



# DIRT AND GRAVEL ROAD MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

## Program Funding Summary

2/2010

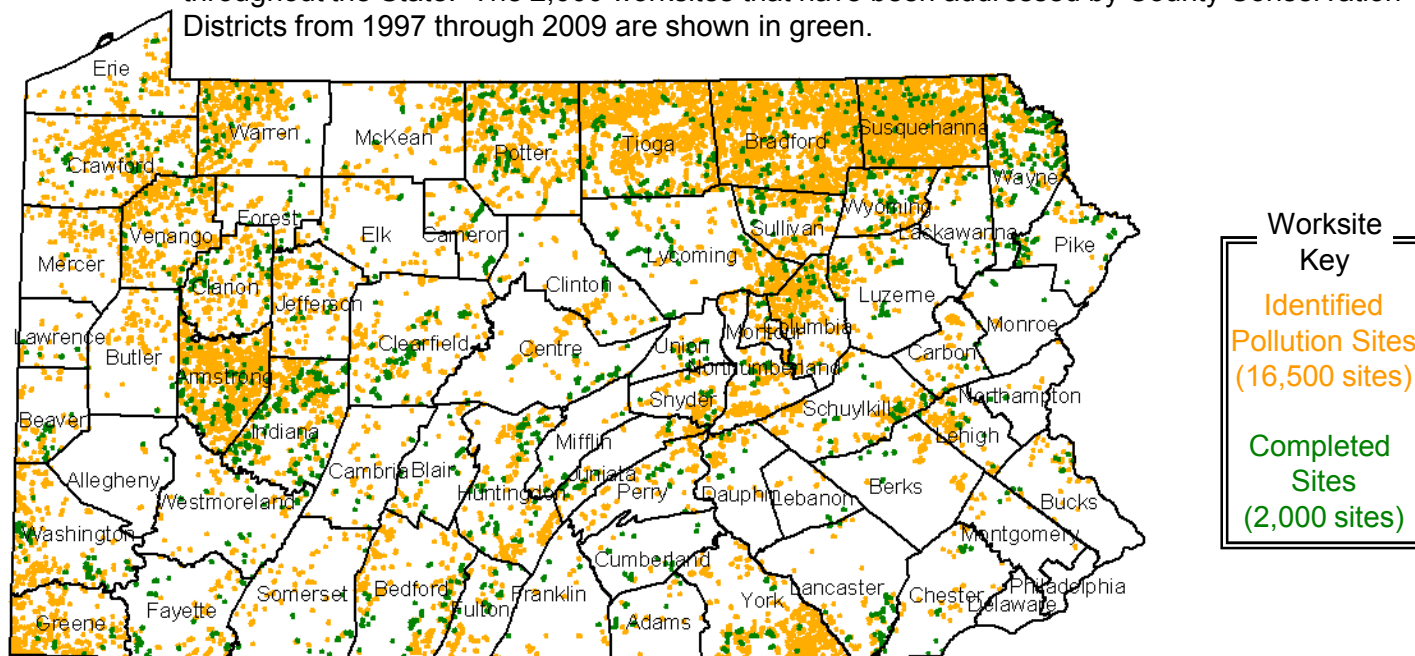
### PROGRAM BACKGROUND

Pennsylvania's Dirt and Gravel Road Maintenance Program provides grant funding to local municipalities in order to eliminate stream pollution caused by runoff and sediment from unpaved roads. The Program was enacted into law in April 1997, as Section 9106 of the PA Vehicle Code, with \$4 Million in annual funding for "environmentally sensitive road maintenance". Each year, the State Conservation Commission allocates this "dedicated and earmarked funding", based on identified need, to County Conservation Districts. Townships and other road-owning entities apply to their local Conservation District for these funds to address identified pollution problems using environmentally sound road maintenance practices. All grant applicants must have completed a 2-day training course entitled "Environmentally Sensitive Road Maintenance" focused on lowering maintenance costs and reducing stream pollution.

### KEY FACTS about the Dirt and Gravel Road Maintenance Program:

- Stresses site-specific, long-term solutions to prevent erosion and pollution, instead of "band-aid" fixes.
- Reduces pollution while promoting sustainable unpaved roads. "Chip-sealing" or paving is not funded.
- Minimal administration; limited to 2% at the state level; limited to 10% at the local level.
- Emphasis on informed local control and environmental soundness puts decision-making at local level.
- Adherence to program values assured through central training, technical assistance, and quality control.
- Over 17,000 miles of public unpaved road (forestry roads not included) have been inspected.
- Over 16,500 "Worksites" where road runoff negatively impacts a stream are mapped and assessed.
- Uses a computerized GIS system for project tracking and central reporting with minimal paperwork.

**PROGRAM STATUS** The map below illustrates in orange the 16,500+ identified pollution worksites throughout the State. The 2,000 worksites that have been addressed by County Conservation Districts from 1997 through 2009 are shown in green.



All information based on reports submitted by individual County Conservation Districts.

