



REPORT ON MCCD

January 2019

By Paula Heeschen for Brodhead Watershed Association

MCCD sets some plans for new year

BWA board President Craig Todd continues trying to gain a foothold in the guidance of the agency he long headed.

Todd retired nearly three years ago from his decades-long job as Monroe County Conservation District manager. At the agency's board meeting on Jan. 17, the board reappointed John Lyman, Janet Weidensaul and Edie Stevens as associate (nonvoting) board members, after which Todd reminded the board that he, too, has expressed a willingness to serve. Todd has thrown his hat in the ring for both a voting board position and associate board membership, but the board then created a three-year period during which a former employee cannot be appointed. At January's meeting, Todd noted that Aug. 19 will mark his third year in retirement. Board member Chuck Gould moved to bring up Todd's nomination at the June or July meeting, but the board tabled the motion.

The board then went into an executive session to discuss potential litigation.

Resuming business, Lori Kerrigan reviewed construction site status, called attention to site statistics summarizing 2018 activity, and reminded the board of the Feb. 5-6 NPDES workshops to be held at Northampton Community College.

District Manager Adam Schellhammer is working with the 2030 Executive Committee on a plan for Monroe County in conjunction with folks from the county Planning Commission and others from the community with an eye toward sustainable growth. He's also collaborating with engineers to find creative solutions for flood control on a low-volume stream in Chestnuthill Township. Two interns will work with MCCD during spring and summer on GPS mapping of stormwater systems in the county, he added.

Shane Kleiner, watershed manager for the state Department of Environmental Protection, discussed an effort to improve flood control measures with a focus on working upstream to try to capture pollutants before they get downstream. BWA Executive Director Bob Heil later noted just such an emergency arose last year in Pocono Creek. A speeding tractor-trailer was involved in a chain accident and ended up careening off Interstate 80 and sliding down more than 200 feet, ending up on its side, spilling nearly 49,000 pounds of tiny plastic pellets into the stream's headwaters. BWA played a major role in the response, working with other groups as they tried to contain the pellets, but many of them flowed downstream anyway. They weren't toxic, it turned out, but it remains to be seen what, if any, effect they might have had on fish or other aquatic life.

Kleiner also is working to encourage municipalities to get trained on dirt and gravel road management, which makes them eligible for funding for maintaining these roads. Board member Charlie Garris encouraged Schellhammer to attend a Monroe County Council of Governments meeting to talk directly to municipal officials about the training. Schellhammer noted that only three municipalities have no one trained.

The ag banquet will be held the last weekend in February.

The MCCD board's next meeting is at 8 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 21, 2019, at Kettle Creek Environmental Education Center, 8050 Running Valley Road, Bartonsville.