

# **TENNESSEE STATE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE OPERATING PROCEDURES**

November 2019

## **IN GENERAL**

The Tennessee State Technical Committee (TNSTC) 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, 2008, 2014, and 2018 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 National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA).

### **COMMITTEE PROCEDURE 1**

The name of the committee shall be the Tennessee State Technical Committee (TNSTC).

### **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 TNSTC 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;
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 establishment of criteria and guidelines for new conservation practices and systems not already described in the Field Office Technical Guide;
9. Recommendations on establishment of criteria and priorities under the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP);
10. Recommendations on establishment of criteria and priorities under the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP);
11. Recommendations on establishment of criteria and priorities under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP);
12. Recommendations on establishment of criteria and priorities under the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP); 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 TNSTC. Representatives from each of the following will make up the TNSTC:

1. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
2. Farm Service Agency (FSA)
3. FSA State Committee
4. U.S. Forest Service
5. National Institute of Food and Agriculture (formerly the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service)
6. Tennessee Association of Conservation Districts (TACD)
7. State departments and agencies within Tennessee, including the following:

- a. Tennessee Department of Agriculture (TDA)
  - b. TDA, Division of Forestry
  - c. Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC)
  - d. Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA)
8. Agricultural producers representing the variety of crops and livestock or poultry raised within the State
  9. Owners of non-industrial, private, forest land
  10. Non-profit organizations (as defined under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) that demonstrate conservation expertise and experience working with agricultural producers in the State
  11. Agribusiness
  12. Other federal agencies and persons knowledgeable about economic and environmental impacts of conservation techniques and programs as determined by the State Conservationist

## **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 TNSTC and provide to the State Conservationist when requested. Individuals desiring to participate in TNSTC meetings will provide written background information on their personal experience/education/special technical expertise when requested. Additional TNSTC members may be appointed as deemed appropriate by the TNSTC Chairman.

## **COMMITTEE PROCEDURE 4**

### **Meetings**

#### **Section 1 – Frequency**

The TNSTC shall meet at least twice 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 TNSTC Chairman or his/her representative, specific business of an urgent nature may be conducted by email, fax, mail, telephone, or video teleconference. Requests for comments with designated response times will be sent to all TNSTC members. All business conducted outside of meetings will be reviewed at the next scheduled TNSTC meeting.

## **Section 3 – Meeting Notice**

The chairman will maintain a list of all TNSTC 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 TNSTC members and the public according to provisions in Section 3 – Meeting Notice. Additional agenda items will be considered if submitted in writing to the TNSTC Chairman at least five working days prior to the meeting.

## **Section 5 – Public Participation**

Individuals attending TNSTC meetings and desiring the opportunity to address the TNSTC 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 TNSTC participants within 30 days after the meeting and will be posted on the [TN State Technical Committee website](#).

### **Section 8 – Response to Recommendations**

The State Conservationist shall inform the State Technical Committee as to the decisions made in response to all State Technical Committee recommendations within 90 days. This notification shall be made in writing to all State Technical Committee members and posted to the NRCS Tennessee website.

## **COMMITTEE PROCEDURE 5**

### **Special Committees and Ad Hoc Committees**

Sub-committees shall be appointed, as necessary, by the Chairman in consultation with the TNSTC membership to address specific issues, topics, or problems or to investigate specific situations or events. The entire TNSTC will be made aware of the work of any such committee. The Chairman shall appoint one of the TNSTC 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 TNSTC member for upcoming TNSTC 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.

All Special Committee and Ad Hoc Committee meetings shall be open to the public.

## **COMMITTEE PROCEDURE 6**

### **Amendments**

These operating procedures may be amended, repealed, or changed at any meeting by consensus opinion of the TNSTC, with concurrence by the TNSTC 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 Committee at the official meeting held in Murfreesboro, Tennessee on Tuesday, November 12, 2019.

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Chairman  
Tennessee State Technical Committee

11-15-2019

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Date