

Sunset Public Hearing Questions for  
**STATE SOIL CONSERVATION COMMITTEE**  
Created by Section 43-14-203, *Tennessee Code Annotated*  
(Sunset Termination June 2016)

1. Provide a brief introduction to the State Soil Conservation Committee, including information about its purpose, statutory duties, staff and administrative attachment.

**The purpose of the State Soil Conservation Committee (SSCC) is to provide oversight and assistance to the 95 Soil Conservation Districts (SCDs) in Tennessee in carrying out programs directed towards soil conservation and water quality improvement.**

**Its statutory duties include appointing two supervisors to the governing board of each soil conservation district and establishing procedures for the local election of three other supervisors to each district's governing board, offering assistance to the supervisors of SCDs in carrying out their programs and powers, coordinating the programs of the SCDs and encouraging cooperation among them.**

**An Environmental Program Manager in the Land and Water Stewardship Section of the Tennessee Department of Agriculture serves as Technical Secretary for the SSCC and furnishes staff support for SSCC functions and activities. Secretarial support for routine administrative duties is also provided by TDA.**

2. Provide a list of committee members and describe how membership complies with Section 43-14-203, *Tennessee Code Annotated*. Please indicate if there are any vacancies and explain what is being done to fill those vacancies.

**Mr. Kenneth R. Sneed**  
1884 Wilksville Road  
Atoka, TN 38004  
Serves as a farmer from West Tennessee

**Mr. Eddie Sanders**  
1495 Coleman Road  
Franklin, TN 37064  
Serves as a SCD Supervisor from Middle Tennessee

**Mr. Tommy Surber**  
825 Hico Road  
McKenzie, TN 38201  
Serves as a SCD Supervisor from West Tennessee

**Mr. Mark Klepper**  
3125 Horton Hwy  
Greenville, TN 37745-8523  
Serves as a farmer from East Tennessee

**Mr. Pal Neal**  
7090 Trousdale Ferry Pike  
Lebanon, TN 37090  
Serves as a farmer from Middle Tennessee

**Mr. Dwight King**  
1665 Weaver Branch Road  
Piney Flats, TN 37686-3723  
Serves as a SCD Supervisor from East Tennessee

**Ms. Regina Miller**  
 6419 Hwy 70N  
 Crossville, TN 38571  
 Serves as an at large SCD Supervisor

**Dr. Larry Arrington**, Vice President  
 UT Institute of Agriculture  
 800 Andy Holt Tower  
 Knoxville, TN 37996-4505  
 Ex officio member

**Mr. Julius Johnson**, Commissioner  
 Department of Agriculture  
 P. O. Box 40627  
 Nashville, TN 37204  
 Ex officio member

**Mr. Bob Martineau**, Commissioner  
 TDEC  
 Snodgrass Tower, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
 312 Rosa L. Parks Ave.  
 Nashville, TN 37243  
 Ex officio member

**There are no vacancies on the State Soil Conservation Committee.**

3. Does the committee’s membership include public/citizen members? Female members? Members of racial minorities? Members who are 60 years of age or older?

**Yes to all three categories.**

4. Section 43-14-205, *Tennessee Code Annotated*, requires the committee to meet at least four times a year. How many times did the committee meet during fiscal years 2013 and 2014 and to date in fiscal year 2015? How many members were present at each meeting?

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Number Members Attending</b>
<b>02/24/2013</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>03/18/2013</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>12/9/2013</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>02/23/2014</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>03/31/2014</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>07/23/2014</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>12/8/2014</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>02/22/2015</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>03/31/2015</b>	<b>7</b>

5. What per diem or travel reimbursement do committee members receive? How much was paid to committee members during fiscal years 2013, 2014 and to date in fiscal year 2015?

**Committee members receive reimbursement for travel expenses in accordance with the Tennessee Comprehensive Travel Regulations.**

6. What were the committee's revenues (by source) and expenditures (by object) for fiscal years 2013 and 2014 and to date for fiscal year 2015?

