



REPORT ON MCCD

January 2018

By Paula Heeschen for Brodhead Watershed Association

Fresh faces, a fresh start for MCCD board

A reconfigured board now heads Monroe County Conservation District.

On Dec. 6, county commissioners voted unanimously to appoint Roger McFadden to the board to replace Mark Sincavage, a local developer, who had resigned as a public director. McFadden is a retired biology professor who most recently taught at Northampton Community College. He's a Kiwanian and a member of the Monroe County Planning Commission.

Commissioners did not reappoint former board chairman Joe Hanyon, a local lawyer/tree farmer, or the board's sole female member, organic farmer Heidi Secord, whose terms expired in December.

They voted unanimously to appoint Carl B. "Chuck" Gould, a third-generation family farmer and chairman of the Chestnuthill Township supervisors, to one of the vacant farm director spots. But the board was divided on the second one. Commissioner John Christy's motion to reappoint Secord failed for lack of a second, and Commissioners Chairman John Moyer and Commissioner Charlie Garris, also an MCCD board member, prevailed over Christy's opposing vote to appoint Mountain View Winery owner Randy Rice to fill the second farm director position.

Rounding out the current board are Pat Ross, who was elected MCCD Board chairman, excavator David Moyer and Robert Armstrong, who's vice chairman. Ross swore in Gould, who will serve as secretary, and McFadden, who'll be board treasurer. Rice, from Hamilton Township, did not attend. Ross tabled swearing in the associate directors until February.

Ross served for years as chairman of the Pocono Township supervisors, and is well experienced at running a meeting. He asked board members to think about their interests with an eye toward identifying objectives for 2018 in addition to the oversight the board provides for MCCD's staff as they work with the development community and run Kettle Creek Environmental Education Center. They'll discuss their ideas in February, and Ross said he will assign members to committees.

Pennsylvania Conservation District law calls on districts to help their communities protect natural resources by addressing everything from preserving farmland to curtailing fertilizer and pesticide runoff, managing dirt and gravel roads and monitoring construction sites to reduce runoff, which can carry damaging pollutants into nearby waterways. That soil-erosion management program has been especially important in recent decades in Monroe County, which historically has enjoyed pristine streams, but whose population has easily doubled since 1980. Working closely with developers and inspecting building projects throughout the process, district staff members helped maintain still-clean streams even as hundreds of new commercial structures and thousands of new houses were built.

Every county is unique, and every district board addresses challenges in its own way. Members of the Monroe County board have a sworn duty to continue protecting the soil and waterways within our boundaries as best accomplished under Conservation District law. We look forward to hearing members discuss their priorities at the next board meeting.

The MCCD board will meet at 8 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 15, at Kettle Creek Environmental Education Center, 8050 Running Valley Road, Bartonsville.