

NRCS CPS 512 Pasture and Hay Planting Standard Team

MEETING NOTES

Monday, August 5, 2024 ▲ 9:30am – 2:30pm ▲

NRCS, 5417 Clem's Way, Stevens Point, WI ▲ Conference Room B

9:30 Welcome & Introductions (All)

Goal: Familiarize team with other members and their experience related to this standard.

Attendance: Kate Brunner – WI Land+Water, SOC Program Manager and meeting facilitator
Eric Hurley, Sponsor – NRCS
Adam Abel, Leader – NRCS
Patrick Bula – Sauk Co Land Resources and Env.
Jason Cavadini – UW Madison Extension
Brian Hillers – NRCS
Chris Miller – NRCS
Laura Paine – Grassland 2.0
Matt Rataczak – NRCS
Mike Stanek – NRCS
Benjamin Wendt – NRCS

Absent: None

Guests: None

The goal of this process today is to strengthen the technical integrity of the draft and to work out any major problems prior to releasing it for a more widespread public distribution.

9:40 SOC Process, Reviewer Responsibilities (Kate)

Goal: Establish understanding of SOC process & reviewer expectations.

The updates to this standard are following the Modified Process detailed in the SOC [Technical Standards Process Handbook](#).

The SOC process focuses on the science-based, technical aspects of a standard, rather than policy or legal issues or politics.

- Technical standards are not rules or regulations but should follow the provisions of current rules and regs.
- There is format to follow and the national standard has areas where language can't be adjusted or is more difficult to change. This is where Adam and Eric will advise.
- This update will follow the SOC Guiding Principles of quality, uniformity and accountability.

Pasture and Hay Planting is going through a Modified Process. The reviewers in this room are going to provide feedback, then I'll facilitate the public review, and then Adam will work within NRCS's internal system to get the standard published.

Key Roles in this process:

- SOC Program Manager –
 - Coordinates and facilitates standard work teams
 - Makes sure the team follows SOC process detailed in the handbook including the guiding principles of quality, uniformity and accountability
 - Organizes and documents the meeting
 - Shepherds the team communication and standard edits
- Custodian/Sponsor – Eric Hurley
 - Provides resources
 - Assists with clarification of goals and sideboards
- Team Leader – Adam Abel
 - Acts as meeting chair, keeps meeting on topic
 - Identifies and assigns tasks for others
 - Main editor of the standard
 - Oversees training
- Initial Reviewer
 - Shares expertise and advises on standard improvements
 - Strives for consensus
 - Provides perspective on the impact, practicality, and technical appropriateness of the draft.

9:50 Current Resources & Objectives (Adam)

Goal: Provide an overview of current federal NRCS requirements and NRCS WI goals for the revised standard. Review and discuss main topics to address in revising the standard.

The national text is broad and the Wisconsin language will provide more specificity. Team will use the current WI standard to merge with the national, but has the opportunity to update and clarify components based on this review team's recommendations.

10:15 Break

10:30 Reviewer Input (Everyone)

Goal: Discuss proposed draft standard and address reviewer input.

Adam reviews the new national standard and existing WI language with edits to the draft text made on-screen together. Some key points of the team discussion:

- Name has changed – Forage and Biomass to Pasture and Hay Planting
- Definition: "perennial herbaceous plants" doesn't include red clover but it is used and allowable. It's a biennial but biologically a perennial. Species specific information in the guidance document will be clearer on red clover and other "sister" plants?
- Purpose:
 - Cannot remove a purpose but can add, with a variance from national.

