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# **TECHNICAL STANDARDS PROCESS ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORT**

## **January 2008 – December 2008**

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Prepared by the Standards Oversight Council

### **COOPERATING AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS**

WI Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP)

WI Department of Commerce (Comm)

WI Department of Natural Resources (WDNR)

USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

University of Wisconsin – Extension (UWEX)

Wisconsin Association of Land Conservation Employees (WALCE)

Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association (WLWCA)



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**February 2009**

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# **I. Introduction**

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## **What does the Standards Oversight Council do?**

The Standards Oversight Council (SOC) is assigned the responsibility of overseeing the process used in Wisconsin for the development, maintenance and distribution of technical standards for urban and rural soil and water conservation practices. Essentially, SOC is the “gatekeeper” for the technical standards process, and is responsible for the contents of the Technical Standards Process Handbook (TSPH) that serves as a reference for everyone involved in the SOC process. SOC members represent the primary responsible parties in the technical standards process. They are also authorized to appoint individuals to represent their respective organization for participation in any technical standard activity.

## **The Standards Oversight Council**

SOC is composed of cooperating agency personnel in the state who are involved with developing technical standards for the delivery of soil and water conservation programs, including:

- **Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR)**  
Runoff Management Section, Engineering Unit Leader,
- **Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP)**  
Conservation Engineering Section Chief,
- **Wisconsin Department of Commerce (Comm)**  
Appointee of the Secretary of the Comm,
- **USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)**  
State Resource Conservationist,
- **University of Wisconsin – Extension (UWEX)**  
Appointee of the Dean of University of Wisconsin - Extension,
- **Wisconsin Association of Land Conservation Employees (WALCE)**  
Appointee(s) of the WALCE Board of Directors, and
- **Wisconsin Land & Water Conservation Association (WLWCA)**  
Executive Director.

For efficiency purposes, many federal, state and local agencies in Wisconsin rely upon the same technical standards to implement numerous conservation programs. This diverse user group must deal with different mandates, goals, policies, deadlines and political pressures. The SOC is the organization charged with working through these inherent difficulties.

To further clarify the intent of SOC, it is important to note what it is not responsible for doing. SOC does not write standards, it oversees an interagency process charged with that task. SOC does not “own” any standards, and no change of custodianship by cooperating agencies is proposed. When a new or revised standard is needed, SOC determines which agency will take the lead, and coordinates the work team activities.

## **II. Evaluation of SOC Accomplishments in 2008**

There are several levels to the activities and accomplishments performed by the Standards Oversight Council. The most visible means of measuring these accomplishments is to produce a list of the technical standards that SOC work teams devoted effort to create or revise during 2008. Table 1 contains this information for NRCS technical standards; Table 2 for a Joint WDNR-Commerce technical standard; and Table 3 for a Commerce technical standard.

<b>Table 1. SOC Technical Standards Work Team Status 2008</b>		
<b>NRCS IS THE CUSTODIAN FOR THESE STANDARDS</b>		
<b>SOC WORK TEAM</b>	<b>STANDARD(S)</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
Fence Team	Fence (382)®	In 2008, the work team completed its major revision of the NRCS 382 Fence standard. The team brought the standard up-to-date with current fence technology, incorporated criteria to improve fence integrity, safety and lifespan, created specifications for various fence types, and improved technical drawings.
Waste Storage Facility Team	Waste Storage Facility (313)®	In 2008, SOC and NRCS prepared a comprehensive list of topics to address in the major revision of this standard, planned the timeline for this project and began soliciting membership for a new SOC work team.
Manure Transfer Team	Manure Transfer (382)®	In 2008, SOC and NRCS prepared a comprehensive list of topics to address in the major revision of this standard, planned the timeline for this project and began soliciting membership for a new SOC work team.
Feed Storage Leachate and Runoff Control, and Milking Center Wastewater Treatment	Waste Treatment (629)®	Previously completed standards for Milking Center Wastewater Treatment and Feed Storage Leachate and Runoff Control were merged into the existing NRCS 629 Waste Treatment technical standard.

