



REPORT ON MCCD

September 2020

By Paula Heeschen for Brodhead Watershed Association

MCCD adapts, expands education offerings

Trips to the Tannersville Cranberry Bog have been a rite of passage for thousands of young Monroe County students for decades. This year, COVID-19 has derailed school visits to the Tannersville natural wonder. But Monroe County Conservation District's environmental education program has created plans for a variety of virtual education programs and in-school sessions. And they're free.

The district's chief naturalist, Roger Spotts, reported to the MCCD board in September that EE staff is already working with East Stroudsburg High School to conduct water quality instruction with students outside in the coming weeks. That is just part of the reconfigured school programs. The EE program naturalists created a menu of options for school districts for both virtual programs, offered via Zoom, and EE instruction at schools. Some schools have begun to respond.

District naturalists expect that grants will cover the cost of the programs.

In other business, the board discussed board member Dave Moyer's offer to have his excavating company donate \$10,500 toward the replacement of the district building's handicapped entrance ramp. In the past such donations from board members or regulated individuals or businesses have been used exclusively to support the environmental education program.

The board voted to consult the State Conservation Commission for guidance on handling donations from board members and individuals or businesses that are regulated by the district under its delegation agreement with the state Department of Environmental Protection, as is Papillon & Moyer Excavating.

And, the board discussed the SCC's and Leadership Development for PA Conservation Districts' offer of a \$1,500 strategic planning grant. The grant would require creating a committee and entering partnerships with agency and private conservation groups, and would involve a year of work focusing on the kinds of issues and projects MCCD should be doing. Board President Pat Ross said he feels the board should be working on stormwater management and flood mitigation. He polled the board, and most agreed a strategic plan review had value. However, some mentioned the time involved and the need to keep an eye on an ultimate goal. If the board goes ahead, the district may need to hire a consultant to lead the committee.

The board also:

- Hired Alexandra Dutt as a new resource conservation specialist, and Clara Stalter and Diana Flint as office assistants.
- Learned that the annual bird seed sale will be held Oct. 24; ordering has begun. The established method of curbside pickup in the parking lot will continue. Order forms are available online.

The MCCD board's next meeting is at 8 a.m. Thursday, Oct. 15, 2020, at Kettle Creek Environmental Education Center, 8050 Running Valley Road, Bartonville. The meeting will also be accessible via Zoom. See mccconservation.org/agendasmeeting-minutes.html for details.