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Monroe County Conservation District

Spring 2024 Newsletter

Volume 47 No. 1

ENVIRONAL EDUCA

Our Entrance is getting a fresh new look!

It is hard to believe the facility that houses the Monroe County Conservation District and the Kettle Creek EE Center has been around for 33 years. During that time thousands of people have visited the Center and learned more about conservation and the natural world around them. From the preschoolers who marvel at the smallest creature to the engineers who work to develop an environmentally sound project, this building has served Monroe County residents and visitors alike.

Over time there have been improvements and repairs to the facility but this spring/summer we are undertaking one of the biggest improvement projects we have ever done. The existing entranceway to the second floor where the EE Center is located is in need of major repairs. We have discussed many ideas for the project and with the input of Staff, Directors and

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members of the Kettle Creek Environmental Fund (KCEF), we have come up with what we feel is a beautiful and exciting plan to improve the entranceway. We are replacing the existing ramp and steps with a new series of steps and a walkway that will skirt along the edge of a water feature highlighting some of Monroe County's unique aquatic species. This pond contains an *underwater viewing area* and will include a waterfall and flowing water as well as natural landscaping. The design was a collaborative effort between our staff and Schoonover & Vanderhoof Architects from Stroudsburg. We also enlisted Scott Preston from Edgewater Pond and Landscape. What they came up with will be a fabulous entrance area to our facility and one which we hope will increase the excitement of all the visitors young and old to Kettle Creek Environmental Education Center.

With the help of funds raised in memory of past educator Karen Boyle and past KCEF President John Woodling, this project is moving quickly to become a reality. Over the next few months KCEF is hoping to collect additional donations to help support this project. The exact construction timeline is not set but the building will remain open throughout construction using an alternate entrance. When complete the project will be a lasting memorial to Karen and John as well as a great introduction to all of our environmental programs at the Conservation District. We will keep you updated and look forward to a grand opening later in 2024.





Monroe County Conservation District Board of Directors

Robert Armstrong, Chairperson Brian Winot, Vice-Chairperson Roger McFadden, *Treasurer* Craig Todd, Secretary Sharon Laverdure, Commissioner Donna Foulk Jason Smith

District Staff

Kristina Heaney District Manager

Drew K. Wagner, P.E., Michael J. Wilk, P.E. Hydraulic Engineers

OC Hearthstone, David Hooker, David Lucykanish, John Motz Resource Conservation Specialists

Roger Spotts Environmental Education Coordinator

Brittney Coleman, Barrett Donna, Derek Lederer, Colleen Lidon **Environmental Educators**

> **Barbara Bistrais** Finance Manager

Diana Flint, Iwona O'Connor **Office Assistant Seniors**

> Anthony (Tony) Herda Groundskeeper

Delaney Henasey Groundskeeper/Assistant

The Board of Directors' monthly meeting is held at 10am on the third Thursday of each month at the District office. Work sessions are at 9am preceding the meeting.

Kettle Creek **Environmental Fund** Update

Save the Date - Thurs, Sept. 19, 2024

Please join us at our 2024 Annual Fundraising Dinner at Trout Lake where we will continue our tradition of good food, good friends, and great prizes!

As most of you know, KCEF was founded in order to raise funds from our community in order to assist the KCEEC and the Monroe County Conservation District in their mission to educate the youth. Adults, families, and community groups about, for, and

in the environment of Monroe County. KCEF has been tremendously successful in accomplishing this purpose, thanks to members of our community who have become sponsors and donors to the fund over the years. If you are reading this and have not become a donor vet. please consider doing so. KCEF is a 501©3 and as such your contributions are taxdeductible. Please include us on your list of charitable

organizations to support in 2024!



Dr. Elaine Rogers, President Leslie J. Berger, Vice-President Joseph Bedrick, Secretary Ed Cramer, Treasurer Patrick Calpin Dr. Ian Foster Kara Klaus-Major Jim Lambert Brianna Strunk Christine Wilkins



During 2023 the fund received approx. \$45,000 in donations with almost \$26,000 donated during our fundraising dinner. Memorial donations in memory of Karen Boyle and John Woodling are being held for a special entryway project. Construction for this project will begin this spring. Each year the fund provides 50% of the cost to Monroe County school districts to provide environmental education field trips to Kettle Creek and the Tannersville Cranberry Bog. In 2023 KCEF provided \$28,500 for this purpose. Thank you again to all who have supported this effort and, like the members of the Board (listed), believe in the importance of EE for our community.

Note: In order to reduce our administrative costs of mailing our "Save the Date" postcards, we will be emailing our "postcards" instead. -Dr. Elaine Rogers, KCEF President



Our 2024 Maple Sugaring season was short but sweet this year. Thanks 💥 all who came out despite the rain! 🌢



As I write this update we have just finished another successful Maple Sugaring season with 23 organized groups visiting the sugar bush and two wet but well-attended public days. We made our last syrup on March 12th and it seems like each year the weather is getting warmer and the season is ending earlier. Maple Sugaring is one of our longest running programs, since 1978, and we look forward to the programs every year. We would like to say a big *thank you* to all the volunteers who helped out on our public days, parking cars, cooking pancakes, and collecting sap.

