

Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance of Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Roads

Clearfield County Conservation District Program Policies

Conflict of Interest

No District Director, QAB member or 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. Understanding that this shall not preclude the payment of normal salary and benefits to employees provided in their normal course of employment.

Equal access provisions and grant eligibility requirements

Participation in the program is limited to municipalities, PennDOT, Fish and Boat Commission, Game Commission, and other state agencies with employees/supervisors that have attended the two-day Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance Training. Dirt and Gravel Road projects to be funded must be open to the public for a minimum of two consecutive weeks and the majority of the driving surface composed of gravel, stone or dirt. Low Volume Road project to be funded must be open to the public for a minimum of two consecutive weeks and the majority of the driving surface must be “sealed or paved with an average daily traffic count of 500 vehicles or less”. Request for grants will be sent to all eligible participants as grant funds become available.

Environmental Standards for Products and Procedures

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 and Low Volume Roads Administrative Manual will be referenced with regards to materials used. Quality Assurance Board members will determine if a maintenance practice is detrimental to the environment or an ecosystem.

Applications:

1. The date the District will begin accepting applications as well as an application deadline will be established by the QAB on a yearly basis and all eligible applicants will be notified of these dates by letter by the Clearfield County Conservation District. The dates will also be published as a legal notice in The Progress at the opening of the application period.
2. 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.

3. The person in charge of work plan development and project implementation from the entity that intends to apply for funds from the Program must have attended Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance (ESM) Training within the past five (5) calendar years to qualify for funding.
4. All applications are required to have a Pre-Application meeting with a qualified district employee or QAB member, applicant representative and representative from any contractors on the project.
5. Bridges or major stream alignments will not be funded through the Program. The applicant is required to address the bridge or major stream alignment problem before funds are allocated for the road project.
6. Reimbursements for applicant owned equipment is an eligible expense up to the accepted Federal Emergency Management Agency rate. If needed for a project equipment can be rented for use on the project site. Fuel for rented equipment is not eligible for reimbursement, but can be counted as an in-kind expense.
7. Each application can only identify one site.
8. Applications for DSA MUST include a WRITTEN quote from a quarry.
9. Applicant must secure written Off-Right of Way consent forms from landowners before a contract can be signed.
10. Maintenance is the responsibility of the grant recipient.
11. The QAB will have a meeting following the closing of the application period to evaluate all applications based on the established ranking criteria and make its recommendations to the Board of Directors of the Clearfield County Conservation District. The District Board will take action on those recommendations at their next regularly scheduled meeting. Eligible applicants will be notified by letter of the acceptance or rejection of their proposals following the Conservation District meeting. Notice will be sent to the newspapers regarding the allocation of funding.

Ranking Criteria:

1. QAB will rank all applications for contracting priority and make recommendations to the District Board.
2. The environmental evaluation considers road sediment in stream, wet site conditions, road surface material, road slope, road shape, slope to stream, distance to stream, outlets to stream, outlet stability, road ditch stability, road bank stability, off right-of-way considerations and average canopy cover. This evaluation will prioritize applications from the worst environmental pollution potential first to the least potential last.
3. Other factors that will be evaluated for project ranking may include: classification of nearby stream, effectiveness of solution, whether a pre-application meeting with the Conservation District was held, in-kind contributions and maintenance of previous projects.
4. All contracts will be recommended by discretion of the QAB depending on funding available for that year.

Funding Procedures:

1. All contracts with grant awardees will be signed by the Chairman of the Clearfield County Conservation District. The conservations district agrees to disburse funds under this project in the following manner:
2. The district will maintain separate accounts specifically for Dirt and Gravel Road Program expenses and Low Volume Road Program expenses.
3. 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.
4. The district shall process subsequent payments to the project participant on an actual cash expended basis.
5. The district shall withhold 30% of grant amount will be withheld until the satisfactory completion of the project has been determined by the QAB or the district.
6. 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 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, timesheets and/or other appropriate supporting information to document actual expenditures by the project.

Construction:

1. Applicants will be responsible for completing the PA One Call before beginning work on their project. PA One Call Serial Number must be provided to the Conservation District.
2. All projects are required to have a Pre-Construction meeting with a qualified district employee or QAB member, applicant representative and representative from any contractors on the project.
3. All projects are required to obtain an inspection, by a qualified district employee or QAB member, to verify the correct and effective installation of all drainage components of the environmentally sensitive design prior to placement of DSA to qualify for DSA cost share.
4. All projects must establish that all stream crossings meet program standards prior to DSA placement over a crossing.
5. Advance notification of DSA placement must be provided to the Conservation District within 30 calendar days. Exceptions for mitigating circumstances will be made at the discretion of the QAB. A qualified QAB representative will be on site during delivery of the first load of DSA to ensure the material meets Program specifications.
6. DSA materials may only be laid with a spreader or paver. DSA placements less than 500 tons will be discussed by the QAB and recommendations will be made on a case by case basis.

7. Trucks without tarps are ineligible to deliver any aggregates for Dirt and Gravel Road Program Projects. If a truck attempts to deliver material that has not been tarped it may be refused.

Other Requirements

1. The Program Specialist and/or a QAB member will certify the completion of the project based on a final inspection.
2. Project performance report and all required documentation must be submitted to the District prior to project end date.
3. Any and all other program guidelines and policies as set by the Pennsylvania State Conservation Commission, written and un-written, will be followed. This includes all guidelines and policies that may be initiated after the date of this policy manual.
4. Applicants will be responsible for following all Prevailing Wage requirements, documentation of registering Prevailing Wage with Labor and Industry must be provided prior to construction beginning. Proof of payment of prevailing wage must be provided before final payment.
5. All state DSA certifications and specifications will be followed when purchasing and placing DSA.
6. Townships must use the Request for Quote form provided by the Center for Dirt and Gravel Roads when bidding out DSA projects.
7. When borrowing/renting Conservation District Equipment (Carbide tipped grader blades) all conditions set out in the equipment agreement will be followed.
8. Stream crossings which meet program requirements for replacement are eligible for funding, and must be replaced at 110% bankful width.

Low Volume Road Policies

1. Projects must have an environmental benefit.
2. Program funds will not be used to fund road paving or tar and chip projects.
3. Replacing the disturbed road surface after drainage components have been added is an eligible expense under the LVR program.
4. Stream crossings which meet program requirements for replacement are eligible for funding, and must be replaced at 110% bankful width.
5. Drainage projects are of greater focus for the program.