

**KOOCHICHING SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2026**

**MEMBERS PRESENT IN PERSON:** Supervisors Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Becker.

**MEMBERS PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE:** None.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Reller

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

**OTHERS PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE:** Micheal (last name unknown)

Vice Chair Lewis called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m.

**Supervisor Oath of Office**

Mary-Jean Becker took the oath of office as Supervisor for District IV.

**2026/2-1 Motion by Voigt, seconded by Aitchison to approve consent agenda items as presented: 1/2/2026 Agenda with reductions, 1/5/2026 Minutes, Ratification of paid bills for December 2025 totaling \$73,561.78, Treasurer Report ending 12/31/2025, and to allow payment of ordinary and necessary bills not to exceed budget. Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Becker. Motion carried.**

**Guest Introductions:**

None.

**Supervisor Reports**

Voigt reported on the following meeting updates: There will be a Forestry meeting in March. Attended the Northern Landscape Committee meeting. Attended a DNR meeting regarding the tree nursery. Noted that the International Watershed Forum has been moved online. Discussed attending Legislative Days.

Aitchison reported on his attendance at the Little Fork River One Watershed One Plan Policy Committee Meeting and passed around a draft planning document.

**Committee Reports:**

None.

**NRCS District Conservationist Report**

None.

**Watershed Coordinator Report**

Discussion included Rat Root work and eLINK reporting; Aasen passed out copies of the 2026 tree forms and reported that inventory is finalized and order forms have been emailed out to landowners; The Northern Landscape Committee meeting took place in January and it was noted that old growth tamarack has been depleted to as low as 3% due to eastern larch beetle, however tamarack trees grow quickly and are showing signs of fresh growth; Little Fork Landscape Stewardship plan committee met; assisted with the Keep It Clean program; trained the Clean Water Forester on forest stewardship plan writing; worked to find housing for the upcoming CCM intern and reported that interviews are taking place this week; there will be a tree cone collection event likely in March and a speaker has been secured; the Program

Coordinator is working with teachers at Koochiching schools for the student events; working with the Northern Progressive group in Northome.

### **Program Coordinator**

Discussion included the Keep It Clean program kickoff; signs have been purchased, constructed, and placed on site. Frames for the donated garbage cans are built and at Sand Bay and Rainy Lake City along with port-a-potties at each. Five 3'x5' signs were placed at Sand Bay, Rainy Lake City, Rainy River at Nelson Park Landing, Ash River and Kabetogama ice road entrances. Work has also been started to plan cone collection events for youth and adults in March and the Envirothon planning is underway.

### **District Administrator Report**

Discussion included grant tracking, invoicing, 1099/W2s, coordinating the Little Fork One Watershed One Plan noting that the City of Cook is now a Policy Committee member, working on job descriptions for the contractor, Water Levels Committee meetings where projections are being analyzed and preparations are being made for the upcoming public meeting in March with a follow up in mid to late April, attended the WPLMN mid-project review and preparation for next contract, a new clothing logo was created which is easier to print and embroider.

### **Clean Water Forester Report**

Discussion included two forest plans written, assisted with building frames for Keep It Clean; collected a winter water sample for WPLMN; completed the beaver mapping project. Beaver activity mapped shows an increase from 613 acres in 1940 to 24,210 acres in 2025. This information was presented to the LF sediment fingerprinting team and will be discussed with the Little Fork River One Watershed One Plan Advisory Committee.

### **Resource Conservationist Report**

Discussion included georeferencing aerial images in order to complete the beaver activity mapping project, assisted with the Keep It Clean program by building structures and placing them on the lake, attended a WCA presentation with KEDA and the County Board; Koochiching County still has an active wetland bank; researched cattail removal for the Rat Root River; completed wood ash processing; the native plant sale pricing has been finalized and the order form will be released soon.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

None.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

#### **2025 MN PERA Exclusion Report**

The District Administrator reported that she will report contributions for the year for those Supervisors who did not participate.

#### **Conservation Corps of Minnesota**

The District Administrator reviewed the progress regarding the Corpsmember selection, noting that this is a 6 month position at no cost to the District.

**2026/2-2 Motion by Voigt, seconded by Aitchison authorizing the District Administrator to serve as the District's representative and to sign the Conservation Corps of Minnesota contract.**

**Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Becker. Motion carried.**

**Upcoming Meetings:**

Discussion included Legislative Briefing on March 17-18, 2026 in St. Paul. The Watershed Coordinator and Supervisor Voigt would like to attend.

**2026/2-3 Motion by Lewis, seconded by Aitchison authorizing the Watershed Coordinator to attend the Legislative Briefing event on March 17 - 18 in St. Paul and for Supervisor Voigt to meet with legislators at a later date.**  
**Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Becker. Motion carried.**

**Permits:**

None.

**General Business:**

The District Administrator presented the buckthorn treatment applicators created by the District utilizing empty bingo daubers that continue to be donated by the local VFW and Boondocks.

The District Administrator presented a resolution from Lake of the Woods County to reinstate drainage exemption language as it relates to agricultural exemptions as it was originally.

**2026/2-4 Motion by Lewis, seconded by Voigt authorizing the Chair’s signature on a letter of support for Resolution No. 25-12-07 made by Lake of the Woods.**  
**Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Becker. Motion carried.**

Aasen shared the flyer for a *Ranching for Profit* Workshop on February 12 and Livestock Producer Workshop being held in Baudette on February 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**2026/2-5 Motion by Voigt, seconded by Lewis authorizing all Supervisors to attend the Livestock Producer Workshop in Baudette on February 23<sup>rd</sup>.**  
**Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Becker, Reller. Motion carried.**

There will also be a *NW Soil & Water Quality Learning Exchange* workshop held in Thief River Falls, date TBD.

**Confirm Next Meeting Date:**

The next regular board meeting of the Koochiching SWCD will be held on **Monday, March 2, 2026, at 8:30 a.m. at the Cobblestone Hotel & Suites.**

**2026/2-6 Motion by Voigt, seconded by Aitchison to adjourn at 9:33 a.m.**  
**Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Voigt, Becker. Motion carried.**

**Approved:**

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**Vice Chair, Ralph Lewis**

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**Date**