

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: March 13, 2023

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

QAB Meetings will be held as needed. QAB meetings will be sun shined when a quorum of voting members is present. QAB meetings will also be advertised on the District website. 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, DGLVR policy does not allow the non-voting chair and a voting member to switch roles to avoid conflict of interest. The QAB chair can only vote to break a tie.

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 entities in a timely manner.

- B.) Application deadlines will be sent to all eligible entities.
- C.) Project applications will be accepted and ranked twice a year. March and September.
- D.) Ensure that District staff will be available for project evaluation and site assessment at the request of all eligible entities.
- 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.) The person in charge of work plan development and project implementation have completed the two-day Environmentally Sensitive Road Maintenance Workshop (certification) within the last 5 years.

C.) Any projects with a total project value greater the \$25,000.00 are to be subject to prevailing wage law.

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 applicants 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 applicant'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 applicant's right of way are the responsibility of the applicant. Any work conducted off the right of way must have an agreement completed and signed by the landowner and the applicant prior to application submission. This agreement should include long term maintenance responsibilities and access.

E.) Project applications will be accepted and ranked twice a year. March and September.

F.) Any project involving the placement of Driving Surface Aggregate (DSA) must be tested and placed in accordance with the SCC DGLVR DSA Specification and Certification.

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 outlined in the SCC DGLVR DSA Specification and Certification found in the DSA handbook.

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

Policy for Structure Installation

All stream crossing replacements funded in whole or in part with DGLVR funds, or listed as in-kind on a DGLVR Project, must follow the DGLVR Stream Crossing Design & Installation Standard, unless an “Exemption from DGLVR Stream Crossing Standard” (see section 7.1.3) is applicable. The Standard and its attachments are available online at <https://www.dirtandgravel.psu.edu/> For projects receiving an Exemption from DGLVR Stream Crossing Standard, other site-specific requirements apply (see section 7.1.3).

Policy for Stream Crossing Eligibility for Replacement

Eligibility criteria for replacing stream crossings, in whole or in part, with DGLVR funds:

- Small Pipes: Existing stream crossing structures with an opening width less than or equal to 48" are automatically eligible for replacement regardless of their relationship to the bankfull channel width, as long as they are replaced according to DGLVR Policy.
- Multiple Pipes: Existing stream crossings consisting of multiple (side-by-side) pipes are automatically eligible for replacement regardless of their relationship to the

bankfull channel width, as long as they are replaced according to DGLVR Policy. This automatic eligibility applies to multiple pipes only, not multi-cell or multi-opening bridges.

- All Other Structures: For existing single-opening structures with an opening width over 48", only structures with a "structure opening width to bankfull channel width" ratio of 75% or less are eligible for replacement with DGLVR Program funds.
- SCC Notification: Conservation districts are required to notify the State Conservation Commission (SCC) of proposed stream crossing replacements as soon as practical before a contract is signed. An online notification system is available by logging in to the Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies website (same log-in as accessing the GIS system) at www.dirtandgravelroads.org.

Note: When measuring the width of an existing structure, measure the most limiting width (for example: the narrowest pipe in a series of "necked-down" pipes, or the narrowest point perpendicular to the flow between abutments of a skewed bridge).

Where the DGLVR Stream Crossing Policy Applies

All stream crossing replacements funded in whole or in part with DGLVR funds, or listed as in-kind on a DGLVR Project, must follow the DGLVR Stream Crossing Design & Installation Standard, unless an "Exemption from DGLVR Stream Crossing Standard" (see section 7.1.3) is applicable. The Standard and its attachments are available online at <https://www.dirtandgravel.psu.edu/>. For projects receiving an Exemption from DGLVR Stream Crossing Standard, other site-specific requirements apply (see section 7.1.3).

For DGLVR Program purposes, the stream crossing policy outlined here applies to situations where streams, including intermittent channels, with identified bed and banks are flowing into the road or the uphill ditch. See section 7.1.3 for more information on Automatic and SCC-requested exemptions from the DGLVR Stream Crossing Standard. Contact the State Conservation Commission in questionable circumstances.

Routine maintenance of stream crossing structures is not eligible for DGLVR funding.

This applies both to stream crossing structures that are ineligible to be replaced with DGLVR funds or are eligible for replacement with DGLVR funds but are not being replaced. For these structures, no work may be performed directly on the stream crossing structure or its components unless the structure is replaced according to DGLVR Program Policy. "Work" includes, but is not limited to, culvert lining, extending undersized stream crossings, bridge deck repairs, and adding or replacing headwalls and endwalls to an existing stream crossing structure. The policies and qualifications for replacement with DGLVR Program funds outlined here and in the DGLVR Stream Crossing Design & Installation Standard do not exempt projects from any permitting or engineering requirements. 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.

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.) Eligible entity'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 can forward 50% of the grant amount requested, to the participating applicant.
- 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.) 100% 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 eligible entity 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 its discretion, may opt to not reimburse applicants 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 E&S plans and Chapter 105 permits for stream work and/or wetland encroachments prior to the start of construction and/or advancement of funds.
- 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 its 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.
- P.) The project completion timeline is now shortened from 2 years to 18 months, in order to meet the spending requirements in the new SCC 5 year agreement.