

**State Conservation Commission  
Conference Call Notes  
June 11, 2024  
8:30 AM – 10:00 AM**

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**1. Opportunity for Public Comment**

**2. Agency Updates** – Agencies and organizations that are a part of the Commission are asked to provide brief updates from their organizations. NRCS, DCNR, DEP, Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences, Cooperative Extension, PACD, DCED, and PDA.

**3. DEP BWRNSM - Conservation District Support Section – Online Budget Spreadsheet Application (NA) (Karen Books and Jaci Kerstetter)**

In past years, conservation districts submitted an excel spreadsheet showing staff salaries/benefits and related funding sources. This was useful information when reviewing individual details, but lacked the ability to do reports to show comparative values that would help conservation district leaders make informed decisions concerning appropriate staff salaries and benefits.

DEP is now developing an online system, with help from district managers/financial staff and the Dirt & Gravel Low Volume Roads Center IT staff, to collect financial details and create various reports related to district positions, funding support, and benefits provided. DEP scheduled a live training with each district to show them how to use the online system, describe the benefits of the system, address questions/IT glitches, and gather feedback. DEP continues efforts working with IT and district staff to improve the

efficiency and effectiveness of the online system. Next steps include entering FY 23/24 budgeted (estimated) staff salaries/benefits into the system, with a goal to be back on track with our normal timeline of data entries by September 2024.

**4. Dirt and Gravel and Low Volume Roads Program - Penn State Center for Dirt and Gravel Roads Studies Scope of Work and Budget for FY 2024-25 (A) (Roy Richardson)–**

The Center provides education, outreach, and technical assistance to entities involved in the program. It is funded primarily through the Commission and DCNR Bureau of Forestry through the PA Motor Vehicle fund. Roy will provide an overview of the proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year and seek approval on this call. The new budget includes a continuation of training programs offered by the Center, support and development of the customized GIS and financial tracking tool and continued technical assistance support to conservation districts. An update on a potential program funding increase and overview of recent meetings with the Keystone Transportation Funding Coalition will also be provided.

**5. Agriculture Conservation Assistance Program Update – ACAP (Justin Challenger/Erin Letavic) –(NA)–**

To date, sixty-six districts have signed delegation agreements with roughly \$151 million in funds committed and over \$70 million obligated to contracts with farm owners for ag best management practices. HRG Engineering firm is at work with the Center and NRCS to implement job approval authority for conservation district staff and others to design practices. Erin will provide an update on HRG’s efforts to date, including the latest on the ACAP certification system, which will be presented to the commission for approval at an upcoming meeting. Justin will also provide general updates, including a recap of the first annual ACAP conference, held on June 4-6 in State College.

**6. General Updates – (Doug Wolfgang) (NA) –** Doug will provide general updates, including the latest on the action team to form a Chesapeake Bay program ag advisory team, efforts related to the food processing residual (FPR) workgroup and final report, and a look ahead to the joint annual meeting in July.

**7. Next Meeting – July 18 – In person only – Penn Stater Hotel, State College**

**8. Adjournment**



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

**Date:** June 11, 2024

**To:** State Conservation Commission

**From:** Roy Richardson, Dirt and Gravel Roads Program Manager

**Through:** Doug Wolfgang, Executive Secretary

**RE:** Penn State Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies (Center): Scope and budget for FY 2024-25

**Penn State Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies (Center): Scope and budget for FY 2024-25**

The Center provides education, outreach, and technical assistance to entities involved in Pennsylvania's Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Road Maintenance Program. The Center has been funded primarily through the PA State Conservation Commission and PA Bureau of Forestry through Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Road Maintenance Program funds since 2001. The SCC routinely enters into 5-year contracts with the Center to provide these services, and the current 5-year contract ends in June of 2024. The scope of work and budget for FY 2024-25 remains similar to year 5 of the previous agreement, with the Center providing a variety of training and technical assistance events, in addition to maintaining the GIS project tracking system and working with SCC staff closely on a variety of issues.

Highlights of the scope and budget for 2024-25 include:

- Continuation of established training events such as the in person two-day ESM training, administrative trainings, and new hire trainings.
- Continued support and development of the Customized GIS and financial tracking system used to track over \$26 million in annual spending by Conservation Districts.
- Stream crossing trainings for conservation districts, private engineers, DEP staff.
- Continued support of Conservation District programs through a wide variety of technical assistance on upcoming and active road projects.
- Continuation of other outreach efforts in support of the program, including technical assistance, aggregate testing, webinars, QAQC visits, additional written technical guidance, and more.

