

**LANCASTER COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
DIRT & GRAVEL/LOW VOLUME ROAD
PROCEDURES AND POLICIES**

Purpose – The purpose of the Dirt & Gravel/Low Volume Road Quality Assurance Board (QAB) is to establish and recommend policies and projects consistent with Section 9106 of the PA motor vehicle code which establishes the Dirt & Gravel/Low Volume Road Program administered by the Lancaster County Conservation District. The QAB enables local officials to establish “fiscal and environmental controls” over the program at the local level. The QAB will establish policies, funding priorities, and project competition requirements for the Program. It will review grant applications and make funding recommendations to the Lancaster County Conservation District Board of Directors. 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 as per administrative program requirements.

Quality Assurance Board Composition – The QAB shall be comprised of four appointed members of the Conservation District Board (1 voting member, one non-voting chair, and 2 alternates/advisors), one voting member representing the Natural Resources Conservation Service (1 alternate), and one voting member representing the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (1 alternate).

QAB Voting Members are comprised of:

- Chairperson – Gordon Hoover, Lancaster Co. Conservation District Board Member
- District Voting Member – Herb Kreider, Lancaster Conservation District Board Member
- NRCS Voting Member – Brittany Moore, Civil Engineering Technician
- PAFBC Voting Member – Officer Jeff Schmidt, Waterways Conservation Officer

QAB Work Group Alternates/Advisors are comprised of:

- District Alternate/Advisor – Frank Burkhardt, Associate Director Conservation District
- District Alternate/Advisor – Jay Snyder, Associate Director Conservation District
- NRCS Alternate – Heather Grove
- PAFBC Alternate – Joseph Underdonk, Waterways Conservation Officer

Lancaster County Conservation District Dirt & Gravel/Low Volume Road Program Staff:

- Program Administrator – Tyler Keefer, Watershed Resource Specialist
- Program Assistant – Matthew Kofroth, Assistant District Manager
- Additional Program support – Grace Chamberlain, Assistant Watershed Specialist

Meeting Schedule – The QAB will meet either between March 1st and April 1st and/or between September 1st and October 1st. Specific dates and times will be determined by the QAB members, number of potential applications submitted, and the Conservation District staff. Additional meetings may be held or meetings may be cancelled at the discretion of the QAB or the Lancaster County Conservation District. Public notice about QAB meetings will be posted on the Lancaster County Conservation District’s website (www.lancasterconservation.org) and in the local newspaper at least one week prior to the meeting.

QAB Meeting Minutes – Minutes of the QAB meeting will be taken by Conservation District staff and will be kept on record at the District office.

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 themselves, a member of their immediate family, or a business with which they are associated with. 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, if he or she has an interest. In the event of such a conflict, the QAB member will not vote on that project.

Equal Access to Funding – Participation in the program is limited to public entities that own public roads in Lancaster County and state agencies with employees/supervisors that have attended the two-day Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance (ESM) Training within the last five years. Potential eligible applicants could include, but are not all-inclusive to the following; townships, boroughs, cities, PA Department of Transportation (PennDOT), PA Game Commission (PGC), PA Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC), County and other Government Entities, and Department of Conservation & Natural Resources (DCNR). Road projects to be funded must be publicly owned and open to the public for at least two consecutive weeks during the year. Request for grants will be sent to all eligible participants as grant funds become available.

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 & Gravel and Low Volume Road Maintenance Grant Application, developed for state-wide use for this program. This form will be provided to all public entities that own public roads in Lancaster County by the Lancaster County Conservation District and will be available on the District’s website (www.lancasterconservation.org). The front of the form will include information on the name, address, and location of the applicant and the affected road(s) and stream, as well as a projected list of costs and grant amount. The back of the form is blank and applicants should add a simple drawing and written description of the proposed project.

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

For awarded grant funded projects the Conservation District will keep a copy of the completed application, project sketch, and location map on file during the project and for three 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 eligible public entities that own public roads in Lancaster County will be notified of these dates by letter from the Lancaster County Conservation District. The dates will also be published on the Lancaster County Conservation District's website, www.lancasterconservation.org.

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 Lancaster County Conservation District. The District Board will act on those recommendations at their next regularly scheduled meeting. Applicants 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 applicants will be signed by the District Manager or Business Manager for the Lancaster County Conservation District. The Conservation District agrees to disburse funds under this program in the following manner:

1. The District will maintain separate accounts specifically for Dirt & Gravel Road and 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 and/or the District. In addition, a project completion report must be submitted by the municipality to validate work being reimbursed for.
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 projects agreement. The payments shall be

itemized and show that the utilization of funds is 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.

Contract Amendments – Contract amendments are allowed for, 1) extensions of time to complete a project contract or 2) for additional funding for a project. The procedures for both amendments are slightly different.

Time Extension Amendments – if the applicant requires a time extension for their contract the QAB can allow two 6-month time extensions per contract. These will be granted in 6 month increments by District staff. The requests for such time extensions must be either in writing or email form from the applicant and must be accompanied by a completed District Contract Amendment Form prior to the contract ending.

Funding Amendments – if the applicant would request additional funding to complete a project contract, the total requested must be less than 40% of the total granted contract for that project for a funding amendment to be allowed. Once again, a District Contract Amendment Form would need to be completed after District Board approval is granted.

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

- a. Road maintenance projects - no less than 80% of total allocated county funds
 - b. Education/Training - no more than 10% of total allocated county funds
 - c. Administration - no more than 10% of total allocated county funds
- *Unused education or administrative funds may be used for approved Road projects.

Environmentally Harmful Practices/Materials – No road maintenance practices and road materials utilized on projects will be permitted if their use is perceived as harmful to the environment or an ecosystem. The non-pollution standards established in the Dirt & Gravel/Low Volume Roads Administrative Manual will be referenced with regards to materials used. QAB members will determine if a maintenance practice is detrimental to the environment or an ecosystem. Lancaster County Conservation District Dirt & Gravel/Low Volume Road Program will not fund the use of any materials that are not approved by the Center for Dirt & Gravel Roads nor any practices that may be harmful to the environment. The use of any unapproved materials or practices used on a trial basis must be approved by the Center for Dirt & Gravel Roads prior to use.

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

The Conservation District will perform a final site inspection with or without the applicant 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.

Project Ranking Criteria:

- Stream classification by water quality
- Wild trout or stock trout stream
- Severity of problem
- Amount of in-kind services provided by township
- Extent the project serves the public and other initiatives in the watershed
- How well the project fits Program Guidelines

Replacement of Stream Crossing Structures – Lancaster County QAB will be following the state’s policy on sizing requirements for replacing stream crossing structures.

Low Volume Road Traffic Counts – Lancaster County QAB will be following the state’s policy on validation of traffic count data.

Approved Low Volume Road Expenses – The Lancaster County QAB will fund aspects relating to the environmental sensitive maintenance of low volume roads. Drainage issues, culvert replacement, pipe installation, head walls, end walls, and other drainage or infiltration type practices will be a priority for the QAB. Paving aspects, guiderails, signs, etc. of low volume roads will only be funded through grant funds as a direct result of drainage/infiltration improvements to the road. If the applicant can demonstrate that the paving or other aspect is needed for environmental maintenance of the road the QAB will consider funding the practice.

(Created & Approved 1/12/15)
(Revised 8/2/17 & Approved 9/6/17)
(Revised & Approved 9/1/21)
(Revised & Approved 9/7/22)
(Revised & Approved 3/1/23)
(Revised & Approved 3/6/23)