



REPORT ON MCCD

January 2021

By Paula Heeschen for Brodhead Watershed Association

BWA leader joins MCCD board

Brodhead Watershed Association now has a member serving on the Monroe County Conservation District board. BWA's immediate past president, Craig Todd, swore an oath of office during the Jan. 21 board meeting, held via Zoom, to become a new director on the MCCD board.

Todd was appointed by the county commissioners to a four-year term on the board as a public director. The event represented a long-cherished goal of Todd, who served as MCCD's district manager for many years, retiring in 2016.

The MCCD board also approved BWA's longtime treasurer, Edie Stevens, to another term as associate director. Stevens is one of the founders of BWA and is a widely recognized authority on water quality issues.

MCCD board member Bob Armstrong acknowledged the service of outgoing member Dave Moyer, crediting him for his focus on the effects area roads have on water quality. "He was always one to stand high and talk about highways — the salt and erosion," Armstrong said. He noted that the district now has regular dialog with the state Department of Transportation on finding ways to mitigate the negative effects that road and bridge building and maintenance have on waterways.

In other business, Head Resource Conservationist Lori Kerrigan reported that despite COVID-19, the district's business was up overall during 2020.

"Not only did we keep rolling, but we exceeded all our expectations and numbers from last year," Kerrigan said, pointing out that the technical staff conducted 7% more plan reviews than last year, responded to 7% more complaints, all while reducing the review timeframe by 10%.

Environmental Education Coordinator Roger Spotts reported that the status of the Stony Acres tract, where the district holds its summer Conservation Camp for teens, is uncertain after this summer. East Stroudsburg University's Student Activity Association owns the property and it may be sold, Spotts said. He has drafted a preliminary proposal to use the O'Connor property the district bought in 2005 to permanently house the camp. The tract is adjacent to the Kettle Creek property, where the district offices are. The board encouraged Spotts first to consult Hamilton Township on zoning, as the plan includes six cabins and a bathhouse.

Spotts said the Kettle Creek Environmental Fund board members are "very excited about having the opportunity" to help fund the effort, which could reach upward of \$300,000 in site development work. Spotts will also look into reaching out to camp alumni for donations to develop a camp.

Spotts also reported that there are already 180 tree sponsors for the environmental education section's annual maple sugaring program. COVID-19 protocols have prompted the EE section to require preregistration for the first three Saturdays of the season. Visitors won't receive the traditional pancakes and syrup; instead, they will get maple lollipops.

The board also heard from Ryan Hill of the Monroe County Planning Commission that the 2020 water quality study, on which the commission works with the district, has been published. An interactive story map is available on the planning commission's website.

And, the first full MCCD strategic planning meeting with consultant Peter Wolfurst was scheduled for 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 26. The last hour of the meeting would include not only the board but MCCD staff members.

The MCCD board's next meeting is at 8 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 18, 2021, at Kettle Creek Environmental Education Center, 8050 Running Valley Road, Bartonsville.