



REPORT ON MCCD

September 2018

By Paula Heeschen for Brodhead Watershed Association

Monroe shows stormwater protections work

Stormwater management measures are largely working in Monroe County, Lori Kerrigan told the county conservation district board in August.

Kerrigan heads the district's technical section, whose staff members review plans and spend time in the field observing construction sites and other areas affected by rain and stormwater. Despite several significant rainfalls over the summer, there's been no major pollution event or flooding, Kerrigan said.

"Think of the money that saves governments," Kerrigan said.

Pennsylvania adopted the Storm Water Management Act decades ago to reduce flooding and pollution from stormwater runoff. Monroe County Planning Commission and the conservation district worked with local municipalities to develop plans for managing stormwater. Municipalities also adopted their own ordinances regulating runoff from construction and development to conform with their stormwater management plans.

Kerrigan reported at the August board meeting that even on July 22, when 3.84 inches of rain fell within 24 hours here, streams did not reach flood stage. Stormwater management practices are designed to address a storm dumping up to 3.92 inches of rain, occurring on average once every five years.

Stormwater management plans are designed to help replace natural systems when land is altered by development. Untouched, nature processes and absorbs rain with plants and soil, allowing precipitation to recharge groundwater and slowing runoff to streams and rivers. When development alters the natural landscape, creating impervious surfaces that speed and increase surface water flow, properly designed stormwater management systems help control flooding and prevent or limit soil erosion. Good stormwater management plans also reduce the amount of surface pollutants that reach waterways. These pollutants range from eroded soil to pesticides or gas/oil and other contaminants that may be on parking lots or roadways.

"We have good compliance with stormwater controls," Kerrigan said, noting that frequent and hard rainfalls have not created the flooding problems here that they have in some other areas.

District board members often face pressure from builders and developers who object to the regulations that call for a series of practices and structures to address stormwater, which may change over the course of the project from the initial land clearing through the completion of construction. Kerrigan's report highlighted the important role preventive measures play. Stormwater controls guide stormwater and help keep area waterways clean, protecting fish and other aquatic life – and saving money.

In other business at August's board meeting:

- BWA Executive Director Bob Heil reported on the Our Pocono Waters project, a regional collaboration to build public support for good water quality. The project is educating residents,

business people, and public officials about the importance – to the natural environment and to the local economy – of protecting “Exceptional Value” streams.

- District Manager Adam Schellhammer reported on a cooperative project with BWA and ESSA Bank & Trust to create a 150-foot riparian buffer along McMichael Creek near the ESSA headquarters in Stroudsburg.

The MCCD board will meet at 8 a.m. Thursday, Sept. 20, at Kettle Creek Environmental Education Center, 8050 Running Valley Road, Bartonsville.