® Revised Standard

<b>Table 2. SOC Technical Standards Work Team Status 2008</b>		
<b>WDNR AND COMM HOLD JOINT CUSTODIANSHIP FOR THIS STANDARD</b>		
<b>SOC WORK TEAM</b>	<b>STANDARD</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
Proprietary Stormwater Devices Team	Methods and Procedures for Predicting the Efficiency of Proprietary Stormwater Devices (1006)*	In 2008, the work team completed this joint DNR-Commerce technical standard, which sets criteria for evaluating and predicting the performance of proprietary devices installed to reduce total suspended solids in stormwater. The technical standard was delivered to the joint custodians and was accepted for publication. <b>Note:</b> This is the first joint custodianship of a standard developed by a SOC Work Team.

\* New Standard

<b>Table 3. SOC Technical Standards Work Team Status 2008</b>		
<b>COMM IS THE CUSTODIAN FOR THIS STANDARD</b>		
<b>SOC WORK TEAM</b>	<b>STANDARD</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
Infiltration Trench Team	Infiltration Trench (number to be assigned)*	In 2008, the work team met regularly to put together a comprehensive draft of a new technical standard governing the design, construction and maintenance of infiltration trenches, which are stormwater management tools primarily appropriate for urban settings. Significantly, a subgroup of the team created several design examples and met with staff from the standard's agency sponsors to ensure the examples were consistent with stormwater performance models. By the end of 2008, the work team had readied the draft for the Initial Review phase of standard development.

\* New Standard

In order to gauge the significance of Tables 1, 2 and 3, it is helpful to have an understanding of how much work is involved from the time a technical standard is selected for revision or creation, to the time it is finalized and distributed.

It is not uncommon for the process to take between one to two years to complete. This time frame is often dependent upon whether a team is working on more than one standard, and if the team is developing companion documents to enhance the application of the standards. A typical team may include anywhere from 5 to 12 work team members who commit at least one full day a month to working on the standard and other related tasks. This does not include the preparation time required for these meetings. In addition, the standards are subject to two stringent review processes that expose the drafts to hundreds of people before being finalized.

During 2008, individuals from numerous affiliations participated as SOC work team members. Table 4 illustrates the diversity of backgrounds represented on the work teams.

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Number of Work Team Participants</b>
Consultant/Private Industry	10
WDNR*	6
County LCD	10
DATCP	4
NRCS*	11
UWEX	1
Municipalities*	2
Comm	6
DHFS	1

\* Individuals participating on more than one work team have been counted multiple times because of the different roles they fulfill on each work team.

It is widely acknowledged that given the complexity of the work and the breadth of stakeholders involved, the quality of the technical standards have been dramatically improved when compared with the pre-SOC era. There is also much evidence to suggest that the acceptability of the end product has increased. This means that Wisconsin is able to move closer towards providing a single, uniform set of land and water conservation practices that are consistently used and accepted by all user groups and codifying agencies.

Beyond the SOC process, the custodian of technical standards retains the responsibilities and the right to set the schedule for completion. The custodian maintains the final word regarding the content of the technical standard. Note that to date, no final work team drafts have been refused by a custodian; this should not occur if all parties meet their expected responsibilities.

## **Other SOC-Related Accomplishments 2008**

Over the past year, SOC has been conducting a number of projects. SOC has continued to demonstrate a commitment to improving the accessibility and usability of technical standards by considering new initiatives and improving the general awareness of SOC activities in Wisconsin. In addition, the Council has concentrated on improving the process by evaluating the current structure and considering new ways to conduct business. SOC-related accomplishments in 2008 can be categorized as follows:

- SOC Outreach, Publications and New Initiatives
- Maintaining and Improving SOC Operations

### **SOC Outreach, Publications and New Initiatives**

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***Progress on New Companion Documents*** – SOC’s long-awaited companion document on Milking Center Wastewater Treatment was readied for publication in 2008. The new companion document, authored by two members of the Milking Center Wastewater Treatment work team, will be distributed via a limited number of hard copies and posted as a PDF file on various web sites. UW-Extension’s Environmental Resources Center has been producing and editing the 70+ page document, which provides additional guidelines for users needing to comply with milking center wastewater treatment criteria in the NRCS 629 Waste Treatment technical standard. Also, the leader of a former SOC work team prepared an initial draft of a new companion document for designing Feed Storage Leachate and Runoff Control systems. In 2009, SOC intends to finalize the document with input from a review team and comments from the SOC listserv.

***Creating a Final 2008-2009 SOC Work Plan*** – Every two years, SOC queries state and federal agencies, counties, municipalities and other public and private entities about their needs for new and revised technical standards. Based on results of the Technical Standards Needs Assessment conducted in the Fall of 2007, SOC held several meetings in 2008 to hash out and prioritize its projects for the next two years, ultimately incorporating them into the 2008-09 SOC Work Plan. The entire process of obtaining input from the technical standards user groups, member agencies and interested parties in the conservation community—and then reaching a consensus over work priorities—is very time consuming.

