

Chester County Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Road Quality Assurance Board Policies and Procedures

Purpose

The purpose of the Quality Assurance Board (referred to in this document as QAB) in Chester County is to make recommendations to the Chester County Conservation District Board of Directors (referred to in this document as the Board) regarding the Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Roads Program. The QAB will assist the Board in carrying out the Administrative, Educational and Contractual responsibilities of the Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Roads Program.

The QAB will establish priorities and requirements for funding through the Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Roads Program. The QAB responsibilities will include review of applications submitted for funding, conducting site visits (as necessary and determined by the QAB) and recommending eligible applications to the Board of Directors for funding that will address pollution in eligible affected areas.

Board Composition

The QAB in Chester County will be comprised of four members as follows: One non-voting chairman appointed by the Board, one voting member appointed by the Board, one voting member appointed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and one voting member appointed by the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PAFBC).

Meetings

Meetings will be held as needed. Minutes of the QAB meeting will be taken by the Chester County Conservation District (referred to in this document as the District) staff, approved by the QAB and filed with the Dirt and Gravel Road files.

Conflict of Interest

No officer, member, or employee of the Chester County Conservation District or the Quality Assurance Board who exercise any function or responsibility under any agreement or contract related to the Dirt and Gravel Road Maintenance Program, shall participate in any decision relating to any agreement or contract which affects his personal interest or the interest of any corporation, partnership, or association in which he is directly or indirectly interested. In the event of such a conflict, the QAB member will temporarily assume the role of the non-voting Chairman, and the Chairman will vote in his or her stead.

Equal Access to Funds

In order to ensure that eligible entities have equal access to funding the QAB will:

A.) Provide program updates to all eligible municipalities and state agencies in a timely manner.

- B.) Application deadlines will be sent to all eligible municipalities and state agencies.
- C.) Application deadlines will be dependent upon when funding becomes available to the District.²
- D.) Ensure that District staff will be available for project evaluation and site assessment at the request of all eligible municipalities and state agencies.
- E.) Prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status.

Environmental Standards

All projects must adhere to the following:

- A.) All commercial products used by project participants within a project area shall be used and/or installed according to manufacturer's recommendations and label requirements.
- B.) Materials toxic to aquatic life, as defined by the Clean Streams law, shall not be used where surface runoff may enter surface or ground water.
- C.) Participants shall be in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and requirements.
- D.) All materials proposed to be used on the site must meet all State Conservation Commission conditions for non-polluting.

Finance

- A.) All allocated funds shall be placed in a separate interest bearing account.
- B.) Interest shall be solely used for grants to municipalities.
- C.) All funds shall be used in accordance with the Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Roads Program Statement of Policy.

Eligibility

All applications must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- A.) The site must be a verified worksite in accordance with the Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Roads Program.
- B.) Have at a minimum, one current elected/appointed or employed individual attend and complete the two-day Environmentally Sensitive Road Maintenance Workshop within the last 5 years.
- C.) At its discretion, the QAB may allow an applicant to contract with another entity that meets the requirements of item B above.³

Applications for Funding

- A.) The one-page the Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Roads Program Grant Application, developed for statewide use, will be distributed to all municipalities upon request.
- B.) The Conservation District will return all non-funded project applications to the applying entity with a reason the project was not funding at that time. The applying entity may reapply in the future.
- C.) There is no restriction to the number of applications that can be submitted by one entity.
- D.) Applications may include work outside of the municipality's road right of way provided the work is necessary for the successful completion and continued maintenance of non point source pollution problem corrected on the site. Any necessary easements outside the municipal right of way are the responsibility of the municipality. Any work conducted off the right of way must have an agreement completed and signed by the landowner and the municipality prior to application submission. This agreement should include long term maintenance responsibilities and access.
- E.) New applications may be submitted at any time. Applications will be ranked in the first full week of February or on as needed basis. Applications will be ranked according to the QAB's ranking procedure.
- F.) Any project involving the placement of Driving Surface Aggregate (DSA) must have independent Lab testing including and approval from the Conservation District prior to delivery to the site. At a minimum, a Sieve Analysis with Wash, Standard Proctor Analysis and The Liquid/Plastic Limits tests must be completed.
- G.) A technician certified in the use of a Nuclear Density Meter must be onsite during the placement/compaction of the DSA to ensure proper compaction is achieved.
- H.) Any project involving the placement of DSA funded through the Conservation District must be placed by a paver as described in the Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance for Dirt and Gravel Roads Manual.

Low Volume Road Policies

Projects in the Low Volume Road Program must contain benefits to both the road systems and the environmental systems. The balance between road improvements and environmental benefits will be considered in the QAB/District project ranking criteria and funding decisions.

1. Grant Applications for resurfacing a Low Volume Road alone will not be accepted for funding.
 2. Before funding resurfacing work on a project, the following ESM principals should be addressed:
 - Drainage issues must be properly addressed
 - Base instability issues must be properly addressed
 - Other necessary and appropriate issues such as bank stability, road entrenchment, vegetation, must be properly addressed.
- B.) Only paved roads with 500 vehicles per day or less are eligible for Low Volume Road Funding.
 - C.) The applicant is responsible for providing traffic counts before submitting an application for funding.

- D.) Traffic counts are considered valid for a period of 5 years, provided there are no new significant changes in traffic flow volumes or patterns.
- E.) Documentation of traffic counts using a signed "Traffic Count Validation Form" (appendix A) must be submitted prior to project funding.
- F.) Traffic counts only apply to a segment of road between intersections, not the entire length of road. Traffic counts should be done at the project location.
- G.) A level 2 traffic count for a minimum of 24 hours is required for Low Volume Road Funding. If the level 2 traffic count produces a count of 500 vehicles per day or less, the project on the road is considered eligible. If a Level 2 Traffic Count produces a count of more than 500 vehicles per day, a project on that road is not eligible for Low Volume Road Funding. 24 hour counts do not have to be broken up by hour or any smaller time unit.

