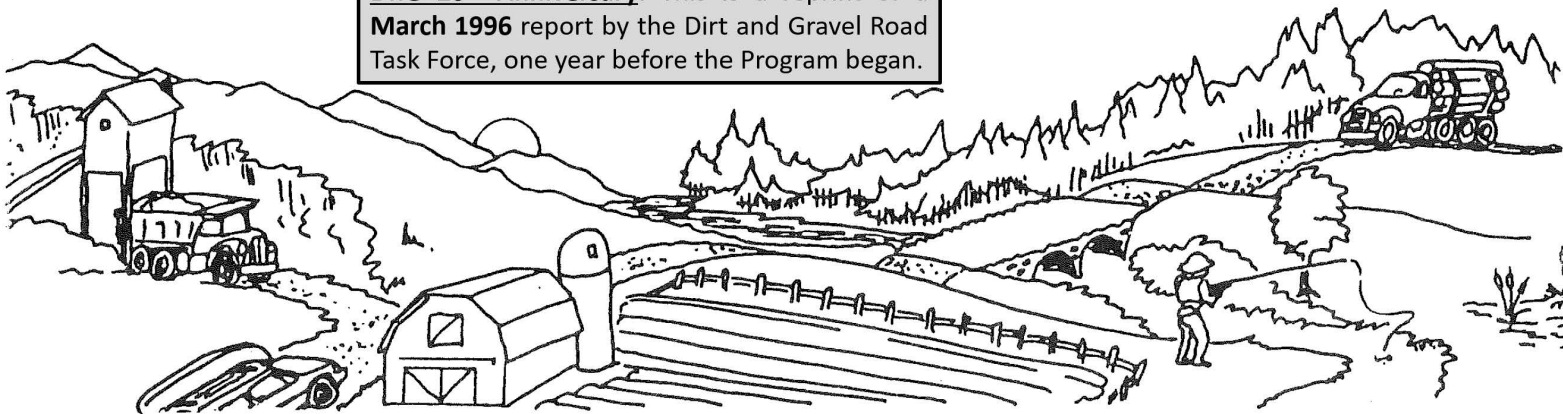


DnG 20th Anniversary: This is a reprint of a March 1996 report by the Dirt and Gravel Road Task Force, one year before the Program began.



TASK FORCE ON DIRT AND GRAVEL ROADS FACT SHEET

Serving Pennsylvania's industries and citizens with environmental guidance for managers of unpaved roads

Background

Twenty eight thousand miles of unpaved roads provide local service to Pennsylvania's rural residents and the major enterprises of agriculture, tourism, mining/mineral industries and forest products. Although they are inexpensive to maintain, loss of fine materials from the roads and their drainage areas creates dust and sediment.

Dust is both a nuisance and a pollutant. Sediment is one of the greatest sources of pollution to waters of the Commonwealth. Excessive amounts of sediment can adversely affect aquatic life in many ways. Sediment can smother species of plants, insects and fish eggs and destroy the habitat they require.

History of Task Force

1990 - Anglers, in Potter County, reported streams were being hurt by sedimentation conveyed in dirt road drainage. Turbidity was so high, people had to travel elsewhere to fish for trout.

1991 - James H. "Bud" Byron of Pennsylvania Trout, a Council of Trout Unlimited, arranged a "Northcentral Erosion Conference". It was attended by government agencies and concerned environmental groups. Effects of sediments on streams were brought to the forefront of environmental concern at that meeting.

1991 - The Rural Technology Assistance Program conducted a meeting on drainage and maintenance of unpaved roads. The meeting was sponsored by the Potter County Conservation District and Trout Unlimited.

1991 - A demonstration to stabilize banks by hydro-seeding was funded by Trout Unlimited and Butterkrust Bakeries of Sunbury, PA. Specialized equipment for that work was provided by Penn Lines Utilities and The PA National Guard.

1993 - A series of meetings were held to discuss how to control runoff from unpaved road drainage areas. PennDOT, as administrators of the Municipal Services funding program, was selected to head the statewide effort.

1993 - The Task Force On Dirt And Gravel Roads was formed and the following work groups were appointed: "SCOPE OF PROBLEM", "TRAINING", "MONITORING" and "ROAD MAINTENANCE Standards, Techniques, Demonstrations".

Task Force Participants

Department of Environmental Protection
DCNR - Bureau of Forestry
Fish and Boat Commission
Game Commission
PA Association of Township Supervisors
PA Council - Trout Unlimited
PA County Conservation Districts
PA Environmental Defense Foundation
PA House and Senate Staffs
PA Federation of Sportsman
Penelec Power Company
Pennzoil Products
PennDOT
US Fish and Wildlife Service
US Forest Service

Accomplishments

Listed on the reverse side is a summary of goals and achievements as of March 1996.

Goals

Conduct statewide evaluations to determine the extent of unpaved roads' adverse affects on streams protected as "Exceptional Value" and "High Quality" Waters. →

Develop an interim reference manual for road managers. →

Address the circumstance of environmentally harmful products being included in state purchasing contracts without adequate safeguards and warnings. →

Develop a multi-media training program on environmentally sensitive maintenance of unpaved roads and make this training easily available to road managers. →

Document or develop new examples, of dirt and gravel road management practices that establish the value of considering environmental ramifications. →

Develop maintenance standards for dirt and gravel roads that include consideration of environmental values and consequences of their loss. →

Achievements

Using maps prepared by a PennDOT funded contract, Trout Unlimited volunteers are field verifying the extent of and locations where drainage from dirt and gravel roads adversely affects streams classified as special protection waters.

"Controlling Sediment Pollution From Light Duty Gravel/Dirt Roads" was produced by the Indiana County Conservation District using an Environmental Protection Agency 319 grant.

A PennDOT product evaluation board now requires vendors offering new products to include data on the affects of their ingredients' on the natural environment; future work of the board will include consideration of products already on the purchasing lists.

The Transportation Institute at Penn State is working with Task Force members to prepare manuals of "Best Management Practices". Correlations between the functions of natural systems and road maintenance are being prepared by the Fish and Wildlife Unit. The Local Technology Assistance Program will present this material to road managers.

Staff of the Mid-Atlantic University Transportation Center at Penn State is soliciting conservation and transportation agencies for colored slide photographs and cost figures of unpaved road projects that demonstrate these values.

The Task Force offered guidance to PennDOT District 2-0 during planning of road upgrades for Card Creek Road in Potter County. Card Creek Road was part of a group of roads which were improved and then turned back to Roulette Township.

In conjunction with preparation of the training program, individuals at the Pennsylvania Transportation Institute are identifying specifications within PennDOT manuals that are inconsistent with best practices.

To Join The Task Force Or Obtain Further Information Contact:

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