motion carried.

Peek mentioned there may also be a possibility of an unfunded agreement to do work for NRCS which could turn into a funded agreement in the future.

NEW BUSINESS:

Little Fork River 1W1P

2025/9-7 Motion by Aitchison, seconded by Lewis approving and authorizing the Chair to sign a sub agreement with North St. Louis SWCD for the Little Fork River One Watershed, One Plan.

Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller. Motion carried.

Soil Health Cost Share

2025/9-8 Motion by Reller, seconded by Lewis approving SHCS25-4 up to \$750 on the basis of 75% of the estimated cost of \$1000 utilizing FY25 Soil Health Delivery funds.

Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller. Motion carried.

Discussion also included creating a standard cost-share policy to streamline the various cost-share programs currently being administered. Staff will bring a draft policy to the board for review.

Cost Estimate for Data Request

Tomevi presented a summary of dates and hours spent complying with the data request received July 14, 2025. Tomevi stated that the estimated charge of \$484.12 was calculated using her total hours times her base wage rate as opposed to using her actual billing rate and an additional \$10 would be added if the SWCD will be providing the USB drive.

2025/9-9 Motion by Lewis, seconded by Aitchison approving the data request charge as presented and authorizing the District Administrator to hire an outside lawyer to review the data request files prior to release if the county attorney is unavailable, not to exceed \$10,000.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller. Motion carried.

Upcoming Meetings:

None

Permits:

2024-3581 CN Rainy River Bridge: No official comments.

General Business:

Voigt suggested that staff draft a policy for Board review on how requests for SWCD grant writing assistance will be handled in the future. In the interim, Voigt suggested that no new requests for grant writing assistance should come before the Board without first having the support of the staff and when the submission deadline is less than 6 months from the date of the board meeting at which it will be discussed.

2025/9-10 Motion by Voigt, seconded by Lewis to adopt an interim policy stating that any request for SWCD grant writing assistance must first have staff support and be presented for approval at least six months prior to the grant submission deadline.
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, October 6, 2025, at 8:30 a.m. at the Cobblestone Hotel & Suites.**

Adjourn Meeting:

2025/9-11 Motion by Lewis, seconded by Reller to adjourn the meeting at 10:56 a.m.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller. Motion carried.

Approved:

Chair, Eldon Voigt

Date