

State Technical Guide Committee Meeting Minutes
July 30, 2004
Marysville, Ohio

The meeting was called to order by Acting Chair, Jon Gerken. In attendance were Dan Braden, Mark DeBrock, Rich Gehring, Bob Hendershot, Mike Monnin, Mike Patterson, Jon Reedstrom, Dave Samples, Mark Smith, and Norm Widman. Miguel Santiago a student intern attended as a guest.

After a welcome the agenda was reviewed. Jon asked for any additions to the agenda. Bob Hendershot requested time to give a report on items he is reviewing.

Minutes

The minutes from the last meeting were reviewed. A review of the reference list in Section I was supposed to be conducted at this meeting. This will be tabled until the next meeting. Questions were raised about posting of changes to standards. The "What Is New" feature on the Ohio Web page is not functioning any more. Any changes to standards will have to be identified in the FOTG under the section titled "What's Changed Recently".

There were questions about the review process as outlined in the minutes. After some discussion, it was decided that the final process step outlined in the minutes should be changed from "DRAFT will be reviewed with the State Technical Committee" to "The final copy of the standard will be presented to the State Technical Committee." The reasoning behind this decision is that the standard is presented to the State Technical Committee for informational purposes and not to solicit comments. It was felt that if the standard was still considered a draft at this time, it would slow the implementation process. The committee feels that the standard should be issued as soon as possible after the 30 review period. Once finalized, a notice will go out under the state conservationist's signature transmitting the standard.

Mike Monnin had agreed at the last meeting to review procedures dealing with contracts and standards. He apologized that this had not yet been done, but would send out an email when he has completed this.

There were some additional questions that dealt with specific standards. The flexibility of the 30 day comment period was discussed. Some felt that additional time may be need is some cases. It was decided to be firm with the 30 day period. The need for a time frame for committee review was discussed. It was decided that a 30 review period for the committee members be adopted. This review will be done prior to draft being placed on the website.

A group consisting of Mike Patterson, Mary Ann Core, and Norm Widman had agreed at the last meeting to review job sheets/practice narratives. This was not included in the minutes. The group will complete this activity in the first quarter of FY05.

Reports

Mark DeBrock handed out Standard 647. This is needed for CRP. It has had outside agency review and is being fast-tracked because it is needed for CRP contracts. Mark hopes to put it on the website for the 30 day review soon. Mark would like an exemption from the established procedures in order to finalize this standard ASAP. The committee concurred with Mark's request. Mark stated that he is working on several other

standards in various stages of progress. Jon asked the sponsors to develop a list of standards being worked on in order to keep the committee informed. Experts and others involved with the standard should be identified on the list.

Rich Gehring – Jon prefaced Rich’s report by stating that there have been attempts to change data in the FOTG without undergoing any formal process or approval. Jon wants to get the word out that there are processes in place to request changes to data. Rich shared with the committee the recent request to change soil data for use in CSP. Because of national policy and other concerns, data will not be changed for one program or without following established policy and procedures. Rich handed out a list of all changes made to Section II soils in FOTG since April 1. Most changes were due to counties being SSURGO certified and updating the conservation planning data table. A draft of sources of official soils data was distributed. This was requested at the last meeting. The list can be used by the field offices to identify the source of official soil data for different uses.

A question was raised about updating of data for use in RUSLE2. Rich and Norm reported that counties will be notified when the data is updated. In the past data was updated in RUSLE2 once the county data had become SSURGO certified.

Rich raised a concern encountered during the recent Lawrence County Field Office review. There is some confusion about accessing eFOTG and maintaining reference materials in closed counties. In particular, there is no current listing of Technical Reference material that is not available electronically that is still considered part of FOTG. Because FOTG can be accessed through any internet connection, not just through a USDA hub, it was not felt that availability of electronic FOTG in the closed office should be a hindrance.

Mike Monnin has worked on standard 702i, 313, and 554. 554 is close to being final. A vegetative treatment standard is a high priority, but this is proving to be a problem because EPA is not in favor of any practice that does not confine the manure. Mike feels there is no good solution. There is a problem using interim standards for more than 3 years. After 3 years the standard is dropped or a national standard needs to be developed. There are also problems with reporting in PRS using these interim standards.

A problem with the fencing standard on how it addresses creek crossing is another problem. Dan will send Mike some drawings. Mike asked the committee if the identification and adoption of web-based materials that are referenced in standards, eg. DRASTIC maps, ground water potential, etc., should be a function of this committee or the GIS committee. It was felt that if the references are part of Section I, then the committee should take responsibility.

Norm Widman handed out the list of practices he is responsible for and those needing review. Several national standards are coming out which will necessitate revisions of the state standard. Need to add the pest management standard for use with CSP. This will result in training. Norm has developed a training outline and extension is reviewing. A statement of work needs to be added to each standard. This will include a list of deliverables. The national office has developed a template. These statements of work need to be completed by October 1. Everything will be filed together in the practice folder in FOTG, the job sheet, standard, and statement of work.

Bob Hendershot - 528 and 511 are being reviewed by the grazing land folks. Bob will distribute to the committee for their review. Forage suitability groups are now part of Section II. Bob presented two

publications he would like added to the reference file. These materials are not available in an electronic format. He questioned if the committee has responsibility for recommending additions to the file. The committee feels that this is something the committee can undertake, but not an exclusive activity. Subject experts can also recommend additions to the file. Bob asked the committee if Ohio needs a livestock trail standard. A national standard is available. A standard for vegetative heavy use area may be needed in the future.

Work for next meeting

Review the reference file list in Section I.

Review Supplement OH401.1

Supplement OH401.1

The committee reviewed the supplement and made the following changes. In section (b), third paragraph, last sentence, change “final draft” to “final copy”. In section (a) under Members – permanent, suggested adding state grassland specialist with the concurrence of the State Resource Conservationist. It was also suggested that a bulleted list of steps for revising standards be added to the last page. The committee will review the supplement at the next meeting and make edits before sending out to the field.

Next meeting

October 22, 2004 at the Ohio Cattleman’s Association meeting room in Marysville.

Minutes submitted by Rich Gehring.