Pennsylvania Dirt, Gravel, and Low-Volume Road Maintenance Program

20th Anniversary 1997-2017

- 3,835 Contracts have been completed
- 812 Municipalities have completed a contract

Time flies when you’re stopping mud!

In the mid-1990s, a group of fishermen became upset when a summer thunderstorm passed through, mudding their local streams, and ruining their day’s fishing. After some investigating, they realized that the roads themselves were the primary cause of the stream sediment in the largely forested watershed. Who in that group would have believed that a program they helped to create through Trout Unlimited, would generate more than $100 million for improving local roads and reducing stream pollution over the next 20 years?

In the past 20 years:
- $72,000,000 spent on completed projects
- $37,000,000 contributed in-kind (51%)
- 3,835 contracts completed
- 16,000 pollution worksites identified
- 812 municipalities received funding
- 243 two-day ESM trainings held
- 10,165 ESM training attendees

This 15-year-old project in Huntingdon County illustrates the long-term road improvement practices implemented by the program, in this case filling the road profile, adding shallow crosspipes, and driving surface aggregate.
Since the 2014 funding increase, the average contract value has increased from $21,000 to $38,000. This increase is a reflection of the ability to fund larger, more complex, and more comprehensive projects than possible in the past with limited funding. Over 16,000 identified pollution sites remain statewide.

Districts are continuing to develop and adapt the paved low-volume road portion of their local programs. Paved low-volume roads bring many new challenges and opportunities such as increased off right-of-way influences; more urban settings; stormwater issues; a new set of increasingly urban municipal applicants; and determining policies on traffic counts, pavement costs, and other issues.

An increase in funding and more complex projects mean an increased workload at conservation districts. Districts are working to meet this new demand, with many newly hired Dirt and Gravel Road Specialists being hired around the state.

Increasing educational efforts, both from the state to districts, and from districts to local applicants, have been helping to get quality projects on the ground.

With more funding comes more accountability. Commission staff have ramped up their Quality Assurance / Quality Control efforts to review district programs, and are increasing financial accountability efforts.

This report was prepared jointly by the PA State Conservation Commission and the PSU Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies. Figures are based on GIS data supplied by Conservation Districts in January 2017. For more information, visit www.dirtandgravelroads.org.