

Dirt Gravel and Low Volume Roads Program Update



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Program Purpose

- The program is focused on using maintenance practices that reduce the impacts road runoff and sediment have on surrounding streams while decreasing the long term maintenance costs of the road.
- The program works towards a balance of fixing roads and improving water quality.



Program Structure

- Funding and guidance come from the State Conservation Commission (SCC)
 - SCC determines the program policies state wide, and allocations for Conservation Districts.
 - They also ensure the Conservation Districts are implementing the policies, through Quality Assurance/Quality Control Visits
- Conservation Districts implement the program at the county level.
 - CDs are advised by their Quality Assurance Board (QAB)
 - The QAB is made of four members from PA Fish and Boat Commission, National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), and district staff.



pennsylvania
FISH & BOAT COMMISSION



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service



Does your Road Qualify?

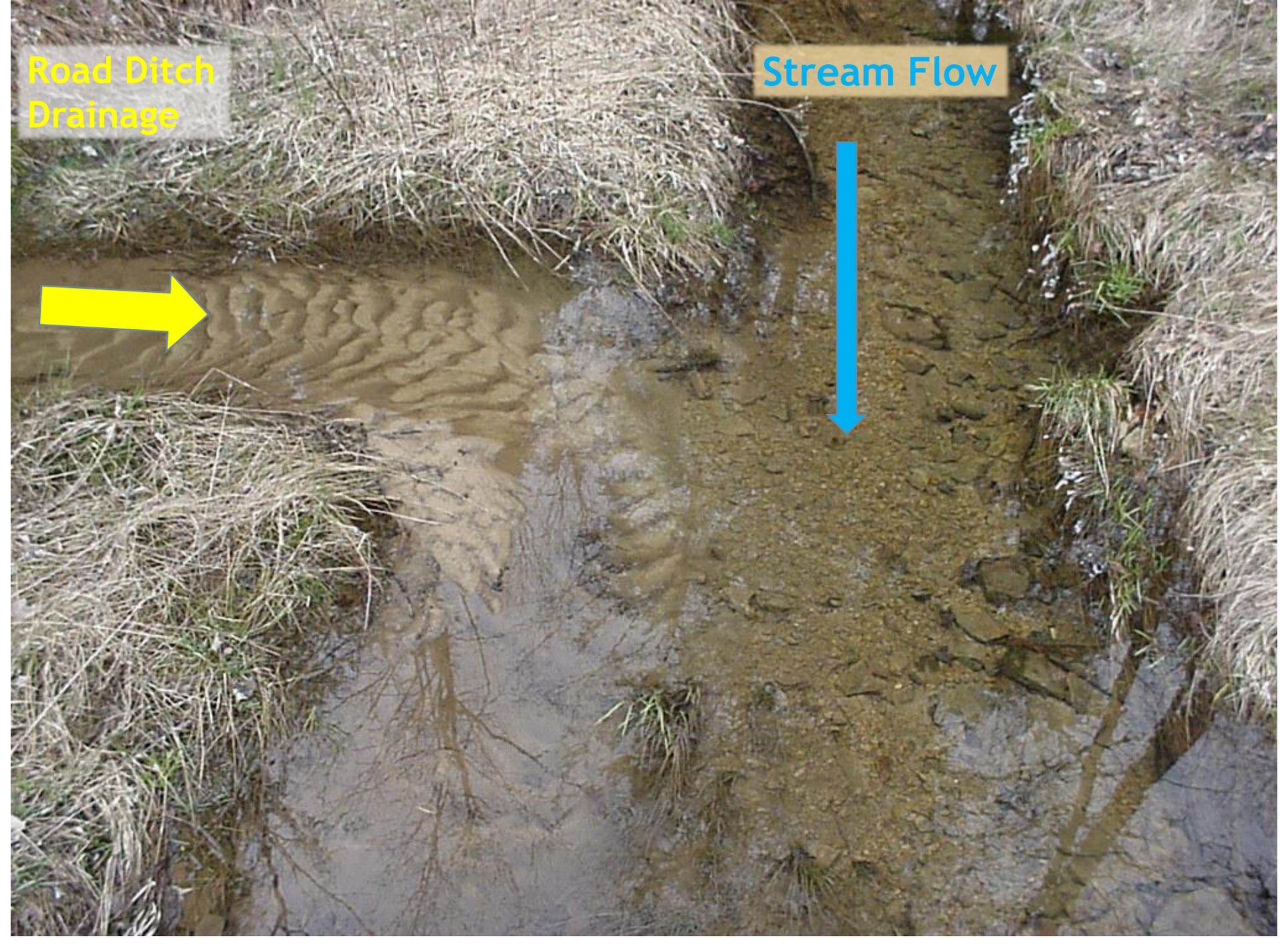


- Should be having a negative effect on a stream
 - Pipes/ditches discharging directly to stream
- Road must be owned by municipality
- Should be open to vehicle travel for at least 2 consecutive weeks of the year
- **Low Volume Roads:**
 - Sealed Surface (paved/ Tar & Chip etc.)
 - Under 500 cars a day
- **Dirt and Gravel Roads:**
 - Anything that can be graded
 - No traffic count needed
 - Doesn't matter how many houses are on the road...if any!



Road Ditch
Drainage

Stream Flow





Ditch line

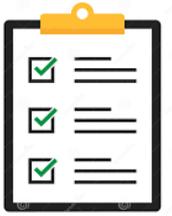
Sediment from
ditch

Stream

08/23/2024



Does your Organization Qualify?



- Applicant must be an employee or elected official
- Municipalities must have an ESM Certified individual to apply
 - This individual should be in charge of the work plan development, and project implementation.
 - Engineers on retainer/ serving multiple municipalities do not count
