



MIFFLIN COUNTY

CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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## Mifflin County Dirt and Gravel Road Quality Assurance Board Policies and Procedures

Effective January 19, 1999; revised September 20, 2016

### **Purpose<sup>1</sup>**

The purpose of the Quality Assurance Board (QAB) in Mifflin County is to provide recommendations to the Mifflin Conservation District Board of Directors regarding Section 9106 of the PA Motor Vehicle Code. The QAB will assist the Mifflin Conservation District in carrying out the Administrative, Educational and Contractual responsibilities of the Dirt and Gravel Road Program.

The QAB will establish priorities and requirements for funding through the Dirt and Gravel Road Program. The QAB responsibilities will include review of applications submitted for funding, conducting site visits (as necessary and determined by the QAB), and recommend eligible applications to the Mifflin County Conservation District (MCCD) Board of Directors for funding that will address non point source pollution in affected areas. Formal selection and approval of projects to be funded will be acted on during monthly MCCD Board of Director meetings, which are open to the public.

The QAB in Mifflin County will be comprised of one voting member appointed by each of the following: the MCCD Board, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PAFBC). MCCD will make every attempt to appoint a District Board member as a voting member; staff persons will be appointed as a voting member as a last resort. One non-voting chairperson will be appointed by the MCCD Board of Directors.

The QAB will typically meet on the first Wednesday of March and of September each year at the MCCD office at 10:00 a.m. Fully completed, signed applications must be received by 4:00 p.m. on the LAST Wednesday of February to be considered at the following QAB meeting in March. The QAB will evaluate all applications submitted within the last 365 days during the March meeting. The September meeting will be an informational update meeting for the QAB regarding ongoing projects. If funding is available in September and applications warrant, the QAB may rank and recommend projects for funding. Fully completed, signed applications must be received by 4:00 p.m. on the LAST Wednesday of August to be considered at the following QAB meeting in September. All formal adoption of policies, project approvals, and formal actions will occur at the monthly, "Sunshined" Board meetings.<sup>2</sup>

Minutes of the QAB meeting will be taken by the staff person responsible for the program and distributed to each member after the meeting and are available for public review upon request.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Title 25, Part I, Subpart C, Article 1, Chapter 83, Subchapter F., 83.608, (c)

<sup>2</sup> Title 25, Part I, Subpart C, Article 1, Chapter 83, Subchapter F., 83.608, (d), (1)

<sup>3</sup> Title 25, Part I, Subpart C, Article 1, Chapter 83, Subchapter F., 83.608, (d), (2)

## **Conflict of Interest<sup>4</sup>**

The QAB recommended from their January 19, 1999 meeting to the District Board the current policy as follows: “An individual member of the Quality Assurance Board who has a personal conflict or interest in a specific project shall abstain from evaluating, ranking, or voting for that specific project application. The two remaining QAB members shall vote, and in the case of a tie, the non-voting member of the QAB shall break the tie with a vote”, as outlined in the Dirt and Gravel Road Administrative Manual.

## **Finance<sup>5</sup>**

Any interest accrued from the Dirt and Gravel Road checking account will be transferred to the construction allocation.

Administrative costs will not exceed 10% of the allocation provided to the District.

Educational monies not utilized in the funding year they are received may be carried over or used to fund other educational expenses or Special Educational Projects such as, but not limited to:

- Purchase of plate tampers to be made available free of charge for township use
- Awarding of cost share monies to assist in the purchase of carbide tipped rotating toothed grader blade systems
- Purchase of promotional items for educational/public awareness purposes
- To use for any innovative ideas that will benefit the educational activities of the Mifflin Conservation District regarding the Dirt and Gravel Road program

## **Demonstration Projects**

The Mifflin County Conservation District will develop, design and conduct demonstration projects only when no projects are applied for or the district directors determine a need for a project that is unique to a particular situation. Demonstration projects may be funded all or in part by the educational allotment.

