

Important Information Regarding the Contents of this Document

Please note that the policies and information presented in this document are current through the date given below. The documents made available within the [Center's Conservation Districts web pages](#) are intended to serve as a guide for the policies set by each Conservation District. While these policies may in fact be current at the time of your viewing, it is strongly recommended to contact the relevant Conservation District for the most current version.

Document Current Date: June 9, 2015



Cameron County
Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Road Program
Quality Assurance Board Policies



(Revision Date: March 9, 2015)

Introduction

The purpose of the Quality Assurance Board (QAB) in Cameron County is to recommend to the Cameron Conservation District Board (CCCD) a grant program for Section 9106 of the PA Motor Vehicle Code. The QAB will assist the CCCD in carrying out the Administrative, Educational and Contractual responsibilities of the Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Roads (DGLVR) Program.

The QAB will establish priorities and requirements for funding through the Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Roads (DGLVR) Program using Program Manual guidance. The QAB responsibilities to promote the use of Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance (ESM) will include review of applications submitted for funding; conducting site visits (as necessary and determined by the QAB); and recommending eligible applications to the CCCD Board of Directors for funding of environmentally sensitive road maintenance practices to address road runoff and sediment to local streams, dust control and items which may cause negative impacts to the streams.

Rules of Order and Procedures

The QAB in Cameron County will be comprised of a non-voting chairperson and a voting member appointed by the CCCD Board, one voting member or appointed designee from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and one voting member or appointed designee from the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PAFBC). A quorum shall be two of three voting members and the chair can vote as a tie breaker.

The established meeting schedule for QAB meetings will be on an annual basis for each aspect of the DGLVR Program, usually in March for Low Volume Roads (LVR) and September for Dirt & Gravel (D&G) Roads, and also on an as-needed basis as determined by the Chairman. Public notice of meetings will be in the newspaper.

Minutes of the QAB meetings will be taken by the CCCD staff, and kept on file with the DGLVR Program files. These files will be kept on record and available to the public pursuant to the Open Records Policy.

The QAB meetings will be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order.

Finance

Separate accounting will be done for the D & G portion and the LVR portion of the CCCD designated allocations. Any interest accrued from the DGLVR Program will be transferred at least annually to the construction allocation portion of the Program.

Training and educational monies not utilized in the funding year they are received may be carried over or used to fund Special Educational Projects such as:

- Purchase and use of equipment to be made available free of charge to local road owning entities eligible to participate in the DGLVR Program.
- Awarding of cost share monies to assist in the purchase equipment such as carbide tipped rotating toothed grader blade systems, traffic counters or other equipment to implement environmentally sensitive road maintenance practices.
- To purchase promotional items for educational/public awareness purposes.

- To use for any innovative ideas that will benefit the educational and outreach activities of the CCCD regarding the DGLVR Program.
- Training and educational funding will be used to pay for costs associated with ESM workshops, staff training events and the annual Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Roads Program conferences.
- Training and educational funding may be used for staff salary related to trainings, conferences, field days, workshops (at or hosting), technical assistance or other outreach activities.
- Training and educational funding may be used to pay for the hiring of an intern, temporary person, or cost sharing of an AmeriCorps or OSM Vista member to perform DGLVR education and outreach.

Rules of Conduct & Conflict of Interest

The QAB rules of conduct include PA Ethics Commission requirements and no CCCD Director, QAB member or CCCD employee shall, as a result of this program, be permitted to obtain financial benefits for him/herself, a member of his/her immediate family or a business with which he/she is associated. Understanding that, this shall not preclude the payment of normal salary and benefits to employees provided in their normal course of employment, as outlined in the most current version of the DGLVR Program Administrative Manual.

In addition, any QAB member, CCCD Board Member, or staff member, shall recuse themselves and be excluded from discussing and voting on actions that might benefit a road or stream adjacent to his or her property or the property of relatives or businesses in which he or she has an interest. 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 seat or simply be barred from voting, as determined at the meeting.

Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Roads Program Equal Access to Funds

To encourage and promote equal access to funding, the QAB recognizes that any state or public entity which owns and maintains roads open to the public within Cameron County, as described in the program administrative manual, are eligible for funding provided the entity has:

- a) Inventoried their dirt and gravel roads with CCCD staff, and
- b) Evaluated their dirt, gravel and low volume roads with CCCD Staff and assisted in the creation of worksites within their entity, or conducted and provided an approved Low Volume Road traffic count of 500 vehicles per day or less with a Low Volume Road application.
- c) Have at the minimum, one current elected/appointed or employed individual attend and complete the two-day Environmentally Sensitive Road Maintenance (ESM) Workshop within the last 5 years. The ESM certified individual must be a person in charge of the project design and implementation for the applying road entity. Individuals (interns, secretaries, etc.) not directly involved with the project design and implementation DO NOT qualify an applicant to be eligible for funding. Engineers on retainer or others who serve multiple public road entities are welcome to attend ESM trainings, but their attendance DOES NOT count toward ESM Certification for an entity they present. The person that attended the 2-day ESM Training on behalf of the municipality/entity must be on-site during the project.
- d) CCCD Staff will advertise or attempt to notify by regular mail or by electronic means all eligible road owning entities of the availability of Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Roads Program funds before a new grant round opens.

- e) CCCD Staff will also post the road owning entities awarded funds for ESM projects and the amount of those funds on the CCCD website.
- f) In order to keep the entity who owns the road eligible for participation in the program, CCCD staff will advertise or attempt to notify the entities by regular mail or by electronic means of the Regional Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance (ESM) trainings scheduled each year when made available by the Penn State Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Roads Center.
- g) CCCD staff will advertise or attempt to notify the road owning entities by regular mail or by electronic means about program sponsored training events.

Written Funding Criteria for Ranking Projects

The QAB shall use the following criteria for application funding: High Quality designated watersheds, stocked trout streams, streams with drinking water intakes, in-kind contributions of the applicant, and the relative computer score. All criteria will receive equal weight in the decision making process.

The road owning entities past history of involvement in the program may also be taken into consideration. Past history of involvement includes all aspects of the DGLVR Program such as timeliness of completing a project; following of the submitted work plan; proper installation of ESM techniques; maintenance of previous projects; use of ESM techniques, when performing maintenance on other non-project roads; proper administration of paperwork; communicating with the CCCD; and attendance to educational trainings conducted by the CCCD. The QAB may recommend the awarding of funds to a road owning entity that has not previously participated in the program to encourage their present and future participation.

CCCD staff will compile all applications for funding into a spread sheet comprised of the specified data and make the spreadsheet, as well as a copy of each application available to each QAB member at least one week prior to the QAB meetings.

Applications for Funding

The one-page DG and LVR Grant Application, developed for statewide use, will be made available to all eligible road owning entities. The front of the form requires all the applying organization's information, worksite ID, problems which need addressed on the site, and the grant amount requested and the estimated in-kind contributions.

The application is designed to be used for either the Dirt & Gravel Roads or Low Volume Roads applications by marking the appropriate box (shaded gray) in the upper right hand corner of the application. The remaining items in the gray box will be filled in by the CCCD. An attachment to the application is provided to list the Grant Request Items and In Kind Contributions. The QAB recommends the applicant to use the attachment and the QAB may use this form for scoring purposes. The back of the application is reserved for a simple drawing and a short explanation of the project which is also considered as the work plan of the project. Instructions and application forms can also be obtained from the Penn State Center for Dirt & Gravel/Low Volume Roads website at <http://www.dirtandgravel.psu.edu/index.html>

Each application will be for one previously verified worksite, or continuous project area. In cooperation with the CCCD, an applicant may request that a worksite be added. The CCCD will keep all non-funded projects of the current funding year on file for the remainder of that funding year should additional monies become available. There is no restriction to the number of applications an eligible entity may submit, but the QAB reserves the right to limit the number applications a road owning entity may submit on any given funding round. If multiple applications are submitted by a road owning entity, the applicant must mark each application in the order they want the QAB to consider the projects for funding. The unfunded applications will not be considered in the next funding round. The application must be resubmitted each funding year so the road owning entity can review and or revise the application if necessary.

