

PA Dirt and Gravel Road Maintenance Program 2014 Annual Summary Report

DIRT AND GRAVEL ROAD PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Pennsylvania's Dirt and Gravel Road Program provides grant funding to local municipalities in order to reduce environmental impacts and long-term maintenance costs associated with public unpaved roads. The Program was enacted into law in April 1997 as Section 9106 of the PA Vehicle Code, with \$4 million in annual funding for "environmentally sensitive road maintenance." Each year, the State Conservation Commission allocates this funding based on identified need to County Conservation Districts. Townships and other road-owning entities then apply to their local District to address identified pollution problems using environmentally sound road maintenance practices. All grant applicants must complete a 2-day "Environmentally Sensitive Road Maintenance" training course focusing on lowering maintenance costs and reducing stream pollution.

Funding Increase for 2014-15! Dirt and Gravel Road Program funding increases from \$4M to \$20M annually, with an additional \$8M component for paved low-volume roads. *details on back*

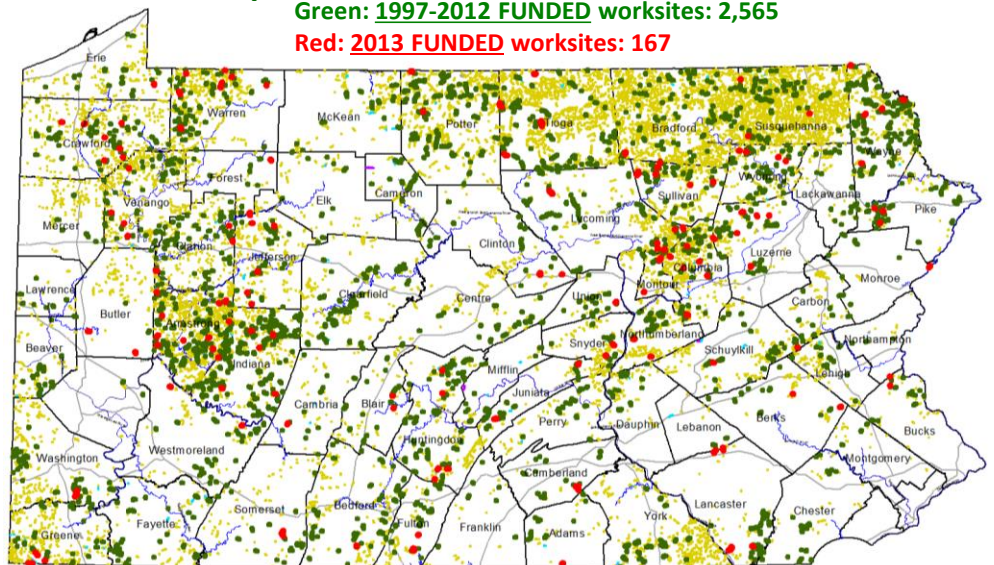
2013 Summary:

Since it began in 1997, the Program has funded a total of 2,565 local road improvement projects spanning 65 Counties and 691 municipalities across Pennsylvania. In 2013 alone, nearly \$3.1 million was spent on 167 completed worksites spanning 47 Counties and 133 municipalities. In-kind contributions from grant applicants stood at 56% for 2013, above the in-kind average of 44% seen over the past decade (although no in-kind is required). Over 14,000 pollution sites on unpaved roads have been field-identified and are awaiting funding.

More Program info:

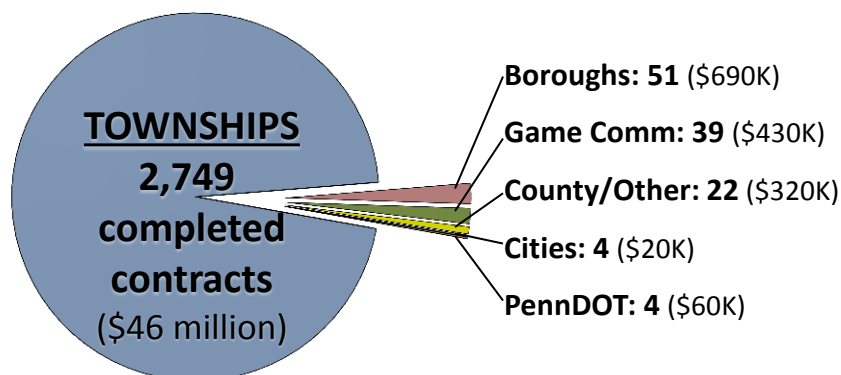
www.dirtandgravelroads.org

2013 Status Map: Yellow: Unfunded identified worksites: 14,195
 Green: 1997-2012 FUNDED worksites: 2,565
 Red: 2013 FUNDED worksites: 167



