

Standards Oversight Council  
Meeting Minutes  
April 2, 2002  
DATCP Headquarters, Madison

Present: Perry Lindquist, John Ramsden, Paul Daigle, Pat Murphy, Gail Puzach,  
Tracy Briggs, Gordon Stevenson, Ed Odgers

Absent: Rebecca Baumann, Pat Walsh

Guests: Bruce Webendorfer, Nina Berkani

Review Minutes and Agenda

- Gordon proposed that some time should be set aside on the agenda for a discussion regarding the inclusion of the DOT and DOC in SOC.
- The Council reviewed the cover page and cover letter that were included with the hard copy Master list of technical standards that is to be made available upon request.
  - It was suggested that the SOC partners be included on the cover page. In addition it should be made clearer that this is a master list consisting largely of the NRCS subset.
  - The SOC process deals with more than just “conservation planning technical standards”. The word “planning” should be taken out of that phrase.
- Tracy handed out a summary of the responses to the SOC survey that was sent to the county LCD’s in February.
  - All of those who responded said that they were aware of SOC activities, but it is likely that only those who were aware of the SOC felt inclined to respond.
  - In general, those who responded were in support of involving themselves and their staff with SOC activities. Key identified constraints to county involvement:
    - Not enough county staff available to spare for SOC work teams and technical standard review.
    - The length, frequency, and duration of the meetings deter those with heavy workloads from participating on work teams.
  - Some suggestions for SOC that might better facilitate the involvement of county staff:
    - Hold meetings in more central locations.
    - Use teleconferences, emails, ETN’s and the Internet/website more in order to limit the frequency and duration of meetings.
    - SOC should provide travel reimbursements.
    - Advance notice of the SOC work plan should be provided so that county staff can plan their participation in SOC activities ahead of time.
- Several counties indicated that with the growing budget constraints, it is likely that they will not be able to contribute the \$350 to SOC in 2003.

- The Council agreed that SOC should do all that it can to respond to the constraints facing the participants of the work teams such as streamlining work team activities as much as possible.
  - Alternatives to all day meetings should be reviewed, though they may only be appropriate under certain circumstances.
- SOC will be prudent regarding the travel reimbursement issue and will continue to review eligibility criteria. SOC must be fiscally responsible considering the uncertainty of future funding sources.
  - LCD staff are able to use NRCS vehicles if travel restrictions become a problem.
- Copies of the updated SOC brochure were handed out to the Council members.
  - **AR: Tracy** will send several hundred brochures to Ed Odgers to distribute to the counties.

#### Introductions with New UWEX Staff Member - Nina Berkani

- Bruce provided a brief background of the graphics department in the Environmental Resources Center at UWEX before introducing Nina Berkani.
- Nina was hired in order to assist the SOC in developing companion documents. She has a strong background in writing agricultural impact assessments at DATCP and as a private consultant.
- She was hired on a 40% basis - 2 days a week.
- **PARKING LOT: Tracy** will schedule some time in a future meeting for the Council to establish a general work plan of priorities for Nina based upon the SOC work plan.
- **AR: Tracy** will send copies of the SOC work plan and the Handbook to Bruce and Nina
- The Handbook must provide guidance to the work teams who will need to understand what sort of assistance they can expect from Nina.
  - Nina will be predominantly dealing with the over all planning documents.
- **PARKING LOT: The Council** should revisit the issue of rotating the Chair position.

#### Agency Update

##### **DATCP**

- It may not be feasible for DATCP to take on the custodial responsibilities for a Milk house waste work team at this time.
  - **AR: Ed** agreed to draft an initial list of people to assess and prioritize the possible practices that may be drafted as standards by a SOC work team. He will send this list to Tracy.
  - **AR: Tracy** will send a letter soliciting interest from those who would like to participate on this scoping team.
- SOC will sponsor this exploratory scoping team, regardless of who may end up being the custodian.

- A goal for this scoping team would be to determine what standards should be pursued.
- This scoping exercise should include people who have been involved with the relevant technology.
- If DATCP does not become the custodian, the NRCS may be able to take on the role of custodian even though equivalent national standards (except for constructed wetlands) do not exist. If this becomes the case, the standards will have to go through the NRCS interim process.

