Dirt and Gravel Road Program Coordinator Retired June 19th

"When I came to the Dirt and Gravel Road Maintenance Program in the spring of 2003 the Program had matured from its origins and funding had been adjusted to the "new formula". Now, six years later we have seen the spending power erode by 32% and yet the workload has risen by 47% as new potential worksites have been added to the inventory. We all have been tasked with doing more with less. You folks in the districts have risen to the challenge. Municipal governments contributed on average $0.53 for every dollar granted through the DGRMP in 2008. That is an outstanding accomplishment when money is matched without being required.

In 2003, many districts were just learning to spell GIS, and now it is widely embraced and the program is looking forward to moving on to a new GIS platform. The QAQC efforts to see how the county programs were running were by and large successful, and more importantly the QAQC reviews have shown that the program is working as intended. Knowing that the program is functioning well, I can leave on a high note. It has not been my accomplishment that this is so, but rather yours. Keep up the good work. It has been an experience working with 65 county conservation districts and now, as it is time to go, I say to you, ‘Moje Poduszkwiec jest pelen węgorzy, Do widzwnia’ "

-Mike Klimkos

Dirt & Gravel Roads 2009 Maintenance Workshop
September 22-23, Toftrees, State College, PA

Info packet and registration inside this newsletter!

DGRoads GIS Upgrade

The Center is continuing to work with the Penn State Institute for Energy and the Environment to upgrade the DGRoads GIS system used to track worksites within the Dirt and Gravel Road Maintenance Program. The upgrade will migrate the DGRoads program from ArcView 3.2 to MapWindow GIS software. MapWindow is a free, “open source” software package (more info at www.mapwindow.com). The initial round of “Beta Testing”, including representatives from 6 Conservation Districts, has begun. More programming and testing is needed before plans for implementation of the new GIS system can be finalized. Look for more info in the future, and a preliminary showing of the new GIS program at the 2009 workshop in September.

-Steve Bloser, CDGRS
**meet the staff**

**Tim Ziegler**  
Field Operations Specialist

**Background**

Tim started with the Center in late 2006. He has a background in production agriculture & construction equipment sales. In addition to Tim’s responsibilities as an ESM trainer, he provides technical assistance to Townships and Districts, oversees various ESM road projects, and assists with the Center’s Annual Workshop.

**Personal**

A Centre County “native”, Tim currently lives outside of Boalsburg with his wife Mara, and two daughters, Kieryn(14), & Brynna(12). Tim’s various outdoor hobbies include hunting, fly fishing, distance running, and gardening.

---

**QAQC & “Trail Mix”**

**QAQC Initial Visits Wrapping Up**

**QAQC Background**

The Dirt and Gravel Road Program’s Quality Assurance / Quality Control (QAQC) process involves a two day visit from a team made up of Center, Program, and DEP staff. The process evaluates the administration, functionality, and project work of the Dirt and Gravel Road Program in individual Conservation Districts. The process was designed to evaluate how each District was implementing the Program, and provide positive feedback for potential improvements. The QAQC effort began with pilot visits in 2003, and has visited approximately 10 Conservation Districts each year. 2009 will see the completion of the first round of QAQC visits to every county implementing the Dirt and Gravel Road Maintenance Program.

**QAQC Future**

The initial round of QAQC visits will soon be over, but what is the logical next step for the Dirt and Gravel Road Program? That is a question that will be posed to the Program’s “Policy and Planning” Advisory Group this fall. This group is composed of Conservation District, DEP, Program, and Center Staff. The group will be given the task of reviewing the results from the first round of QAQC visits, and making a recommendation to the State Conservation Commission about the future of the QAQC process. Look for more details in the future.

**Center Working on an Improved “Trail Mix”**

Building on the success of the Driving Surface Aggregate for roads, the Center has developed a “Trail Mix” designed for surfacing trails. Trail Mix was originally developed several years ago, but proved to be difficult for quarries to produce. The new version of trail mix, currently being tested, will be a “recipe” of existing aggregates that can be easily reproduced. Trail Mix, like DSA, has been designed to achieve maximum compaction and density. The overall aggregate size in trail mix is smaller than DSA since it does not have to support traffic loads, and a smoother surface is desired on trails. Compared to traditionally used “poorly graded” aggregates that are easily segregated, Trail Mix should provide a harder and more erosion resistant surface. Look for more information in the future after testing is complete. A completed Trail Mix site may even be part of the 2009 Workshop in September!
Is it really DSA???

You Requested & Paid for DSA, but is it Really DSA?

A Continuing Problem

The Center provides technical assistance to Conservation Districts and the Bureau of Forestry on many Driving Surface Aggregate (DSA) placement jobs every year. Recently, the Center has seen an increase in the number of quarries who are delivering aggregates that do not meet the DSA specification. In many cases, PENNDOT’s 2RC aggregate is being delivered to jobs where DSA has been specified. Compared to DSA, 2RC has a wider size range and allows for the inclusion of soil and clay into the aggregate. Since aggregate is the most expensive part of many Program projects, it is important to put some effort in ahead of time to insure a quality product.

Insuring Quality Aggregate

The Dirt and Gravel Road Program utilizes an aggregate certification that must be completed by the quarry. It is important to realize that every job requires an individual certification. The DSA certification refers to a specific pile of DSA, not to the quarry as a whole, since no two batches of DSA will be the same. Do not accept outdated aggregate certifications, or certifications for anything other than what is actually being delivered to your job!

One of the most important things you can do to insure quality DSA is to visit and work with the quarry before the day of placement. Few quarries will knowingly provide the wrong product. However, many of the quarries we have visited still do not realize some of the special requirements of DSA such as clay limitations, pH, and optimum moisture content. Visiting the quarry will have several benefits. First, it will give you a contact person that you can correspond with during the project. Second, you can be sure that the quarry understands DSA and its special requirements. Third, the quarry operator will know that you are “watching” the aggregate, so you will be more likely to get a quality product.

You may want to consider contracting with an outside lab to get an independent sieve (size) analysis or a hydrometer analysis (to determine clay content). These tests will add a few hundred dollars, but they are an eligible Program expense, and worth it when buying large quantities of aggregate. Look for a list of known labs at www.dirtandgraveroads.org under “Resources” > “DSA”.

Communication with the Quarry before aggregate placement is the best proactive step to prevent aggregate problems.

This clay-laden “DSA” was recently delivered to a project. Trucks were sent back to the quarry after the first two loads.
The two-day ESM training covers many aspects of road maintenance and focuses on practices to reduce maintenance costs and environmental impact from unpaved roads.

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

Two-Day ESM Training Schedule

**Blair:** July 14-15
**Columbia:** October 21-22
**Dauphin:** August 11-12
**Carbon/Northampton:** Nov 17-18

Trainings are currently being scheduled for 2010.
Contact the Center to register for a training, or to discuss hosting one (814-865-5355).

2009 Other Events

**Center for Dirt and Gravel Roads 2009 Workshop:** September 22-23, State College

**2009 State Conservation Commission Meetings:** 7/21 St College w PACD, 9/16 Harrisburg, 11/18 Harrisburg