[www.dirtandgravelroads.org](http://www.dirtandgravelroads.org)

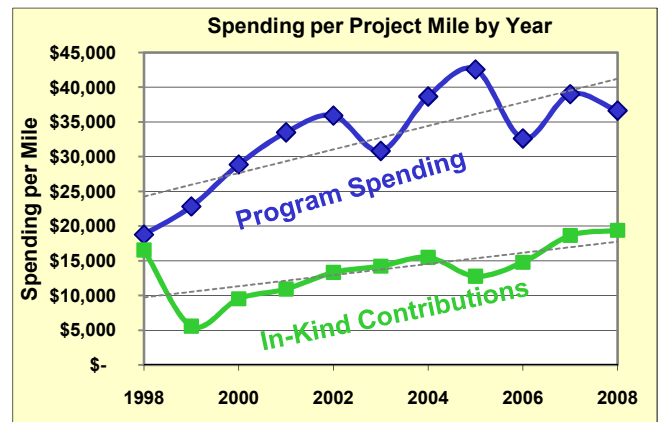
The publishers of this publication gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the PA State Conservation Commission. For additional information or assistance, contact: Center for Dirt & Gravel Roads Studies, Penn State University, 207 Research Unit D, University Park, PA 16802 (Toll-Free Phone: 1-866-668-6683, Fax: 814-863-6787, Email: [dirtandgravel@psu.edu](mailto:dirtandgravel@psu.edu)). Additional copies available on our website at: [www.dirtandgravelroads.org](http://www.dirtandgravelroads.org)

©2009: PSU Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies



## Spending History

The Dirt and Gravel Road Program puts over \$3 Million of the total \$4 Million allocation (>75%) directly on the ground. The money pays for materials, equipment, and labor costs, almost entirely at the second class township level. Although not required, the Program keeps track of “in-kind” goods and services provided by townships. The “in-kind” percentage has steadily risen, and averages 39 cents on the dollar over the past 13 years. This equates to an additional \$1.2 Million in on-the-ground road work each year. Spending trends are illustrated in the graph to the right.



## Buying Power

The buying power of the Program has been significantly reduced over the 13 years since it was established. The Program’s annual \$4,000,000 allocation began in 1997, but only has the buying power of \$2,960,000 in the 2010 economy. Assuming a similar trend, the Program’s buying power will have eroded to around \$2,000,000, or half of its 1997 value, by 2020. This trend is reflected in the increasing cost of projects as illustrated in the graph above.

Want more info? [www.dirtandgravelroads.org](http://www.dirtandgravelroads.org)  
Karen Ely: 717-787-2103 or Steve Bloser: 814-865-6967

## Future Projections

**\$4,000,000:** When considering current Program funding levels and inflationary trends, it becomes obvious that the Program will NEVER address all of the 16,500+ identified worksites in the Commonwealth. Not to mention having the capacity to re-address sites as they age.

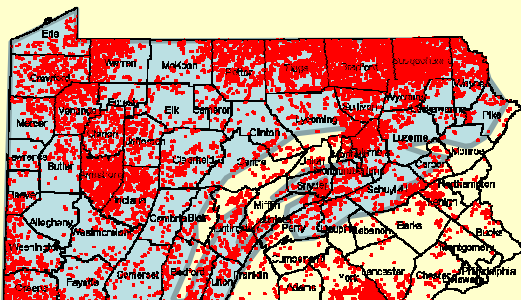
**\$8,000,000: What if Program funding was doubled?** If the Program’s annual allocation were doubled to \$8 Million, the 16,500 currently identified worksites could be addressed by the year 2036.

**\$12,000,000: What if Program funding was tripled?** If the Program’s annual allocation were tripled to \$12 Million, the 16,500 currently identified worksites could be addressed by the year 2025.

*Note that all the above scenarios are for illustrative purposes and assume that no additional sites are found, and that no sites are re-addressed. In actuality, additional sites will be found, and sites will need to be re-addressed, pushing the projected completion dates further into the future.*

## Who Benefits from this program?

- **Conservation Districts:** This program makes available \$352,000 in administrative support and \$176,400 in educational support to 64 Conservation Districts. It also improves the relationship between Conservation Districts and local Municipalities.
- **Municipalities:** In addition to on-the-ground projects, municipal officials gain knowledge of practices that will reduce environmental concerns and maintenance cost for their roads. Other entities such as the PA Game Commission, PA Fish and Boat Commission, and PENNDOT are also active in the Program.
- **Road Users:** The rural road users, both public and private, gain a more sustainable rural road network.
- **Local Businesses:** Many local businesses throughout the state benefit from these projects including quarries, excavating companies, equipment operators, and suppliers of materials such as pipe.
- **Pennsylvania’s Streams:** Ultimately, this program is about making long-term improvements to water quality. This benefits all of the citizens of the Commonwealth.



Approximately 70% of the Program’s 16,500 identified worksites, in red, are underlain by the Marcellus shale, shaded blue.

## The Marcellus: an emerging impact

The Marcellus Gas play is a major “headline” in much of rural Pennsylvania, although the impacts of heavy truck hauling on the rural infrastructure are rarely considered. The required heavy hauling will impact both sites that have already been funded, and the overall “need” of the unpaved road system. The Program’s ~\$50 Million in spending on completed road projects is already in jeopardy. Over 70% of the Program’s funded worksites are underlain by the Marcellus Shale. The expected continued boom in gas exploration will further degrade the unpaved road infrastructure and erode the Program’s impact across the state.