



**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

Date

Chairman
Conservation District Board of Directors

Dear ,

The State Conservation Commission (Commission) will be conducting a Quality Assurance/ Quality Control (QAQC) Visit of the Snyder County Conservation Districts Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Road Program on _____.

The purpose of the visit is to insure the Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Roads Program is being administered properly and to work jointly to improve the Program at both the local and State level. QAQC's are geared to be an educational experience for District Staff, QAB's, and Board Directors.

The State Conservation Commission would like to formally invite you or a designee of your choice from the Board to participate in the QAQC visit. The Commission understands that the District Board of Directors play a vital role in the success of the program at a local level and would welcome your participation during the QAQC Visit.

I have attached a copy of the previous QAQC report, the proposed agenda, and a list of what we typically look for during a QAQC Visit. Please note, the agenda is very flexible and may change prior to the QAQC visit. Please contact your District staff members to verify prior to the day of the visit.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

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cc: County Conservation District

QAQC Visit Agenda (2 day visit)

DAY 1 *Half day (1:00-4) scheduled for interviews and administrative reviews.*

1-1:30pm **Arrival, introductions, and review of agenda and preliminary report**
- **Will be completed at the District Office**

1:30 – 4pm **Interviews of manager, staff, Board Chairman and QAB members**
- **District should arrange interview times for staff and QAB members** ← District Task
- **Try to arrange all QAB member interviews for the same time.**
- **District Board Chairman or Board Designee**
- Individual interviews will take approximately 20 minutes.
- Will be completed at the District Office, please have a conference room available if possible.
- Any questions that arose during the administrative or project file review will be addressed as well.

4pm We will try to be finished at the District before 4pm. We are able to work with your time schedules. Let the QAQC team know in advance if you would like to revise the time frames.

DAY 2 *Field Site Visits and Wrap Up*

~8am to 4pm Visit to field sites (weather and snow cover dependent)
- At a minimum, the person responsible for administering the D&G Program for the District must accompany the group. The District Manager is also encouraged to attend. Anyone else at the District, including the District Board and QAB, is also invited.
- Please attempt to have the municipal officials responsible for the sites selected at the project site during the review.
- We will plan to have lunch as a group at a restaurant between sites.
- Ideally, we will visit at least the three sites that were submitted.
- We will plan to visit at least one site that has been contracted but construction has not started yet.
- We may visit additional sites as time and travel allows.
- We may visit a current contract or application site that has not been completed as time and travel allows. (opportunity for District to get input or help on an upcoming project)

~4pm Exit interview and overview of findings
- The QAQC team will provide the District with an informal overview of their findings at the end of Day 2. The QAQC team will develop the preliminary report and present it to the District at a later date.

*** The QAQC schedule is flexible and can be changed to accommodate the Districts schedule. In some cases, the exit interview may be scheduled earlier or later as needed. These plans can be finalized at the end of Day 2. The QAQC team will also stay as long as necessary to address anyone's questions and concerns. If you would like to change the standard format of the QAQC, please contact the SCC ahead of your scheduled visit.*

Attachment C: Expectations

This document is meant to give you a thorough picture of the kinds of things that the QAQC team will be looking at. Some of these issues, especially in administration, are “black and white” items required by the law or Statement of Policy. Other items are meant to gauge how the Program is being run. The QAQC process is divided into three areas: Administration, Functionality, and Projects.

Administration & Functionality

1. Quality Assurance Board (QAB)

- a. Is QAB complete and do members attend? (§83.607.e)
- b. Adopted policies – *these policies should have been adopted long ago. They are required by various section of the SCC Statement of Policy.*
 - i. DGRP equal access criteria (§83.607.f)
 - ii. Written criteria for ranking projects (§83.608.b(3), §83.608.c)
 - iii. Environmental standards for products and practices (§83.608.b(6))
 - iv. QAB rules of conduct (§83.608.d(3))
- c. QAB Minutes (required) for past meeting dates. (§83.608.d.(2)) (§83.608.d.(1)) *Minutes of QAB meetings (at least date, attendance, and recommendations) are required by the Law & Statement of Policy. (Yes, QAB meetings are public.)*
- d. How are projects being ranked? *Is District Staff doing rankings? Does QAB visit project sites before, during, or after construction?*

2. District Accounting

- a. Is there evidence of proper financial & accounting practices?
 - i. Are D&G funds separate accounting? (§83.607.k)
 - ii. Are D&G funds kept in an insured account? (§83.607.k)
 - iii. Is interest used only for D&G projects (§83.607.k) *Interest can ONLY be used for projects, even interest from admin/edu accounts.*
 - iv. Is Administrative spending kept within the 10% limit? (§83.608.b.4.ii) What was it spent on? (§83.607.k) Contract, General Conditions II.H)
 - v. Education spending kept within the 10% limit? What was it spent on? (§83.608.b.4.i, Contract, General Conditions II.I)
 - vi. Does the District supply sufficient evidence that all DGLVR grant money was spent on eligible expenses? (ie, ESM practices, labor, materials) *Receipts must be kept in the contract file showing grant money was spent on eligible expenses. Receipts must total to final grant amount paid to grant recipient.*
 - vii. Has District submitted quarterly reports on time? Are they accurate and include all necessary information?
- b. Have they encumbered to a contract and/or spent D&G funds within 2 years? Is the District submitting replenishment requests in a timely manner? (Contract, General Conditions II.J)