**The SSCC receives no revenue. The expenditures for travel and meeting expenses are as follows:**

<b>FY 2013</b>	<b>\$5,776.40</b>
<b>FY 2014</b>	<b>\$2,161.12</b>
<b>FY 2015 (to date)</b>	<b>\$2,264.24</b>

7. Is the committee subject to Sunshine law requirements (per Section 8-44-101 et seq., *Tennessee Code Annotated*) for public notice of meetings, prompt and full recording of minutes, and public access to minutes? If so, what procedures does the committee have for informing the public of its meetings and making its minutes available to the public?

**The meetings of the SSCC are subject to the Sunshine law requirements. Advance notices of meetings are prepared and forwarded to the Public Affairs office of the Department, which in turn sends the announcement to news media in the state. Minutes are available to the public from the office of the Technical Secretary of the SSCC.**

8. How does the committee ensure that its members are operating in an impartial manner and that there are no conflicts of interest? If the committee operates under a formal conflict of interest policy, please attach a copy of that policy.

**The SSCC does not have a formal conflict of interest policy, but as a state entity, would be subject to the conflict of interest statute (TCA §12-4-101). Currently, the SSCC does not have contractual obligations with any entity, so conflict of interest is not an issue.**

9. Has the committee promulgated rules as authorized by Section 43-14-203, *Tennessee Code Annotated*? Is so, please cite the reference.

**No rules have been promulgated by the SSCC.**

10. Does the committee have a website? Is so, please provide the web address. What kind of public information is provided on the website?

**Yes the committee has a web site located at:**

**[www.tn.gov/agriculture/water/sscc.html](http://www.tn.gov/agriculture/water/sscc.html). The web site references the Tennessee Code Annotated establishing the SSCC, gives its statutory duties, the current Committee members and resources for conducting elections and appointments to SCD Boards.**

11. What were the committee's major accomplishments during fiscal years 2013, 2014 and to date in fiscal year 2015? Specifically, describe the nature and extent of committee activities as they pertain to the nine enumerated powers and duties defined in Section 43-14-206, *Tennessee Code Annotated*.

**The SSCC has fulfilled their responsibilities under the statute during FY13, FY14 and so far in FY 15 with respect to certifying the elections and making appointments of SCD boards. They are instrumental in maintaining the cooperation of the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) as a critical partner in the installation of conservation practices in each of the 95 Soil Conservation Districts. The SSCC does offer support to the Tennessee Department of Agriculture in the implementation of the Agricultural Resources Conservation Fund Cost Share Program and the federal 319 Nonpoint Source Program as well as encouraging, to the extent practical, participation from landowners in these programs. By virtue of its meetings held in conjunction with agricultural events, the Committee is in position to hear directly from farmers about conservation concerns in their areas. These meetings as open meetings also serve as venues for input from the public.**

12. Does the committee transmit an annual report and budget request to the Commissioner of Agriculture each year as authorized by Section 43-14-206(9), *Tennessee Code Annotated*? If so, please attach copies of the last two annual reports. What other reports does the committee prepare on its operations, activities and accomplishments?

**In lieu of a formal annual report, the Commissioner is advised of current activities by personally attending SSCC meetings, and by receiving copies of the minutes of each meeting. The Technical Secretary routinely gives reports on behalf of the SSCC to groups such as the Tennessee Association of Conservation Districts, and the Tennessee Conservation District Employees Association.**

13. How many soil conservation districts currently exist in Tennessee? What percentage of land in the state is included in soil conservation districts? What assistance, if any, does the committee provide to the districts?

**Currently there are 95 SCDs in Tennessee, with 100% of the state's land area included in them. The assistance portion of the question has been previously answered in the response to Question 11 above.**

14. Has the committee developed and implemented quantitative performance measures for ensuring it is meeting its goals? (Please answer either yes or no). If the committee has developed and implemented quantitative performance measures, answer questions 15 through 22. If the committee has not developed quantitative performance measures, proceed directly to question 23.

