



## REPORT ON MCCD

March 2021

By Paula Heeschen for Brodhead Watershed Association

# MCCD publishes checklist for construction

The Monroe County Conservation District staff has stepped up to be local residents' and municipalities' go-to earth disturbance consultants.

Recently, the district's technical staff drew up the "Basic Checklist for Public Information Regarding Permit and Plan Requirements Related to Earth Disturbance Activities in Pennsylvania," and provided it to municipalities throughout the county. The how-to guide asks the applicant basic questions about the construction plan and refers them to the district for guidance if needed.

MCCD District Manager Kristina Heaney told the district board on March 18 that the checklist takes the weight off municipal officials who may not know whether the property involved could require federal permitting for construction.

The checklist "has been met with very positive reviews so far," Heaney told the board.

Among the checklist questions are the approximate area of any proposed earth disturbance, whether the property is in a Special Protection Watershed or whether the municipality requires district approval of an erosion and sedimentation plan. Depending on the answers, the form refers the applicant to the district, and continues with further questions about the site location, what's proposed and whether it's part of a larger development.

The checklist provides definitions of earth disturbance, erosion and sediment control plans, special protection watersheds and "Waters of the Commonwealth," taken from Pennsylvania's Erosion and Sediment Control regulations. Board member Craig Todd complimented the district on creating and distributing the checklist, which should help property owners, contractors and municipalities. The guide helps clarify up front whether the project falls under a regulatory process that is designed to protect waterways from sediment pollution.

"It was a great idea to refresh those memories," said Todd, who is BWA's past president and retired MCCD district manager.

Heaney said after the meeting that the district has shared the checklist with the state Department of Environmental Protection's Northeast Region office. It's also gone out to every township supervisor and zoning official. "Whether they choose to implement it" is their decision, Heaney said, adding, "I'd much rather answer questions about compliance, because that's what we do for a living."

In other business at the March 18 meeting, district board members approved the lower Sambo Creek as a "Small Watershed of Concern," as proposed by district Watershed Specialist Andrea Polkowski. Sambo Creek starts in Middle Smithfield Township and flows through Smithfield and Stroud townships before joining Brodhead Creek in East Stroudsburg, but the lower section, within which the plan is to focus "best management practices," stretches from just north of Route 447 to its confluence with the Brodhead.

This portion of the Sambo is considered "urbanized" and has been impaired by sediment pollution from storm sewers and construction. Polkowski will draw up restoration strategies to help reduce that sediment pollution.

And, the board:

- Agreed to readvertise for bids for a handicap ramp replacement for the district office building in Bartonsville. Heaney also reached out to Monroe Career & Technical Institute to see if students could assist as part of their construction education. The board also will approach the state Department of Transportation, with which it has

an “agility agreement” of mutual assistance. Construction costs are rising fast, so the new advertising will go out in late March, with bid opening on April 1.

- Heard from head Resource Conservationist Lori Kerrigan that both site inspections and phone inquiries were down during February, probably the result of heavy snow.
- Learned that planning for the annual Water Quality study is under way in cooperation with the county Planning Commission. The water survey will start at the end of April or early May when macro invertebrates, which help indicate water quality, emerge.
- Heard that despite COVID-19 restrictions, the annual maple sugaring program in Marshalls Creek was successful over two weekends, March 6 and 13. Environmental Education Coordinator Roger Spotts reported the event drew 196 and 255 participants, respectively, and 50 more asked to attend but could not be accommodated under the restrictions. Those attending wore masks for the outdoor activity.

*The MCCD board’s next meeting is at 8 a.m. Thursday, April 15, 2021, at Kettle Creek Environmental Education Center, 8050 Running Valley Road, Bartonsville.*