

State Technical Committee

Linking Producers and Partners to Conservation Policy



Overview

The State Technical Committee provides recommendations for establishing technical guidelines, program criteria and priorities to carry out conservation provisions of the Farm Bill. All meetings are open to the public.

Role of the Committee

The State Technical Committee's role is to provide information, analysis, and recommendations to the NRCS State Conservationist on issues related to Farm Bill conservation legislation. It is purely an advisory committee that allows the State Conservationist to seek the advice, ideas and recommendations from those with an interest in natural resource management.

As various tasks occur, members may organize into subcommittees to provide NRCS more detailed information. For example, there is a subcommittee on the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), which establishes program ranking criteria, conservation practices and cost share rates.

Other program issues that may be addressed include, but not limited to, are:

- State program management policies and procedures;
- Technical program recommendations;
- Statewide public information and outreach campaigns;
- Identifying significant statewide natural resource concerns;
- Guidelines for developing ranking criteria for evaluating applications;
- Guidance on eligible conservation practices;
- Technical guidance on conservation practices, including new, innovative practices;
- Cost-share rates and incentive payment limits and methods of payment;
- Identifying, monitoring and analyzing performance indicators;
- Evaluating and reporting program impacts on natural resources and the environment; and
- Coordinating with other Federal, State, tribal, and local public and private activities.

Who Are the Committee Members?

The State Conservationist is the chair of the State Technical Committee. There is a nucleus of organizations that are required to be invited to participate. In Nebraska, the State Conservationist welcomes the participation of any organization or agency desiring to participate.

State Technical Committees are composed of individuals who represent a variety of natural resource sciences and occupations. To participate on the Committee, individuals or groups may submit a request to the State Conservationist that explains their interest and outlines their natural resource credentials. Representatives on the committee may include:

- Natural Resources Conservation Service;
- Farm Service Agency;
- FSA State Committee;
- Extension;
- Forest Service;
- Each of the Tribal Governments;
- Nebraska Game & Parks Commission;
- Nebraska Forest Service;
- Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality;
- Nebraska Department of Agriculture;
- Nebraska Department of Natural Resources;
- Nebraska Association of Resources Districts and individual NRDs;
- Other agency personnel with expertise in soil, water, wetland and wildlife management;
- Agricultural producers with demonstrable conservation expertise;
- Non profit organizations with demonstrable conservation expertise;
- Persons knowledgeable about conservation techniques; and
- Agribusiness.

In Nebraska, the committee is generally made up of around 20 organizations. However, meeting notices are sent to about 180 people, some within the same organization.



How Do I Find Out About Meetings?

Meeting notices are published at least 14 days in advance of the meeting date in the statewide edition of the *Lincoln Journal Star*. A letter is also sent to all committee members. Meetings are usually scheduled quarterly, but are at the call of the State Conservationist or other USDA agencies. Visit the Nebraska NRCS website's State Technical Committee page to view the upcoming meeting dates. There you will also find past meeting minutes, presentations and handouts.

Is There a Way To Be Locally Involved?

There is a "local working group" made up of various agencies, including NRCS, the Natural Resources District and others. These meetings are held annually within each Natural Resources District, typically in March. Meeting dates, times and location are available on the Nebraska NRCS website on the State Technical Committee page. Anyone is invited to attend and express comments at these locally set meetings. Topics discussed at Local Working Group Meetings are compiled and shared with the State Technical Committee.

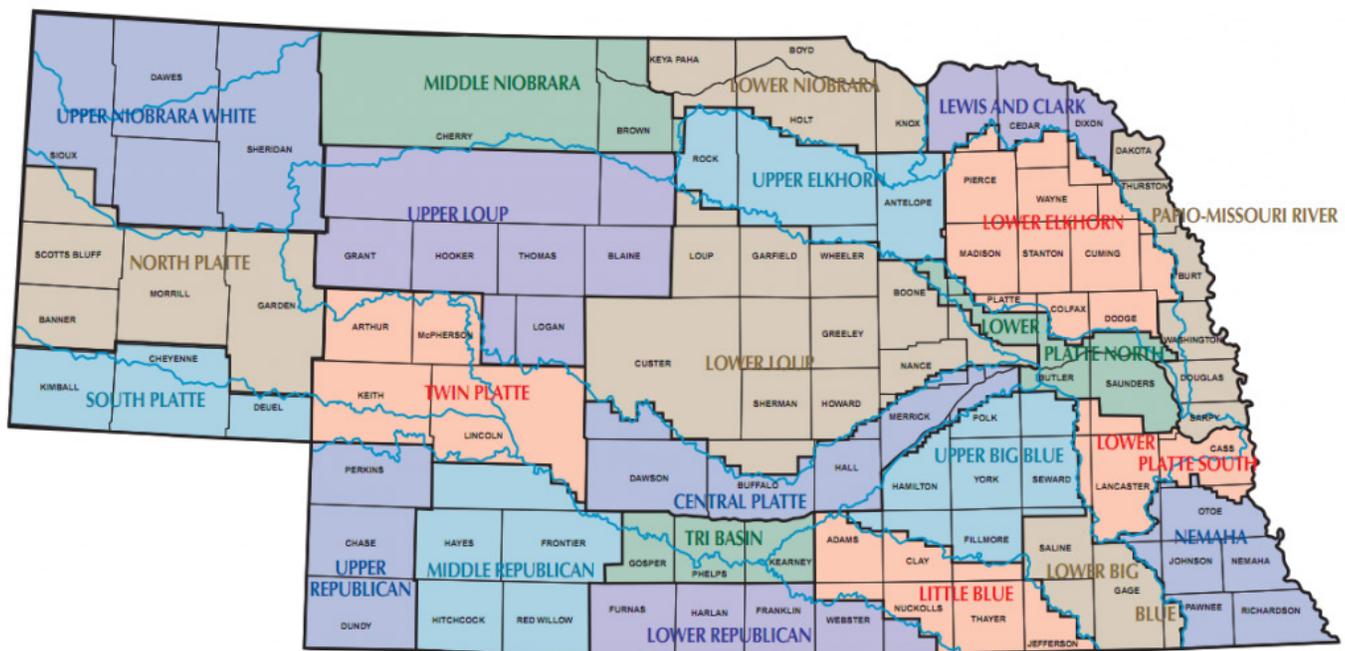
What Are Local Working Groups?

Local working groups are organized on NRD boundaries (see map below) and are comprised of similar representation as the State Technical Committee. The local working group provides advice/recommendation to the NRCS District Conservationist or NRD representative serving as chair. The meetings are an open discussion that focus on identifying local natural resource concerns that can be treated with Farm Bill programs and activities.

Local Working Groups review State Technical Committee actions and priorities, and return their recommendations with the local input and/or priorities back to the State Technical Committee. The State Technical Committee reviews these recommendations and develop the conservation programs, special initiatives, etc., for that year.

How Can I Get More Information?

Contact either the State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service, 100 Centennial Mall N., Rm. 152, Lincoln NE., 68508-3866 or any local NRCS office listed in the telephone book under U.S. Government, U.S. Department of Agriculture, or visit www.ne.nrcs.usda.gov/.



Nebraska

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