- The ESM certification needs to be renewed every 5 calendar years.
- The course is free to municipal, county, and state agencies involved with the Dirt and Gravel Road Program.



Upcoming ESM Trainings

- May 27th and 28th at St. Vincent College, Latrobe
- July 8th and 9th at Penn West Clarion, Clarion (Clarion County)
- July 22nd and 23rd at the Blair County Convention Center, Altoona. (Blair County)
- To Register visit the center for dirt and gravel roads website <https://dirtandgravel.psu.edu/course-registration/#ESM>
- This course is FREE to municipal, county, and state agencies involved with the Dirt Gravel and Low Volume Roads Program.



When Does Funding Open?

- Application period opens **SEPTEMBER 1ST** and closes **OCTOBER 30th**
 - Must be received or post marked by October 30th
- It's recommended to have a pre-application visit with the Conservation District before submitting and application!





How to Apply for Funding

- Municipalities fill out a grant applications and send it in to the Conservation District.
 - Application includes: road/applicant information, work plan, cost estimate (for requested and in-kind), and pictures are always helpful!
 - Pictures before the road is fixed are better, we want to see the problems on the road
- Any work that is going to be done outside of the municipal right of way will need land owner permission.
 - This includes new crosspipes or other practices that outlet water onto the property.



Who Decides Which Roads Get Funded?



- The Quality Assurance Board (QAB) is made of three voting members
 - PAFBC, NRCS, District Board, and one WCD non-voting chair to break ties.
- The (QAB) meets in January to rank the applications.
 - Roads are ranked based on a 11 question ranking sheet.
 - Proximity to stream/ water quality impact, stream classification, best management practices to be used, municipality maintenance of past project, etc.
- The QAB recommends applications to be funded and then the District Board approves the applications for funding.
- The QAB meetings are open to the public.





