



## REPORT ON MCCD

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By Paula Heeschen for Brodhead Watershed Association

# MCCD manager leaving for new job

Leadership at Monroe County Conservation District is about to change. District Manager Adam Schellhammer announced at the district's October meeting that he is leaving his post to take a new job in New Zealand. His last day will be Nov. 15.

The district board hired Schellhammer in 2016 to replace former manager Craig Todd, who retired after decades at the district. The board agreed unanimously that Environmental Education Coordinator Roger Spotts will serve as interim manager while a search to replace Schellhammer goes forward.

District board Chairman Pat Ross praised Schellhammer, who will be working in Auckland, noting that the current district staff is "working well together."

"You're sure to be missed," Ross said. "Our loss will be their gain."

Schellhammer's will develop water quality and climate change resiliency projects for the Auckland Council, a regional government. He will work with corporate groups and other agencies.

Schellhammer said the decision to leave was difficult, because he has enjoyed working in Monroe County. But he noted that he had worked in New Zealand before, and described the new job offer as too good to refuse.

Schellhammer navigated often turbulent waters at the district, as at times certain board members questioned or even challenged the staff's work. District technicians protect soil and water by administering sediment control and pollution discharge elimination permits on behalf of the state Department of Environmental Protection, working closely with engineers and developers. Technicians also investigate complaints ranging from suspected illicit dumping to livestock odors. In addition to its technical section, the district also operates Kettle Creek Environmental Education Center, which Spotts heads, along with presenting education outreach onsite and in area schools.

Schellhammer often fielded questions or complaints from current and previous board members about staff members' work, finding himself explaining what the district is charged to perform under the law. Still, he thanked the board for the opportunity to head the agency, and after the meeting, said he felt he had moved the district in a positive direction by improving its working relationship with the county Planning Commission and Industrial Development Authority.

In other meeting business, Schellhammer reported the district is beefing up its role in the fight against the crop- and tree-damaging spotted lantern fly. Staff member Amber Funt is now certified as a trainer and will work with municipalities to create control programs.

The first Pennsylvania sightings of the spotted lantern fly were in 2017 in Berks County. The pest has spread. Most local sightings have been in southern Monroe County, but, Spotts noted, local school children found two of the bugs on a walk at Kettle Creek, the district's headquarters near Bartonsville.

Fall is egg-laying season for the spotted lantern fly. Egg masses look like gray bubble gum. Property owners should scrape these off and put the mass in rubbing alcohol or hand sanitizer, Spotts said.

The district is providing information about the spotted lantern fly at public events, and is teaching about them in its school education programs.

“Fourth- to sixth-graders are great teachers of their parents,” Spotts said.

Also at the meeting, the board:

- Discussed whether the district should raise its fee structure. Construction review fees have been flat since 2009, and fees in surrounding counties are notably higher. Board Vice Chairman Bob Armstrong encouraged the staff to make the fee revision a priority.
- Heard Schellhammer's report on how he and his Pike County district counterpart, Michelle Long, met recently for two hours with a representative of Gov. Tom Wolf's office, reviewing what districts do and discussing issues. “I think that will be a good partnership moving forward,” Schellhammer said.
- Set the district's annual holiday luncheon meeting for 10:30 a.m. Thursday, Dec. 12, at Stroudsmoor.

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