



MONROE COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Conserving Natural Resources for the Future

**MONROE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
DIRT, GRAVEL, AND LOW VOLUME ROAD MAINTENANCE PROGRAM
QUALITY ASSURANCE BOARD
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Amended March 2021

Purpose

The Quality Assurance Board (QAB) is impaneled to provide the Monroe County Conservation District Board of Directors with recommendations for local policy and project grant funding related to the establishment and administration of the Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Road Maintenance Program consistent with Pennsylvania State Soil Conservation Commission requirements and guidelines. The QAB serves in an advisory capacity to the Board of Directors for the development and implementation of customized Program controls and requirements specific to Monroe County. The QAB will also establish priorities for the expenditure of program funds, review applications submitted for funding and conduct site visits as necessary and determined by the QAB to ensure successful project completion.

The purpose of the QAB Policies and Procedures is to involve local individuals in the pollution prevention efforts of the Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Road Maintenance Program; to ensure that the local decision-making process includes environmental expertise; and to ensure fairness in the review and recommendation of projects for funding.

Quality Assurance Board Composition

A four-member QAB will be comprised of two members appointed by the Board of Directors: a non-voting chairman and one local District representative; one member from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and one member from the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PAFBC). The chairman may only vote to decide a tie vote. To broaden citizen involvement, the QAB may enlist any individual or organization to be advisors (non-voting) to the 4 member QAB.

Conflict of Interest

No Conservation District Director, Quality Assurance Board member, or Conservation 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.

QAB Meetings

QAB meetings must be scheduled and advertised as required by the Pennsylvania Sunshine Act. Meetings held on an as-needed basis need to provide public notice in a newspaper of general circulation at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting. The notice must include the time, date and location of the meeting. Meetings may be held via conference call. The meetings must still be sunshined and public participation provided.

QAB Meeting Procedures

Meetings of the QAB will be conducted according to Roberts Rules of Order. A quorum (2 of 3 voting members) is required to vote on any recommendations to the District Board. The QAB chairman may vote to decide a tie. Minutes of the QAB meeting will be taken by the District and will be kept in a record book and made available to the District Board and general public.

Fund Accounting and Allocations

All Funds received from the Commission must be placed in an interest bearing Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) or equivalent insured account. Account balances in excess of \$250,000 must also be insured or otherwise collateralized. Records relating to the Program must be maintained for a minimum of three (3) years following final payment on a project. Interest accrued must be allocated for projects within their respective funding category, Dirt and Gravel or Low Volume Roads.

Dirt and Gravel Road and Low Volume Road Funds must be accounted for separately. This includes funds for administration, education, and projects within each category.

A minimum of 80% of the District's allocation must be dedicated for projects for both Dirt and Gravel and Low Volume Roads. Project Funds must be tracked separately for both Dirt and Gravel Road projects and Low Volume Road projects.

A maximum of 10% of the District's allocation may be used for administrative expenses. Administrative expenses must be tracked in detail and separately for the Dirt and Gravel and Low Volume Road allocations.

A maximum of 10% of the District's allocation may be used for education expenses. Education expenses must be tracked in detail and separately for the Dirt and Gravel and Low Volume Road allocations.

Demonstration projects are encouraged and may utilize education and grant funds. If project funds are utilized, all other program requirements and approval processes must be followed.

Project Administration

Equal Access

All potential applicants shall receive equal notification of all opportunities and benefits of the program. The QAB will follow these procedures to insure equal access to the benefits of the Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Roads Program, and to eliminate bias and favoritism. The QAB is committed to managing a program that increases the quality of the environment through sound road maintenance practices.

1. All potential applicants will be notified of the dates and locations of the required Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance training sessions.
2. All potential applicants will be notified when grant applications are being accepted. Application periods may be extended by the Board as needed. Projects may be pre-approved pending adequate funding.
3. All potential applicants will have access to the evaluation form that is used to prioritize projects for grant funding.

Eligible Projects and Expenses

The following project categories have been established by the QAB:

1. Dirt and Gravel Road Maintenance
2. Paved Low Volume Road Maintenance (<500 vehicles/day)
3. Stream Crossing Structural Replacement
4. Demonstration

All materials, equipment, and labor costs to complete the project are eligible expenses. Equipment rental is eligible, but no equipment can be purchased with grant funds. Up to 10% of the project cost can be used for engineering and/or permitting.

Non Pollution Standards

Section 9106 (f) (7) of the PA Motor Vehicle Code Requires Quality Assurance Boards to adopt standards that prohibit use of material or practices that are environmentally harmful. The Statement of Policy 83.16 (1) (b) formalizes that requirement. The use of materials or practices which are environmentally harmful or do not meet the programs' "non-pollution" standard is prohibited. These materials include, but are not limited to: noxious weeds, invasive plant species, fugitive emissions, and dust control products which 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 Conservation District and the eligible entity. An environmentally suitable substitute for dust control, as determined by the State Conservation Commission, may qualify for payment.

Plan Requirements

An Erosion and Sediment Pollution Control Plan is required for all projects funded under the Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Road Maintenance Program. A Preparedness, Prevention and Contingency (PPC) plan is also required for all funded projects.

Permitting and Engineering

Any proposed or improved stormwater conveyance systems, or projects requiring a PA Chapter 105 permit, are required to be designed by a Professional Engineer. Stormwater improvements must be designed to meet the municipal stormwater management ordinance.

