



REPORT ON MCCD

January 2022

By Paula Heeschen for Brodhead Watershed Association

MCCD seeks grant for tabletop stream-flow model

Monroe County Conservation District is applying for a grant to buy a tabletop stream-flow demonstration model. If the district receives the nearly \$10,000 grant, technicians and environmental educators will deploy the model to help municipal officials and the public generally understand stream dynamics.

That understanding can guide road maintenance and other land-use decisions, helping to reduce stream bank erosion and keep sediment out of the water, officials said during the district board's Jan. 20 meeting.

Streams, District Manager Kristina Heaney said, "are almost like a living creature." Varying amounts of rain and meltwater have equally varying effects on landscapes and streams, ranging from ground absorption to destructive flooding. The model will show how streams flow, can move and have the ability to carry sediment, rocks and boulders, sometimes transforming a landscape.

The Em2 tabletop model is designed by Little River Research and Design and costs \$9,800. The district is seeking the funds through the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's Environmental Education Grant.

The model will enable technicians to offer classroom lessons simulating how streams carve out their own paths. These lessons would be useful to municipal officials considering seeking help through the district's Dirt and Gravel Low Volume Road Program and other road projects. The model could serve as a hands-on tool in schools, and for adults and children alike at the district, Heaney said.

The proposed stream-flow demonstration model is not the first tabletop demonstration tool the district has used. Recently the staff refurbished its groundwater model, which shows how water and pollutants can move through bedrock.

IN OTHER BUSINESS, the board discussed timbering in wetlands after Board Chairman Bob Armstrong questioned a site on the technical report. "You're allowed to cut a tree in a wetland," Head Resource Conservationist Lori Kerrigan said, including felling trees and leaving the stumps.

Board member Craig Todd noted that the district may get involved after tree clearing if "it's logging in anticipation of land development," and that project could impact the wetland.

ATTENDANCE AT EDUCATIONAL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES IS REBOUNDING after its sharp drop during 2020. "Attendance is still down," said Environmental Education Coordinator Roger Spotts, "but if you look at 2020, we almost doubled the number of attendance we had" despite the actual number of programs down sharply. As of mid-January, the EE Center had 165 tree sponsors for the annual maple sugaring program, which will take place by pre-registration.

Meanwhile, visits to the building, on Running Valley Road outside Bartonsville, are brisk. "People are wearing masks and not complaining," Spotts said.

THE NATURE PRESERVE HAS PROVED A MAGNET TO HIGHER EDUCATION, Spotts said, noting that he's issued use permits to Temple University, University of Pennsylvania and East Stroudsburg University. "It's still one of the best outdoor labs around," he said.

THE BOARD APPROVED A PAYMENT OF \$7,812.53 to complete Dirt and Gravel Low Volume Roads improvements to Knob Hill and Paper Lane in Middle Smithfield Township. Among other work, the project involved installation of a concrete structure for a trench drain.

Heaney praised Resource Conservation Specialist John Motts for working closely with municipalities to stabilize their low-volume roads, which left untended can generate dust and contribute sediment pollution to area streams. "It's one of the most stellar programs we have," Heaney said.

THE BOARD WELCOMED NEW DIRECTOR DONNA FOULK, who served for many years as Monroe County Cooperative Extension Agent and later with the Penn State Cooperative Extension. District board officers are: Armstrong, chairman; Brian Winot, vice chair; Chuck Gould, secretary; Roger McFadden, treasurer. Other board members include Sharon Laverdure, commissioner member; Craig Todd and Foulk.

STATE FISH AND BOAT COMMISSION REPRESENTATIVES REPORTED that the number of fishing licenses has risen since the COVID-19 pandemic began. More people are out fishing than ever before.

THE NEXT BOARD MEETING WILL BE AT 8 A.M. THURSDAY, FEB. 17. The MCCD board meets at Kettle Creek Environmental Education Center, 8050 Running Valley Road, Bartonsville.