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# **TECHNICAL STANDARDS PROCESS ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORT**

## **January 2009 – December 2009**

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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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**January 2010**

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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 2009

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 2009. This list also includes technical standards undergoing revision by a Custodian's informal work team employing the SOC-EZ process. Table 1 contains this information for NRCS technical standards; Table 2 for a WDNR technical standard; and Table 3 for Commerce technical standards.

<b>Table 1. SOC Technical Standards Work Team Status 2009</b>		
<b>NRCS IS THE CUSTODIAN FOR THESE STANDARDS</b>		
<b>SOC WORK TEAM</b>	<b>STANDARD(S)</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
Waste Storage Facility Team	Waste Storage Facility (313)®	A SOC work team was formed in March 2009 to substantially revise the Waste Storage Facility technical standard, which governs the design, construction and maintenance of storage structures to temporarily store manure, leachate, wastewater and contaminated runoff as part of an agricultural waste management system. In 2009, the SOC work team met monthly and anticipates completing work on this standard in 2011.
Waste Transfer Team	Waste Transfer (634)®	A SOC work team was formed in March 2009 to substantially revise the Waste Transfer technical standard, which governs the design, construction and maintenance of conveyance systems, conduits and equipment to transfer animal manure, bedding, wastewater, leachate and contaminated runoff. In 2009, the SOC work team met one to two times per month and completed the Initial Review phase of standard development. In December 2009, a revised draft of the standard was distributed for Broad Review comments. The work team anticipates completing work on this standard in 2010.
Wis. Construction Specification 4—Concrete Team (informal cross-agency work team)	Wis. Construction Specification 4—Concrete®	In April 2009, a work team of DATCP, NRCS and county LCD engineers and technicians formed to revise NRCS Construction Spec. 4. An internal review of the draft was conducted in July 2009. In December 2009, SOC distributed a draft Spec. 4 for Broad Review comments.

® Revised Standard

**Table 2. SOC Technical Standards Work Team Status 2009**

<b>WDNR IS THE CUSTODIAN FOR THIS STANDARD</b>		
<b>SOC WORK TEAM</b>	<b>STANDARD</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
Bioretention (informal WDNR team using SOC-EZ process)	Bioretention (1004)®	In April 2009, WDNR staff proposed revisions pertaining to the standard’s criteria for the engineered soil mixture. In June 2009, SOC distributed the proposal for Broad Review. Comments were compiled and forwarded to WDNR to address. The WDNR team is evaluating the comments and is expected to revise the standard in 2010.

® Revised Standard

**Table 3. SOC Technical Standards Work Team Status 2009**

<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)*	This SOC work team is developing a new technical standard governing the design, construction and maintenance of an infiltration trench, which is a stormwater management practice primarily appropriate for urban settings with limited space. In 2009, the work team distributed a draft standard for Initial Review comments and subsequently met to evaluate and address comments received. In October 2009, an updated draft standard was distributed for Broad Review comments. The SOC work team anticipates completing work on this new standard in 2010.
Perimeter Control and Slope Interruption Products (informal Commerce team using SOC-EZ process)	Perimeter Control and Slope Interruption Products (number to be assigned)*	In April 2009, a Commerce informal work team proposed a draft technical standard to address installation of approved products that reduce uninterrupted slope length, and slow the velocity of runoff from small areas of disturbed soil. In June 2009, SOC distributed the draft standard for Broad Review. Comments were compiled and forwarded to the informal Commerce work team. Subsequently, the project was placed on hold in the Fall of 2009 pending completion of an MOU between Commerce and WDNR.

\* 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 2009, individuals from numerous affiliations participated as SOC work team members. Table 4 illustrates the diversity of backgrounds represented on the work teams.

<b>Table 4. Affiliations of SOC Work Team Members in 2009</b>	
<b>Organization</b>	<b>Number of Work Team Participants</b>
Consultant/Private Industry	5
WDNR	4
County LCD	5
DATCP	5
NRCS*	4
UWEX	1
Municipalities	1
Comm	5
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 in 2009**

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 2009 can be categorized as follows:

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

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

***Progress on New Companion Documents*** – SOC's companion document on Milking Center Wastewater Treatment was formally published in 2009. A limited number of copies of the new companion document, authored by two members of the Milking Center Wastewater Treatment work team, were printed for distribution to users. Also, an electronic version of the 67-page companion document was posted on the Wisconsin NRCS web site. The document, produced and edited with the help of UW-Extension's Environmental Resources Center, provides additional guidelines for users needing to comply with milking center wastewater treatment criteria in the NRCS 629 Waste Treatment technical standard. Also in progress is 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 New 2-Year SOC Work Plan*** – Prior to 2009, SOC devoted time and resources every two years to gather input from state and federal agencies, counties, municipalities and other public and private entities about priorities for new and revised technical standards. Using the input, SOC would prioritize the projects and develop a SOC Work Plan covering a specific period of two calendar years. In 2009, SOC decided to increase the SOC program's flexibility by deciding to update the SOC Work Plan more frequently, as needs and priorities change. Thus, rather than cover specific calendar years, each new and revised SOC Work Plan will be dated and cover planned work projects for the forward two-year period. In revising and updating the work plan, SOC will continue to solicit input from the various agencies and interested members of the public. In December 2009, after several meetings were held to discuss, prioritize and reach a consensus over technical standard projects for the next two years, SOC created a new SOC Work Plan that covers the next two-year period.

***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 kept in touch with issues raised at quarterly meetings of the WALCE Technical Committee, which 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 took the lead on editing, formatting and printing SOC’s newly published companion document on Milking Center Wastewater Treatment. Also in 2009, web designers with UWEX completed its project to reorganize, redesign and create basic templates of new webpages for 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.

***New Edition of Technical Standards Process Handbook*** – In 2009, SOC completed a number of significant revisions to its Technical Standards Process Handbook, which governs SOC’s cooperative process for developing and maintaining urban and rural soil and water conservation technical standards. The handbook documents the step-by-step processes for creating new standards and revising existing ones. The changes to the handbook have been incorporated into a new 2009 edition. Among the major changes to the handbook is the addition of two simplified, less time-consuming processes that may be used in certain limited circumstances. They include a new “SOC-EZ” process that retains a public review and comment period, and a “Minor Revisions Process” that does not include a public comment period. This truncated process may be used by a technical standard’s Custodian to update an existing technical standard where the changes do not significantly alter the standard’s planning criteria, performance expectations or design parameters.

***Progress on New SOC Website*** – In 2009, SOC continued to work with web designers at the UW-Extension’s Environmental Resources Center to substantially update the SOC



website. When complete, the new SOC web site will be more efficient and easier to navigate, will have an improved appearance and will include an expanded store of information. At this point, SOC is working to update the data, text and various links on each of the new website's 13 webpages.

***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 2009, 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 (21)</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