## **Project Ranking/ Scoring<sup>6</sup>**

On October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2014, the District Board adopted an updated ranking criteria based on the most recent recommendations from both the Penn State Dirt & Gravel Roads Program and the State

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<sup>4</sup> Title 25, Part I, Subpart C, Article 1, Chapter 83, Subchapter F., 83.608, (d), (3)

<sup>5</sup> Title 25, Part I, Subpart C, Article 1, Chapter 83, Subchapter F., 83.608, (b), (4)

<sup>6</sup> Title 25, Part I, Subpart C, Article 1, Chapter 83, Subchapter F., 83.608, (b), (3)

Conservation Commission. Please refer to the most recent application approved by the District Board for a detailed explanation of the ranking criteria.

The Conservation District will keep all non-funded projects on file for future funding allocations for two (2) years from the original submittal date. Therefore, resubmittal is not necessary during this time period of two years although applicants may choose to revise existing submitted applications. There is no restriction to the number of applications that can be submitted by one applicant. Applicants may also submit applications for project sites not yet identified through the District assessment process, and those projects will be evaluated and ranked based on the same above criteria.

### **Application Eligibility Guidelines/ Equal Access Statement<sup>7</sup>**

Municipalities and other entities may be eligible for funding as per the latest State Conservation Commission Dirt and Gravel Roads program guidelines. The QAB will have a year-round, open enrollment sign-up period for all eligible applicants.

All submitted applications will be reviewed, ranked and recommended for funding at the QAB meeting. Applicants that have open contracts at the time of the QAB annual meeting may not be considered for further funding until the existing contract is completed unless no other projects have been submitted and/ or selected by the QAB for funding. These recommendations will be given to the District Board at the next regularly scheduled MCCD Board meeting for final approval. Applicants will be notified in writing of their status after final Board approval. It is the MCCD's intent to approve at the March Board meeting those grants that have been recommended by the QAB. Re-submission of unsuccessful grants can be done with a new application and/ or written request to use the previously dated application for consideration.

Any and all qualified applicants within Mifflin County are eligible for funding provided the applicant meets and follows the following criteria:

1. Applicant has inventoried their dirt and gravel roads with District Staff. While not mandatory, it is highly recommended that a site visit be conducted with District staff prior to submission of any application.
2. Applicant has evaluated their dirt and gravel roads with District staff and created worksites within their jurisdiction.
3. Applicant has at the minimum, one current elected/appointed or employed individual, who is the primarily responsible party for road maintenance, who has attended and completed the two-day Environmentally Sensitive Road Maintenance Workshop within the past 5 years.
4. All necessary local, state, and federal permits both environmental related and otherwise have been obtained or will be obtained prior to contract execution. Copies will be made available upon request of the District.
5. Submitted an application that should include the one-page application form and any other necessary documentation for review (maps, sketches, etc.) and should include a

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<sup>7</sup> Title 25, Part I, Subpart C, Article 1, Chapter 83, Subchapter F., 83.608, (b), (1)

breakdown of the cost estimate of the project, including any in-kind services. It is the policy of the QAB to minimize the amount of paperwork necessary to move a project through to the completion phase, thus no formal application procedures are given beyond the one-page application<sup>8</sup>.

6. Sites that have been established, as “trouble spots” by the original Task Force on the Dirt and Gravel Roads Program shall be given special consideration by the QAB in the review.
7. Only sites with impact to water quality are eligible for funding.
8. Grant applications will be approved at public, “Sunshined” QAB and MCCD board meetings.

It will also be the policy of the QAB to allow the inclusion of work outside of the applicant’s road right of way provided the work is necessary for the successful completion and continued maintenance of non-point source pollution problem corrected on the site and subject to the discretion of the District QAB and Board of Directors.

Regulated water crossings, major stream alterations, and paving (including all forms, such as tar and chip) will not be given priority through the local DGR program unless no other type of road improvement projects are available to fund.

