WISCONSIN STANDARDS OVERSIGHT COUNCIL

QUALITY   UNIFORMITY   ACCOUNTABILITY

THE STANDARDS OVERSIGHT COUNCIL

The Standards Oversight Council (SOC) is a collective partnership among conservation agencies to develop and maintain Wisconsin's technical standards for soil and water conservation practices.

Federal, state, and local agencies, as well as private sector entities, rely on the same technical standards to implement conservation programs. SOC uses teams of agency and private sector experts to reach consensus among different interests in developing the standards.

This results in technical standards that are science-based, usable, and effective.

Developing technical standards

Technical standards, also called conservation practice standards, specify minimum criteria to plan, design, install, and maintain conservation practices aimed at preserving our land and water resources.

Conservation practices on the farm may include manure storage facilities, nutrient management, and streambank and shoreline protection. In an urban setting, practices include wet detention ponds and infiltration trenches.

The SOC process focuses on the technical aspects of a standard rather than legal or political issues.

Providing statewide assurance

SOC standards create certainty among landowners, simplify the work of conservation professionals, and ensure uniform administration of government programs statewide.

Conservation practices are installed using the same technical standard, whether they are installed using government cost-share dollars or to meet the requirements of a local permit.

Team members use the latest research and extensive field experience to make updates to existing technical standards, or create new ones. They also incorporate user and reviewer feedback to ensure practicality of the standards and increase their implementation.

Protecting natural resources

The SOC process helps ensure that technical standards meet resource protection goals, such as controlling soil erosion or minimizing pollution from urban and agricultural runoff.

Conservation practices implemented according to the technical standards, help reduce runoff pollution, protect water quality and support infiltration.

SOC-developed standards ensure high-quality conservation practices. This translates into better protection of natural resources, a high confidence that conservation practices will perform as expected, and assurance that taxpayer dollars are well spent.

THE STANDARD DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The standard development process brings together teams of experts that collaborate on reviewing, drafting, and updating state standards.

Revisions either go through a Minor, Modified, or Full Processes. The Full Process can be broken down into six steps to ensure quality, uniformity and accountability in the process, including expert and public input.

Participation is key to developing workable technical standards. You are welcome to participate in the process! See the back page for more details.

Minor
Modified
Full
Discretionary (Modified)

1 Form and support team

- Set goals, sideboards, and timeline
- Solicit participation from diverse expertise
- Select team leader and members
- Coordinate team meetings and build membership relationships
- Monitor and support team progress

2 Develop draft standard

- Review literature and gather data
- Contact previous team members for input (if applicable)
- Prepare draft language
- Consider input from various stakeholders

3 Conduct expert review

- Invite feedback from targeted experts outside of the team membership
- Carefully consider comments and incorporate changes into draft standard

4 Conduct broad review

- Distribute final draft for public comment
- Compile, review, and respond to comments
- Incorporate changes
- Develop plan for outreach and training

5 Finalize and publish revised standard

- Submit final draft to custodian agency
- Review and approval by custodian
- Publish and announce newly revised standard

6 Evaluate team process

- Survey team leader and members
- Compile and review results
- Implement improvements as needed

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

- Subscribe to the SOC listserv
- Comment on draft technical standards
- Recommend technical standards to update, via SOC's biennial survey
- Participate on a technical standard work team

Learn more at www.socwisconsin.org

CONTACT US

Standards Oversight Council

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OUR MISSION

is to oversee a collaborative process for developing effective technical standards that protect Wisconsin's natural resources.
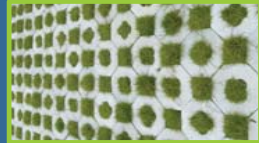
2017 stream restoration project, Swinn Valley Creek in Buffalo County.

NRCS Conservation Practice Standards: Streambank and Shoreline Protection (580), Stream Habitat Improvement (395), Critical Area Planting (342) and Mulching (484).
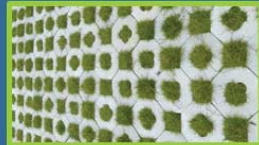
www.socwisconsin.org

Conservation Practice Technical Standards

and the

WI Standards Oversight Council (SOC)

Perry Lindquist, Waukesha County/SOC Chair

Matt Krueger, WI Land + Water/SOC Treasurer

Kate Brunner, SOC Manager

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Presentation Outline

- Definitions and where did SOC came from? (Perry)

- How does the SOC process work? (Kate)

- SOC Memorandum of Agreement (Matt)

What is a Technical Standard?

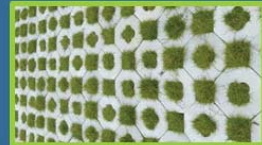**Water Quality Standards (NR 102, 104, 105, etc.)**

Nonpoint Pollution Performance Standards (NR 151)
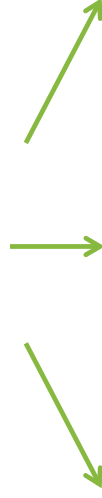
Conservation Practice/BMP Technical Standards

Defines minimum criteria for planning, design, installation and maintenance of the conservation practice

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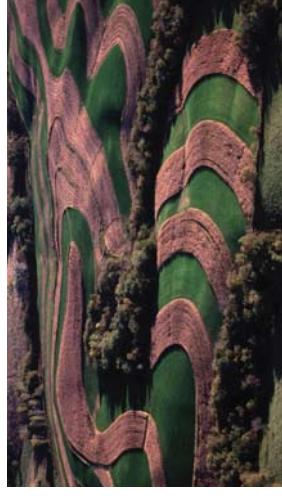# Example (definition hierarchy)

Nonpoint Performance Standard

NR 151.02 - Control Sheet & Rill Erosion to "T"

Conservation Practices / Technical Standards

Conservation tillage

Contour strip cropping

Cover crop

Why Technical Standards?