**No, the SSCC has not discussed the setting of formal performance measures.**

15. What are your key performance measures for ensuring the committee is meeting its goals? Describe so that someone unfamiliar with the program can understand what you are trying to measure and why it is important to the operation of your program.
16. What aspect[s] of the program are you measuring?
17. Who collects relevant data and how is this data collected (e.g., what types information systems and/or software programs are used) and how often is the data collected? List the specific resources (e.g., report, other document, database, customer survey) of the raw data used for the performance measure.
18. How is the actual performance measure calculated? If a specific mathematical formula is used, provide it. If possible, provide the calculations and supporting documentation detailing your process for arriving at the actual performance measure.
19. Is the reported performance measure result a real number or an estimate? If an estimate, explain why it is necessary to use an estimate. If an estimate, is the performance measure result recalculated, revised, and formally reported once the data for an actual calculation is available?
20. Who reviews the performance measures and associated data/calculations? Describe any process to verify that the measure and calculations are appropriate and accurate.
21. Are there written procedures related to collecting the data or calculating and reviewing/verifying the performance measure? Provide copies of any procedures.
22. Describe any concerns about the committee's performance measures and any changes or improvements you think need to be made in the process.
23. Provide an explanation of any items related to the committee that may require legislative attention, including your proposed legislative changes.

**There are no legislative changes currently proposed.**

24. Should the committee be continued? To what extent and in what ways would the absence of the committee affect the public health, safety, or welfare of the citizens of the State of Tennessee?

**The SSCC should be continued for a number of reasons. Its role remains important due to the increased emphasis from all segments of society toward preserving the natural resources of our state. The committee and the SCDs have maintained a relationship with the USDA-NRCS for many years, which has facilitated Best Management Practices to be installed in a very economical and effective manner. Since the SSCC is composed of farmers and SCD board members from across Tennessee, they contribute a unique perspective to TDA grant programs. Conversely, through their meetings, it can be ascertained as to how well new initiatives will be received by rural landowners. The contribution of the SSCC to water quality improvement and soil erosion control measures on Tennessee farms far exceeds the very minimal expense to the state. Abolishing the Committee would be counter-productive to maintaining these achievements.**

25. Please list all committee programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance and, therefore are required to comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Include the amount of federal funding received by program/activity. If the committee does receive federal assistance, please answer questions 26 through 33. If the committee does not receive federal assistance, proceed directly to question 32.

**The SSCC receives no federal financial assistance, nor does it administer any.**

26. Does the committee prepare a Title VI plan? If yes, please provide a copy of the most recent plan.
27. Does the committee have a Title VI coordinator? If yes, please provide the Title VI coordinator's name and phone number and a brief description of his/her duties. If not, provide the name and phone number of the person responsible for dealing with Title VI issues.
28. To which state or federal agency (if any) does the committee report concerning Title VI? Please describe the information the committee submits to the state or federal government and/or provide a copy of the most recent report submitted.
29. Describe the committee's actions to ensure that association staff and clients/program participants understand the requirements of Title VI.
30. Describe the committee's actions to ensure it is meeting Title VI requirements. Specifically, describe any committee monitoring or tracking activities related to Title VI, and how frequently these activities occur.
31. Please describe the committee's procedures for handling Title VI complaints. Has the committee received any Title VI-related complaints during the past two years? If yes, please

describe each complaint, how each complaint was investigated, and how each complaint was resolved (or, if not yet resolved, the complaint's current status).

32. Please provide a breakdown of current committee staff by title, ethnicity, and gender.

**The SSCC has no staff, so this question is not applicable.**

33. Please list all committee contracts, detailing each contractor, the services provided, the amount of the contract, and the ethnicity of the contractor/business owner.

**The SSCC has issued no contracts, to this question is not applicable.**