

Standard Oversight Council  
Minutes  
May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2001  
DATCP Office  
Madison

Present: Paul Daigle, Mary Anne Lowndes, Pat Walsh, Tracy Briggs, Don Baloun, Ed Odgers, Rebecca Baumann

Guests: Gail Puzach, Bruce Webendorfer

Review Minutes and Action Register

The Council reviewed the Action Register from the last meeting.

- On the website, the Wisconsin Manual of Technical Standards will be given a name change to avoid confusion. It will either be referred to as the Wisconsin Index of Technical Standards, or simply as the FOTG.
- **AR: Tracy** will revise the SOC website
- Rebecca explained why a letter soliciting funds from the Counties had not been sent.
  - She felt that a marketing campaign might be necessary to ensure that everyone was clear about why the money was being requested.
  - It was agreed that the Council would need to mount an orchestrated effort associated with an identified funding need being unmet. If DATCP does continue to fully fund the SOC, the Council should determine where the money requested from the Counties would go.
    - Expanding the SOC's role in orchestrating guidance training and documents to complement the technical standards. The SOC would work closely with UWEX on this effort.
    - Perhaps offer some financial compensation to the work team volunteers who are not paid by their agencies to attend.
    - An inflationary factor is not calculated in the funding coming from the agencies.
  - **AR: Rebecca** agreed to talk to Secretary Harsdorf in the coming week about funding from DATCP.
- The Counties have not submitted their budgeting for 2002 yet (due by June or July), so there is still an opportunity to request that the SOC be added as an item in the regular budget if it is done soon.
- **AR: Perry and Tracy** will write and distribute a letter to the counties soliciting funds.
- If this request does not fit into this year's budget, by December the SOC will be able to solicit funding at WLWCA's December Conference.
- SOC mailing distribution issues were raised:
  - It was suggested that the NRCS be responsible for distributing the hard copies of the standards in-house, while DATCP could distribute hard copies of SOC correspondence to all of the LCD's through the Thursday Bulletin.
  - **AR: Tracy** will contact the NRCS and DATCP to ensure that more efficient forms of mailing distribution systems are used for SOC mailings.
  - The email and hard copy mailing list have been updated and catalogued. There are currently 600 people on the mailing list in total.

## SOC Evaluation of Comp Doc/Tech Note/Appendix

There was much discussion over the need to clarify the ambiguity surrounding the use of guidance documents/technical notes/companion documents. It has been apparent for some time that these different terms have been used interchangeably which only adds to confusion over what these documents are or should be, and how or whether they differ.

- **AR: Tracy** will coordinate a sub-committee to convene in order to establish some standardized language and definitions that would be added to the Technical Standards Handbook.
- Who is the audience for these guidance documents?
- In Bruce's opinion, the companion document incorporates the tech note, but appeals to a broader audience and would include the "how to" and the "why should we".
  - How to avoid the delay in distributing companion documents? Perhaps the Extension could be brought in once the technical standard is 75% completed.

There are three distinct functions for the SOC to consider:

- The I&E function for the landowner, land user, etc which includes the overview and answers the "whys".
- The function of the technical standard itself, which basically represents the building code, for the more technically inclined.
- And the planning function, which details how one should build something
  - The planning function is often the item that people want to pursue.
  - The SOC has been reluctant to put the planning into the technical standard because that is what is tied to cost sharing and other legalities. If the technical standard is kept separate from the planning then it can be codified while the companion document can be left to expand upon the discretionary planning issues. The SOC wants to avoid designing technical standards that are too prescriptive.
- From an evolutionary perspective, I&E should become an important component in the SOC process allowing people the opportunity to appreciate the revisions being made in old standards and the need for creating new ones.
- This approach would require the SOC to include an implementation strategy in its work plans.
  - Are we getting to the point, where before we finalize a standard, we need to coordinate listening sessions throughout the state?
  - Should the SOC consider making layperson fact sheets available for those standards that are identified as being of high interest?
  - The demand for training is acute.
- The common element of many of these standards is that they represent a big change, and there is the matter of "selling" the standard.
- Part of this strategy may include charging teams with the task of including such matters as fact sheets and public review sessions into their work plan schedules. The teams may need the area offices to assist.
- Perhaps cover letters, that are included with the technical standards being sent out for review, should survey people's training needs.
- Pat Walsh reminded the Council of the resource intensive requirements involved in developing a companion document. He asked to what extent the SOC agencies and the SOC itself are willing to commit to this new educational initiative?

