

TESTIMONY BY ROBERT B. MAIDEN

**Executive Director, Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts
To the Pennsylvania House of Representatives' Transportation Committee
June 17, 2013**

Good morning, Chairman Hess, Chairman McGeehan, and distinguished members of the House Transportation Committee. My name is Robert B. Maiden, and I am the executive director of the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts. The 66 county conservation districts focus on sustainable resource conservation, local support, and education for programs like the Dirt and Gravel Roads Program.

According to the state Department of Agriculture, Pennsylvania has more than 25,000 miles of unpaved roads, about 17,500 of which are owned by local municipalities. These provide access for the state's agriculture, mining, forestry and tourism industries as well as more than 3.6 million residents. Please note that these 25,000 miles of roads receive funding support equivalent to only 0.2 percent of the Motor License Fund.

Pennsylvania's Dirt and Gravel Roads Program became law in April 1997 thanks to the efforts of the Pennsylvania General Assembly and the Pennsylvania Chapter of Trout Unlimited. It was based on the principle that informed and empowered that local control is the most effective way to improve dirt and gravel roads. The law created a dedicated, non-lapsing fund to provide money and training to local communities for local road maintenance. The funds are distributed by the State Conservation Commission to the 65 county conservation districts which participate in the Dirt and Gravel Roads Program.

The Motor Vehicle Code establishes the static funding for this program. Under the 1997 Act, \$1,000,000 is allocated directly to the Bureau of Forestry at the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) to maintain the dirt and gravel roads under its jurisdiction, and another \$4,000,000 is allocated to the State Conservation Commission, then onto participating conservation districts.

Each year, townships/boroughs apply for grants from their local conservation district to address identified sites by using environmentally- sound road maintenance practices. All grant applicants must have completed a two-day training course focused on lowering maintenance costs and reducing stream pollution, which is provided by the Dirt and Gravel Road Center at Pennsylvania State University.

Since its inception, the Dirt & Gravel Roads Program has invested \$75 million in the Commonwealth's unpaved roads.

Please consider these seven facts:

1) **It's effective.**

More than 2,400 sites - 950 miles of roadways in 650 municipalities - have been permanently improved through drainage improvements, grading, application of erosion-resistant surface materials, and other measures. Further, the program reduces the need for routine maintenance saving funds for Pennsylvania's townships, which they can spend on other improvements.

I hope to leave you with a simple message: The increased funds for the Dirt and Gravel Roads Program included in Senate Bill 1 will be money well spent, improving the environment, the economy and local infrastructure to support agriculture, business and tourism. The Pennsylvania Conservation Districts look forward to working with the State Conservation Commission, the Dirt and Gravel Roads Center, the Quality Assurance Board Advisory Committee and our local governments to maximize the value of this program this year, and well into the future.

Thank you for your time today. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