***Utilizing the SOC Website*** [www.socwisconsin.org](http://www.socwisconsin.org) – The SOC website is maintained to provide a single clearinghouse for SOC-related information. This website was developed to ensure that the services of the Standards Oversight Council are fully utilized and recognized by technical standard users in Wisconsin. Standards available for broad review, work team progress and meeting dates, links to relevant sites, and SOC meeting minutes are available online.

***Promoting SOC via Print and Public Meetings*** – Several informational articles and news briefs were published (Wisconsin Conservation Engineering Newsletter, Thursday Note) to inform the conservation community of ongoing SOC activities and plans. In other activities, the SOC Coordinator attended quarterly meetings of the WALCE Technical

Committee to update the group on SOC's current projects and to obtain useful feedback from the committee. The technical committee serves as an important voice on technical topics of concern to county conservation employees.

***UWEX Partnership*** –The UWEX Environmental Resources Center (ERC), although it no longer dedicates a part-time staff member to work on SOC publications, nonetheless continues to provide in-kind services to SOC on an as-needed basis. For example, as noted above, UWEX's ERC has taken the lead on editing, formatting and printing SOC's companion documents on Milking Center Wastewater Treatment and Feed Storage Leachate and Runoff Control. Also, in 2008, web designers with UWEX's ERC initiated a project to update and redesign the SOC website (see below). In the future, UWEX will continue to act as an editorial resource for SOC, and funding for services likely will be negotiated between SOC and UWEX's ERC.

### **Maintaining and Improving SOC Operations** ~~~~~

***SOC Communications*** – The SOC listserv continues to be used to support SOC's system of distributing draft standards for review, notifying listserv members of new teams being formed to revise or create new standards, soliciting input on important topics and generally communicating with members of the SOC distribution list. Other communication efforts include responding to general requests for information about SOC and the technical standards development process, as well as maintaining telephone and email correspondence with work team leaders and members regarding the progress of various work teams.

***Plans for New SOC Website*** – Working with web specialists at the UW-Extension's Environmental Resources Center, SOC in 2008 began a project to substantially update the SOC website. An initial mockup of the new Web site proposes several improvements, including: a more inviting home page that is clearer, more professional looking, and that provides more information; a more efficient design for the site's navigation system, including the use of more effective main headings on the home page; and fewer web pages overall that are more robust and informative.

***Changes in SOC Policy*** – In 2008, SOC updated its internal policy manual, which governs many of the Council's activities. Also, SOC explored and defined alternatives to the full-blown SOC work team process for making relatively minor revisions to existing technical standards. In 2009, SOC will finalize draft language for the Technical Standards Process Handbook that describes the process for adopting revisions not significant enough to require a full SOC work team to address, but still may require input from conservation practitioners outside of the custodian agency. This process for making minor revisions will free-up SOC resources to focus on new technical standards, as well as revisions to existing standards, that will require the full SOC work team process.

***Maintaining the SOC Distribution List*** – In addition to the listserv, the SOC distribution list also includes an extensive Outlook contacts database that the SOC Coordinator continually updates and maintains, as well as a small mailing list for contacts

wishing only to receive regular mail. In 2008, the SOC Coordinator continued to work on expanding the number of urban contacts in the SOC distribution list. Overall, maintaining the SOC contacts database requires a significant amount of the SOC Coordinator's time.

### III. Appendix

The following Tables provide a list of standards of which SOC has overseen the revision, creation or deletion.

<b>Table 5. Revisions of NRCS Technical Standards Overseen by SOC To-Date</b>		
<b>Code</b>	<b>Revised Standards (20)</b>	<b>Date</b>
575	Animal Trails and Walkways	4/02
327	Conservation Cover	11/01
342	Critical Area Planting	5/00
382	Fence	11/08
393	Filter Strip	1/01
410	Grade Stabilization Structure	7/01
561	Heavy Use Area Protection	3/02
634	Manure Transfer	11/04 & 12/05
590	Nutrient Management	7/02 & 9/05
329A	Residue Management No Till & Strip Till	5/98
329B	Residue Management Mulch Till	5/98
344	Residue Management Seasonal	5/98
378	Pond	7/01
521A	Pond Sealing or Lining - Flexible Membrane Lining	4/99
528A	Prescribed Grazing	12/08
580	Streambank and Shoreline Protection	2/97 & 12/05
612	Tree/Shrub Establishment	3/01
313	Waste Storage Facility	6/01, 11/04 & 12/05
638	Water and Sediment Control Basin	7/01
642	Well	4/99
657	Wetland Restoration	9/00

