Workshop on Maintenance of Dirt and Gravel Roads

On March 21-22, 138 people attended the first annual Maintenance Workshop sponsored by Penn State’s Center for Dirt & Gravel Road Studies (Center). Attendance was mainly composed of conservation district personnel and representatives of state agencies responsible for implementing Pennsylvania’s Dirt & Gravel Road Pollution Prevention Program.

Attendees at the workshop participated in a series of “hands on” training sessions focusing on erosion and sediment control techniques, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), 3rd party contracting, quality project design and streamlined program applications. Guided tours were conducted in-the-field at the Center’s Outdoor Classroom under development at Penn State’s Stone Valley Experimental Forest in nearby Huntingdon County. Michael H. Silsbee, Director of the Center, welcomed attendees to State College and introduced the program content.

Workshop presenters included representatives from the Pennsylvania Departments of Environmental Protection, Transportation, and Conservation and Natural Resources; the State Conservation Commission; the Natural Resources Conservation Service within the US Department of Agriculture; the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors; the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts; Penn State University; and private industry.

Workshop co-sponsor, Karl Brown, Executive Secretary of the PA State Conservation Commission, noted that “we worked these folks pretty hard over the last two days,” emphasizing “the future success of this program depends on how well local communities—Conservation Districts and municipal government representatives—collaborate to implement quality projects.” Plans are already underway for next year’s event scheduled to be held again in the State College area during the first week of April 2002.

First Recipients of Bud Byron Award Announced

During the April 30 and May 10 advisory committee meetings, ED BELLIS and WOODY COLBERT, respectively, were named the first recipients of the BUD BYRON Award. Co-sponsored by PA Trout (a state chapter of Trout Unlimited) and the Center, the award is named in honor of the former PA Trout President who successfully advocated the creation of the Commonwealth’s Dirt and Gravel Road Program.

The Bud Byron award honors individuals who consistently demonstrate leadership that charts a path others can follow and who make environmental advancement their personal responsibility. Ed Bellis, like Bud Byron, a past president of PA Trout, led the first statewide volunteer inventory and assessment of polluted “hot spots” caused by unpaved roads in the state’s protected watersheds.

Woody Colbert, spokesman for the Task Force on Dirt and Gravel Roads and Coordinator of the state’s Dirt and Gravel Road Pollution Prevention Program, is a hardworking champion in the erosion and sediment pollution field. Our congratulations and best wishes to Ed, Woody and their families.

Acknowledgement:
The D&G Gazette gratefully acknowledges the financial support of Pennsylvania’s State Conservation Commission and the Dirt and Gravel Road Program.
Calendar of Events

Dirt & Gravel Roads Training Sessions:

- May 23 & 24
  Jefferson County, Warsaw Vol. Fire Company
  Shawn Wessell, 814-849-7463

- June 20 & 21
  Huntingdon County, South Central Regional Game Commission Field Office
  Dave Creamer, 814-627-1626 ext. 107

- July 11 & 12
  Washington/Fayette/Green Counties
  Comfort Inn, Waynesburg
  Lee Wright, 724-852-5278

- July 25 & 26
  Bucks/Northampton/Lehigh Counties
  Location to be determined
  Lisa Ishimuro, 215-345-7577

- August 8 & 9
  Clinton/Centre Counties
  Location to be determined
  Mary Ann Bower, 570-726-3196, ext. 5

Field Days Planned

- Grading Demo
- June 14 (weather permitting)
- Wyoming County

2nd Annual Natural Stream Channel Design Summit

- June 28-30, 2001
- The Penn Stater Conference Center Hotel
- State College, PA

Please watch our webpage. We are planning field demonstrations on grading, full depth reclamation, culverts and ditches and aggregate placement. Times and places are being arranged.

http://www.mri.psu.edu/cdgrs/

WWW for the Center for Dirt & Gravel Road Studies: Up & Running

The Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies now has a home on the world wide web. The site contains general information, a calendar of events, Center newsletters, training materials, GIS tutorial (coming soon), contact information, sample project walk-throughs, related links, and much more. The address is:

http://www.mri.psu.edu/cdgrs/

The website will continue to evolve over time so check back frequently. Any suggestions or comments would be greatly appreciated. Please send to: Stever Bloser at smb201@psu.edu.

Advisory Committees Formed

Recently, the Center for Dirt & Gravel Road Studies formed two advisory committees. A Program Committee to provide guidance and assistance with the Commonwealth’s Dirt & Gravel Road Program (DGRP) and an Executive Committee to provide oversight and strategies directed to the Center’s education, training and research efforts.

On April 30th members of the original Dirt and Gravel Task Force joined with QABC members, DEP field reps, conservation district personnel and other interested parties to form a Program Advisory Committee for the Commonwealth’s Dirt and Gravel Road Program (DGRP). The committee members received a briefing on the current status of the DGRP and an update on the SCC’s new relationship with the Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies (CDGRS). Four workgroups were formed: Policy and Planning; Education and Outreach; Basic Science; and Product, Practice and Process Review. It is anticipated that the entire committee will meet twice a year and the workgroups, as needed on specific task assignments.

