

Protecting Our Water Resources With a Little Roadside Assistance

Solebury homeowners give a lot of thought to protecting the groundwater that feeds drinking wells and sustains the local ecology. Careful consideration of lawn treatments, native plants and stormwater runoff are all important parts of our efforts to protect our water resources.

If your property is along a state road, there's one more element to consider in responsible environmental management — roadside maintenance.

While Solebury Township has long committed to environmentally-responsible roadside management for the roads it controls, state roads are a different story. PennDOT maintains state roads following the guidelines approved for all 67 counties in Pennsylvania, and those guidelines allow for the use of chemical herbicides to manage roadside growth. These chemicals can have harmful effects on people, fish, songbirds and the insects they

Keeping the roadside clear means no obstructed sightlines along the roadway, no falling or hanging branches that end up in the street, and clearing bamboo thickets or other obstructions.

The form — a "Vegetation Management Permit" — is an agreement between the homeowner and the Commonwealth to allow you to maintain the roadside on the state's behalf. This is an easement agreement, and easement

issues are never easy. You'll want to talk with PennDOT or work with a landscaping contractor to understand all the ins-and-outs of maintaining your stretch of the roadside.

But if you're willing to work with the state to mitigate the chemicals that are introduced into our ecosystem, you will be helping to protect our environment.

The application form is available on the Township website (Documents & Forms, in the Environmental Community section). Completed forms should be returned to Sharon Goldberg, District Highway Maintenance Manager PennDOT District 6-0, 7000 Geerdes Blvd., King of

Prussia, PA 19406. Any questions about the form or the application process should be directed to PennDOT at (610) 205-6566.

Solebury is unique among townships in the region: The springs, watersheds and aquifers that contain our



water ecology lie inside the township's boundaries. Most of the steps that we can take to protect our resources — like the way we care for Township roadsides — are within our control.

Solebury's Environmental Advisory Committee has long-held concerns about PennDOT's use of chemicals and Township administrators have requested the state to switch to non-toxic methods for weed removal. So far, the only alternative that PennDOT is willing to provide is the Vegetation Management Permit program.

If you live along a state road, your agreement with PennDOT can help us all take charge of one of the few environmental issues that is outside of local management.

State Roads in Solebury:

Aquetong Road ~ Carversville Road

Fleecydale Road ~ Green Hill Road

Lower York Road ~ Mechanicsville Road

Phillips Mill Road ~ River Road ~ Stoney Hill Road

Sugan Road (Paxson Road to Upper York Road)

Upper York Road ~ Windy Bush Road

forage when the spray leaches into our underground water supply.

But here's the good news: If you keep the roadside clear and fill out a form with the state, they promise not to spray along your property.