### **NRCS**

- Pat explained that the state NRCS office was informed that they will need to revise / review / update the FOTG.
- He asked at what point should SOC be more involved and informed? How will it be determined that only 'minor' changes have been made?
- Pat handed out a list of old/marginal standards that are to be discontinued from the FOTG. Should the need arise; the national standards can be used as a reference.
  - It may be necessary to coordinate a SOC advisory team to work on the standards that require more than just minor revisions.
  - The standards that were highlighted in yellow on the handout provided by Pat will undergo review and may require minor revisions of a technical nature.
  - **AR: Pat** will present an evaluation of this process by the next SOC meeting.
- The standard 590 was sent to NRCS federal registry last week and distributed for a second broad review in Wisconsin by SOC.

### **WDNR**

- Gordon raised the issue of inviting the WisDOT Section Chief for Environment - Dan Scudder and perhaps Carol Kutchell – to the next SOC meeting in order to discuss the possible addition of the WisDOT as a SOC partner.
  - It was agreed that it would be appropriate to offer the WisDOT the opportunity to be an ad hoc SOC member for six months without any strings attached.
- The polymer work team has expressed an interest in developing a technical standard for hydrologically applied products such as tackifiers.
  - Gil Layton from WisDOT has suggested that his colleagues from Michigan and Minnesota are interested in working with this SOC team.
- Issues regarding the flexibility of the technical standard format in response to the individual needs of the different agencies were discussed. Can variations in format be accepted?
  - It was agreed that there should be no reason why the technical standards could not have minor variations from custodian to custodian based upon their needs. Though the basic integrity of the format should remain the same.

### Handbook Revision

- The Council members spent the afternoon reviewing the revisions made to the Handbook since the last meeting.

- Chapter Three will be revised to include and elaborate upon the shortened SOC process flowchart that is shown in the SOC brochure.
- A substitution policy for team members was discussed.
  - Team members should identify substitutes from the beginning that must be approved by the team leader.
  - Each team member will be responsible for keeping their substitutes informed of the team member activities in order to avoid delays if a substitution is required.
- Team leader credentials were discussed including the need to have TQM or some other such form of training made available to those who may need it.
- The credentials of the general work team members were also discussed.
  - What credentials should team members have in order to qualify?
  - A team member must have a ‘demonstrated technical expertise’ in the relevant field. What does this mean? Do we need to define the term technical?
  - The team leader and sponsor will be the final judge of whether a prospective team member’s background and expertise is adequate.
  - The Handbook needs to specify that a team member’s credentials may be of an educational or vocational nature.
  - The SOC process is envisioned as a technical rather than legal and political process. While experience has shown that these standards may be referenced in administrative rules and ordinances and such, the decision to reference these technical standards rests on the shoulders of those administrative bodies that choose to include them as such.
  - The Handbook must stress that even if someone is not invited to participate on work teams, they are invited to participate in the review process.
- The team members must identify training and material requirements (i.e. companion documents) for the future users of the technical standards being developed.
  - The concept of the companion document is vague and there will need to be some clarification for the team members regarding their responsibilities and what would otherwise be expected from Nina who may be able to provide some assistance.
- **AR: Perry** will build a training element into his orientation presentations to the two Blue Book (WDNR Construction Site Handbook) work teams.

### **Action Register**

**Tracy** will send several hundred brochures to Ed Odgers to distribute to the counties.

**Pat** will present an evaluation of the FOTG update process by the next SOC meeting.

**Ed** agreed to draft an initial list of people to assess and prioritize the possible practices that may be drafted as standards by a SOC work team. He will send this list to Tracy.

**Tracy** will send a letter soliciting interest from those who would like to participate on this scoping team.

**Tracy** will send copies of the SOC work plan and the Handbook to Bruce and Nina

**Perry** will build a training element into his orientation presentations to the two Blue Book (WDNR Construction Site Handbook) work teams.

**PARKING LOT: The Council** should revisit the issue of rotating the Chair position.

**PARKING LOT: Tracy** will schedule some time in a future meeting for the Council to establish a general work plan of priorities for Nina based upon the SOC work plan.