The CCCD will keep all non-funded applications on file for a period of five (5) years from date of submission to

create a pool of “Shovel Ready” projects to draw from, should additional other source funds become available or any current year funding remains available. Applicants will be given an opportunity to review and revise these applications before any funds are awarded but, the worksite must remain the same. Applicants who do not have an awarded project for the current year will be given highest priority. If an applicant duplicates an application, the most current year application will replace the duplicate.

It will also be the policy of the QAB to allow the inclusion of work outside of the entities’ road right of way provided the work is necessary for the successful completion and continued maintenance of the environmentally sensitive road maintenance practices to address road runoff. Funds can be spent only if the issue cannot be addressed within the ROW. The scope and sediment to local streams, dust control and items which may cause negative impacts to the streams of work and area is limited to ESM practices which directly reduce the impact to the public road. Or, the CCCD has determined it is directly necessary to the successful completion of the project on the public road portion. The grant recipient is required to obtain written permission from the landowner before starting work and submit a copy of the agreement for the CCCD files. A sample SCC approved landowner agreement is available for use from the CCCD or the Penn State Dirt & Gravel Roads Center website. An applicant may use their own agreement as long as it is in a form or manner similar to the SCC approved document.

The QAB will have a period for accepting applications. There will be a given deadline usually Junet for low volume roads (LVR) and May for dirt & gravel (D&G) roads to allow applicants to plan their projects accordingly.

The two annual QAB meetings will be held as determined by the Chairman. At that time, all submitted applications will be reviewed, ranked and recommended for funding to the CCCD. **Road owning entities that have open contracts pertaining to the grant round applications being considered by the DGLVR QAB will not be considered for further funding in the grant round until the existing contract is completed.** The QAB funding recommendations will be given to the District Board at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting for final approval. The QAB scoring and review process does not guarantee an application will be fully funded. The process is designed to allow the QAB to partially fund a project to allow the DGLVR Program achieve its goal in the most efficient way possible. The applicants will be notified by letter and provided a proposed contract in conformity with their grant application offer. If deemed necessary by the QAB Chair, additional QAB meetings may be called to award any remaining funds not allocated during the annual meeting of either Dirt & Gravel or Low Volume Roads.

Funding Procedures

All approved contracts with road owning entities will be signed by the Manager of the CCCD or his designee. The funds will be distributed by the CCCD in the following manner:

- The CCCD maintains separate accounting specifically for the DG and the LVR Programs. Funds awarded will be transferred from the designated account and be allocated through the CCCD.
- Upon execution of the project contract, the CCCD can forward up to 50% of the grant amount requested to the participating entity. The road owning entity is responsible for retaining receipts, weigh slips, labor accounting, etc. to document the expenditures of the entire grant amount (100%.)
- The Road owning entity has up to one week before the next annual application deadline to complete the approved contract pertaining to each particular grant round. If unable to complete by this time, the entity may request in writing for a one year extension on the project. The applicant will be ineligible in participating in either the Dirt & Gravel Roads or Low Volume Roads future funding rounds during the extension. All extension requests must be approved by the CCCD Manager or his designee.
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- The SCC statewide policy requires all participants to notify their conservation district prior to beginning work on a project. The QAB will set the amount of time an entity is required to notify the CCCD in the contract with the road owning entity. Notification is required three (3) business days in advance prior to beginning work.

The Conservation District will withhold payment of the approved grant amount requested until the project is

complete, invoices have been submitted and has been final inspected by the QAB and/or CCCD personnel. For the project to be considered complete, all site work must be accomplished and stabilized as indicated in the contract in a manner to be considered satisfactory to achieve the purpose it was designed, as determined by the QAB and/or the CCCD.

All receipts, weigh slips, labor accounting, etc. must also meet or exceed the total grant amount requested prior to final portion of funds being released. If totals equal less than the remaining portion, only the lesser amount will be forwarded to the road owning entity. Grant monies that are unspent by the applicant at the end of two (2) years from the date of the executed contract must be returned in full to the CCCD unless the QAB or designee determines extenuating circumstances prevented the full utilization of those funds.