On May 10, the Executive Committee for the Center for Dirt & Gravel Road Studies (CDGRS) met to be briefed on initiatives underway on the educational training and research efforts of the Center. The committee will be asked to provide insight into the Center’s role in Pennsylvania, as well as suggestion areas of concentration, identifying resources that would enable the Center to carry out its mission more effectively.

The Memorandum of Understanding between the Center and the SCC defines the core membership of the committee. The Executive Committee shall meet at least annually to review the activities of the Center and its interaction with the Commonwealth’s Dirt & Gravel Road Program. At the time of the annual review the Committee will provide a verbal summary of its findings to the Center directors at the time of the meeting and within 30 days of the review a written report of the committees findings.

Look for New Section next issue: Do you have a question about dirt & gravel roads? Send it in to: Ask Auntie Mudd?

Please send in questions to: dirtandgravel@psu.edu or by fax: 814/863-7039
Guest Column

Local Authority and Driving Surface Aggregate

By Karl Brown, Executive Secretary,
State Conservation Commission

Recently our office has received inquiries in regards to two key questions concerning local administration of the Dirt and Gravel Road Program (DGRP). Specifically these questions are: 1) does a participating conservation district have authority to establish program performance standards (i.e. driving surface aggregate) that exceed the program performance standards established by the Commission; and 2) does the Commission’s DGRP driving surface aggregate (DSA) standard restrict the source of driving surface aggregate parent materials to limestone only?

In regards to the first question, the program performance standards established by the Commission represent the minimum threshold of performance for all participants in the Commission’s statewide DGRP. A conservation district board may adopt a higher performance standard for their county if they believe it is appropriate. In any such action, it is strongly recommended that the district determine if the more stringent criteria are scientifically and legally defensible.

The Commission is prepared to defend (scientifically or legally) the statewide performance standards that it adopts for the DGRP. However, if a district makes a decision to adopt a more stringent local program standard and this decision leads to a legal challenge, it will be the district’s responsibility to defend its decision in any such legal challenge in regard to the higher standard that it chose to establish.

Regarding the second question, the Commission’s Driving Surface Aggregate (DSA) standard requires all DSA used in DGRP projects to meet minimum performance standards. The standard includes criteria such as moisture content, abrasion resistance, aggregate size and pH. While the Commission’s DSA standard does require all DSA to be derived by crushing parent rock material from natural stone formations, it does NOT restrict the DSA to any specific parent material. Any parent material that meets all of the DSA physical and chemical criteria may be utilized in DGRP projects. The Commission’s DSA specifications were prepared to deliberately avoid legal challenge on capricious or arbitrary basis. Each point of the specification is defendable on its individual role in the aggregate’s physical performance.

It is important to note that numerous parent rock materials (limestone, sandstone, blue stone, granite, etc.) have been tested in Pennsylvania and found to meet or exceed the Commission’s DSA standard requirements. This variety of locally available materials not only meets the desired DSA performance standards for the DGRP, but it helps to maintain cost competitive DSA options for local DGRP projects.

Finally, The Commission with the assistance of the Penn State Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies is currently reviewing the DSA standard. The Center will be distributing to all the districts the proposed changes to the DSA standards. I encourage all districts to work to provide recommendations to the Commission, via the Penn State Center on any changes that may be needed in the DSA standard. When the recommended DSA standard changes are adopted by the Commission, they will be widely distributed to all interested parties (conservation districts, townships, aggregate producers, Trout Unlimited Chapters, etc.) to help ensure uniform understanding of the revised DGRP DSA standards.

Acknowledgement of Driving Surface Aggregate Review Committee

The creation of a Driving Surface Aggregate (DSA) Specification within the Dirt & Gravel Road Program has made a significant contribution to program efforts to prevent sediments from entering the Commonwealth streams. The Program has conducted nearly 3 seasons of road maintenance following DSA’s practices and using the DSA specifications.

The Center for Dirt & Gravel Road Studies recently solicited a committee of interested producers, users and aggregate experts to take a fresh look at the specifications with the objective of making recommendations to the State Conservation Commission on modifications that would serve to improve DSA. The Center would like to acknowledge the contributions made by these committee members: Dave Creamer, Resource Technician, Huntingdon Conservation District; Phil Dux, Center for Dirt & Gravel Road Studies; Len Jedrick, United States Forestry Service; Mark Snyder, Glacial Sand & Gravel; Mike Hawbaker, Glenn O. Hawbaker; Paul Schaffer, NRCS – Tioga; Mike Lovegreen, State Conservation Committee, Bradford Co.; Mike Ertley, Eastern Industries; Bob Dineen, PennDOT; Bob Robbins, Hanson Aggregate PMA, Inc.; Gary Musto, Quality Aggregate; David Chilcote, Sr., New Enterprise Stone & Lime, Co., Inc.; Bert Rolison, Bedrock Quarries; Robert Muller, District Manager, Wayne Conservation District; Sam Berkheiser, Jr., Acting Director and State Geologist; and Terry Wagaman, The Waylite Corporation.
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Penn State is an affirmative action, equal opportunity university.

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