



REPORT ON MCCD

April 2019

By Paula Heeschen for Brodhead Watershed Association

MCCD combats illegal waste, fill dumping

The Monroe County Conservation District board aired a variety of issues and activities during the April 18 meeting. A lengthy discussion surrounded the district's inspection of a residential property in Leisure Lands, Middle Smithfield Township, where possible illegal solid waste was brought onto the site with no erosion and sedimentation plan. There was evidence, including odor, that the fill was not clean. The district issued an inspection report and referred the site to the Solid Waste division of the state Department of Environmental Protection, which will test the material.

Board member Bob Armstrong asked whether a permit is required for fill activities. Lori A. Kerrigan, technical section supervisor, said all fill should have a chain of custody. The source producing the fill is required to certify the quality of the waste and demonstrate through records that it's clean. They're required to have analytics and tracking on the contents.

District Manager Adam Schellhammer said some landowners actually pay for fill not realizing it could contain pollutants. He credited vigilant neighbors who sometimes alert the district about potential problems.

Kerrigan said property owners should ask drivers, before they drop fill material, to produce the paperwork, and contact the district or DEP if it's not provided.

Former district manager Craig Todd noted that counties that border New Jersey "are in harm's way" when it comes to waste disposal because Pennsylvania's regulations are less stringent. Historically, some haulers took advantage, bringing in hazardous materials to sites like the Yuhas property, which took years to clean up. Todd noted that the public costs of cleanup and restoration are high.

Kerrigan also discussed Monroe County's current Water Quality Study. The annual survey tests 36 sites, some of them repeat sites and others new. The study helps create a profile over time of the overall health of various streams and tributaries. The joint project with the county Planning Commission and the Brodhead Watershed Association may pinpoint a specific pollutant or identify upstream changes that could affect water quality, allowing issues to be addressed at the county level.

BWA Executive Director Bob Heil regretted that the funding allows for testing at only 36 sites. Finding the balance between long-term analysis and adding new sites is challenging, he said.

Schellhammer discussed the planned April 30 Best Management Practices tour, which will feature visits to Cherry Valley Golf Course, Ray Price Auto dealership, Northampton Community College and Mountain View Vineyard. "All have impressive 'green infrastructure,'" he said.

In other business, the district board:

- Approved hiring three for the summer work crew. All three worked for the district last summer;
- Learned that Magdalene Trunfio of Stroudsburg was chosen from eight applicants to receive the Becker Scholarship for a college student pursuing a career in the environmental field. She will go to Vassar College;
- Approved district technician Matthew Giambra's move to the district's Environmental Education department;
- Accepted Janet Weidensaul's resignation as an associate director. Ross noted her many years of service and positive contributions to the district; and
- Heard encouragement from Heil to spread the word about the April 20 Earth Day celebration at Northampton Community College. Among many other activities, the county Waste Authority will offer electronics recycling and tire amnesty that day.

"This is an opportunity to take it to the waste authority and get rid of it in a responsible manner," Heil said, noting that there is also a prescription drug drop-off spot.

The MCCD board's next meeting is at 8 a.m. Thursday, May 16, 2019, at Kettle Creek Environmental Education Center, 8050 Running Valley Road, Bartonsville.