



REPORT ON MCCD

April 2022

By Paula Heeschen for Brodhead Watershed Association

MCCD TALKS EDUCATION, OUTREACH IN APRIL

Thinking about landscaping your property? Many residents find offers of free fill on Facebook or Craigslist and use it to regrade their lawn or create a garden over an otherwise naturally rocky area.

However, the Monroe County Conservation District warns, "**NOT ALL EARTHEN FILL IS CREATED EQUAL.**"

District officials are responding to a spring uptick in the perennial problem of illegal, tainted fill that unscrupulous haulers are foisting on unwary property owners. Typically, the fill originates in New York or New Jersey, where regulations on disposal of such fill are stricter than in Pennsylvania.

"We've been getting a lot of phone calls," Head Resource Conservationist Lori Kerrigan told the board during its April meeting. "Homeowners are doing (outside) work without controls," without knowing what to look for or without implementing controls to stabilize the fill on the property.

TAINTED FILL POSES A DANGER TO WATERWAYS. Stormwater can carry possible pollutants and the fill itself into area streams and creeks, harming fish and other aquatic life.

District staff visit sites where neighbors or the property owner detect an odor or other indication that the fill might be tainted. District technicians refer suspect sites to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, which can follow up with testing or enforcement.

The district has forwarded to local municipalities materials and guidance about what property owners should consider before landscaping.

Interested property owners can visit the district's website for suggestions: <https://tinyurl.com/2xuc37dt>

ALSO AT THE APRIL MEETING, Environmental Education Coordinator Roger Spotts reported that the EE section is pretty much back to pre-Covid normal, with a full complement of in-school programs and field trips.

The EE staff will present the conservation educator of the year award to Ann Summa during Earth Day celebrations April at Northampton Community College. Summa is a first grade teacher at Tobyhanna Elementary Center.

The board voted to approve the EE program's candidate to receive the \$500 Stanley Becker Environmental Resource Scholarship Award: Charlie Silfee of Evergreen Community School. The graduating senior has served on past Envirothon teams and received outstanding recommendations from her teachers. She plans to study horticulture at Delaware Valley University in Doylestown.

DISTRICT WATERSHED SPECIALIST DAVID HOOKER WILL HOST AN MCCD BOOTH ON MAY 28 AT THE MONROE FARMERS MARKET in Stroudsburg. He will have information about the Northeast Regional Nutrient Management Reimbursement Program, and will have materials, including sample traps, to combat the invasive Spotted Lanternfly. The district also is providing lanternfly materials to every Monroe County municipality to help homeowners combat the fly, which damages trees and fruit crops.

AGRICULTURE DAY AT STROUDSBURG HIGH SCHOOL WAS A BIG SUCCESS, District Manager Kristina Heaney reported. More than 1,200 students took part and were "very active and engaged.... these are kids in an urban environment (who) have very little knowledge of agriculture." Going forward, she said, she hopes the school district itself will take over more of the coordination for the program.

Other local school districts have expressed interest in partnering with the district for agricultural education, so the district may expand the program in future.

The board approved, retroactively, a letter of support to Pocono Township for a proposed splash pad facility there.

The board approved a contract not to exceed \$9,600 with Schoonover & Vanderhoof to create a plan to replace the district building's roof.

THE DISTRICT WILL HOLD A ZOOM ENGINEERING SOLUTIONS WORKSHOP from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on May 18. The workshop will address common permit comments, permit requirements during construction, best management practices and other topics. The fee is \$25. For more information, visit <https://tinyurl.com/2bpvrz9>.

THE NEXT MCCD BOARD MEETING WILL BE AT 8 A.M. THURSDAY, MAY 19 at the district offices on Running Valley Road in Bartonsville, and on Zoom.