



PEOPLE • CONSERVATION • RESOURCES

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DIRT, GRAVEL, & LOW VOLUME ROAD MAINTENANCE PROGRAM
Quality Assurance Board Policy
October 2022

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Quality Assurance Board (QAB) in Schuylkill County are:

- To provide the Schuylkill Conservation District directors with information to allow the directors to make informed decisions related to the Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Road Maintenance Program;
- To involve local individuals in the pollution prevention efforts of the Program;
- To ensure that local decision-making processes include environmental expertise;
- To ensure fairness in the review and recommendation of projects.

The QAB will also establish priorities and requirements for program funding, review applications submitted for funding, and conduct site visits as necessary as determined by the QAB.

QAB COMPOSITION

Section 9106 of the Pennsylvania Motor Vehicle Code requires a four-member QAB to be established within the Schuylkill Conservation District.

The QAB in Schuylkill County will be comprised of four members as follows: one non-voting chairman appointed by the Conservation District Board, one voting member appointed by the Conservation District Board, one voting member appointed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and one voting member appointed by the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PAFBC). The QAB also includes several non-voting advisors.

The QAB will meet on an annual basis following the September 1st application deadline. Additional meetings may be scheduled by the chairperson. QAB meetings are subject to the requirements of Pennsylvania's Sunshine Law and will be advertised and posted accordingly. Minutes will be taken during the meeting and kept on file at Schuylkill Conservation District. QAB meetings will be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

No district manager, QAB member, QAB non-voting advisor, or Conservation District employee shall, as a result of this program, be permitted to obtain financial benefits for him/herself, a member of his/her immediate family, or a business with which he/she is associated. QAB members will abstain from voting on the recommendations of policies or projects where they have a vested interest.

The Schuylkill Conservation District protects and restores the county's natural resources through education, cooperation, guidance, and technical assistance that promotes wise stewardship, responsible development, and sustainability.



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This shall not preclude the payment of normal salary and benefits to employees provided in their normal course of employment. This information is outlined in the Pennsylvania Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Road Maintenance Program Administrative Manual.

EQUAL ACCESS & ELIGIBILITY FOR FUNDING

Public entities that own public roads in Pennsylvania that are open to public vehicle travel are eligible to apply to Schuylkill Conservation District for Program funding, including, but not limited to, municipalities, PA Department of Transportation (PennDOT), PA Game Commission (PGC), PA Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC), county and other government entities, and Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR). All potential applicants will receive equal notification on topics such as: funding availability, application deadlines, availability of District-owned equipment (such as grader blades or traffic counters), training, etc.

Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance (ESM) Training

The person in charge of work plan development and project implementation from the entity that has applied for funds from the Program must have attended Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance (ESM) training within the past five (5) calendar years to apply for funding. A re-certification can also be obtained by attendance at the Program's Annual Maintenance Workshop.

Attendance by individuals not directly involved with the project design and implementation (interns, secretaries, etc.) do not qualify an applicant to be eligible for funding. Engineers on retainer or others who serve multiple municipalities are welcome to attend the ESM training, but their attendance does not count as "ESM Certification" for the municipalities they represent. Alternatively, if an engineer is on staff at a particular eligible entity, it would count as ESM certification for that municipality.

GRANT APPLICATION SUBMISSION

All applications for Program funding must be received on the Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Road Maintenance Program Grant Application that has been approved by the State Conservation Commission (see Appendix A).

Pre-Application Meeting

Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to arrange an onsite meeting with Schuylkill Conservation District to discuss the potential project before an application is submitted for funding. The pre-application meeting allows the District to provide input on the potential project at an early stage before the applicant has invested a large amount of time and resources in developing a plan.

Application Deadline

The Schuylkill Conservation District will accept applications on a rolling basis. The deadline for application submissions for the current year will be September 1st of the current year. For example, applications received by September 1, 2021, will be reviewed and ranked for funding in 2021. Application received after September 1, 2021, would be reviewed after September 1, 2022.

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Conservation Program Coordinator will review applications for administrative completeness and ensure compliance with established Program policies and guidance. The Conservation District may, at their discretion, refuse to accept applications that are ineligible, incomplete, or do not properly address environmental issues.

GRANT APPLICATION REVIEW & FUNDING

Conservation Program Coordinator will compile and distribute all complete applications for funding to all QAB members. The QAB will review all applications, schedule site visits to proposed project locations as needed, and rank applications according to Schuylkill Conservation District's Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Road Grant Application Ranking (see Appendix B).

Application(s) received for a subsequent stage(s) or phase(s) of a previously funded project contract will be ranked according to the "Total Score" received on ranking of initial project application.

The QAB operates in an advisory capacity only. The QAB will provide the Schuylkill Conservation District Board with funding recommendations and necessary information to allow the directors to make an informed funding decision related to the Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Road Maintenance Program. All applications for funding will be acted on by the Schuylkill Conservation District Board at a meeting following requirements of Pennsylvania's Sunshine Law.

All applicants will be notified in writing of the funding decisions of the Conservation District Board.

Funded Applications

When an application has been accepted and approved by the District Board, the Conservation District will enter into a contract agreement with the successful applicant. The contract, when signed by both parties, is a legally binding document between the applicant and the District that describes in detail the responsibilities of both parties.

Contract amendments for time extensions will be approved by the District Manager. Contract amendments for additional funding will be approved by the District Board of Directors.

Dirt, gravel, and low volume road projects must comply with all federal, state, and local permit requirements. The Program has no specialized permits and projects are not exempt from any permit requirements. Permits are not required in order for an application to be submitted to the Conservation District. The applicant is responsible for obtaining all necessary permits. Any required permits must be obtained by the grant recipient before funding can be advanced or work can begin. The District is responsible for verifying all necessary permits have been obtained and retaining documentation with project files.

Unfunded Applications

Unfunded applications will not be retained for consideration in the next grant round. Eligible

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applicants must re-apply as per guidelines in “Grant Application Submission” section.

NON-POLLUTION STANDARDS

Section 9106 (f)(7) of the PA Motor Vehicle Code 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.

The QAB will prohibit the use of materials or practices which are environmentally harmful or do not meet the programs' “non-pollution” standard. These materials include, but are not limited to: noxious weeds, fugitive emissions, and dust control product that may pose a problem if they enter a waterway. Compliance with all existing environmental laws is a condition of purchase under the contracting agreement between the Schuylkill Conservation District and the funded entity. An environmentally-suitable substitute for dust control, as determined by the Center for Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Roads and/or the State Conservation Commission, may qualify for payment.

STREAM CROSSING PROJECTS

Due to the Stream Crossing Replacement Policy implemented by the State Conservation Commission in May 2022, stream crossing replacement projects will not be funded due to time constraints of staff, difficulty of projects, availability of funding, and spending deadlines.

Exceptions to this will be granted by the QAB if stream crossing replacement is a component part of a larger ESM project. Before funding any stream crossing replacement projects, drainage issues, base instability issues, and other necessary and appropriate issues such as bank stability, road entrenchment, vegetation, etc. must be properly addressed.

APPENDIX A

Grant Application and Instructions

APPENDIX B

Grant Application Ranking Criteria

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