



# Standards Oversight Council

**Overseeing the Development,  
Maintenance and Distribution of  
Technical Standards**



**SOC**

In Support of  
Wisconsin's  
Land & Water  
Conservation  
Efforts

**Technical standards** are documents that specify the minimum requirements needed to plan, design, install and maintain a wide array of conservation practices aimed at preserving our land and water resources. Standards are based on current research, field experience and the best available technology, and are a primary component to many federal, state and local conservation programs.



## What is the Standards Oversight Council (SOC)?

For efficiency purposes, many federal, state and local agencies in Wisconsin rely on the same technical standards to implement numerous conservation programs.

However, this diverse user group must deal with different mandates, goals, policies, deadlines and political pressures. The SOC is an organization charged with working through these inherent difficulties and overseeing the development, maintenance and distribution of quality technical standards for conservation practices in Wisconsin.

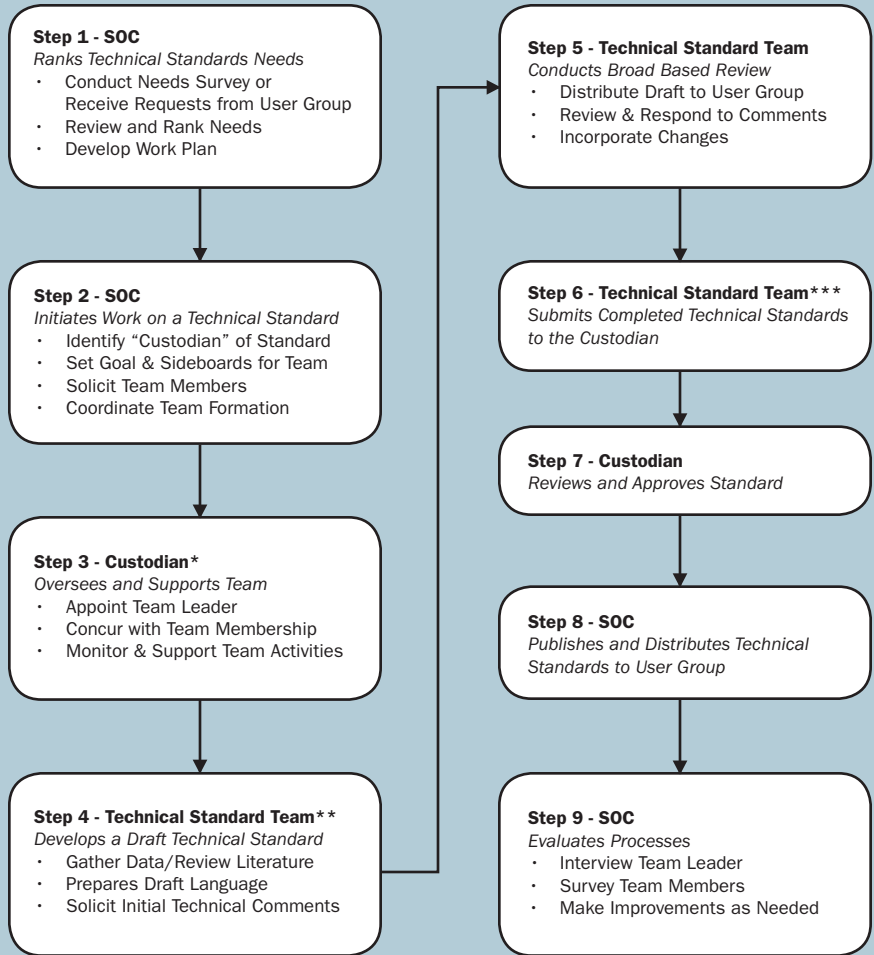
## Why technical standards?

Technical standards help ensure that when a conservation practice is applied to the landscape it accomplishes the stated objective. The most common objectives are controlling soil erosion or minimizing water pollution from urban and rural runoff. For example, the technical standard for a rock-lined waterway will specify the maximum flow velocities that can be sustained by various rock sizes to prevent failure of the liner and erosion of the channel.

Technical standards provide a sound basis for spending public funds on conservation practices and ensuring compliance with certain environmental regulations. The use of technical standards helps protect the natural resources while minimizing the risks to technical staff, the landowner and the taxpayer.



# The technical standards process at a glance



The graphic above illustrates the major players and their roles in the development or revision of the technical standards.

\*Custodian means the agency or organization that is or will be responsible for maintaining the technical standard.

\*\*Technical Standard Team is the group of technical experts that have agreed to develop or revise the technical standard.

\*\*\*As needed, Technical Teams work with UWEX and SOC to develop educational "companion documents" to the technical standards.

## What other activities is SOC involved in?

The SOC publishes and maintains the Technical Standards Process Handbook, which guides all activities related to developing or revising technical standards. The handbook details the entire process and the duties of those involved.

The SOC communicates with technical standard users via e-mail, hard copy, website and articles published in related newsletters. Many of the SOC's administrative duties are contracted through the Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Associations' (WLWCA) office.

**Note:** The SOC does not write or “own” any technical standards. They are only a coordinating body of those that do. The SOC is not involved in cost sharing or other program policies of partner conservation agencies and organizations.

## Who is on the SOC?

The following agencies and organizations, involved in the delivery of Wisconsin's land and water conservation programs, are represented on the Standards Oversight Council:

- Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection
- Wisconsin Department of Commerce
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
- UW-Extension
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Wisconsin Association of Land Conservation Employees
- Wisconsin Land & Water Conservation Association

## Who else is involved?

Technical standard teams rely heavily on volunteer participation by those planning, designing or using conservation practices in Wisconsin. To help ensure high quality technical standards and statewide use, the most qualified people are encouraged to get involved.

### For more information contact:

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