



# Standards Oversight Council (SOC)

Developing effective technical standards that protect Wisconsin's natural resources

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## DRAFT COUNCIL MEETING NOTES

Wednesday, August 12, 2015 || 9:00 am – 12:00pm || DNR GEF 2, 101 S. Webster St., Madison, Room 313

Attendees: Matt Woodrow (DATCP), Jim Luedtke (County Materials), Jim VandenBrook, Pat Murphy, Scott Mueller (NRCS) Mary Anne Lowndes, Michelle Reynolds (DOT), Gini Knight, Bruce Olson on phone.

### Updates

- Almost all action items from last meeting were completed. Gini will reach out to Army Corps again and include their representative on meeting emails.
- Staff report highlights – standard revision team progress, promotional video near completion, 2015 survey
- State Inter-agency Training Committee (Pat, Mary Anne, Jim)
  - Recent work was mostly focused on planning trainings for 2016 WI Land+Water conference in March
  - Several sessions will have PDHs associated with the sessions. Stephanie Schneider will be taking over the responsibility of assigning CEUs to WI Land+Water conference sessions.
  - Farming 101 two-day training at UW-Platteville is occurring this week. NRCS sees a real need to increase farming experience in their staff.

### Team updates

- DNR standards
  - Standard 1005, Vegetated Swale
    - Team has met monthly since April, and has made progress in re-organizing the current swale standard to meet new purposes beyond enhanced infiltration.
    - Team plans to have initial review in fall/winter 2015.
    - Could schedule a breakout session at WI Land+Water conference
  - Standards 1050 & 1051: Land Application & Water application of Polymers - EZ process standards
    - These two standards are almost ready for broad review.
    - DNR created toxicity guidance to be referenced in these standards instead of creating a new technical standard for toxicity criteria.
- NRCS standards
  - 590 Nutrient Management
    - Team considered all 50 pages of comments from 1<sup>st</sup> broad review, and completed a new draft for a second broad review occurring from Jul 31 to Aug 31.
    - The team is aiming to provide the final draft to NRCS by November.
  - 393 Filter Strip – In final drafting phase.
    - Previously team evaluations were sent out after the standard had been released/published. NRCS often is writing contracts from January to June, and prefers to wait to release any new standards after that contract writing period is over. Since the 393 final draft was submitted during the contract writing period, the new standard has not been published. In the future, the team evaluation will be sent out after submittal to the Custodian. Gini will update Policy Handbook and send out 393 team evaluation.

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## 2015 Technical Standards Needs Survey Summary

This year's Technical Standards survey was open for three weeks from July 17 to August 7, 2015. The survey was announced through the SOC urban and agriculture standard listservs, in a WI Land+Water e-newsletter, and in the DATCP Conservation Engineering newsletter. An announcement also went out through the NASECA listserv and through the Waukesha County Stormwater network. Given these two additional outlets and increased visibility of SOC within the conservation technician community, participation in the survey was significantly increased and resulted in more valuable feedback. The survey was completed by 245 individuals across the state from the private sector and public agencies.

Nearly 75% of respondents thought that Wisconsin's technical standards reflect current research, technology, and field experience. Overall, the weighted averages for ranking the importance of the proposed standard projects indicated that the 2016 & 2017 projects were good decisions. In future surveys, we may design this question differently to allow respondents to compare the priority of standard projects to each other versus of general importance. The comments related to the proposed standard projects will be given to the appropriate Custodian agencies for further review and consideration when revising these standards. The comments suggesting additional standards that need revision also will be provided to the Custodians to evaluate and consider adding new standard projects to the Work Plan. Two additional WDNR standards were added to the Work Plan, and the stormwater engineering group will further evaluate the survey results for any additional projects. The main topics for DNR to further discuss are related to ditch checks, wet detention pond maintenance (possibly referring to 528 guidance), standard 1006 regarding updated testing procedures from across the US, and dewatering.