- The continuation of the “other tasks as assigned and agreed upon” clause in the scope that provides flexibility in adapting this scope and budget as issues arise

As was done in past years, the SCC establishes a 5-year contract with the Center, with the updated budget and scope of work for each year brought back to the SCC for approval each May. The scope of work and summary budget is attached here for FY 2024-25. The detailed budget has been reviewed with SCC staff.

**The approval requested here is for the FY 2024-25 Budget and Scope of work, pending State Budget approval of DGLVR funds.**

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## **Scope of Work**

**(July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2029)**

### **Submitted To:**

**Dirt, Gravel, and Low-Volume Road Maintenance Program (Program)**

Pennsylvania State Conservation Commission (SCC)

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture

### **Performing Organization:**

**Center for Dirt & Gravel Road Studies (Center)**

The Pennsylvania State University (Penn State)

201 Transportation Research Building

University Park, PA 16802-4710

Principal Investigator: Steven M. Bloser, 814-865-6967

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**FY 2024-25 represents year one of a proposed five-year contract between the Center and the SCC. The Scope of Work below for approval is for FY 2024-25. Also included are estimated Scope of Work plans for the remaining four fiscal years of the proposed contract. Before each successive fiscal year begins, an updated Scope of work will be revised and presented to the SCC for approval along with a budget.**

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The Center provides education, outreach, and technical assistance to Conservation Districts and local road owning entities throughout Pennsylvania as part of the PA Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Road Maintenance Program (Program).

### **1) ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE MAINTENANCE (ESM) TRAINING COURSE**

- a) **Description:** The two-day ESM training course focuses on the connection between road maintenance activities and surface water quality and covers all of the road maintenance practices promoted by the Program. It also covers the basics of Program functionality and how to apply for Program funding. Municipalities or other road-owning entities who wish to apply for Program funding must have attended the ESM training within the previous 5 years in order to be eligible for funding.
- b) **FY 2024-25:** The Center will:
  - (1) Continue to provide ESM trainings throughout the state. The annual number to be based on requests for trainings by eligible entities and the recommendations of the SCC. Some of these training may be larger-scale “regional” trainings. It is estimated that 12 ESM trainings will be held in FY 2024-25 for approximately 700 attendees.
  - (2) Be responsible for training scheduling, logistics, publicity, registration, provision of continuing education units upon request, and attendee certification tracking and verification.
  - (3) Provide at least 2 trainers per session along with all necessary classroom equipment.
  - (4) Provide for training facility and necessary meals for attendees.
  - (5) Provide attendees with printed material related to the ESM training and instructions on applying for funds.
  - (6) Update ESM training with new material and field project experience.
- c) **FY 2025-26 through FY 2028-29:** The Center plans to:
  - (1) Provide trainings with similar deliverables described above through FY 2028-29.

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- (2) The number and size of trainings to be held will be determined based on
  - (i) demand from local entities.
  - (ii) the recommendations of the SCC and Program advisory groups

## 2) **ANNUAL MAINTENANCE WORKSHOP**

- a) **Description**: Annual conference focusing on current issues and new practices related to the Program practices, procedure, and projects. This is a 2-3 day event with concurrent classroom session, invited speakers, and multiple field trips. It is held at a different location within PA each year.
- b) **FY 2024-25**: Plans are currently underway to hold the 2024 workshop in Dubois in October. The Center will work with established advisory workgroups in developing classroom and field topics for the workshop. The Center will handle all of the logistics for the workshop including coordination of field trips, classroom sessions, meals, busses, agendas, registration, etc.
- c) **FY 2025-26 through FY 2028-29**: The Center plans to continue to conduct the Annual Maintenance Workshop each year. The Center will make adjustments to the workshop duration and format to accommodate attendance and subjects to be addressed. It is anticipated that a workshop will continue to be held every fall at a different location in Pennsylvania. Any potential changes to the workshop format, timing, etc. will be made through recommendations by the Program's advisory groups, in which both SCC and Center staff participate.

