

**KOOCHICHING SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 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: Jody Peek (NRCS), Michael (last name unknown)

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

2026/3-1 Motion by Aitchison, seconded by Becker to approve consent agenda items as presented: 3/2/2026 Agenda with reduction, 2/2/2026 Minutes, Ratification of paid bills for January 2026 totaling \$85,872.52, Treasurer Report ending 1/31/2026, and to allow payment of ordinary and necessary bills not to exceed budget. Voting yes: Lewis, Aitchison, Becker. Absent for Vote: Voigt. Motion carried.

Guest Introductions:

None.

Supervisor Reports

Lewis reported on his attendance at the grazing workshop in Bemidji on February 23rd.

Voigt reported on his attendance at the MASWCD meeting in place of the Director. The MASWCD Annual Convention will begin on November 30, 2026. A group will be working to get the soil health grant in place using Clean Water 1W1P, however, more sales tax was collected so this may not immediately affect other districts this year but could in future years.

Committee Reports:

None.

NRCS District Conservationist Report

Peek reported on eligibility and payments for CSP; EQIP assessment deadline is March 20; base and implementation payments will now be available, including pipeline, which will now be determined by the pound rather than foot for 2026; cover crop payments have gone up; pre-approval process has now changed; Regeneration Pilot Program (RPP) funding is now available; CRP signup opened February 12, 2026.

Voigt discussed having attended the MASWCD meeting and that NRCS will focus more on meeting with landowners than with SWCDs. This is due to reduction in staffing and increased workload. This may affect the timeline for receiving Job Approval Authority (JAA).

Watershed Coordinator Report

Discussion included a 2025 year in review-each staff member reviewed their work in 2025.

Program Coordinator

Discussion included the Keep It Clean program kickoff; signs have been constructed and placed at Sand Bay, Rainy Lake City, Rainy River (Birchdale), Ash River and Kabetogama. Staff attended the Rainy Lake Sportfishing Club Ice Fishing Derby to promote the Keep It Clean program; recorded a live Keep It

Clean radio spot on the “Let’s Talk About It” spot; coordinated with schools and ordered supplies for the cone collection events-there will be 1 public event and 4 school events (homeschool, Northome, Littlefork/Big Falls, and International Falls).

District Administrator Report

Discussion included that water levels committee meetings will ramp up as spring approaches; coordination of Big Fork River and Little Fork River Watershed 1W1Ps, financial management, staff meetings, and general administration.

Clean Water Forester Report

Discussion included year in review such as assisting with Keep It Clean, water sampling, forest stewardship planning, etc.

Resource Conservationist Report

Discussion included year in review such as wild rice seeding, Keep It Clean, water sampling, soil health contracts, tree program, etc.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

MOA for the Little Fork River 1W1P

2026/3-2 Motion by Voigt, seconded by Aitchison approving the updated Little Fork River 1W1P MOA, adding the City of Cook and authorizing the Chair and District Administrator’s signatures.

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

2025 Financial Audit Services

The District Administrator reviewed options for the 2025 audit contractor. Peterson seems to be the best option for this year, and staff will reach out to other auditors for the next audit.

2026/3-3 Motion by Voigt, seconded by Aitchison approving the quote for Peterson Company LTD, authorizing the District Administrator to serve as the District’s representative and to sign the contract.

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

2026 Service Rates

Staff reviewed the proposed service rates for 2026 SWCD services, to be reviewed at each year’s Annual Reorganizational meeting.

2026/3-4 Motion by Voigt, seconded by Aitchison approving the 2026 Koochiching SWCD Service Rates as presented. Details on file.

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

Upcoming Meetings:

Voigt asked for Board approval to attend the IMA meeting on Tuesday and that Supervisors and staff be authorized to attend the upcoming virtual Area VIII meeting on March 27th.

2026/3-5 Motion by Voigt, seconded by Becker authorizing any Supervisor and staff to attend the virtual Area VIII meeting on March 27th, and for Supervisor Voigt to attend the IMA meeting on March 9th.

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

Permits:

2026-0093 Jackfish Bay Dredging: Discussion included that because of the dredging location, there should be no effect on the previous native planting. No official comments from the SWCD Board.

General Business:

The District Administrator presented a request for a letter of support on a grant being applied for by Voyageurs National Park. This work would reduce wetland restoration impacts on soil and water quality.

2026/3-6 Motion by Voigt, seconded by Aitchison authorizing the Chair’s signature on a letter of support for the “Wetland Restoration’s Impact of Soil, Nutrient Status” grant application.

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

Upcoming Meetings:

Public Cone Collection Workshop: March 21st, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Ranier Community Building.

Collaborative Soil Health Agricultural Workshop in Thief River Falls, on March 25th.

2026/3-7 Motion by Aitchison, seconded by Voigt approving all Supervisors to attend the Public Cone Collection Workshop on March 21st in Ranier, and the Collaborative Soil Health Agricultural Workshop in Thief River Falls.

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

Confirm Next Meeting Date:

The next regular board meeting of the Koochiching SWCD will be held on **Monday, April 6, 2026, at 8:30 a.m. at the Cobblestone Hotel & Suites.**

2026/3-8 Motion by Voigt, seconded by Becker to adjourn at 9:51 a.m.

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

Submitted:

Chair, Jody Reller

Date