Map of over 16,500 identified pollution sites on public unpaved roads statewide.

Ownership of 2,869 Completed Contracts to Date:



Local entities that own public roads are the ones who apply for Program funding and implement projects. To date, 2,869 contracts have been completed on 2,565 separate worksites (*some sites are phased over multiple contracts or re-addressed over time*). Townships are by far the largest program participant, accounting for 96% of completed contracts, as illustrated to the left. Other public road-owning entities are eligible and have completed a limited number of projects in the past. Interest from these "non-traditional" entities is expected to grow in the coming years due to the increase in Program funding.

Education in 2013:

Education is the cornerstone of the Program's success around the state. The Program's two major educational efforts, run through the Penn State Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies, are the 2-day Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance Course (attendance required to participate in the Program), and the Annual Maintenance Workshop.

ESM Course:

A total of 441 people attended the 8 "Environmentally Sensitive Road Maintenance" training courses that were held at various locations around the State in 2013. Since the Program's inception, there have been 214 ESM course sessions with a total of over 7,000 attendees.

Annual Maintenance Workshop:

The Annual Maintenance Workshop was held in Lewistown, PA in September 2013 and drew a 10-year high of 230 attendees. The two-day conference included presentations by multiple invited speakers and field demonstrations including stream pipe replacement, Driving Surface Aggregate placement, French mattress installation, a look at several complete projects, and more. The 2014 Workshop is scheduled for September 30-Oct 1 in State College, PA.



Attendees watch a paver place Driving Surface Aggregate at the 2013 Annual Maintenance workshop in Union County.

Planning for the Future: Program Changes for 2014-15

PA Act 89 of 2013, commonly known as the PA Transportation Funding Bill, made significant changes to Pennsylvania's Dirt and Gravel Road Program. Most significantly:

- The amount of funding through the State Conservation Commission for work on unpaved roads was increased from \$4M to \$20M annually.
- An additional \$8M was made available to expand Program work onto paved "low-volume roads" (LVRs) that have an average daily traffic of less than 500 vehicles per day.

Planning for these significant Program changes is well underway. Several advisory groups have been active since the legislation passed to address the many questions that need to be answered. These advisory groups consist largely of Conservation District personnel, but also include members from the State Conservation Commission, Penn State Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies, PennDOT, DEP, PSATS, PSAB, PAFBC, PACD, Trout Unlimited, and others.

Dirt and Gravel Roads (\$20M):

With a backlog of over 14,000 unfunded identified worksites statewide, finding locations to effectively spend this new money will not be a problem in most areas. There will be more projects done, and the type of projects done will likely become more comprehensive, but the principles of local control and balancing environmental benefits with road improvements will remain the same.

Paved Low Volume Roads (\$8M):

While the new "LVR" part of the Program will require the development of new policies and procedures, the intent of the Program for paved roads remains the same as it has been since the Program began: "projects should benefit both the environment and the roadway." **The new LVR part of the Program is NOT intended simply to pave or re-pave roads.** Paving costs may be eligible expenses as part of a larger road and environmental improvement project, but many of these decisions and policies will be up to individual Conservation Districts to make.

It is important to note that paved roads function as drainage collectors that carry runoff, sediment, and pollutants to our waterways just like unpaved roads do. Many of the Program's existing practices to reduce the effects of the road drainage network apply to paved roads as well. While it may take some time to adjust to this new charge, Pennsylvania is once again poised to lead the way, this time in regard to environmentally sensitive maintenance for paved roads.



Paved roads can concentrate runoff and create erosion just like unpaved roads.