



# Standards Oversight Council (SOC)

Supporting Technical Standards for Urban and Rural Soil and Water Conservation

702 E. Johnson Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53703  
(608) 441-2677 || Fax (608) 441-2676 || [soc@wlwca.org](mailto:soc@wlwca.org) || [socwisconsin.org](http://socwisconsin.org)

## DRAFT COUNCIL MEETING NOTES

Thursday, August 8, 2013 || 9:00 am – 12:30pm || NRCS State Office

Attendees: Pat Murphy, Perry Lindquist, Richard Castelnovo, Mary Anne Lowndes, Gretchen Wheat, Gini Knight. By phone – Jim VandenBrook, Bruce Olson. Jimmy Bramblett attended first half of the meeting.

### SOC Introductions / Overview with NRCS State Conservationist

The Council invited Jimmy Bramblett to attend a portion of this meeting, to meet the Council representatives and discuss SOC's role in Wisconsin's conservation programs and process for standard revisions. The group discussed SOC's role in managing the technical aspects of drafting technical standards and Jimmy's role in managing the all stakeholder, practical, and social implications of the standard revisions while meeting the mission of NRCS. There is a clear need to have all stakeholders' input for standard revisions, including scientific, economic, practical, social, and environmental risk factors.

Our goal is to include as much input from interested stakeholders as reasonably possible. SOC has multiple methods for receiving input currently, and will consider additional methods. We will continue to reach out to parties that have expressed interest in revisions of particular standards through phone conversations, meetings, or listening sessions. The Custodians or teams will do their best to explain the real implications from the changes to the standards, not just the technical changes. Farmers want to know what the real impact of the standard revisions is to their farm production and operation. SOC will respond and reach out to those that have asked for more feedback.

NRCS has met with WAPAC, DBA, and will be meeting with the Cattleman's Association soon to discuss NRCS programs and standards, particularly the 590 NM standard. NRCS asks for "Structured Feedback" on 590, which is a form that requests a high, medium, or low ranking of importance on a list technical issues involved with the 590 standard. NRCS is using this structured feedback form to get input from the ag producers, because they have asked for meetings with NRCS. It was acknowledged that environmental groups are not providing this sort of feedback. So far, the environmental groups are not contacting NRCS, instead they contact DNR for environmental concerns. NRCS is reaching out to those that contact them. Many organizations or the public do not understand which agencies are responsible for which technical standards or who enforces or revises them.

Training for conservation technicians was also discussed. There are gaps in training content, availability, and quality. It is the responsibility of the Custodian to train on these standards, although the Custodians often do not have a specified position to coordinate trainings. NRCS training is often held at the area office level for LCD and NRCS staff. Private sector consultants are also using the standards, but do not have the ability to participate in NRCS trainings. Ongoing training for new and veteran staff is needed. VandenBrook gave a brief review of the inter-agency conservation training committee that is working to re-invigorate the old SITCOM. Currently WLWCA,

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**DATCP**  
Richard  
Castelnovo  
(608) 224-4608

**WDNR**  
Gretchen Wheat  
& Mary Anne  
Lowndes  
(608) 264-6273

**NRCS**  
Pat Murphy &  
John Ramsden  
(608) 662-4422

**UWEX**  
Ken Genskow  
(608) 262-8756

**WLWCA Reps**  
Perry Lindquist  
(262) 548-7867  
& Bruce Olson  
(608) 785-9867

**WLWCA Staff**  
Jim  
VandenBrook  
(608) 441-2677

DNR, DATCP, NRCS, and UWEX are active in the committee. A private sector representative is needed. Examples on the urban erosion control and storm water – NASECA, Waukesha County, or Fox Valley.

WLWCA is planning to fill another staff position by the beginning of 2014 to assist in the re-development of a comprehensive conservation training program. DATCP has just filled a new position, specifically for training and outreach. These two positions, amongst others, will work to define the gaps in training, coordinate teams to develop curriculums, determine how the training systems will relate to CEUs and job approval, and help coordinate the delivery of the training programs. The committee will need to explore options for how job approval can be tracked and how it relates to this program. NRCS will look into providing matching funds to contribute to a re-invigorated training program.

### SOC Team Updates

- Nutrient Management – next meetings: Aug 21, Sep 18
  - Working through nitrogen management issues, and beginning to make progress on more substantial technical issues
  - Team is working well together and may consider inviting an additional farmer to the team, since farmers have the most difficulty attending all meetings. We are also considering the idea of hosting listening sessions to explain our progress a few times throughout revision process.
- Permeable Pavement – next meetings: Aug 23, Oct 15
  - Scheduled to complete a draft of full standard in September, with plans to send out draft for initial review soon after.
- Other EZ Process standards
  - NRCS Filter Strip – Terry Kelly is leading this standard revision and has a draft of the revised standard. He will be reaching out to collect feedback from colleagues before sending the standard out for broad review comments/input. Gini will forward on survey comments regarding Filter Strip to Terry.
  - WDNR Storm Drain Inlet Protection for Construction Sites – DNR hired a new Storm Water Engineer, Ryan Lentz, who will lead the revision of this standard. He has a draft, and is sending it out to the original team for comments. The initial review is almost underway, and then the final draft will go out to broad review. The engineer is interested in using CAD drawings for this standard. Pat will check with JR and Scott about available CAD drawings.