- Set minimum criteria for conservation practices

- Protect the state's natural resources (based on best science)

- Provide sound basis for public cost-sharing for BMPs
  - Also for compliance with certain environmental regulations

- Maintain fairness to program participants (and contractors)

- Minimize risks to the landowner/manager, conservation professional and the taxpayer

- Maintain conservation program credibility

Life Before SOC (early 1990's)

- Technical Standard needs outpaced agency resources

- Insufficient input from partner agencies, field staff and researchers (on standards and priorities)

- Inconsistent standards between programs/variances

- Local stormwater ordinances without BMP technical standards

- No process/entity to voice concerns

- All this led to interagency conflict/inefficiencies

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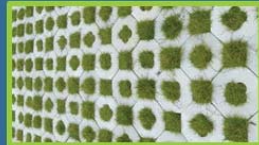STANDARDS
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WALCE Resolution (1994)

- Support an interagency process for the development and maintenance of conservation practice technical standards

- Forwarded to the Wisconsin Quality Steering Team

  ➢ Interagency group charged with process improvement (TQM)

  ➢ QST assembled a team to work on recommendations

  ➢ Team participated in TQM training together (problem solving)

  ➢ DATCP, DNR, NRCS, Counties, WLWCA, WALCE

  ➢ Over 1 year of training and meetings (1995)

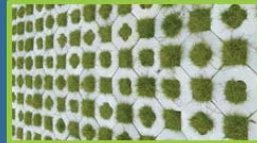WISCONSIN STANDARDS OVERSIGHT COUNCIL

Team Recommendations (1996)

1. Create Standards Oversight Council (SOC)
   - Interagency group to oversee technical standards process

2. Adopt "Technical Standards Process Handbook"
   - Detailed reference prepared by the team, following three themes: quality, uniformity, and accountability
   - Defined roles and responsibilities for all participants in the process

3. Hire a SOC Manager to carry out many of the SOC's duties
   - To be housed in WI Land & Water

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SOC Creation

- QST embraced the team's recommendations

- SOC Handbook was widely distributed/used to educate

- MOA executed between partner agencies/organizations (1996)

- 1997 State budget bill [s. 281.16(2) and (3) Wis. Stats.]:

  ➢ Required DNR (urban) and DATCP (agric.) to prescribe by rule a process for development of technical standards

SOC Manager

- DNR, DATCP and NRCS shared the costs (1/3 each)

- Hired as part time in 1997/full time in 1998

- Key duties:

  - Biennial technical standards needs assessment (user survey)

  - 2-year interagency work plan (priorities)

  - Coordinating/supporting work teams (for each technical standard)

  - Conducting research/drafting stds./meeting notes/logistics

  - Distribution of drafts for public comment/compiling results/respond

  - Maintain SOC web site/technical standard training/education
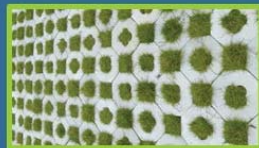
  - Coordinate/support SOC Council meetings

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SOC Accomplishments (25 years!)

- High quality, science-based BMP technical standards
  - ➤ Developed/updated hundreds of standards
  - ➤ Responded to thousands of public comments
- Uniformity among conservation agencies and programs
  - ➤ Fairness/consistency to landowners (and contractors)
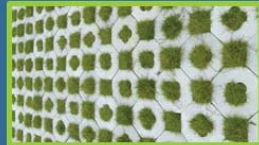- Cooperation/collaboration among conservation partners
- National recognition

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Steps in SOC Process

1	2	3	4	5	6
Form and support the team	Develop draft standard	Request & consider feedback	Conduct broad review	Finalize & publish standard	Evaluate team process

FULL

MODIFIED

MINOR

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SOC Memorandum of Agreement

- Original MOA executed in 1997 (after 1 year of SOC mtgs.)

- Purposes were to formally commit each agency/org. to:
  - ➢ Participate in the SOC process (as defined in the SOC Manual)
  - ➢ Provide financial & in-kind support for the SOC Manager position

- Parties: DNR, DATCP, USDA-NRCS, UWEX, WI Land +Water
  - ➢ Later added DOT and DSPS

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Evolution of the SOC MOA

- MOA extensions were gradually replaced with agency contracts to support the SOC Manager position

- Many retirements and other staff changes have occurred

- SOC history lost

- SOC education within agencies has been a challenge
  - ➢Why does SOC exist?
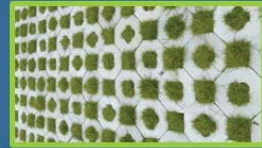 - ➢What is the benefit to my agency?

New SOC MOA

- Purpose: Recommit agencies to the SOC process
  - Execution process also serves to educate program leaders on SOC
- Scope: Oversee and coordinate an interagency, collaborative process for the development, maintenance and dissemination of Technical Standards
  - Applies to all urban and rural conservation practices in Wisconsin.

New SOC MOA (cont.)

- Responsibilities of all parties:
  - ➤ Representation on SOC by appointment
  - ➤ Follow the SOC Technical Standards Process Handbook
  - ➤ Provide staff and support to individual Technical Standards teams
- WI Land+Water responsibilities (subject to funding):
  - ➤ Employ, house and supervise the SOC Program Manager
  - ➤ Manage SOC budget
- Parties may provide financial support for SOC through separate contracts/agreements

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Questions?