

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: October 7, 2020

Crawford County Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Roads Quality Assurance Board Procedures and Policies

Purpose – The purpose of the Quality Assurance Board is to establish and recommend to the District Board a 9106 grant program and assist the Crawford Conservation District in carrying out its administrative responsibilities. The QAB enables local officials to establish “*fiscal and environmental controls*” over the program at the local level. The QAB will establish funding categories, funding priorities, and project competition requirements for the Dirt and Gravel Road Program. It will review grant applications and make funding recommendations to the Conservation District. It will provide site analysis with applicants to develop mutually agreeable objectives to correct pollution; and it will continue to provide guidance throughout the work period. It will also compose progress reports and completion reports.

Board Composition – The QAB Board shall be comprised of two members appointed by the Crawford Conservation District, one member representing the Natural Resources Conservation Service and one member representing the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission.

Current Members: Tracey Crawford, (CD Staff), Chairperson, Vernon Knapp, (CD Director), Wendy Kedzierski, (Alternate CD Director), Jody Lasko, (NRCS), Doug Torok, (Alternate NRCS), and Timothy Fuller (PFBC).

Members may nominate a substitute to attend meetings in their stead in the event of a scheduling conflict, etc. Substitutes should be knowledgeable about the program and their representative’s role on the board.

Meeting Schedule – The first two organizational meetings of the Crawford County Quality Assurance Board were held on January 19th and February 9th, 1998. Subsequent meetings will be held as need at the Crawford County Conservation District Office, Woodcock Creek Nature Center, 21742 German Road, Meadville. Public notice of the meeting will be sent to a minimum of two media one week prior to the meeting.

Minutes – Minutes of the QAB meeting will be taken and will be kept in a record book available to the public upon request.

Rules of Conduct – The meetings of the QAB will be conducted according to Roberts Rules of Order.

Conflict of Interest – The following **Conflict of Interest Policy Statement** was adopted by the QAB at its meeting on December 8, 1998, and by the Board of the Crawford Conservation District at its meeting on December 10, 1998 :

“No District Director, Quality Assurance Board member, or District Employee, shall, as a result of this program, be permitted to obtain financial benefits for himself, a member of his immediate family, or a business with which he is associated. This shall preclude the payment of normal salary and benefits to employees provided in their normal course of employment.”

In addition, any QAB member, Conservation District Board Member, or staff member, will be excluded from 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 stead (or simply be barred from voting, as determined at the meeting).

Equal Access to Funding – At its meeting on December 8th, 1998, the QAB adopted the following statement with regards to access to funding: “All county citizens, through their municipal representatives, shall have equal access to the funding provided through the Crawford County Dirt and Gravel Road program. Decisions on funding allocation will be made on the basis of maximizing the reduction of pollution to county streams in a cost effective manner, and targeting the most ecologically sensitive streams first. No discrimination will be made concerning race, religion, gender, economic status or political standing of citizens affected by the improvements achieved through this program. All eligible entities may submit project proposals which will be judged solely by a published set of criteria approved at a public meeting of the QAB. The QAB will be bound by the policies established by the State Conservation Commission for the administration of this program statewide.”

Criteria to identify county project priorities – At its meeting on December 8th, 1998, the QAB drafted criteria to prioritize funding proposals based on suggestions of the State Conservation Commission. These criteria were then approved by the Crawford Conservation District at their meeting on December 10th, 1998. Criteria will be reviewed and amended annually. A copy of the written criteria is available on request.

Filing Applications for Funding – It is the intent of the legislature to keep the application process as simple as possible. Applications for funding will consist of the one page form entitled *Dirt and Gravel Roads Grant Application*, developed for state-wide use for this program. This form will be provided to all municipalities by the Crawford Conservation District and/or QAB members. The front of the form will include information on the name, address, and location of the municipality and the affected road or roads and stream, as well as a projected list of costs and grant amount. The back of the form is blank and

municipal officials should add a simple drawing and written description of the proposed project. A 7.5 minute topographic map with the project site identified on it should be attached to the application, and all required permits should be secured once approved for funding and after signing a project contract. In addition, the project should be in compliance with all existing environmental laws, including those regarding the use of environmentally detrimental projects or practices, as a condition of acceptance.

Each application should be for one grant and refer to one contiguous project location or one type of work through an area (e.g. bank seeding on a series of roads in a township.)

The Conservation District will keep a copy of the completed application, project sketch, and location map on file during the project and for seven years after its completion.

Projects can be resubmitted in subsequent years if not initially accepted for funding.

There is no restriction on the number of grants that can be submitted by one applicant at any time or over a period of time.

If a municipality is interested in applying for Driving Surface Aggregate (DSA), they must notify the District and mark "Other" and write "Intent to place DSA as Phase II" on the grant application. The first Phase (first Contract) will be to add drainage to the road and stabilize the road surface for DSA placement. The District must be notified when the first Contract/Phase is finished and the District will complete an inspection to make sure all drainage issues are resolved before the municipality can apply for a second grant application with DSA as Phase II. The second grant application will keep the original ranking score of the first grant application.

Application period for projects will open on January 1st and close on November 1st. All municipalities will be notified of these dates by letter by the Crawford Conservation District. Notification will also be published as legal notices in the Meadville Tribune and Titusville Herald two weeks prior to the opening of the application period.

The QAB reserves the right to reopen the application period in the event of a natural disaster.

At their next regularly scheduled meeting following the closing of the application period, the QAB will evaluate all applications based on the established funding criteria and make its recommendations to the Board of Directors of the Crawford Conservation District. The District Board will take action on those recommendations at their next regularly scheduled meeting. Municipalities will

be notified by letter of the acceptance or rejection of their proposals in the two weeks following the Conservation District meeting. Notice will be sent to newspapers regarding the allocation of funding.