### 2013 Technical Standards Needs Summary

The council reviewed the survey summary, discussed highlights, and made recommendations for revisions to a final report. The final summary report will be sent to all respondents of the survey, to the list-serve, and posted online. The Council decided to delete the second question in the survey for the 2015 TSA, because it does not provide valuable, useable data.

### 2014 – 2016 Work Plan

The Council reviewed the draft 2014 – 2016 Work Plan, incorporated suggestions from the survey regarding standards that need to be revised. We discussed how this document could be used for grant applications and reporting, given that all grant applications reference the current Work Plan. We will continue to categorize the standards by ‘active’ and ‘planned’. Each standard will have a sentence or two of intention for the revision and an approximate date of final publication.

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Castelnuovo  
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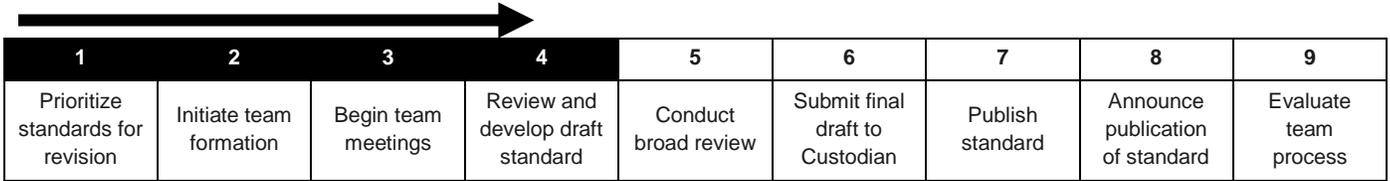
**WLWCA Reps**  
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**SOC 9-step Full Process – potential revision**

We discussed how to document the progress of each team involved in a full process revision. One option is using a simple scale or some sort of graphic of the 9 steps with a bar that shows where the team is at in the process. Examples below...

The **Nutrient Management Standard Revision Team** is working on Step 4 in SOC’s Full process for standard revision.



- After exploring a visual depiction of team progress, the Council agreed to evaluate the 9-step process in order to simplify the steps and more accurately show our work. Options suggested.
  - Remove Step 1, since all standard revisions start with evaluating Survey results and development of a Work Plan.
  - Consolidate Step 6 & 7, and possibly 8
  - Include an additional step after Step 4 for Initial Review and feedback solicitation, emphasize gathering input from other stakeholders; considering listening sessions
  - Consider adding training or providing an overview of standard revisions
  - Maybe something like the following for the annual report:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Solicit involvement	Coordinate team meetings	Review and develop draft standard	Request initial feedback	Conduct broad review	Request approval & announce	Evaluate team process
Nutrient Management							
Permeable Pavement							
Filter Strip							
Inlet Protection							

- Gini will prepare a draft of revised Full Process steps for the next meeting, and add to the November agenda.

**2014 Budget**

The council reviewed and approved the draft 2014 SOC budget that will be sent along to the WLWCA board. The Council will work on developing action items for outreach and training. Jim will report back to Council in November if budget has been approved by WLWCA board. Gini and Jim will work with grantors about clarifying Administration/Overhead expenses.

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## Next Meeting Agenda

- Nov 5<sup>th</sup>, DATCP
  - i. Work Plan review & implementation
  - ii. Team Updates
  - iii. Review of 9-step Full process
  - iv. Review SOC brochure
  - v. Locations of Tech Notes, planning guidance. What level of detail is available on web?
  - vi. 2014 Meetings - 4x per year okay?

## November Meeting Materials

1. Agenda
2. Staff Report
3. 4th Quarter SOC Year-to-Date vs. Budget
4. Revised 2014 – 2016 Work Plan
5. Draft of revised Full Process steps
6. Draft SOC brochure
7. Draft Annual Report?

## Action Items

- Pat will ask JR and Scott about available CAD drawings.
- Gini will forward on survey comments regarding Filter Strip to Terry.
- Mary Anne will get more feedback from the survey respondent requesting revisions to standards 1005, Vegetated Infiltration Swales, and standard 1071 Interim Manufactured Perimeter Control and Slope Interruption Products.
- Gini will update the survey summary, send the final summary report to all respondents of the survey with a thank you, send out to the list-serve, and post the summary online.
- Jim will report back to Council in November if budget has been approved by WLWCA board.
- Gini will prepare a draft of revised Full Process steps for the next meeting, and add to the November agenda.