The CCCD makes funds available to participating road owning entities from the DGLVR Fund. Those applications are highly competitive and requires full and accurate cost estimates be developed by the applicant prior to their submittal for potential funding. Once the CCCD enters into a contract with a road owning entity, the CCCD expects the entity to complete the contract within the proposed budget. The CCCD may provide additional funds not exceeding 10% of the contracted amount, should the project costs exceed those proposed by the applicant in the grant application. Funds spent by the entity in excess of the grant amount will count as an in-kind contribution to the project.

Low Volume Roads

Act 89 of 2013 included appropriations for Low Volume Roads (LVR) to Section 9106 of the PA Vehicle Code Dirt and Gravel Roads Program. The purpose of expanding the Program is to perform Environmentally Sensitive Road Maintenance to sections of qualifying paved or tar & chipped roads and provide funding for environmentally sensitive road maintenance practices to address road runoff and erosion to local streams along with items which may cause negative impacts to the streams.

A Low Volume Road (LVR) is a sealed (tar & chip) or paved road with an average daily traffic count of 500 vehicles or less. A "Traffic Count Validation Form" (TCVF) signed by the applying road entity must be submitted with the application for funding. The road owning entity is responsible for obtaining valid LVR traffic counts. Only traffic count methods approved by the QAB will be accepted with the application. The TCVF document will be retained along with the project files according to the CCCD record retention policy. The TCVF document can be obtained from the CCCD and the Center for Dirt and Gravel Roads Studies website.

Three methods of traffic counts are accepted by the QAB which are Extrapolation, Two Hour and 24 Hour traffic count methods. The applicant must follow proper procedures of each method when performing a traffic count. Failure to follow proper procedure shall result in denial of funding project applications. Instructions for performing a valid traffic count can be obtained from the CCCD and the Center for Dirt and Gravel Roads Studies website: <http://www.dirtandgravel.psu.edu/index.html>.

Technical assistance from CCCD staff may also be available if requested by the applicant... The contractor may use an approved QAB process or submit an alternative methodology for QAB approval prior to submitting an application. CCCD will NOT pay to have traffic counts done. However, the cost for performing a traffic count may be used as In-Kind contribution from the municipality.

Traffic counts are not permitted in a timeframe or manner which intentionally causes or may cause an artificially low average daily traffic count. Traffic counts should be conducted only on the proposed project area between intersecting roads. Sites which include intersections may require multiple traffic counts for the project area. Traffic counts only apply to the segment of road between intersections not the entire road. Future projects outside of the counted area require separate traffic counts. Traffic counts are valid for a period of five years providing no significant change in traffic flows or patterns have taken place during the five year period.

The ranking of Low Volume Roads applications will follow the same standards as dirt and gravel roads ranking where permissible. Adjustments to the same dirt & gravel roads standards will be made to apply to low volume roads such as road surface type. Additional criteria which may be considered are the cost effectiveness of a project to the environmental benefit received and any special policies which may apply such as the stream crossing replacement policy. The balance between the environmental benefit, road improvement reduced long

term maintenance and improved air quality may be considered during the ranking process.

Driving Surface Aggregate (DSA)

Driving Surface Aggregate (DSA) meeting PennDOT DSA specifications is the only SCC approved road surface material which may be purchased with DGLVR funds. DSA shall only be acquired from PS4 DGR center approved quarries. Placement of DSA shall follow the Penn State Dirt & Gravel Roads Center specifications and guidelines. The guidelines can be obtained from the District or the Penn State Dirt & Gravel Roads Center website.

All DSA must be placed using a paver machine for any project that will be placing in excess of 500 ft. DSA used must be of limestone or dolomite composition. In some cases DSA sandstone may be used with the permission of the QAB.

Then CCCD will not use Low Volume Roads funds to pave an entire project. However, funds may be used to re-pave specific sites where pavement has been destroyed while performing the environmental work.

Stream Crossing Structural Replacement Policy

To maximize the purpose of the DGLVR Program, in 2014 the State Conservation Commission (SCC) implemented new policy and procedures to address stream crossing structure replacements. These guidelines focus on replacing undersized and inadequate structures which cause significant environmental degradation. Undersized and inadequate stream crossings increase sedimentation, aggradation, scouring and affect aquatic organism passage which cause negative effects both up and downstream of the structure. Proper sizing of stream crossing structures maximize the benefit and minimize life cycle costs of the structure. The stream bank, bed and flow are stabilized, aquatic organism travel is improved and stream diversion is reduced. Long term maintenance costs are reduced through less overtopping and debris plugging during high water events which reduce failures and increase the life of the structure. The following policies have been adopted to be eligible for funding the replacement of a stream crossing structure.