A level 2 traffic count includes the following:

- 1. It must be conducted between March 1 and the week before Thanksgiving.
- 2. It cannot be conducted on a holiday, or the day before or after a holiday.
- 3. It must be conducted between 12 AM Tuesday and 12 AM Friday.
- 4. It must be conducted for a minimum of 24 consecutive hours.
- 5. Only the number of vehicle passes is counted, regardless of direction of travel or type of vehicle.

- H.) A traffic count survey cannot be conducted in a timeframe or manner that intentionally causes artificially low average daily traffic counts on a particular road segment. This includes conducting a traffic count during summer recess for a school access road, or conducting a traffic count when access to a road segment is temporarily or partially restricted or reduced or conducting a traffic count in any other timeframe or manner that intentionally causes low average daily traffic counts.

Stream Crossings for Low Volume Roads

This policy is to determine the eligibility for stream crossing structural replacement with Program Funds. These qualifications do not exempt projects from any permitting or engineering requirements.

- A.) Existing stream crossing structures with an opening equal to or less than 7 square feet:
 - 1. Are eligible to be replaced with program funds.
 - 2. The new replacement structure must (all four):
 - a. Have a structure width at least equal to bankfull width.
 - b. Be properly aligned with the channel
 - c. Consider additional floodplain connectivity when possible.
 - d. Be designed and constructed to accommodate the passage of aquatic organisms through the structure.
- B.) Existing stream crossing structures with an opening of more than 7 square feet:
 - 1. In order to be eligible for replacement, existing structure must (all three):
 - a. Have a structure to bankfull width ratio of 50 % or less.

- b. Show signs of streambank erosion
 - c. Show signs of streambed erosion/aggradation
2. The new replacement structure must (all four):
- a. Have a structure width at least equal to bankfull width.
 - b. Be properly aligned with the channel.
 - c. Consider additional floodplain connectivity when possible.
 - d. Be designed and constructed to accommodate the passage of aquatic organisms through the structure.

Ranking Procedure

All eligible applications will be ranked according to the following procedure:

A.) The attached "Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Road Grant Applicant Ranking Form" (Appendix Q) will be completed for each project by the District. The project will then be ranked based on the score received from this form.

Project Selection

The following will be forwarded to the QAB for final site selection:

A.) Final Ranking and Score

B.) Grant Application

C.) Staff Recommendation

The QAB will prioritize projects based on the above information. In addition the QAB may consider other factors when prioritizing projects for funding. These factors may include the following:

A.) Municipality's program history and willingness to work with the conservation district.

B.) Availability of District Funding

The project selection process will be conducted by meeting or via conference call as determined on a case by case basis. Any projects that are selected based on reasons other than the ranking system, a summary of the factors considered shall be included in the meeting minutes and/or Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Roads Program Files. Any unfunded applications will be returned to the applicant after each round of funding has been completed.

Funding Procedures

When an application has been accepted and approved by the Board, the District will enter into a contract agreement with the successful applicant. No funding transfers can take place with grant applicants, and no project work can begin without a signed contract. The contract states the terms and conditions for the project. After a contract is completed, the funds will be distributed by the Conservation District in the following manner:

A.) Upon execution of the project contract, the District will forward 50% of the grant amount requested

to the participating municipality.

- B.) Up to an additional 20% of the contract amount may be reimbursed to the applicant. The applicant must provide documentation to verify the additional expenditures.
- C.) 30% of the contract amount will be held until project is complete and has been final inspected by the QAB and/or District personnel.
- D.) For a project to be deemed complete a project performance report meeting between the District and the Applicant must be held. At this meeting, the applicant shall provide all documentation to verify reimbursable expenditures covered by the grant.
- E.) In no case will reimbursement exceed actual expenditures.
- F.) The municipality is responsible for retaining receipts, weigh slips, labor accounting, and all other documents necessary to verify expenditures.
- G.) Expenditures in excess of the grant amount must be approved by the QAB.
- H.) The QAB, at it's discretion, may opt to not reimburse municipalities for expenditures in excess of the grant amount for which approval has not been granted.
- I.) Expenditures in excess of 120% of the grant amount require a new contract
- J.) The applicant must notify the Conservation District at least 7 days prior to the start of construction.
- K.) The applicant must obtain any applicable Chapter 105 permits for stream work and/or wetland encroachments prior to the start of construction.
- L.) The applicant has two years to complete the approved contract. If unable to complete in two years, the applicant must request, in writing, a time extension. Such request must include justification for the request.
- M.) The QAB shall consider the written request for extension and approve or disapprove the extension.
- N.) For projects which are not completed within the time frame specified in the contract or an approved extension, the QAB may, at it's discretion, take any actions it deems necessary. Including, but not limited to, any of the following actions:
 - 1. Recommend that the Board terminate the contract and withhold any additional payments to the applicant.
 - 2. Require the applicant to return any expended and /or unexpended grant funding as determined by the Quality Assurance Board.
- O.) Upon project completion, a final inspection must be scheduled on site involving the District and the grant recipient prior to final grant funding. During the final inspection, the district may find elements of the project that were not installed, or were not installed to Program or District standards. If so, remediation work may be required of the grant recipient before the project can be considered

complete. The District will verify any remediation work meets Program standards before making final payment.