



REPORT ON MCCD

April 2021

By Paula Heeschen for Brodhead Watershed Association

Battling lanternflies while boosting bees

Naturalists at Kettle Creek Environmental Education Center (KCEEC) are urging the public to play a key role in combating the invasive spotted lanternfly.

Environmental Education Coordinator Roger Spotts told the Monroe County Conservation District board about the effort during the board's April meeting. KCEEC is working closely with the Penn State regional task force on the program, which involves building circle traps that, in mid- to late May, will help trap the flies in their immature, or nymph, stage.

"We're trying to pump the community full of information," Spotts said, including how to make your own circle traps. The spotted lanternfly is an invasive pest that feeds on the sap of grapevines, trees and fruit trees. It can cause the sap to ooze, and lead to wilted or curling leaves. The flies excrete a substance that encourages black, sooty mold growth. Unchecked, they can devastate fruit crops, ornamental and forest trees.

KCEEC is alerting homeowners associations, municipalities, wineries and others about what individual property owners can do to protect their trees and vines.

Circle traps are fairly easy and inexpensive to put together using simple tools and materials such as window screen, duct tape, lath, milk jugs, gallon plastic bags, twine and the like. For directions, visit <https://tinyurl.com/6abunym8>.

KCEEC is also exploring the Bee Friendly Pennsylvania initiative that encourages communities to support the vital role bees play as pollinators. The program recognizes communities that – through legislation, education in schools and libraries, pest management, pollinator-friendly green spaces and community effort – support healthy environments for bees.

The program, here and abroad, is "a really great way to promote pollinator habitat," Spotts said. He is reaching out to Stroudsburg and East Stroudsburg boroughs to see if there might be some property that they would donate in perpetuity. He's also working with the county's Open Space Program with an eye to establishing a committee.

"It's a really great program," Spotts said, adding that some communities have even made their bee-friendly spaces tourist destinations.

In other business, the board discussed how district technicians are handling questions about old site permits, some issued as early as 2011. Some of these are developments that started, then stopped, and have revived thanks to the hot real estate market. Depending on the acreage to be disturbed, they may need to be updated. The district is providing a Frequently-Asked-Questions document to help builders and developers make that determination.

The board also:

- Approved sending a letter supporting increased funding for the Department of Environmental Protection to help restore the level of staff lost due to pre-budget cuts.
- Heard that testing for the annual Water Quality Study, conducted with the county Planning Commission, just ended. Results will be available in the coming weeks.
- Learned that about 20 attended a recent contractor workshop, which provides educational materials for contractors and their laborers. The district will try in future to hold these workshops during the less busy winter months.
- Approved awarding the Becker Scholarship to Monika Buczek, a Pocono Mountain West High School senior who plans to study wildlife biology at Keystone College. The scholarship goes to an outstanding senior who plans to study biology or environmental science.
- Approved hiring two workers and a supervisor for the district's summer work crew.

The MCCD board's next meeting is at 8 a.m. Thursday, May 20, 2021, at Kettle Creek Environmental Education Center, 8050 Running Valley Road, Bartonsville.