

Huntingdon County Quality Assurance Board
Attachment D: Administrative Policy
Updated February 4, 2021

Objectives

The objectives of the Quality Assurance Board (QAB) in Huntingdon County are the following; to provide the conservation district board of directors with information to make informed decisions regarding the Dirt, Gravel, and Low-Volume Road (DGLVR) Maintenance Program, to involve local individuals in the pollution prevention efforts of the program, and to ensure the local decision-making process includes environmental expertise and to ensure fairness in the review and recommendation of projects. The QAB will also establish local priorities and requirements for program funding, review project applications submitted for funding, and conduct site visits as necessary and determined by the QAB.

Board Composition

The Huntingdon County Conservation District QAB is composed of a conservation district appointed chairman (non-voting) and three voting members representing the Huntingdon County Conservation District (HCCD), Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC), and the Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS). Voting members may assign alternates but all voting members are limited to only one vote. The current QAB members are as follows:

Sherri Law (chair)	
Russell Kyper (HCCD Board)	alternate: Michael Mowrer
Jim Steward (NRCS)	alternate: Ryan Senft
Ryan Erdman (PFBC)	alternate: other Huntingdon County waterways conservation district officer

Rules of Conduct

The chairman will be responsible for establishing the meeting agenda and running the proceedings. Voting members will establish policy for the programs operation and distribution of allocated funds consistent with Section 9106 of the PA Motor Vehicle Code. The QAB will make recommendations to the HCCD board of directors. All actions of the QAB will require that a quorum of the voting members be present. The chairman will only vote in the event of a tie.

Conflicts of Interest

No District Director, Quality Assurance Board Member or District employee shall as a result of this program and their action obtain financial benefit for themselves, their family, or business interests for which they are associated.

Equal Access Policy Statement

The Dirt, Gravel, and Low-Volume Road QAB has adopted the following policy procedures to insure equal access to the benefits of the DGLVR Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance 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 eligible applicants will be given a list of the dates and locations of the required ESM training sessions
- 2) All eligible applicants will be notified when grant applications are being accepted and when the applications are due.
- 3) All eligible applicants will have access to the evaluation form that is used to prioritize/rank work-sites.
- 4) QAB meetings having formal actions shall be open to the public and follow the requirements of the sunshine law.
- 5) The QAB shall prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status.
- 6) The actions of the QAB will be approved by the Conservation District Board at the Conservation District monthly meetings. These meetings are open to the public and follow the requirements of the sunshine law.

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. In response, the QAB has adopted standards prohibiting the use of materials or practices which are environmentally harmful or do not meet the program's "non-Pollution" standard. These materials include, but are not limited to: noxious weeds, fugitive emissions, dust control products which may pose a problem if they enter a waterway, and bags or containers of concrete mix stacked for pipe headwalls or endwalls or used in any way other than the manufacturer recommendations. Compliance with all existing environmental laws is a condition of purchase under the contracting agreement between the Conservation District and the project participant. An environmentally suitable substitute for dust control as determined by the State Conservation Commission may qualify for payment.

Grant Eligibility Requirements and Scoring

Participation in the program is limited to municipalities and state agencies with employees/supervisors that have attended the Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance Training conducted by the Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies. Road projects must be open to the public and the majority of the existing surface comprised of a gravel, stone, or dirt to be eligible for the traditional dirt and gravel road funds. All projects must convey water to a nearby waterway or wetland. Applicants may also submit for roadway projects on county Low Volume Roads (LVR). In order to be eligible for LVR funding, a road must have an existing paved (including chip sealed) surface, and it must have a verified average daily traffic count of less than 500 vehicles per day.

All submitted applications will be scored according to the adopted HCCD QAB Scoring System. This ranking system is based on environmental impact, watershed quality, trout stream status, aquatic organism passage, effectiveness of solution, project phasing, past project maintenance, matching funds, and history/cooperation. Refer to Dirt, Gravel, and Low-Volume Road QAB Scoring System Sheet for scoring details.

Grant Allocation Policies

The goal of the DGLVR Program is to keep excess sediment out of streams by improving local roads. HCCD aims to accomplish this in two main ways: by educating local road-owning entities about environmentally sensitive road maintenance (ESM) practices and by funding environmentally sensitive road improvements with DGLVR Grants.

Emphasis is placed on funding quality projects as well as maintaining high participation to maximize ESM technology transfer. Widespread participation in Huntingdon County's Program is encouraged by spreading out each year's available grant funds to top-ranking projects.