- The task now is to check the market and determine the benefit of these documents. Will additional resources need to be sought? From which sources? He felt that this could be a self-sustaining project, if all goes as planned.
- What will be the extent of the market? Will it be nationwide or just statewide? It is still early to predict what the level of demand will be.
- Everyone on the Council agreed that the companion document (regardless of what it ends up being called) should represent a valuable piece of the SOC process. This educational component will certainly help the standards process work more efficiently.
- There was also discussion over the possibility of separating the agricultural standards from the urban standards since funding sources tend to split between these two sectors.
  - An agricultural fact sheet could be covered by the statewide PUB funds, whereas the urban funding is otherwise something that could be provided by the counties.
  - **AR: Mary Anne** will make enquiries at the DNR about what funds may be available to help support the development of urban companion documents.
- The possibilities of hiring staff to take over the companion document responsibilities at UWEX were discussed.
  - **AR: Pat** will develop a financial proposal to obtain 2 people to handle SOC educational matters. Ed suggested that Pat also take people into account who are well qualified, but only looking for part time or 3/4 time work
  - Need to look at potential income streams; if interest for these documents goes nationwide, the national sources should be contributing.

### Work Team Status

The issue of custodial responsibilities was discussed, with specific reference to the DNR. The number of standards the DNR will be holding is set to increase given the work being done on the Polyacrylimide and Stormwater Infiltration teams. Don explained some of the custodian's responsibilities that include:

- Maintaining the document file.
- Determining if a request requires a new, updated or revised standard.
- Identifying the need for and to complete minor revisions.
- Establishing and following a review schedule for standards.
- Ensuring that the necessary training support is provided in the use of the standard.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the standard.
- It was decided that for those who have the NRCS's FOTG, the DNR standards could be treated in the same manner as those held by the NRCS.
- For those without the FOTG, the DNR's Stormwater Manual could be used as the storing house for DNR urban standards.
- To address this issue of storing standards, it was agreed that there should be a common index, though it might be useful to separate out the urban from the agricultural standards, and from those standards that are both.
- It might be worthwhile to check with the northeastern states, to see how they build urban standards into their index of technical standards.
- **AR: Mary Anne** agreed to see if there is an index for urban standards from outside Wisconsin that could be used as a guide for building urban standards into

the FOTG index of technical standards.

The issue of systems standards was examined in detail.

- The standard 312 was recently dropped from the NRCS's FOTG
  - There is a tendency for systems standards to be too prescriptive.
  - There is also a tendency to place items in the systems standards that do not comfortably fit elsewhere, as was the case with the 312.
    - The 312 team will have to determine which elements of the standard are essential and should be placed elsewhere, before the standard is dropped entirely.
  - Because there are usually several different solutions to any particular problem, it is important that the standards accommodate creativity and flexibility rather than a flow diagram mapping out exactly how people should interpret and use the standards.
- The Stormwater infiltration team is interested in taking a systems approach because it wants people to look at all of the different possibilities. It is generally felt amongst the team members that there is much room for people to choose the wrong standards/practices without adequate guidance.
  - It was suggested that the Wisconsin Stormwater Manual form the basis of the guidance document.
- The 590 team has been given a December 2001 deadline to complete the standard.
- Don reported that his meetings with Secretary Jim Harsdorf, Les Lamb and Nick Nehr went well, and he expects that DATCP will be cooperating with the SOC more from now on and adding a presence to the 590 team.

**AR: Rebecca and Tracy** will extend an invitation to Jim Harsdorf, Les Lamb and Nick Nehr to attend the SOC's next meeting that will be held on July 9th.

**AR: Everyone** will update the SOC flyer before more copies are reprinted.

### **Action Register**

**Tracy** will revise the SOC website

**Perry and Tracy** will write and distribute a letter to the counties soliciting funds.

**Rebecca** agreed to talk to Secretary Harsdorf in the coming week about funding from DATCP.

**Tracy** will contact the NRCS and DATCP to ensure that more efficient forms of mailing distribution systems are used for SOC mailings.

**Tracy** will coordinate a sub-committee to convene in order to establish some standardized language and definitions that would be added to the Technical Standards Handbook.

**Mary Anne** will make enquiries at the DNR about what funds may be available to help support the development of urban companion documents.

**Pat** will develop a financial proposal to obtain 2 people to handle SOC educational matters. Ed suggested that Pat also take people into account who are well qualified, but only looking for part time or 3/4 time work.

**Mary Anne** agreed to see if there is an index for urban standards from outside Wisconsin that could be used as a guide for how it could be used in this state.

**Rebecca and Tracy** will extend an invitation to Jim Harsdorf, Les Lamb and Nick Nehr to attend the SOC's next meeting that will be held on June 12<sup>th</sup>.

**Everyone** will update the SOC flyer before more copies are reprinted.