PA DIRT AND GRAVEL ROAD MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

2013 PROGRAM STATUS MAP

LEGEND

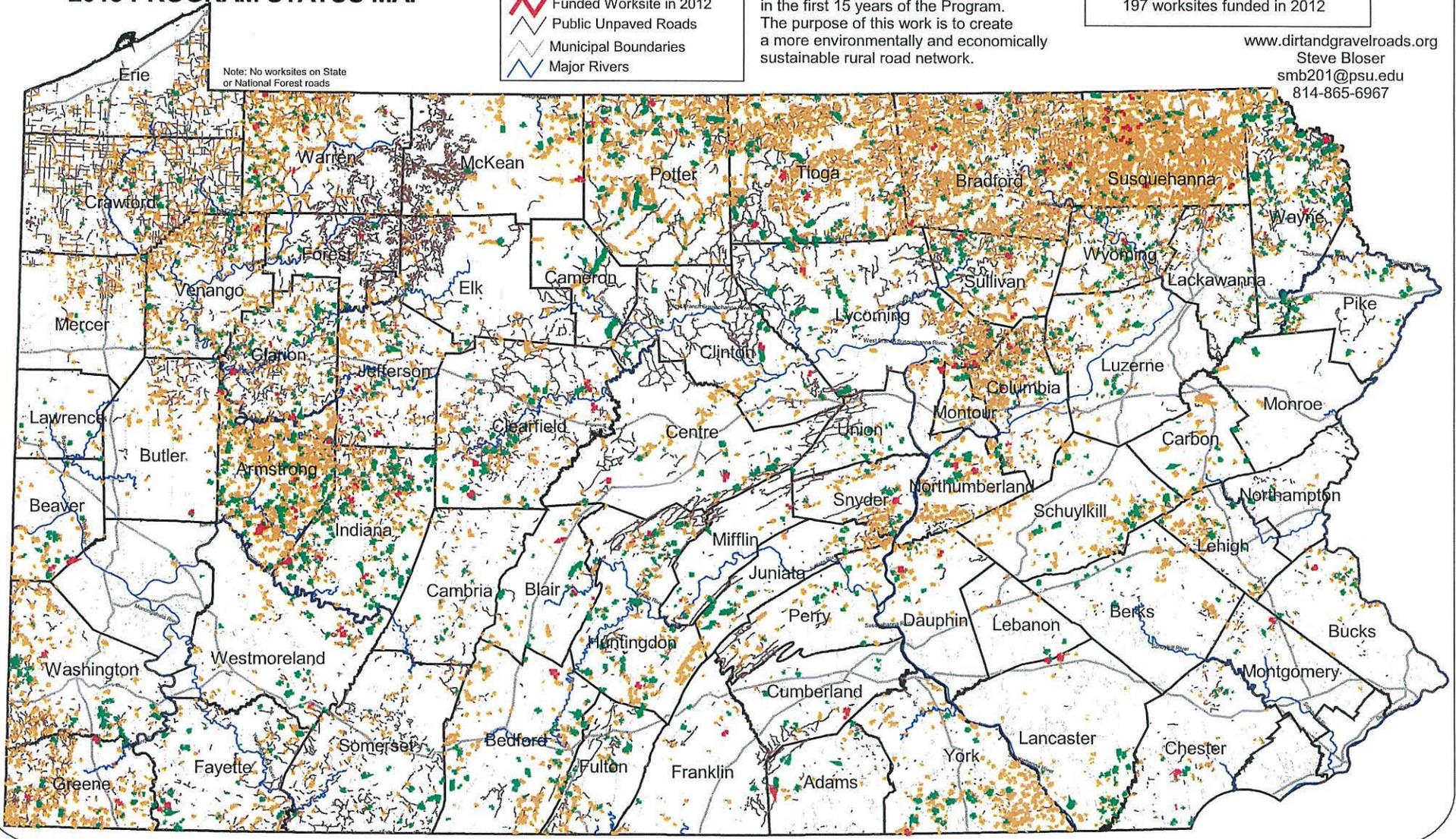
-  Un-Funded Worksite
-  Funded Worksite
-  Funded Worksite in 2012
-  Public Unpaved Roads
-  Municipal Boundaries
-  Major Rivers

"Worksites" are identified pollution sites on publicly owned unpaved roads.
 "Completed" worksites have been funded in the first 15 years of the Program.
 The purpose of this work is to create a more environmentally and economically sustainable rural road network.

—2013 Program Status—
 20,000+ miles of public unpaved road
 16,626 verified pollution "worksites"
 2,427 worksites funded 1997-2012
 197 worksites funded in 2012

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Note: No worksites on State or National Forest roads





PACD

PENNSYLVANIA ASSOCIATION OF
CONSERVATION DISTRICTS, INC.

PACD is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization that supports, enhances, and promotes Pennsylvania's Conservation Districts and their programs. Conservation Districts lead local conservation efforts to sustain, protect and restore the natural resources of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

PACD serves as the collective voice for Pennsylvania's sixty-six county Conservation Districts. PACD provides advocacy, education, technical assistance, training, program coordination, and facilitation to Conservation Districts and their constituents. The PACD partners with organizations, business, industry, and federal and state agencies to fulfill needs of the conservation districts.

What is a Conservation District?

In 1945, state legislators recognized the need to support grass roots conservation efforts. As a result, the Conservation District Law was passed and county conservation districts were created. Since then the law has been updated to better serve the needs of Pennsylvania citizens. Conservation Districts implement a variety of programs that address issues unique to their county including:

- Abandoned Mines
- Agricultural Land Preservation
- Chesapeake Bay Program
- Dirt & Gravel Roads Program
- Environmental Education
- Erosion & Sedimentation Pollution Control
- Floodplain Management
- Forest Management
- Nutrient Management Program
- Stormwater Management
- Waterway Protection
- West Nile Virus Surveillance Program
- Wildlife Management

Each Conservation District is led by a Board of Directors made up of local people from all walks of life. These volunteers examine county natural resource issues and make decisions which enhance and protect the local community. Contact your local Conservation District for information on programs in your area and ways to become involved in local conservation efforts.

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Conserving Natural Resources for Our Future