2007 Maintenance Workshop Wrap-up
September 10-12 in Tannersville, Monroe County, PA

Thank you to our local hosts who helped make the workshop a success:
Pike, Carbon, & Monroe Conservation Districts, Delaware State Forest District.

Over 200 attendees from Conservation Districts, Forestry, local municipalities, private industry, and DEP helped to make the 2007 workshop a successful event. This annual three day event mixes field demonstrations and classroom sessions dealing with the Dirt and Gravel Road Program and specific aspects of environmentally sensitive maintenance for unpaved roads. Next year’s workshop will be held in September in the Somerset-Westmoreland-Fayette area. Details will be provided as they are finalized.

Alex Day, Bureau of Forestry (retired), was awarded the 5th Bud Byron Award at the 2007 Workshop. The award is named in honor of former PA Trout President Bud Byron, who spearheaded the task force that created the Dirt and Gravel Road Program. Alex has demonstrated a continued commitment “above and beyond the call of duty” to the Program over the years. The Program and Center thank Alex for his steadfast support, and look forward to his continued friendship and guidance in the years to come.

Wayne Kober, former Chairman of the Dirt and Gravel Road Task Force, speaks to workshop attendees about the past, present, and future of the Dirt and Gravel Road Program. Hear some of Wayne’s thoughts inside.
The 2007-2008 reassessment is underway. Conservation Districts have until the end of 2008 to complete a reassessment of their unpaved roads. Six assessment trainings have been held throughout the State. More trainings will be made available next Spring if there is sufficient interest. Contact the Center at 814-865-5355 if you have any questions about the assessment.

The PA Bureau of Forestry is currently in the planning stages to conduct their first unpaved road assessment using the DGRoads GIS system.

Remember that the best time to assess roads is when the leaves are off, so get out there this fall and next spring!

Wayne Kober was the director of PENNDOT’s Bureau of Environmental Quality when the Dirt and Gravel Road Task Force began in 1993. For seven years he acted as chairman of the Task Force that eventually resulted in the creation of the Dirt and Gravel Road Maintenance Program. Mr. Kober was the featured speaker at the introduction for the 2007 Workshop in Tannersville. Here are some of his perspectives on the past, present, and future of the Dirt and Gravel Road Program.

*Mr. Kober’s letter is abbreviated here. Read his full letter on the Workshop Proceedings CD.

Celebrating Success

by

Wayne W. Kober, Former Chair, Dirt and Gravel Road Task Force

On September 10-12, 2007, I had the great opportunity and pleasure of joining the participants in celebrating the success of the Commonwealth’s Dirt and Gravel Road Program at the 2007 Dirt and Gravel Road Workshop. This year marks 10 years since the formal initiation of the Dirt and Gravel Road Maintenance Program with the State legislation establishing the dedicated funding. As the founder and Chair of the Dirt and Gravel Road Task Force which originated in early 1993, I was asked to offer my perspectives on the past and future of the program during the opening session of this year’s workshop. This article is drawn from my remarks at the opening session and my participation in many of this year’s workshop activities.

I have been personally involved in the development and implementation of several important local, state, regional, and national initiatives to improve the environmental performance of transportation. However, I am most proud of my involvement in this program, because it gets at the real root of my love for Pennsylvania and my desire to make it better for us and future generations through stewardship. Since my initial involvement in the dirt and gravel road maintenance program, I have followed the evolution of the program and watched it mature into one of the most effective transportation environmental protection and stewardship programs in the U.S. and possibly around the world. All of those dedicated individuals and organizations who have had a hand in advancing the science and understanding of how to best maintain the 30,000 miles of dirt and gravel roads in the Commonwealth, can be extremely proud of how they are working together in a very collaborative way to preserve our environmental and economic assets for us and future generations. This effort is not just important to Pennsylvania, there are over 4.5 million miles of road in the U.S. which can benefit from what is learned here.

continued
The Past

In the summer of 1993, the first meetings of the Dirt and Gravel Roads Task Force were held at the Pleasant Gap Office of the Fish and Boat Commission. After several years of work and learning about the maintenance of dirt and gravel roads in the Commonwealth, the Task Force identified the following needs if the science, technology, and condition of dirt and gravel roads were to substantially improve:

• More than a volunteer effort would be required;
• Training is urgently needed for the road masters and road crews in municipalities;
• Dedicated funding is needed to improve the conditions of dirt and gravel roads;
• Dedicated staff is needed to oversee and manage a dirt and gravel road program; and
• Dedicated staff is needed to conduct research, conduct training, facilitate information-sharing, and provide technical assistance.

In recognition of these needs, the Task Force successfully championed state legislation as part of a highway revenue initiative which resulted in $5 million a year dedicated to dirt and gravel road maintenance. Once the legislation was enacted, the Dirt and Gravel Road Maintenance Program you know today was put in place. In reflecting on what I believe are the keys to developing and implementing the PA Dirt and Gravel Road Maintenance Program, I offer the following:

• Citizens who want a safe and efficient transportation system that is in harmony with the natural and human environment;
• Extreme collaboration, networking, partnering, and peer exchange;
• Honesty, accountability, and transparency-Making the results easy to see;
• Pushes decision-making to the lowest possible level of government;
• Dedicated funding and staff;
• Grass roots support and ownership; and
• Researching and developing new practices and materials.

The Future

Based on the strong foundation and on-going interest that underpins the Dirt and Gravel Road Maintenance Program, I am very optimistic about its future. In considering how to best advance the program, I suggest that the following:

• Execute a comprehensive strategic planning process annually with key partners;
• Bring in more partners including owners of private roads, private sector road maintenance companies and materials suppliers;
• Look beyond PA for ideas to improve the program and to share information;
• Expand the funding base; and
• Expand the training program to any owners of dirt and gravel roads.

Congratulations and Thank You!

I congratulate and thank everyone involved in getting the PA Dirt and Gravel Road Maintenance Program where it is today, and look forward to seeing a bright future for the Program. The 2007 Dirt and Gravel Road Maintenance Workshop was a great learning experience for me and fun. Watching the enthusiasm for the program and how the participants enjoyed interacting was a real thrill. We all owe a debt of gratitude to the true fathers of the PA Dirt and Gravel Road Program, Bud Byron and Ed Bellis. Bud and Ed stood up and brought the dirt and gravel road erosion and sediment issue to the forefront. These gentlemen have made a substantial contribution to the Commonwealth’s rich conservation heritage.
The two-day ESM training covers many aspects of road maintenance and focuses on practices to reduce both maintenance costs and environmental impact from unpaved roads.

Have questions or want to schedule an ESM training in your county? Contact Kathy Moir at:
1-866-No-To-Mud
(1-866-668-6683)
dirtandgravel@psu.edu
www.dirtandgravelroads.org

Schuylkill County
October 9&10

Fulton County
November 7&8

Contact the Center to register for one of the above trainings. 2008 ESM training dates are currently being scheduled. If you would like to host an ESM training, please contact Kathy Moir at 814-865-5355. Call soon as dates usually fill quickly.

**Other Events:** look for more details as dates are finalized

**DGRoads GIS Training:** “New hire” training on entire GIS system late this fall.

**Assessment Trainings:** Spring 2008 as needed.

**2008 Dirt and Gravel Road Maintenance Workshop:** SW PA, September 2008