## 3) **FIELD OPERATIONS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

- a) **Description**: The Center provides a wide range of technical assistance education to Conservation Districts and local public road owners statewide regarding road projects funded by the Program. Technical assistance on road projects can include, but is not limited to:
  - (1) E-mail and phone response to specific project questions with varied levels of response required.
  - (2) Walkthrough of potential projects to assist in work plan development.
  - (3) Review and improvement suggestions for project applications.
  - (4) Pre, during, and post-project site visits to address specific project issues or questions.
  - (5) Detailed project walkthroughs for educational purposes, involving multiple site visits, especially in cases where there is new staff at the local Conservation District.
  - (6) Visits to assess post-project performance issues and remediation actions.
  - (7) More in-depth project oversight and on-site training in some cases.
- b) **FY 2024-25 through FY 2028-29**: The Center will:
  - (1) Handle daily support via phone and e-mail regarding project technical assistance throughout the counties involved in Program.
  - (2) Handle an estimated 300 on-site technical assistance visits and at least 30 "in-depth" project oversight visits annually. The amount and type of technical assistance will be based on demand.
  - (3) Continue to utilize the tech-assist tracking system that will allow better summary of technical assistance efforts and direct access by SCC staff.

## 4) **PROGRAM TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

- a) **Description**: In addition to technical assistance related to "field operations" described above, the Center also provides a wide range of other technical assistance to entities involved in the Program. These services include but are not limited to:

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- (1) General e-mail and phone support on a wide variety of Program-related questions (project eligibility, spending issues, Program policy questions, GIS issues, etc.)
  - (2) On-site walkthrough of programmatic issues at county offices when issues arise or when new staff comes on board with the conservation district.
- b) **FY 2024-25 through FY 2028-29**: The Center will continue to serve as the “help desk” for general program questions and issues from participants. Office visits to Conservation Districts will be conducted on an as needed basis to address issues or to assist new District staff.

## 5) **GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS) AND REPORTING**

- a) **Description**: Since the Program began, the Center has maintained a customized GIS system is used by County Conservation Districts throughout Pennsylvania to track location, project data, and spending information on the inventory of over 17,000 designated project sites currently identified throughout the state. The Center has continued to work with the SCC, users, and developers to refine the GIS tool and add components such as better financial tracking and project layout features.
- b) **FY 2024-25**: The Center will continue to work closely with the SCC to implement ensure the GIS meets the financial tracking and reporting needs of the DGLVR Program. The Center will work with sub-contractors on maintenance and any changes and upgrades determined necessary. Regular training and webinars will be available to Conservation District users.
- c) **FY 2025-26 through FY 2028-29**: The Center plans to continue to support the GIS and Annual Summary Report process throughout the life of the Program. Advisory workgroups and SCC involvement will guide the development, upgrades, and trainings necessary for the GIS system.

## 6) **MISCELLANEOUS (FY 2024-25 through FY 2028-29)**:

- a) **Advisory Workgroups**: The Center and Program have relied on advisory workgroups in various capacities since the Program began. The Center works closely with Program staff to schedule and chair workgroup meetings. The Center will continue to coordinate with SCC staff in order to schedule these workgroup meetings as needed. Currently active workgroups include:
- (1) **DGLVR Advisory Workgroup**: Consisting mostly of Conservation Districts, this is the primary advisory group for the Program on matters of administration, education, outreach, and more.
  - (2) **Product and Process**: Deals with approval of products such as dust suppressants for the Dirt and Gravel Road Program.
- b) **Administrative Manual**: The Center worked closely with SCC staff to write the Program’s Administrative Manual in 2014, and on modifications to the manual roughly every two years since then. The Center will continue to work with SCC staff to on corrections, additions, and clarifications to the manual as necessary.
- c) **Administrative Training**: The Center worked with the SCC to develop a one-day administrative training directed at Conservation Districts. The Center will continue to work with SCC staff to schedule additional trainings and edit the training material as needed.
- d) **Stream Crossing Replacement Trainings**: The will continue to work with the SCC to determine the need for trainings on stream crossing replacement for Conservation Districts as wells as other outside entities.
- e) **Quality Assurance / Quality Control (QAQC)**: The QAQC effort visits individual Conservation Districts to evaluate how they are administering the Program within their

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county and make recommendations for improvement. While the QAQC effort is driven by the SCC, the Center is part of the QAQC team and typically assists with visit data preparation, evaluation of field sites, and review of the field sites with Conservation District staff during the visit. The Center will continue to assist the SCC in these QAQC visits, which are expected to be held in approximately 22-23 counties each year. Center staff will provide the SCC with timely feedback on site visits for incorporation into reports.