To achieve these goals, the QAB and Huntingdon County Conservation District Board have made the following special considerations when allocating funding to eligible applicants:

- Any eligible applicant may submit a total of 3 applications between the Dirt & Gravel Road Program and Low-Volume Road Program.
- For the purpose of multiple submissions from an individual applicant, 75% of all project applications ranked for that program (DGR or LVR) must receive funding before the 2nd project can be considered for allocation. This 2nd project will then take priority over the remaining lesser ranked projects.
- HCCD reserves the right to limit the grant funding allocated to individual projects.
- All LVR projects must have submitted traffic counts prior to the QAB allocation meeting to be considered for grant funding
- Eligibility of sealed road surfaces:
 - Conversions of sealed roads, including pavement and chip sealing, to unpaved roads *is* an eligible DGLVR expense, but paving or sealing unpaved roads *is not* an eligible DGLVR expense unless otherwise approved by the State Conservation Commission (see Section 3.7.2.3 of state-wide DGLVR policy at <https://www.dirtandgravel.psu.edu/pa-program-resources/program-resources/administrative-guidance-manual/3-conservation-districts-role>).
 - For LVR projects that already have a sealed road surface (including pavement and chip seal):
 - the QAB may allocate LVR funds for small quantities of sealed surfaces over top of any drainage features that may be incorporated into roadway improvement such as cross pipes, underdrain, French mattresses, etc.
 - LVR applications for grant funding strictly for sealed surfaces, will **NOT** be considered for allocation of funds unless it is a phased project with drainage and/or road base improvements already completed in the project area.
 - For LVR projects including road base and surface improvements, the QAB may consider funding sealed surfaces on LVR projects instead of Driving Surface Aggregate (DSA) on a case by case basis. Sealed surfaces will only be eligible on roads where all drainage and base issues are corrected, and will only be considered in situations where DSA is not an appropriate driving surface (such as due to slope, curves, traffic weight, etc.).

- Like other routine maintenance costs, routine pavement maintenance, including maintenance seal coats, are not eligible for LVR funds (see maintenance policy below). If sealed surfaces funded by the LVR program are left to deteriorate over time, the project area will be ineligible for future resurfacing.

Additional Local Policies

Maintenance: DGLVR Projects install significant improvements to road drainage, base, and surfaces to stabilize roads and reduce accelerated erosion. These practices reduce the time and cost required for long-term road maintenance. Routine maintenance practices needed after the completion of DGLVR projects, such as cleaning ditches, re-grading unpaved roads, and resurfacing roads are not eligible expenses for DGLVR grant funds under state-wide DGLVR policy (see Section 3.7.3 and 7.4.1 at <https://www.dirtandgravel.psu.edu/pa-program-resources/program-specific-resources/administrative-guidance-manual>). Routine road maintenance remains the responsibility of the road owner.

Completed road projects funded by Huntingdon County's DGLVR Program must be properly maintained for at least 5 years from the date of final inspection and satisfactory approval or the practical life of the ESM practice. Participants are required to regularly inspect their completed projects to determine maintenance needs, and HCCD may randomly inspect completed projects as well. Failure to properly maintain completed projects may result in ineligibility for future DGLVR grant funding at the discretion of the QAB and HCCD Board.

If you have questions about how to properly maintain your DGLVR Projects, see the "Tips for Maintaining DGLVR Projects" document at <http://huntingdoncd.org/blank-forms-for-dirt-gravel-low-volume-roads-projects>, reference your Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance (ESM) Training materials, and reach out to HCCD for additional assistance.

Contract Amendments: State DGLVR Policy allows conservation districts to amend contracts to change the contract end date and/or to award additional funding up to 20% of the original contract amount.

The HCCD Board reviews all contract amendment requests on a case-by-case basis, and approval of amendment requests is dependent upon available funding. End date extensions are rarely awarded due to funding deadlines and may also require approval from the State Conservation Commission. Financial amendments are awarded when project changes are required by the HCCD, Penn State Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies, and/or State Conservation Commission. Generally, these project changes incur unforeseen costs necessary to achieve the environmental goals of the project.

Grant recipients who may need a contract amendment should contact the Huntingdon County Dirt and Gravel Roads Technician ASAP to discuss the situation and to learn more about submitting an amendment request to the HCCD Board. The Roads Technician can be reached at roads@huntingdonconservation.org or 814-627-1626.