The Custodian agencies were aware of and already working on many of the concerns raised by the respondents. These issues will continue to be addressed, and the comments bring attention to and reiterate the need to find solutions. Several issues raised were new to the agencies and will receive further review with internal staff. Respondents that provided their contact information may receive follow-up contact for more information or clarity on their suggestions.

The survey results provided a lot of valuable information regarding training needs for proper implementation of the practice standards. SOC will work towards promoting more regular opportunities to educate users on newly revised standards, and support the State Inter-agency Training Committee (SITCOM) in coordinating a training plan that addresses the suggestions offered. The results from training questions will be provided to SITCOM, WI Land+Water's Technical Committee and Professional Improvement Committee for further action.

## 2016 – 2017 Work Plan

The draft Work Plan was reviewed. Based on the survey summary results, the Council refined the practice standard projects and determined which SOC process would be used for each standard development or revision. Two additional DNR standards were added to the list, with the possibility of adding more if resources are available. The survey summary and draft Work Plan will be reviewed by the Custodian agencies. The final Work Plan will be determined at the November meeting and distributed in December or January.

## Current Financials Review & 2016 Draft Budget

The year-to-date financials were reviewed and approved. The outreach line item was over budget due to the production of the SOC video. All other expenses were close to budget. The 2016 draft budget was reviewed and approved to present to the WI Land+Water Board. The SOC program and budget has been steady for the past

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several years, and minimal change is projected with the program's financial needs. Partner agencies will check to ensure accurate allocations are presented for the 2016 income.

### **Election of SOC Chair & Vice Chair**

The Council decided to impose two-year term limits on the SOC Chair & Vice-chair positions with no limit on the number of terms. The Council discussed the value of the Chair position being held by a representative from a Custodian agency. Mary Anne Lowndes will serve as the Acting Chair, until the NRCS transition is complete. The SOC Chair is the leader of the Council, keeps engaged with all of SOC's partners, works with the WI Land+Water ED regarding personnel transitions, and is the point person for the Program Manger. Perry Lindquist was elected as the Vice Chair. The role of the Vice Chair is to serve as the Chair in the event the current Chair is not available.

Scott Mueller will serve as NRCS's Engineering representative and has a long-term history with SOC. Pat Murphy's State Resource Conservationist position announcement has been posted. NRCS hopes to fill that position by November. The New SRC will attend the SOC meetings, and hopefully remain as engaged and committed to SOC as Pat has been in the past.

### **Video Review & Update**

The draft video was reviewed again for final comments. The construction footage was added. There is always additional imagery that could improve the video, which would add more costs. The suggested comments include removing one of the three full team shots and being clear that standard users participate as team members. Some of the audio content refers to this, but it may not be implicit. There was a suggestion to include language like, "Farmers, certified crop advisors, engineers and other standard users participate as team members."

### **Next Meeting Agenda Items – Nov 18**

- Team Updates
- Finalize Work Plan
- Budget review
- Annual Report ideas
- 20<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary at WI Land+Water conference

### **Action Items**

- Gini will add Army Corps representative to Council list.
- Pat will follow up with Judy Derricks regarding release of the Filter Strip standard.
- Gini will update Policy Handbook to clarify timing of team evaluations.
- Gini will send out team evaluation for Filter Strip team.
- Pat, Scott, and Mary Anne will share the summary results with NRCS and WDNR for further review and provide any additional recommendations to the Work Plan or other projects needing to address the practice standard concerns.
- Jim will provide training recommendations from survey to SITCOM.
- Gini will make revisions to the Work Plan, including placing the calendar year associated with the plan.
- Jim and Gini will confirm 2016 draft budget and send to WI Land+Water Board.
- Michelle will follow up with DOT colleagues to confirm where recognition of DOT partnership is appropriate.
- Gini will change the policy handbook to include that SOC Chair and Vice-Chair positions will serve on two-year terms.

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