- f) **ESM Boot Camp:** The “Environmentally Sensitive Road Maintenance Boot Camp” is a three-day training aimed at new hires at Conservation Districts. This field-intensive course is designed to “jump start” new technicians into their role with the DGLVR Program at the district. It is anticipated that 1-2 boot camps will be held per year moving forward.
- g) **Research and PSU Class:** Working in conjunction with the PA Bureau of Forestry and other outside contracts, the Center will continue to conduct and promote research that will be of direct value to participants in the Program. Research findings will be incorporated into the ESM trainings annually to strengthen the practices promoted by the Program. The Center will continue to offer, through other funding sources, an “Environmentally Sensitive Road Maintenance” focused course for graduate and undergraduate students at Penn State University.

#### 7) **COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS:**

- i) **Fact Sheets/Technical Bulletins:** The Center will continue to revise and publish new information bulletins on specific maintenance practices.
- ii) **Webinars:** The Center will continue to work with the SCC to develop and deliver a variety of DGLVR webinars for conservation districts. It is anticipated that approximately 20 webinars will be delivered each year
- iii) **Website:** Continued maintenance and updating of the Center and Program website will occur throughout the contract year.
- iv) **Reporting:** The Center will submit quarterly activity reports along with invoices.

#### 8) **OTHER TASKS AS ASSIGNED AND AGREED UPON**

The Center will, on occasion, provide other products and/or services to SCC under this agreement provided that funds to do so are available. It is expressly understood by both parties that this section is intended to allow flexibility in carrying out the annual work plan to address items unexpected or unforeseen at the time of adoption. In all cases, such additional products and/or services will be undertaken based on mutual agreement of SCC and the Center. This flexibility has worked well between the SCC and Center over the past decade. Office and field supplies are required for assigned projects. Purchase of field equipment, including but not limited to safety equipment, paint, flagging, survey equipment, and testing equipment may be required to fulfill contract obligations. Purchase of office equipment including but not limited to laptops, projectors, screens, cameras, copiers, software, printers, and other office or computer equipment, may be required to fulfill contract obligations.



PA State Conservation Commission - Dirt, Gravel, and Low-Volume Road Maintenance Program

Penn State Center for Dirt and Gravel Studies (Center)

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Summary Budget for FY 2024-25

- FY 2024-25 represents year one of a five-year contract between the Center and the SCC.
- Projected budget for all FY's are provided below.
- **Approval is only being requested for FY 2024-25 budget at this time.**
- Future budgets will be brought to the SCC for approval before each FY.
- Summary budget only, detailed budget reviewed with SCC staff.

<b>7/2024 - 6/2029 Center Summary Budget</b>						
	<b>FOR SCC APPROVAL Year 1 7/1/2024 - 6/30/2025</b>	<i>projected Year 2 7/1/2025 - 6/30/2026</i>	<i>projected Year 3 7/1/2026 - 6/30/2027</i>	<i>projected Year 4 7/1/2027 - 6/30/2028</i>	<i>projected Year 5 7/1/2028 - 6/30/2029</i>	<i>projected Total 7/1/2024 - 6/30/2029</i>
<b>SUMMARY BUDGET</b>						
<i>TOTAL PERSONNEL</i>	<b>\$ 887,278</b>	\$ 908,760	\$ 930,780	\$ 953,350	\$ 976,484	\$ 4,674,452
<i>TOTAL TRAVEL</i>	<b>\$ 213,000</b>	\$ 213,000	\$ 213,000	\$ 213,000	\$ 213,000	\$ 1,065,000
<i>TOTAL OPPERATIONAL</i>	<b>\$ 128,722</b>	\$ 107,240	\$ 85,220	\$ 62,650	\$ 39,516	\$ 470,548
<i>TOTAL SUB-CONTRACT</i>	<b>\$ 143,000</b>	\$ 143,000	\$ 143,000	\$ 143,000	\$ 143,000	\$ 650,000
<b>TOTAL DIRECT COSTS</b>	<b>\$ 1,372,000</b>	\$ 1,372,000	\$ 1,372,000	\$ 1,372,000	\$ 1,372,000	\$ 6,860,000
<i>Admin Fee (0\$)</i>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>TOTAL COSTS</b>	<b>\$ 1,372,000</b>	\$ 1,372,000	\$ 1,372,000	\$ 1,372,000	\$ 1,372,000	\$ 6,860,000

*Approval is Requested Pending State Budget Approval, and Pending Approval of New Center 5-year Contract*