

Soil Health Advisory Committee Meeting Notes
January 11, 2021

Attendance

Kevin Antoszewski, Alan Girard, Alisha Mulkey, Christopher Beck, Deborah Herr Cornwell, Elliot Campbell, Grace Garst, Hans Schmidt, Trey Hill, Jen Nelson, Kate Everts, Lisa Garfield, Michael Twining, Philip Bogdonoff, Steve Darsey, Tom Croghan, Tim Rosen, Kate Tully, Matt Fry, Dietrich Epp Schmidt, Ray Weil, Amy Jacobs, Aaron Cooper, Michael Calkins, Cleo Braver, Robert Hutchinson, Colby Ferguson, Denzell Mitchel

Amanda Cather, Susan Payne, 3 participants via phone that did not identify themselves.

Meeting Minutes

Alisha Mulkey submitted meeting minutes from September for approval. No revisions were suggested and notes were approved.

No members of the public submitted any comments for consideration by the committee.

Alisha Mulkey began going through her presentation, outlining the committee schedule for January – March 2021. The full committee was broken into three subcommittees to plan facilitated discussion on the priority practices identified in 2020. Priority practices are cover cropping, conservation crop rotation, conservation tillage, prescribed grazing, forage and hay planting, critical area planting, nutrient management, integrated pest management, and conservation cover.

60 minutes were devoted to subcommittee conversation.

The final 30 minutes of the meeting were dedicated to agroforestry practices currently being explored by MDA. Hedgerow planting, windbreak/shelterbelt establishment, silvopasture establishment, and alley cropping were discussed. Multi-story cropping was mentioned as a possibility for consideration, but it is currently not approved for use in MD. MDA, DNR, and UMD are working together to develop agroforestry demonstration sites.

MDA has recently published draft regulations to update MACS funding language:

Consideration for MACS funding must demonstrate a clear conservation benefit, defined as “an improvement in the condition of the soil, water or other such natural resource of the State, and includes, among other beneficial effects, improved water quality, improved soil health, reduced soil loss, and restored wetlands.”

The State Soil Conservation committee recommended the adoption of NRCS practices 380, 612, 422, and 381 for MACS funding. The recommendations have been submitted to Secretary Bartenfelder for approval.