Dirt Gravel and Low Volume Roads Newsletter of the McKean County Conservation District

Issue 2 2025

About the DGLVR Program and its benefits

The Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Road (DGLVR) Program is a state-funded initiative created to reduce stream pollution from dirt, gravel, and low-volume roads. Established in 1997, it provides funding and technical support to local municipalities for environmentally sensitive road maintenance, such as improving drainage and using appropriate materials to prevent erosion and sediment runoff into waterways. To be eligible for grants, municipalities must have an official attend a mandatory training on Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance (ESM) practices.

Key Benefits of participating in the DGLVR Program:

- Funding and resources: The program provides funding for eligible projects and offers education and technical assistance through partnerships with the Penn State Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies and county conservation districts.
- Improved road quality: Projects use innovative techniques to stabilize roads, improve drainage, and reduce erosion, making roads more passable for drivers and extending their lifespan.
- Sustainability: The program focuses on long-term, cost-effective solutions that create a more sustainable low-volume road network, which can be more economical to maintain than traditional paved roads.
- Environmental protection: The program's core goal is to reduce sediment pollution from roads into Pennsylvania's waterways by implementing environmentally sensitive maintenance (ESM) practices. This protects water quality and aquatic life, including trout streams.

ESM Practices reduce sediment pollution and improve water quality through these key methods:

- Minimize concentrated drainage: Avoid letting water run in a single channel for long distances. Instead, spread it out, slow it down, and encourage it to flow into surrounding vegetation or porous areas.
- Elevate roads: Build up the road with fill material so the water is able to run off the road rather than directly into a stream.
- Grade Controls and cross pipes: Install structures across the road to direct water away from the surface into ditches or vegetated areas.
- Proper ditches and culverts: Reshape and stabilize ditches to prevent erosion and install properly sized culverts and bridges to manage water flow effectively.
- Road surface and stabilization:
  - Use proper aggregate: The road surface is built with a specific mix of gravel and sand for strength, and a low percentage of fine materials (fines) used to prevent the road from getting soft when wet.
  - Create a crown: Grade the road with a slight rise in the middle to allow water to run off the sides.
  - Stabilize surface materials: Use driving surface aggregate that is specifically designed to resist erosion.

Carbide Tipped Blade Available for Free to Municipalities

The Conservation District owns a carbide tipped blade that is available for use by all municipalities so they can properly grade their road. There is no charge for use of this equipment. Compared to straight blades, carbide tipped blade systems more effectively cut hard surfaces and will typically cut deeper with each pass. Carbide bits shatter rocks rather than pulling them out of the road, the bits also grind off embedded rocks, allowing restoration of the road to the desired cross section and improving adhesion of gravel overlays. Carbide–tipped blade systems offer numerous benefits over traditional straight grader blades for maintenance grading operations.

This is the preferred tool for maintaining a road surface. If your municipality is interested in using the District's carbide tipped blade contact Lindsay Trojanowski, Resource Conservationist at 814-887-4002 or lktrojanowski@mckeancountypa.gov

2026 DGLVR Program Timeline

The District will reach out via email requesting that any potential projects be submitted to the Conservation District no later than February 25, 2026.

Pre-application meetings are required and must take place before April 1st. The district will meet with the eligible entities to discuss topics related to the implementation of a proposed project and development of a proposed work plan. Below is a breakdown of the Districts process with important dates to remember. If you have a road, dirt or paved, that is difficult to maintain and impacting a nearby stream, contact the district.

1. Potential projects to the McKean County Conservation District by February 25th
   - Pre-application work includes:
   - Obtaining off ROW if needed
   - Traffic Count for Low Volume Roads
2. A brief site walk through will be schedule in mid-late March
3. Full workplan development early/mid April
4. Applications due June 6
5. Rank and project award will be in July
6. Project contracts will be signed in August
7. Prepare from project implementation—obtain an engineer if needed, bidding, permitting, pre-construction meeting

If you believe you may have a potential project that we can help fund, please contact Lindsay Trojanowski at (814)887-4002 or email lktrojanowski@mckeancountypa.gov