



REPORT ON MCCD

March 2019

By Paula Heeschen for Brodhead Watershed Association

Work plans, rewarding results and an award

Work is under way with an eye toward restoring streambanks on Sand Spring Run, where an old rail crossing has washed out and eroded streambanks along the run. The project, on State Gamelands 38 in Jackson and Pocono townships, will help protect the headwaters of Pocono Creek from sediment and material pollution. In the long run, Monroe County Conservation District technicians hope, it will also provide habitat for the cerulean warbler and possibly become part of a rails-to-trails network by connecting with trails on Big Pocono State Park.

Currently, though, the project is in the early stages, thanks to a \$72,425 Growing Greener grant that will cover the design and permitting phases. District technician Lori Kerrigan told the MCCD board, which met on March 21, that the project covers 250 feet on each side of Sand Spring Run for a total of 500 linear feet of streambank repair. An old, washed-out rail line runs along the stream there, in some places as much as 75 feet high, and the unstable remnants of the fill have been eroding. The district is working with the state Game Commission on the project.

In other business at the March meeting, Kerrigan reported that the district this winter referred to the state Department of Environmental Protection a complaint about possible improper wastewater disposal from Scotty's Car Wash near Marshalls Creek. The car wash's line that conveys used wash water to the central sewer line was frozen, so the car wash ran a hose to a nearby wetland in violation of the Clean Water Act. DEP also visited the site. The owner agreed to have the water hauled away should the pipe freeze again. No violation was listed.

Also recently:

The district hosted its annual National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit program meeting in February at Northampton Community College's Monroe campus in Tannersville. More than 200 attended from Pike, Monroe and Northampton counties. Keynote speaker Robert Woodman of ACS Consulting in Maine discussed green infrastructure, design, planning and coordination, giving attendees the "big picture" of how good planning pays off. For the first time, the meeting was recorded, and is available to the public for viewing, or reviewing, at mconconservation.org.

Head naturalist Roger Sports reported that almost 300 people visited Meesing Nature Center for the first public Saturday of maple sugaring in Marshalls Creek. Kettle Creek Environmental Education Center's naturalists then hosted 150 Boy Scouts the following weekend at the maple grove near Marshalls Creek. And this year, the effort drew 197 tree "sponsors" — the most ever. The program's popularity, in fact, challenges KCEEC's staff to produce enough maple syrup to distribute to all its participants.

The district will hold a Dirt and Gravel Road program for local homeowners associations on April 13. The program, already fully booked, will advise HOA officials on how to manage water and prevent washouts. BWA Executive Director Bob Heil noted during the meeting that HOAs are semiautonomous and will benefit from the program. He hoped the information would "convince them to do the right thing" regarding road management.

Joy Gilmartin of Resica Elementary School has been named the 2018 Monroe County Conservation Educator of the Year. Nearly two decades ago, Gilmartin worked with district naturalists to create the curriculum that East Stroudsburg Area School District uses in collaboration with KCEEC. She helped establish an outdoor classroom at the school where students can explore and experience the natural world and apply their book-learning skills outdoors. She also has promoted recycling and other activities among students. Among their projects: crocheting used plastic bags into mats that, later, the Retired Senior Volunteer Program will distribute to local homeless residents. The district will honor Gilmartin during the April 27 Earth Day celebration at NCC.

The MCCD board's next meeting is at 8 a.m. Thursday, April 18, 2019, at Kettle Creek Environmental Education Center, 8050 Running Valley Road, Bartonsville.