Funding Procedures – All contracts with municipalities will be signed by the Chairman of the Crawford Conservation District. The Conservation District agrees to disburse funds under this project in the following manner:

1. The District will maintain a separate account specifically for Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Roads Program expenses.
2. Upon the full execution of the project agreement, the District will provide an advanced payment to the project participant in an amount of up to 50% of the grant to be applied towards payment of eligible expenses incurred by the project. The project participant is responsible for keeping receipts, weigh slips, etc. to document proper expenditure of advanced payments prior to receiving additional payments under the project agreement.
3. The District shall process subsequent payments to the project participant on an actual cash expended basis. The District will upfront 50% of the contracted amount to the grant recipient once the contract has been signed by both parties.
4. The District shall withhold final payment of approved project expenses until the satisfactory completion of the project as determined by the QAB or the District. The District must withhold a minimum of 30% of the contracted amount until the project is completed.
5. All claims submitted by the program participant pursuant to the agreement shall be submitted to the District in accordance with this schedule and the terms and conditions contained in the approved project agreement. The payments shall be itemized and show that the utilization of funds are in accordance with the project cost summary contained in the application and work plan. Claims shall include receipts, weigh slips, and/or other appropriate supporting information to document actual expenditures by the project.

Funding Categories – The following funding categories have been established by the Crawford County QAB:

- a. municipal government roads
- b. road demonstration projects
- c. training grants, restricted to 10% of the funding
- d. administration costs, limited to actual documented costs and restricted to a maximum of 10% of the county's total allocation.

Training Incentives – In order to qualify for program funding, all eligible applicants need to have sent a representative to a Dirt and Gravel Road ESM training within the previous five years. Any costs related to a municipal official attending a training program will be covered by the Dirt and Gravel Road Program. One representative per eligible applicant applying for recertification by attending the annual meeting may be reimbursed for their expenses if they request reimbursement from the QAB at least one month in advance of the meeting date, budget permitting.

Non-Pollution Standards – Section 9106 (f) (7) 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 QAB has adopted standards prohibiting the use of materials or practices which are environmentally harmful or do not meet the program’s “non-pollution” standard. These materials include but are not limited to: noxious weeds, fugitive emissions, and dust control products which may pose a problem if they enter a waterway. Bank protection guidelines and materials should conform to those identified under Chapter 105 in the BDWW-GP-3 for Bank Rehabilitation, Bank Protection and Gravel Bar Removal. Compliance with all existing environmental laws is a condition of purchase under the contracting agreement between the District and the eligible applicant. The program will not pay for brine application. An environmentally suitable substitute for dust control would qualify for payment.

Project Performance – The following site inspection requirements were adopted by the QAB at its meeting December 8, 1998:

Any changes to work in contracts should be mutually agreeable and confirmed (prior to initiation) in writing by a letter from the eligible applicant to the Conservation District or vice versa.

The conservation District will perform a final site inspection to verify completion of work prior to issuing final funding reimbursement.

For the contract to be considered complete, all site work must have been accomplished as indicated in the contract in a manner considered satisfactory to achieve the purpose it was designed to, as determined by the QAB and the Conservation District. The work site shall be stabilized. (ie: final seedings done, etc.)

Amendments

1. **Amended 1/26/12** – Typographical error on page 4, under Funding Categories, letter c. revised to “...restricted to **5%** of the funding”. Letter d revised to “...maximum of **10%** of the county’s total allocation.”
2. **Amended 6/4/2015** – Current members was updated to reflect Tracey Crawford as the QAB Chair.
3. **Amended 01/13/2016** – Letter C and D under **Funding Categories** was revised to reflect 10% and 10% for education and administration.
4. **Amended 01/13/2016** – Language was updated under **Eligible Applicant, Training Incentives and Project Performance** to refer to all eligible applicants instead of municipalities.
5. **Amended 8/10/2018** – Chad Doyle replaced Terry Crecraft as the PAFB Commission representative under Board Composition on page 1.
6. **Amended 9/6/2019** – Under Filing Application for Funding, revised “and all required permits should be secured,” to “and all required permits should be secured once approved for funding and after signing a project contract”. On page 3, revised “three years after its completion,” to “seven years after its completion”. On page 3, revised application period from “August 1st and close on December 31st” to “January 1st and close on November 1st”. Under Funding Procedures, Typographic errors on page 3, capitalized Conservation and under number 1. revised “Dirt and Gravel Road Program” to “Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Roads Program”. On Page 4, added “The District will upfront 50% of the contracted amount to the grant recipient once the contract has been signed by both parties” to number 3 and added, “The District must withhold a minimum of 30% of the contracted amount until the project is completed” to number 4.
7. **Amended 1/6/2020** – On page 1. Under Board Composition, Wendy Kedzierski was added as the Alternate Conservation District Director and Doug Torok was added to the list as the Alternate NRCS representative.
8. **Amended 10/7/2020** – On page 1. Under Board Composition, Timothy Fuller replace Chad Doyle as the PAFB Commission representative. Under Filing Application for Funding, the QAB and District Board approved to include the following into QAB Policy “If a municipality is interested in applying for Driving Surface Aggregate (DSA), they must notify the District and mark “Other” and write “Intent to place DSA as Phase II” on the grant application. The first Phase (first Contract) will be to add drainage to the road and stabilize the road surface for DSA placement. The District must be notified when the first Contract/Phase is finished and the District will complete an inspection to make sure all drainage issues are resolved before the municipality can apply for a second grant application with DSA as Phase II. The second grant application will keep the original ranking score of the first grant application.”