

## **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 19, 2023

## ATTACHEMENT E

### ERIE COUNTY DIRT AND GRAVEL LOW VOLUME ROAD 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 Erie County 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 Low Volume 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 Erie County Conservation District, one member representing the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and one member representing the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission.

**Current Members:** Thomas McClure, (CD Staff), Ryan Nageotte, (CD Staff), Brian Wolff, NRCS, and WCO Logan Schuller, PA Fish and Boat Commission.

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** -The first organizational meeting of the Erie County Quality Assurance Board was held on November 20, 1997. Subsequent meetings will be held the third Thursday of each month (as needed) or when a special need develops. The Chairman of the QAB will call special meetings at the request of the District Board.

**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** -"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** -"All County citizens, through their municipal representatives, shall have equal access to the funding provided through the Erie County Dirt and Gravel Low Volume Road Program. Decisions on funding allocation will be made on the basis of maximizing the reduction of pollution to County 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 municipalities are eligible to 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** -There is written criteria to prioritize funding proposals based on suggestions of the State Conservation Commission. This criteria may be reviewed and amended annually. **SEE EXHIBIT A OF THIS DOCUMENT.**

**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 Low Volume Roads Grant Application, developed for state-wide use for this program. This form will be provided to all municipalities by the Erie County 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 must be attached to the application, and all required permits must be secured prior to project start. 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 five 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.

A date to begin to accept applications as well as an application deadline will be established by the QAB on a yearly basis and all municipalities will be notified of these dates by letter from the Erie Conservation District.

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 Erie County 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.

**Funding Procedures** -All contracts with municipalities will be signed by the Chairman of the Erie County Conservation District (District). The District agrees to disburse funds under this project in the following manner:

1. The District will maintain a separate account specifically for Dirt and Gravel Low Volume Road 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.
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.
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 Erie County QAB:

- a. Municipal government roads
- b. Road demonstration projects
- c. Training grants, restricted to 5% 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, the township needs to have sent a municipal official to a Dirt and Gravel Low Volume Road ESM training within the previous five years. Any costs related to a municipal official attending a training program may be covered by the Dirt and Gravel Low Volume Road Program. One municipal official per township applying for the 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 municipality. The program will not pay for brine application. An environmentally suitable substitute for dust control would qualify for payment.

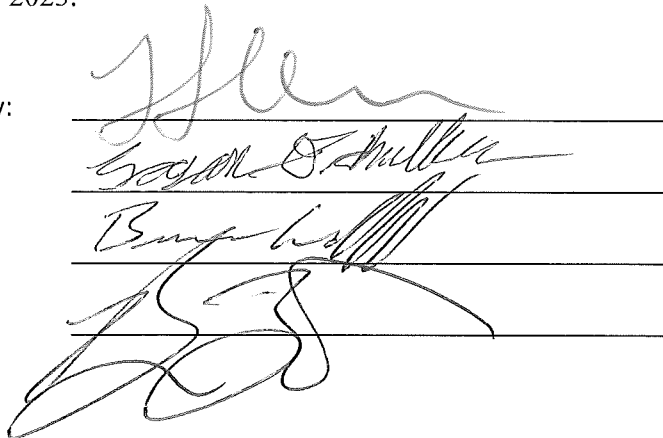
**Project Performance** -Any changes to work in contract should be mutually agreeable and confirmed (prior to initiation) in writing by a letter from the municipality to the Conservation District or vice versa.

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. (i.e. final seeding done, etc.)

This document was reviewed and approved at a meeting of the Quality Assurance Board held on October 19, 2023.

by:



The image shows four handwritten signatures, each written over a horizontal line. The signatures are written in black ink and vary in style, from cursive to more blocky. The first signature is the most legible, appearing to be 'J. H. ...'. The second signature is 'S. ...'. The third signature is 'B. ...'. The fourth signature is the most stylized and difficult to decipher.

## **EXHIBIT A**

### **Erie County**

#### **Quality Assurance Board Project Selection Criteria\***

Applications that are not completed in full will be rejected and not ranked. Applicant will be notified within 5 business days of the District receiving the application. The applicant will have until the close of the grant round to return a complete and corrected application to qualify for consideration.

\*\*Applications for funding will only be received during announced open application period.

#### **Project Selection is as follows:**

- Ranking and score from QAB site evaluation
- Erie County Conservation Staff recommendations
- Balance between road improvements and environmental benefits
- Public benefit of the project
- Municipalities program history and willingness to work with the District
- Availability of District funding
- Known applicant compliance history
- Completeness of project design and application
- Phased projects will receive High Priority in the ranking process if the previous phases were completed as designed. If more applications are submitted than funding is available that year then the original ranking score will be used.

\*This is at the QAB discretion.

\*Funding not guaranteed for phased projects each year.

\*The QAB reserves the right to make changes to these criteria at any time.

\*\*The QAB may extend the open application period at their discretion.