<b>Table 6. Creation of New NRCS Technical Standards Overseen by SOC To-Date</b>		
<b>Code</b>	<b>New NRCS Standards (8)</b>	<b>Date</b>
629	Livestock Feed Storage Leachate and Runoff Control #	8/08
634	Manure Transfer	1/99
629	Milking Center Wastewater Treatment System #	8/08
528A	Prescribed Grazing	4/98
391	Riparian Forest Buffer	1/01
I-643A	Shoreland Habitat	7/01
635	Wastewater Treatment Strip	1/02
351	Well Decommissioning	4/99

I = Interim Technical Standard      # These standards were not issued separately, but were incorporated into 629 Waste Treatment

<b>Table 7. Creation of New WDNR Technical Standards Overseen by SOC To-Date</b>		
<b>Number</b>	<b>New WDNR Standards (26)</b>	<b>Date</b>
1004	Bioretention for Infiltration	10/04
1066	Construction Site Diversion	6/04
1053	Channel Erosion Mat	8/05
1061	Dewatering	9/06
1062	Ditch Check	8/05
1068	Dust Control on Construction Sites	6/04
1050	Erosion Control Anionic Polyacrylimide	7/01
1003	Infiltration Basin	10/04
1052	Non-Channel Erosion Mat	6/04
1058	Mulching for Construction Sites	6/04
1055	Sediment Bale Barrier (Non-Channel)	6/04
I-1051	Sediment Control Water Application of Polymers	12/02
1059	Seeding for Construction Sites	6/04
1064	Sediment Basin	3/06
1063	Sediment Trap	9/05
1070	Silt Curtain	9/05
1056	Silt Fence	6/04
1002	Site Evaluation for Stormwater Infiltration	3/04
1057	Stone Tracking Pad	6/04
1060	Storm Drain Inlet Protection for Construction Sites	6/04
1067	Temporary Grading Practices for Erosion Control	6/04
1069	Turbidity Barrier	9/05
1100	Turf Nutrient Management	5/06
1005	Vegetated Infiltration Swale	5/07
1054	Vegetated Buffer For Construction Sites	6/04
1001	Wet Detention Pond	10/07
<b>WDNR and Comm Joint Custodianship Standard</b>		
1006	Methods and Procedures for Predicting the Efficiency of Proprietary Stormwater Devices	3/08

I = Interim Technical Standard

<b>Table 8. Creation of New Comm Technical Standards Overseen by SOC To-Date</b>		
<b>Code</b>	<b>New Comm Standards (1)</b>	<b>Date</b>
TBD	Infiltration Trench	*

\* Creation in Progress

<b>Table 9. Discontinued NRCS Standards</b>		
<b>Code</b>	<b>Discontinued Standards (24)</b>	<b>Date</b>
310	Bedding	7/97
326	Clearing & Snagging	7/97
402	Dam, Floodwater Retarding	7/97
349	Dam, Multiple-Purpose	7/97
356	Dike	7/97
404	Floodway	7/97
Interim	Floodproofing	7/97
388	Irrigation Field Ditch	7/97
552A	Irrigation Pit or Regulating Reservoir – Irrigation Pit	7/97
552B	Irrigation Pit or Regulating Reservoir – Regulating reservoir	7/97
436	Irrigation Storage Reservoir	7/97
442	Irrigation System, Sprinkler	7/97
443	Irrigation System, Surface and Subsurface	7/97
449	Irrigation Water Management	7/97
466	Land Smoothing	7/97
521B	Pond Sealing or Lining, Soil Dispersant	7/97
521D	Pond Sealing or Lining, Cationic Emulsion – Waterborne Sealant	7/97
521E	Pond Sealing or Lining, Asphalt-Sealed Fabric Liner	7/97
462	Precision Land Farming	7/97
566	Recreation Land Grading & Shaping	7/97
554	Regulating Water in Drainage Systems	7/97
312	Waste Management System	6/01
425	Waste Storage Pond	7/97
359	Waste Treatment Lagoon	7/97