Existing structure opening equal to or less than 7 square feet (equivalent to 36" pipe or less): All are eligible to be replaced with DGLVR Program funds. The replacement structure must meet the following criteria.

- Structure width equal to or greater than bank full width.
- Structure must be properly aligned with the stream channel.
- Consider additional floodplain connectivity when possible.
- Structure must be designed and constructed to accommodate the passage of aquatic organisms through the structure.

Existing structure with an opening of more than 7 square feet (equivalent to greater than 36" pipe): In order to be eligible for DGLVR Program funding for replacement, the existing structure must meet all of the following criteria.

- Have a structure to bankfull width ratio of 50% or less
- Show signs of stream bank erosion.
- Show signs of stream bed erosion/aggradation.

The Replacement structure MUST meet ALL of the following specifications:

- Have a structure width equal to or greater to bank full width. (100% ratio.)
- The structure must be properly aligned with the channel.
- Consider additional floodplain connectivity when possible.
- Structure must be designed and constructed to accommodate the passage of aquatic organisms through the structure.

Stream crossing structure replacement projects require CCCD staff to complete a “Stream Structure Evaluation” Form as provided in the program manual, to determine eligibility. This procedure MUST be performed before an application can be submitted for funding. It is the responsibility of the road owning entity to schedule the evaluation with CCCD Program staff prior to submitting an application for funding. Failure to do so may deem the application ineligible for funding.

Turn Back Roads

If a road owning entity wishes to have any paved or tar and chipped roads turned back to dirt and gravel; the road surface in the contract area must be dirt and gravel when the contract work begins. If the road owning entity chooses not to make the surface dirt and gravel, all grant monies must be returned to the CCCD before the contract termination date. The road owning entity will remain ineligible for any future funding until these monies are returned to the CCCD.

It is acceptable to use either Dirt & Gravel or Low Volume Roads eligible grant funds to turn a road back to dirt and gravel. Applications can be made in either grant round to turn a road back. The turned back road will be placed into the Dirt & Gravel Road Inventory and future projects applied for on the turned back road must be done through the Dirt & Gravel Roads funding portion of the DGLVR Program only.

Permits and Other Requirements

All DGLVR Program projects must comply with all federal, state and local regulations. It is solely the responsibility of the road owning entity to ensure all regulations are adhered to and met. This includes federal, state and local permitting requirements. Other items included but not limited to can be Municipal Code regulations such as bidding and prevailing wage, Erosion and Sedimentation Control regulations, PA Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) regulations, PA One Call, local ordinances and PennDOT standards for road work and safety. The QAB or CCCD Staff are not able to provide all these requirements and the road owning entity is responsible to seek advice from their solicitor and the regulating agency. The QAB maintains the right to sanction a road owning entity ineligible for future Program funding for failure to follow or comply with other regulating agencies which may be associated with a project.

Environmental Standards for Products and Practices

Section 9106 (f)(7) of the PA Motor Vehicle Code requires Quality Assurance Boards to adopt standards that prohibit use of materials or practices that are environmentally harmful. The Statement of Policy 83.613 (1) (b) formalizes that requirement. In response, the Cambria County QAB has adopted standards prohibiting the use of materials or practices which are environmentally harmful or do not meet the programs' “non-pollution” standard. These materials include, but are not limited to: reclaimed steel slag materials; noxious weeds, fugitive emissions, and dust control products which may pose a problem if they enter a waterway. Compliance with all existing environmental laws is a condition of purchase under the contracting agreement between the CCCD and the road owning entity. An environmentally suitable substitute for dust control, as determined by the State Conservation Commission, may qualify for payment.

These policies were reviewed by the QAB and recommended to the CCCD Board on March 9, 2015 and approved by motion at the board's regular monthly meeting on March 9, 2015 that was advertised by the Sunshine Law Requirements.