Maintenance is an applicant responsibility. This program will not allocate funding but will provide technical guidance for maintenance. Applicants will be expected to maintain previously funded projects PRIOR TO requesting funding for additional projects. Applications can be submitted at any time, however, funding allocation and contract execution will not occur until proper past maintenance of the applicant’s Dirt & Gravel Roads projects can be verified by and at the discretion of the Conservation District.

Information regarding the D&GR program will be made available to all eligible applicants and entities equally and at the same time. The QAB and the Mifflin County Conservation District shall prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. Any and all of the most recent program guidelines and policies established by the State Conservation Commission will be followed.

## **Education**

The MCCD, dependent on staff resources, may sponsor Environmentally Sensitive Road Maintenance Workshops at no charge to any municipality wishing to attend.

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<sup>8</sup> Title 25, Part I, Subpart C, Article 1, Chapter 83, Subchapter F., 83.608, (b), (2)

## **Funding Procedures**

The Mifflin County Conservation District Manager or staff person responsible for the program will sign all approved contracts with applicants. The Conservation District will distribute the funds in the following manner:

- The Conservation District maintains a separate account specifically for the Dirt and Gravel Road program.
- Upon execution of the project contract, the District may forward 50% of the grant amount prior to the beginning of construction activities, 20% during construction (if requested), and 30% after project completion and certification by the District and Township. The applicant is responsible for retaining receipts, weigh slips, labor accounting, etc. to document expenditure of entire grant amount (100%).
- If the applicant is unable to complete the approved project before the contract deadline, the applicant may submit a written request to the QAB for an extension on the project. Unless otherwise specifically approved by the Board, projects that have received one extension and have yet to begin work on the project will likely be required to re-submit their application for review as a new project at the next QAB ranking meeting.
- All cost overruns must have prior approval of the District before those overruns can become eligible reimbursable expenses to the Township. Cost overruns exceeding 20% of the original contract amount require a new project application and will have to be re-ranked at the next QAB ranking meeting.
- Not more than 10% of the project funds may be used for administrative fees (including permitting and engineering costs).
- It is the applicant's responsibility to determine what, if any, prevailing wage rules apply to the project. As of June 2014 the prevailing wage threshold was \$100,000.<sup>00</sup>.

## **Driving Surface Aggregate**

The only approved driving surface aggregate that may be funded under the Dirt & Gravel Road program is the DSA mix specified in the program guidelines and technical bulletins. Due to the high cost per linear mile for placement of DSA, it is the policy of the QAB and Mifflin County Conservation District to require testing of any DSA material used, prior to the start of DSA placement on the project, to ensure compliance with the most recent DSA standards as set by the Program. Applicants will be responsible for coordinating testing of DSA materials as well as all costs associated with the testing. Testing costs are an eligible administrative expense under the program.

## **Project Completion/ Final Certification<sup>9</sup>**

It is the policy of the QAB to provide one member, typically the staff person primarily responsible for the program, to conduct a formal inspection of all projects prior to any payment

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<sup>9</sup> Title 25, Part I, Subpart C, Article 1, Chapter 83, Subchapter F., 83.608, (b), (7)

to any applicant to ensure all components being submitted for reimbursement by the applicant are in compliance with all program requirements.

For the project to be considered complete, all site work must be accomplished and stabilized as indicated in the contract in a manner to be considered satisfactory to achieve the purpose it was designed to, as determined by the QAB and/or the Conservation District. All receipts, weigh slips, labor accounting, etc. must meet or exceed the total grant amount requested by the township prior to funding release.

### **Non Pollution Standards<sup>10</sup>**

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. In response, the QAB has adopted standards prohibiting 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 products 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 Conservation District and the applicant. An environmentally suitable substitute for dust control, as determined by the State Conservation Commission, may qualify for payment.

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<sup>10</sup> Title 25, Part I, Subpart C, Article 1, Chapter 83, Subchapter F., 83.608, (b), (6)