Dirt, Gravel, and Low-Volume Road Program
Quality Assurance Board
GRANT EVALUATION FORM

Approved on February 12, 2025

Applicant: _____

Road Name: _____

1. What is the water quality stream classification of the affected water body?* _____
(Warm Water Fishery=1; Cold Water Fishery/Trout Stocked Fishery=3; High Quality=5; Exceptional Value and/or Class A wild trout and/or immediate source of public drinking water=7)
 2. To what extent is the road impacting water quality? _____
(1=slight to 10=severe)
 3. What is the project's impact/correction to water quality? _____
(0=minimally to 10= completely)
 4. Does the immediate downstream water body have a viable fishery? _____
(Non-existent=0 to abundant/thriving=5)
 5. Projects proximity to a USGS blue line stream or Stream Stats identified Stream. _____
(>100ft=0; 10ft-100ft= 3; <10ft= 5)
 6. What percent of the total project value is in-kind contributions? _____
(0%=0), (1-10%=1), (11-20%=2), (21-30%=3), (31-40%=4), (41-50%=5), (51-60%=6), (61-70%=7), (71-80%=8), (81-90%=9), (91-100+%=10)
 7. Are the proposed practices part of a proven Best Management Practice? ** _____
(0=no practices approved to 5=all practices approved and believed to be sufficient)
 8. Has the municipality completed a project under this program yet? *** _____
(Y/and does not have a CPA=0; Y/and has a CPA=3; N/and does not have a CPA=4; N/and has a CPA=5)
 9. To what extent does the municipality maintain past projects? _____
(not at all=0; somewhat= 2; very well or first time applicant= 3)
 10. Will the proposed project reduce stormwater volume or velocity to the receiving USGS blue line stream? _____
(0=none to 5=significantly)
 11. Did the municipality attend the WCD ESM refresher course within the past three calendar years? _____
(No=0; yes=3)
- Total Points=** _____

Ranked by: _____ Notes: _____

*As defined by DEP Chapter 93 Water Quality Standards and/or PFBC designation
 **As publicized by the Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies, WCD, or PA DEP
 ***CPA (Cooperative Partnership Agreement) with WCD within previous 5 years
 ****Applications that are ranked twice and DO NOT get selected must meet with WCD DGLVR Staff to revise/review application



After a Project is Funded



- A contract must be in place before anything with the project can move forward
 - Any work done or materials bought before a contract is signed cannot be reimbursed through the grant!
- After a contract is signed the municipality will receive half of the awarded amount up front as working capital.
 - The last half will be awarded after the project has been finished.
- An amendment can be made to the contract for up to 40% of the total original contract amount.
 - Amendments can only be used for material costs.





After a Project is Complete

- A final walk through with the CD is recommended before equipment is moved off site.
- All receipts, invoices, and time sheets must be submitted before final payment is made.
 - If you want reimbursed for it there must be some sort of receipt, invoice, or time sheet submitted.



Eligible Project Expenses

- Materials
 - For approved project practices
- Equipment Costs
 - Must use most recent FEMA rates unless renting equipment
- Labor
- Contractor Costs
- Engineering Costs
 - Up to 20% of the contract amount with a max of \$25,000



2026 Summary

SUMMARY

- WCD will receive an annual allocation of
 - **\$175,476** for Dirt and Gravel Roads
 - **\$256,109** for Low Volume Roads
- 5 Dirt and Gravel applications were received totaling **\$144,208**
- 8 Low Volume applications were received totaling **\$380,305**
- Between both dirt and gravel and low volume roads **\$524,513** was requested from 10 different municipalities.
- Of the 13 applications that were received 8 applications are being funded. 5 dirt and gravel and 3 low volume.