3. District Administration

- a. Does the District board regularly act on adopting the policies and project recommendations of the QAB? (§83.607.d) *QAB is an advisory group only. The District Board must approve all policies and project funding.*
- b. Schedule of payments - *Policy allows for up to 50% advance and requires at least 30% be withheld until project closeout.*
 - i. Do they advance funds to municipalities? (§83.611.b)
 - ii. Did they keep advances 50% or less? (§83.614.c(1))

- iii. Did they hold at least 30% of the grant amount until project completion and final certification? (§83.614.c(3))
- c. How does the District handle D&G cost over-runs? *Overruns of up to 20% of the original grant can be handled through a signed amendment form. Cost changes of over 20% require a new contract to be written.*
- d. Are the District's GIS and hard-copy files current? Is GIS system updated quarterly? *Hard copy files must include a signed contract, application, attachments, receipts, and signed performance report that is consistent with each other. GIS records should reflect these same figures. Additionally, properly completed stream crossing forms, traffic count forms, Off Right-of-Way forms, Contract Amendments, and DSA Certification and Testing must be kept in the files.*
- e. Does the district have documentation that application has been made for all required permits? (§9106.f(2))
- f. Is the District complying with provisions of the PA Sunshine Act? *The District should provide evidence that all QAB meetings are following the provisions of the PA Sunshine Act. For example, a copy of a newspaper article with the date, time, and location of the QAB meetings.*
- g. *Is the District keeping sufficient evidence that the provisions of the Prevailing Wage Act are being followed? The District should keep sufficient evidence that the applicant is following the prevailing wage act requirements. This could be copies of certified payroll receipts or copies of the bid package showing prevailing wage requirements.*
- h. *Is the District following all policies in the DGLVR Program Administrative Manual appropriately? Stream Crossings replaced at 100% bankfull width? Contract amendments 20% or less of contract, traffic counts being completed properly, DSA policies/specs, Engineering held to 10% or less of contract amount, etc.*

Functionality

Far from the “black and white” administrative aspects of the Program, the Functionality part of the process looks at how the Program is being run and the involvement of the people within the County. The major tool for assessing functionality is the interviews with District Staff, QAB members, and participating municipalities. Obviously, the amount of funding a District receives will have a bearing on the number of projects completed and the District's level of involvement. Below are some general areas the group will be looking at:

- **How is the District promoting the program locally? What is the municipality's knowledge of the D&G Program?** Is the District doing sufficient education and outreach? What types of E&O is the District doing? Are municipalities that have not completed projects getting the word about the Program. Are municipalities with completed projects satisfied with the District and the Program?
- **How involved is the District in planning projects?** Are Districts conducting pre-application meetings for all projects? How involved is the District in the pre-application process? This ranges from Districts who co-design projects with applicants, to Districts who meet on site to suggest application improvements, to Districts who simply “rubber stamp” applications with a yes/no as they come in.
- **How are projects ranked for funding?** Does QAB visit application sites? Does someone from District visit sites in the field and report back to QAB? Are decisions made from applications without site visits? Are QAB recommendations acted on by the District Board?

- **How involved is the District in project implementation and oversight?** How often is the District on site when work is being done? How accessible is the District during project work? Is the District notified before a project begins?
- **What is the final inspection procedure?** Ideally, the District and Municipality will do a final walkthrough of a completed site together. This allows the Project Performance Report to be completed on site and signed by both parties, effectively closing out the project. Some Districts also involve the QAB in “after” site visits.
- **What is the relationship between the District Board, the QAB, and District Staff?** In a program emphasizing “local control” among 64 different Districts, a great deal of variability can be expected. The major goal here will be to find out how the process is currently working in your District, and to make suggestions to improve the process where needed.

Projects

In the end, the most important question to answer may be: “Is the Program making strides to reduce sediment pollution and improve the way Municipalities maintain their unpaved roads?” Some considerations:

Project Effectiveness

- **Have ESM principles of “drainage disconnection” been used?** There should be a lower volume of water, and less sediment, reaching the stream as a result of the project.
- **How effective are the practices that were used?** Were the practices used appropriate to the situation and installed properly? For example: There may be a pipe installed, but: does it have a headwall? Is it at an appropriate angle, location, or depth? Are there enough pipes installed? Etc.
- **Were beneficial ESM practices overlooked? How far beyond “DSA and pipes” did the District go?** Applying DSA and installing pipes can be an effective project. DSA reduces surface erosion while adding pipes divides road drainage. But many times we have seen projects stop at “DSA and pipes” where other practices would have been beneficial. Are other more “innovative” practices being used where appropriate such as underdrains, French mattresses, grade breaks, shallow pipes, vegetation management, road fill, berm removal, etc.

Project Logistics

- **Does what is in the field match the application, contract, performance report, receipts, and GIS data (both location and deliverables)?**
- **Was the project an effective use of D&G money?** How cost-effective was the project? Were project expenditures within normal ranges?
- **Were the sites impacting water quality in the first place?** Was there a stream/wetland impact from the site?

Other Project Considerations

- **What project strategies is the District using? Which may be helpful to consider?**
These could include general project funding philosophies such as: not funding DSA, required use of DSA on all projects, use of dust suppressants, phasing projects to complete drainage before DSA, many small projects vs. few large projects, etc.
- **Is the Program having an effect on the way Municipalitys maintain their roads outside of funded projects?**
- **How effectively are previously funded projects being maintained?**