Application Process

Applications from eligible entities will be accepted year round with QAB reviews conducted in the spring and fall of each year. 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. Projects can be resubmitted in subsequent years if not initially accepted for funding. Additional application rounds may be added at the discretion of the District Board based on available funding.

It is the intent of the legislature to keep the application process as simple as possible. Applications for funding will utilize the forms consistent with and required by law and as provided by the District. District staff will be available to provide technical assistance to applicants preparing applications. Pre-application site visits to ensure complete and appropriate applications are required.

Typical project timeline:

1. Locate potential project.
2. Schedule Site Visit with District. Conduct traffic counts for low volume road projects.
3. Prepare and submit application to District. Include E&S Plan and Permitting.
4. QAB review and recommendation.
5. If funded, acquire any necessary permits and permission.
6. Enter into contract with District for funding.
7. Notify District of start date.
8. Perform work or have contractor perform work.
9. Schedule final inspection with District.
10. Submit Project Completion Report along with supporting documentation.

Applications shall be specific to one work location or one type of work and shall include:

1. Name, address and contact information for the eligible entity.
2. ESM trained person responsible for project implementation.
3. Name and/or number of eligible public road.
4. Proposed project dates.
5. Project location and map of work location.
6. List and sketch of specific work proposed.
7. Photos of existing site conditions and pollution.
8. Cost estimate for materials, equipment and labor.
9. Grant requested funds and In-kind contributions.
10. Signature of the applicant.

Project Review and Ranking

Upon receiving an application, district staff will review the application for administrative completeness and consistency with Program policies and guidance. Eligible applications will be forwarded to the QAB for review and ranking. The QAB will conduct site visits and review the applications using the MCCD Project Ranking Worksheet to evaluate each project based on environmental benefits, road improvement benefits, cost effectiveness and the applicant's maintenance of any past project sites. The QAB will then make recommendations for funding to the Board of Directors at the next regularly scheduled board meeting.

Project Performance

The project participant shall inform the District prior to starting work and provide a schedule for the project. Any changes to work in the contract should be mutually agreeable and confirmed (prior to initiation) in writing from the eligible entity to the Conservation District.

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 per the PA DEP Chapter 102 Erosion and Sediment Control Plan.

The Conservation District will perform a final site inspection to verify completion of work prior to issuing final funding reimbursement. The Project Performance Report form must be completed and submitted to the Conservation District along with all required documentation and a final invoice.

Low Volume Roads

The QAB will provide funding for low volume roads (paved/tar-and-chip) consistent with the dirt and gravel ESM criteria for drainage and environmental improvements. Eligible costs associated with repaving will be considered for projects that demonstrate an environmental improvement. Traffic count validation must be provided by the applicant as required by the Program prior to executing the contract for the project.

Stream Crossing Structure Replacement

The replacement of stream crossings (culverts) will be considered for funding if the culvert in its current condition is limiting fish passage, not conveying adequate flows or causing streambank erosion. Applications for stream crossing replacements must meet the criteria set forth in the Program guidance.

Driving Surface Aggregate Testing Requirement (QAB 1/11/17, MCCD Board 1/19/17)

For program funded projects placing Driving Surface Aggregate (DSA) of 500 tons or more, in-place density and water content testing consistent with the Pennsylvania State Conservation Commission DSA Standards and Specifications is required. The testing shall follow the protocols set forth as specified in ASTM D6938 [AASHTO T310] – Standard Test Methods for In-Place Density and Water Content of Soil and Soil-Aggregate by Nuclear Methods (Shallow Depth).

<http://www.astm.org/Standards/D6938> Testing costs should be included in the project grant application if the proposed DSA placement is 500 tons or more.

Conservation District Notification Requirements (QAB 3/9/21, MCCD Board 3/18/21)

To ensure project and program requirements are being met, grant program participants and their contractors are required to notify the Conservation District at the following times throughout project planning and implementation.

1. Plan development for stream/wetland crossings should be coordinated with the District prior to submittal for permitting. All plans to be sent out for bids should be provided for comment prior to RFPs/Bid Notices.
2. Any Pre-Bid Meetings or Bid Openings - if applicable. Notify the District at least 7 days prior to the meeting.
3. Pre-construction- contact the District at least **7** days prior to holding the preconstruction meeting to coordinate scheduling.
4. DSA Notice- contact the District at least **30** days prior to any planned Driving Surface Aggregate installation. Provide the quarry supplying the material and the contact person so the District can conduct the necessary testing and meet with the quarry operators on material preparation and hauling.
5. Drainage work- contact the District at least **3** days prior to culvert, underdrain, french mattress, broad based dip and similar drainage structure installations.
6. Subbase/base preparation- contact the District at least **3** days prior to beginning subbase or base preparation, prior to placement of any base course or DSA.
7. DSA Placement- Contact the District at least **7** days prior to placement of DSA on the road project.
8. Final stabilization- contact the District at least **3** days prior to installing final stabilization such as seed and matting on banks and swales.
9. Project Completion- upon completion of the project and prior to the project completion deadline in your project agreement contact the District to schedule a final site visit and to complete the Project Completion Report prior to submitting the final invoice for payment.
10. Stream Crossings- The following additional notifications apply to projects when replacing or maintaining stream crossings:
 - A. Upon receipt of Chapter 105 authorization/Permit – provide copy.
 - B. Geotechnical Results – upon receipt.
 - C. Prior to structure placement- 3 days.
 - D. Prior to placement of Grade Controls/In stream work- 3 days.