2026 Dirt Gravel and Low Volume Road Projects

Municipality	Road Name	Granted Funds	% Match	Project Description
Cook Township	Noel Road	\$21,831.00	76%	Crosspipes, Regrading
Donegal Township	Skyview Road	\$19,227.00	26%	Road Fill, Crosspipes, Rip Rap ditches
Loyalhanna Township	Fairbanks Road	\$14,706.00	26%	Crosspipes, Rip Rap
Loyalhanna Township	Sportsman Road	\$14,016.00	27%	Crosspipes
Ligonier Township	Swank Road	\$74,429.00	49%	Road Fill, Grade Breaks
Rostraver Township	Flack Hollow Road	\$74,673.00	62%	Stream Crossing
Upper Burrell	Lower Drennen Road	\$8,640.00	79%	Crosspipes, Underdrain
Cook Township	Armel Hollow Road	\$53,122.00	60%	Crosspipes, Underdrain
	Total =	\$280,644		



2025 Completed Dirt and Gravel Projects

2025 Dirt and Gravel Roads				
Municipality	Road Name	Grant Allocation*	Watershed	Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance Practices Installed
**Avonmore Borough	Indian Ave. Ext.	\$ 65,600.00	Kiski River	Crosspipes, Fill, Grade Breaks
Donegal Township	Aukerman Road	\$ 77,410.13	Indian Creek	Fill, Crosspipes
Total		\$ 143,010.13		

* Grant allocation does not include in-kind contributions, cost overrun, or total project costs

** Projects awarded in 2025 and to be completed in 2026.



2025 Completed Low Volume Road Projects

2025 Low Volume Roads				
Municipality	Road Name	Grant Allocation*	Watershed	Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance Practices Installed
St. Clair Township	Sugar Run Road	\$ 34,000.00	Conemaugh River	Crosspipes, Streambank, Stabilization
Hempfield Township	Orlo Lane	\$ 62,943.69	Loyalhanna Creek	French Mattress, Conveyor Belt Diversions, Fill
Rostraver Township	Todd Farm Road Phase II	\$ 10,821.00	Youghiogheny River	infiltration, ditch stabilization
Mount Pleasant Township	Brinker Road	\$ 11,753.01	Sewickley Creek	Crosspipes, Conveyor Belt Diversions, Ditch Stabilization
**Mount Pleasant Township	Brookhollow Road	\$ 88,858.00	Sewickley Creek	Inlets, Crosspipes, Infiltration
**Trafford Borough	Hird Road	\$ 83,385.00	Sewickley Creek	Full Depth Reclamation, Underdrain
Total		\$ 291,760.70		

* Grant allocation does not include in-kind contributions, cost overrun, or total project costs

** Projects awarded in 2025 to be completed in 2026.





Sugar Run Road Stream
Crossing Replacement
St. Clair Township



Sugar Run Road

- Growing Greener: \$158,360
- Cold Water Heritage Partnership: \$20,000
- Dirt Gravel and Low Volume Roads: \$34,000
- Total Grant funded project cost: **\$212,360**
- In-kind contribution of: **\$10,500**
- Total Project Cost: **\$214,480**
- Practices installed:
 - Stream Crossing Replacement
 - Crosspipes
 - Streambank Stabilization



Before



Before



Removing Existing Pipe





Excavation for New Structure



Footers Placed



Stream Bed Rebuilding





09/22/2025



Completed Streambed



Arch Being Set



09/22/2025



Arch Placed on Footers



Footers Being Poured



Structure Being Backfilled



Headwall Installed



Completed Upstream View



09/30/2025



Completed Structure



APPLICATIONS ARE DUE
OCTOBER 30th, 2026



Driveway Workshop

- March 25th at the WCD Barn 2:30-3:30pm
- Participants will learn how to make cost effective repairs and prevent repeat problems in the future, saving time and money.
- Cost is \$5 per person
- Registration deadline is Monday, March 23rd



DGLVR ESM Refresher

- Friday April 17th at the WCD Barn from 9:30-12 am.
- This refresher is aimed towards municipal workers who are installing the ESM practices.
- This will not replace the two day ESM course held by the Center for Dirt and Gravel Roads Studies. It will also not count as a recertification course.
- Extra points may be available during the grant application process for those municipalities that attend.
- Lunch will be provided after the refresher



For more Information

Visit our website:

<https://westmorelandconservation.org/dirt-gravel-low-volume-roads/>

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