

**KOOCHICHING SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2025**

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

MEMBERS PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE: Voigt.

MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

OTHERS PRESENT IN PERSON: Pam Tomevi, Jolen Simon, James Aasen, Austin Wallin, Austin Vinar (SWCD).

OTHERS PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE: None.

Chair Voigt called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m.

**2025/11-1 Motion by Lewis, seconded by Aitchison to approve consent agenda items as presented: 11/3/2025 Agenda with additions (paid leave and job banding), 10/6/2025 Minutes, Ratification of paid bills for September 2025 totaling \$36,587.64, Treasurer Report ending 9/30/2025, and to allow payment of ordinary and necessary bills not to exceed budget.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller. Motion carried.**

Guest Introductions:

None.

Supervisor Reports

Aitchison noted that there is an Advisory Committee Meeting for the Big Fork River and Little Fork River One Watershed, One Plans.

Discussion also included District policy regarding the rotation of the Chair position. Board members agreed to continue following current policy as outlined in the by laws.

Voigt reported on his attendance at the MASWCD Convention Awards Committee meeting. In this meeting, it was discussed that the Outstanding Conservationist be picked from the other awards for an equal chance from all award areas. A booth is being planned for the MN SWCD Forestry Association at the Convention.

NRCS District Conservationist Report

None, on furlough.

Program Coordinator

Highlights included data entry for eLINK, credit card transactions, climatology reports data entry, etc. Attended Urban Stormwater meetings for 1W1P in both Big Fork River and Little Fork River Watersheds. Discussion included the Keep it Clean Grant application and logistics, and new ash sample for the wood ash program.

Resource Conservationist Report

Discussion included assisting cost share landowners, wetland technical assistance, wood ash landowner assistance, practice flight for assessing shoreland erosion along Rainy River.

Clean Water Forester Report

Discussion included onboarding and various training: BWSR Academy, WPLMN, and forestry.

Watershed Coordinator Report

Discussion included wild parsnip spraying in coordination with Koochiching County Land & Forestry where four sites were completed; the 2024 buckthorn project was inspected for regrowth, where little was found; a black spruce topping harvest training was organized and completed with DNR and SWCD staff; coordinated the Northern Landscape Committee Beltrami Island Peatland Tour and songbird habitat harvest strategies; assisted with landowner cost-shared projects; trained on MPCA water sampling; trained the Clean Water Forester on forestry field work. Discussion also included historical ditches and the process for plugging/abandonment.

District Administrator Report

Discussion included onboarding the Clean Water Forester, Little Fork River Watershed Steering Committee for 1W1P, final presentation to the Rainy Lake Property Owner's Association on the cattail project and their support for additional wild rice planting, BWSR Academy training, and general admin.

OLD BUSINESS

Review Draft Cost Share Policy

The District Administrator reviewed the progress on the draft cost share policy. The staff is partnering with other districts and using various resources as they complete the final draft. The draft policy will be presented at the December or January meeting for Board review.

NEW BUSINESS:

Employee Banding

The District Administrator shared the Board of Soil and Water Resources' (BWSR) Performance Review and Assistance Program (PRAP) has funding to support districts and would like to apply in order to contract assistance with employee job banding, updated job descriptions, and employee handbook updates.

2025/11-2 Motion by Lewis, seconded by Reller authorizing the District Administrator to submit an application for the Performance Review and Assistance Program in the amount of \$10,000 for assistance with updating job descriptions, banding of job positions, and updating the employee handbook.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller. Motion carried.

Paid Leave

The District Administrator explained the new paid leave law and payroll contributions and deductions. A paid leave administrator needs to be appointed and the Board needs to establish their contribution rate of the required premiums.

2025/11-3 Motion by Voigt, seconded by Reller authorizing the District Administrator to serve as the paid leave administrator and establishing the SWCD contribution rate of 50% of the state established premium rate.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller. Motion carried.

December Board Meeting

2025/11-4 Motion by Aitchison, seconded by Reller to approve moving the December 2025 Board Meeting date from December 1 to December 8 due to a conflict with the MASWCD Annual Convention.
Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Reller. Motion carried.

Keep it Clean Grant

The Program Coordinator stated that the deadline for the Keep it Clean Grant through the Board of Soil and Water Resources (BWSR) was due on October 29th an application was submitted for \$40,000 with a

10% match to provide outreach, install five Keep it Clean signs at lake and river entrances, and provide outhouses at popular ice fishing sites. Retroactive approval being sought.

2025/11-5 Motion by Lewis, seconded by Reller retroactively authorizing an application to BWSR’s Keep it Clean Grant in the amount of \$40,000 and authorize the District Administrator’s signature if approved.

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

Rainy River-Rainy Lake WBIF

Staff discussed a request from Lake of the Woods SWCD to partner on a soil health workshop in Thief River Falls along with multiple other SWCDs in the northern area. A request has been made for \$1,500 per partner host the event. Staff noted that the activity aligns with agricultural outreach and education activities outlined in the Rainy River-Rainy Lake WBIF work plan.

2025/11-6 Motion by Aitchison, seconded by Reller authorizing a contribution of Rainy River-Rainy Lake WBIF funds not to exceed \$1,500 for the SWCD to participate in a multi-county soil health workshop to be held in Thief River Falls early winter 2026.

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

Storage Unit

The District Administrator described the need for a larger storage unit.

2025/11-7 Motion by Voigt, seconded by Reller authorizing staff to seek out a larger storage unit to house the SWCD trailer and other field equipment.

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

Upcoming Meetings:

MASWCD State Convention December 1-3 in Bloomington, MN

2025/11-8 Motion by Lewis, seconded by Aitchison authorizing supervisors and staff to attend the 2025 MASWCD State Convention December 1-3 in Bloomington, MN.

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

General Business:

General business discussion included the Minnesota Campaign and finance packets for the SWCD Board members and a request from LF/BF school to advertise in their yearbook.

2025/11-9 Motion by Lewis, seconded by Reller authorizing a business card sized ad in the

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

Confirm Next Meeting Date:

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

Meeting Adjourned at 10:12 a.m.

Approved:

Chair, Eldon Voigt

Date