- Prev. purpose was “Improve yield and plant longevity by providing guidance for selection and establishment of adapted and compatible plant varieties, species, and cultivars.” This was more specific to plant quality and persistence with is more plant focused than livestock focused.
 - “Improve or maintain livestock nutrition and health.” Standard isn’t focused on livestock but on planting. Should include yield, quality and persistence. Adam will look into adding a purpose related to this, or alternately if it’s difficult variance the standard could be more specific on criteria to improve yield, quality and persistence.
- Condition Where Practice Applies is different from previous language, but team agrees to stick with this new language. “likely” used to allow for a variety of situations. 5 years aligns with the contracting.
- Criteria
 - Plant specifies selection stay very similar to previous version
 - Certified Seed language - there’s a difference in certified vs tested seed, not actually that much certified seed. Team likes use of named varieties of seed or tested. Certified Seed will be moved to a Consideration.
 - Use pure live seed, tested for purity, germination, variety name.
 - Untested seed and how to test is covered in the guidance doc. A variance would be needed; a general statement added about getting variance approval for projects that don’t meet the criteria.
- References to tech notes and external documents will be consolidated, not repeated much unless there is a specific table/figure within.
- Dates would be in the guidance doc over the standard for greater flexibility over time.
 - Both dates and maps could use updating, especially relative to cool season grasses which may be planted in Sept. for the southern 2/3 of the state (say, south of Hwy 29)
 - Plant Hardiness Zones map has been updated and doesn’t look like the current map.
 - Jason recommends extending the late summer seeding date for cool season grasses into Sept. A dynamic tool like WiscoNet is readily available for use but it will create more follow-up work and variability. Some other states use changing date like: forecasted temps >50 for X number days. Team likes the use of dates but with update from previous standard. Need deeper dive into this issue.
 - NRCS cover crop discussions are looking at changing map with growing degree days. splitting it north and south with the line at about top ¼. Jamie is doing the 340 re-write so Adam will coordinate with her (and Steve or Beth for engineering input and Mike for agronomy and 590 perspective) on consistent map for intent of these standards. He’ll also develop definitions or clarification on “Thaw” and “Freeze.” Adam will send the team revised draft map for review.
- Nutrient and soil amendment
 - The current language tied to 590 is difficult for this standard’s purpose. Sampling typically done in early spring or late fall since that’s when coop has the time and it’s not necessarily accurate if samples are from several years prior. Standard edited to have sampling within 4 years of proposed planting date, and a Consideration added to sample within 2 years of planting.

- The nutrient recommendations in 512 are used for seeding, not ongoing management. Adjusting nutrients easier at planting; however, sometimes amendment isn't possible.
 - Lime not available in all parts of the state, especially in the north. Cost prohibitive for some producers or not feasible with supply issue.
 - Hartemink in UW soil science department research on soil pH documented in a paper in Nov. 2022. A4034 will be updated based on some new (ongoing?) research.
 - Team discussed alternate options. Standard could instead provide a minimum and/or a "not to exceed" rate.
 - Team discussed option for producer to work toward goal pH over a period of time and not fully one time at planting, but this is a problem for certification and contracting.
 - From CPS 327: apply nutrients and amend as needed to establish plants. This too is hard to certify and would result in inconsistencies in practice.
 - **Adam and Mike** will develop recommendations table/list for "If recs exceed X then apply min. Y"
- Add clarity to seed size and depth of planting. A table would be useful.

Meeting time runs out before the Team reviews the full standard. Another meeting will be needed, to start at Seedbed Preparation language. **Adam** will revise the draft standard text based on the discussions today, then send to **Team** for review prior to next meeting.

Adam will also share the library of resources he's gathered related to this standard. **Kate** will either place on team website or create a Drive/Sharepoint type of directory.

12:00 Lunch, provided

12:30 Reviewer Input, continued (Everyone)

Goal: Continue to discuss proposed draft standard and address reviewer input.

See notes above.

Break as needed

2:15 Plan of Action (Kate, Adam)

Goal: Identify any outstanding topics and plan to address them. Review any Action Items.

An additional reviewer meeting is scheduled for Sept. 30, in person in Stevens Point area. Kate will confirm location and send the Team a calendar invitation. This meeting will be opportunity to review remaining sections with some specific focus topics identified:

1. New seed mixes specifically separating out orchard grass and meadow fescue
2. Revisit interseeding vs frost seeding
3. New species of forages – Specifically plantain and chicory: how do we want to handle these species...add them to the standard?
4. Small ruminant mixes
5. Warm season seeding and grazing mixes

ACTION ITEMS

- Adam will coordinate with Mike, Steve (or Beth) and Jamie Patton on a consistent map for intent of both the 340 and 512 standards, possibly other standards. Adam will present new map with north-south categories and updated dates for growing degree days. He'll email updated draft to this team for comment.
- Adam and Mike will develop recommendations table for soil amendments "If recs exceed X then apply min. Y"
- Adam will revise and clean up text based on the discussions today, then send to Team for review prior to next meeting.
- Adam will share the library of resources he's gathered related to this standard (with support from Kate)
- Kate will draft notes from today's meeting for Team review.
- Kate will confirm meeting venue and send out calendar invite for 9/30
- Kate and Adam will develop agenda for next meeting and send it to team along with any reading materials one week prior.

2:30 End