

TENNESSEE STATE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE OPERATING PROCEDURES

March 2013

IN GENERAL

The State Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) shall meet regularly to provide information, analysis, and recommendations to appropriate officials of the Department of Agriculture (USDA) who are charged with implementing the conservation provisions of the 1985, 1990, 1996, 2002, and 2008 Farm Bills in Tennessee. Such information, analysis, and recommendations shall be provided in a manner that will assist the USDA in determining matters of fact, technical merit, or scientific question. The primary USDA agencies responsible for implementing conservation provisions include the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); Farm Service Agency (FSA); Forest Service (FS); and Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES).

COMMITTEE PROCEDURE 1

The name of the committee shall be the Tennessee State Technical Advisory Committee (TN STAC).

COMMITTEE PROCEDURE 2

The committee shall exist to assist in technical considerations and to develop the technical guidelines necessary to implement conservation provisions of the Farm Bill. It shall have the following specific purpose: To function in an advisory capacity and provide recommendations to the USDA for implementing Farm Bill conservation provisions.

Topics and issues which the STAC may consider are:

1. Recommendations on technical issues, technical information, data, and analysis;
2. Recommendations on conservation management systems, including resource conservation systems, basic conservation systems, and alternative conservation systems;
3. Recommendations on technical standards including conservation practice standards;
4. Recommendations on highly erodible land exemptions and conservation compliance issues;

5. Recommendations on wetland protection and restoration guidance and criteria to evaluate bids or offers for enrollment in the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP);
6. Recommendations on criteria to evaluate bids or offers for enrollment of environmentally sensitive lands in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP);
7. Recommendations for haying, grazing, control of weeds to protect nesting wildlife, and planting perennial cover for water quality and wildlife habitat improvement on set-aside acreage;
8. Recommendations on the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP);
9. Recommendations on establishment of criteria and guidelines for new conservation practices and systems not already described in the Field Office Technical Guide;
10. Recommendations on establishment of criteria and priorities under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP);
11. Recommendations on establishment of criteria and priorities under the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP);
12. Recommendations on establishment of criteria and priorities under the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP); and
13. Recommendations on other Farm Bill programs and associated matters, as appropriate.

COMMITTEE PROCEDURE 3

Membership

Section 1 – Membership Makeup

Membership shall include professional resource managers who represent a variety of disciplines in the soil, water, air, plants, animal and other natural resource sciences; agriculture producers; non-governmental organizations, nonprofit organizations with demonstrable conservation expertise; and persons knowledgeable about conservation techniques and agribusiness. The USDA-NRCS State Conservationist, or his/her designee, will chair the STAC. Representatives from each of the following will make up the STAC:

1. USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA)
2. USDA Forest Service (FS)
3. USDA Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES)
4. USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS)
5. USDA Rural Development (RD)
6. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
7. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
8. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

9. U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)
10. Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC)
11. Tennessee Department of Agriculture (TDA)
12. Tennessee Department of Agriculture, Division of Forestry
13. Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA)
14. Tennessee Association of Conservation Districts (TACD)
15. USDA-FSA State Committee
16. The Nature Conservancy
17. Representatives from each of the agricultural commodity groups, agribusinesses, agricultural producers associations, non-government organizations, environmental organizations, nonprofit organizations, tribes, and fish and wildlife organizations.

Section 2 – Membership Appointments

Each of the above organizations or groups will designate, in writing, their representative(s) including information on experience/education/special technical expertise to serve on the STAC and provide to the State Conservationist when requested. Individuals desiring to participate in STAC meetings will provide written background information on their personal experience/education/special technical expertise when requested. Additional STAC members may be appointed as deemed appropriate by the STAC Chairman.

COMMITTEE PROCEDURE 4

Meetings

Section 1 – Frequency

The STAC shall meet at least annually at a time and place designated by the Chairman. Other meetings may be held at the discretion of the Chairman at a time and place designated. Special meetings shall be called by the Chairman whenever it is the opinion of the Chairman that there is business which should be brought before the committee for action prior to the next scheduled meeting. Any USDA agency, however, can request a meeting as needed to address pertinent issues.

Section 2 – Handling Business Outside of Meetings

At the discretion of the STAC Chairman or his/her representative, specific business of an urgent nature may be conducted by mail, fax, email, or telephone. Requests for comments with

designated response times will be sent to all STAC members. All business conducted outside of meetings will be reviewed at the next scheduled STAC meeting.

Section 3 – Meeting Notice

The chairman will maintain a list of all STAC committee members and will provide such members with written notice of meetings, including a draft agenda and background information, at least 14 calendar days prior to meetings.

Section 4 – Meeting Content

The Chairman shall provide a draft agenda to STAC members and the public according to provisions in Section 3 – Meeting Notice. Additional agenda items will be considered if submitted in writing to the STAC Chairman at least five working days prior to the meeting.

Section 5 – Public Participation

Individuals attending STAC meetings and desiring the opportunity to address the STAC shall be given the opportunity. Opportunity to address non-agenda items will also be provided during the meeting. Each recognized presenter will be allowed three minutes of oral presentation to be accompanied by a written record of their comments submitted to the Chairman at the time of the presentation. Written comments will be accepted without oral presentations if provided to the Chairman no later than five business days after each meeting.

Section 6 – Conducting Business

The meetings will be conducted as an open discussion between members. Discussion will occur in an effort to identify all natural resource concerns in Tennessee that can be treated using programs and activities contained in the current Farm Bill. All recommendations will be considered by USDA when decisions are made. The following guidelines will govern meeting discussions:

1. One person speaks at a time. Every participant that so desires will be allowed to speak. The Chairman or his/her designee is responsible for recognizing speakers.
2. Adhere to established time limits. The Chairman, in consultation with those members present, may establish time limits for discussion on individual agenda items.

3. The Chairman will either defer to the next meeting or address agenda items not covered because of time limits.

Section 7 – Record of Meetings

The Chairman will record the following during the meetings:

1. All recommendations on each issue addressed.
2. Actions identified such as ad hoc committee assignments.

A written record of the meeting will be provided to TN STAC participants within 30 days after the meeting and will be posted on the TN NRCS website (<http://www.tn.nrcs.usda.gov>).

COMMITTEE PROCEDURE 5

Special Committees and Ad Hoc Committees

Sub-committees shall be appointed, as necessary, by the Chairman in consultation with the STAC membership to address specific issues, topics, or problems or to investigate specific situations or events. The entire STAC will be made aware of the work of any such committee. The Chairman shall appoint one of the STAC members as Chair, assign an NRCS consultant, and define the purpose, parameters, reporting frequency, and lifespan of the committee.

Subcommittees will meet or utilize teleconferencing to discuss and formulate recommendations on agenda items. The group members participating will select a person from the group to represent them as the group's STAC member for upcoming STAC meetings. The Chairman will appoint an NRCS consultant to work with each advisory group. The consultant's responsibilities will include:

1. Making arrangements for group meetings or teleconferences.
2. Keeping a record of participants.
3. Recording the group's recommendations.
4. Making available an agenda and any background information on agenda items.
5. Being available at group meetings or teleconferences to answer questions.

COMMITTEE PROCEDURE 6

Amendments

These operating procedures may be amended, repealed, or changed at any meeting by consensus opinion of the STAC, with concurrence by the STAC Chairman, provided the committee actions do not violate the intent of applicable authorities, laws, or regulations.

These committee procedures were adopted by the Tennessee State Technical Advisory Committee at the official meeting held in Murfreesboro, Tennessee on March 13, 2013

John Kooch, Acting STC
Chairman
Tennessee State Technical Advisory Committee

3-13-13
Date