As we transition into spring we look forward to our busiest program schedule of the year from local and area schools as they visit Kettle Creek, and the Tannersville Bog in addition to our staff visiting some of their classrooms. This is really what Kettle Creek is all about providing these hands-on learning experiences for children in all grade levels. It is a rewarding experience for the students and our staff as well.

Other spring highlights include: the beginning of walks in the Bog, our presence at numerous community events where we provide both educational opportunities and information on our programs, the start of Kayak season, and our cooperative effort with the Brodhead Watershed Association on monthly hikes throughout the watershed. If that sounds like a busy schedule—it is and we hope to see you at one of our many upcoming programs!

Finally, be on the lookout for the demolition and redesign of the entrance to the Environmental Educational Center. After 25 years we are excited about a new, more welcoming entrance including a freshwater pond to enhance your visit to Kettle Creek. With the help of the Kettle Creek Environmental Fund and numerous donors, the entrance will receive a much needed facelift. Keep an eye out for actual construction dates and completion before the end of 2024.

-Roger Spotts, Environmental Education Coordinator

MCCD takes 1st place in Conservation District Video Contest!

We are thrilled to announce we have been selected as the winner of the coveted "CONDIVA" trophy! The 4th Annual Conservation District Video Awards were presented on February 15, 2024. Monroe County's video submission was a 3-minute behind-thescenes promotional video about the EE Center's maple syrup production. The judges commented about the video's effective storytelling style of "show, don't tell" as well as how the music selections fit and enhanced the mood of the video.

This recognition of our video production efforts motivates us to potentially create more video content of our programs and about our roles as environmental educators at Kettle Creek EE Center.

Check out all our videos on the Kettle Creek EE Center YouTube channel! Congratulations to all the other contest finalists! ●





Project FeederWatch Update

2023 CDVA



With just under a month to go, our Project FeederWatch Season for 2023-2024 has been very successful thanks to the help of our dedicated volunteers. FeederWatch volunteers have spent roughly 8 cumulative hours biweekly since November observing the many bird species and their interactions at our bird feeders. Project FeederWatch is a helpful citizens science project that gives Cornell Lab of Ornithology important information about the distribution and abundance of birds that visit feeders. We were happy to observe 21 total species so far this season with the Dark-eyed Junco, Tufted Titmouse, and White-throated Sparrow being among our most abundant species. Less commonly observed were other species such as the Brown Creeper, Fox Sparrow, Red-breasted Nuthatch, and Carolina Wren, each of which only had one individual per sighting. We have also had some interesting and exciting mammal sightings nearby our feeders such as red squirrels, white-tailed deer and even a red fox! Project FeederWatch is a great way to contribute meaningful data while getting to know the wildlife here at Kettle Creek.

We are thankful for the time our volunteers have spent at the feeders so far this season!







Program Guidelines

Pre-registration is required for all programs offered unless noted otherwise by calling 570-629-3061.

Cash or checks made payable to MCCD only.

Refunds will be given only if notification is made at least one week prior to the trip/ program.

Building hours are Mon-Fri 8am-4:30pm, and some Saturdays 9am-1pm.

Kettle Creek Environmental Education Center 8050 Running Valley Road Stroudsburg, PA 18360 (570)629-3061 www.mcconservation.org

2024 Spring Public Programming

Friday, March 29th—Building Closed—Holiday Saturday, March 30th—Building Closed Saturday, April 6th—Building Open Saturday, April 13th—Building Closed



Riparian Buffer Workshop and Tree Planting at Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge Saturday, April 13th – 10am - 12:30pm See box on page 8 for details.

Saturday Stroll at Kettle Creek with Stroud Region Open Space & Recreation Commission Saturday, April 20th – 10am



Walk through forest, meadow, and an otherworldly shale barren! This 1-hour walk will be about 1.5 miles. Be prepared for rocks and roots across wooded paths and several hills. **Register at** <u>srosrc.org</u> or call 570-426-1512. Meet in parking lot.



Saturday, April 20th—Building Closed

Find us at the Earth Day Celebration at Pocono Organics on April 20th!

Full Moon Bog Hike Monday, April 22nd – 6:30pm



Explore the bog under the light of a full moon. The walk begins at 6:30pm and participants should bring a headlamp/flashlight. Please wear appropriate footwear. **Pre-registration is required and limited. Meet at the Tannersville Bog parking lot. Cost: \$6 per person.**



Create Your Own Miniature Enchanted Garden Saturday, April 27th – 9 - 11am



Join us for a relaxing morning of crafting your own enchanted miniature garden! We will begin with a short presentation about our local mosses and lichens, then dive into the world of creativity by making our own enchanted gardens using natural materials and miniature figurines. All the materials for creating a magical world of your own will be provided, but participants are welcome to bring any special items or figurines of their own they'd like to include in their mini garden. It is also optional to bring your own basket or even a wide mouth jar to contain your garden. This program is geared for ages 12+.

Pre-registration is required and limited. Cost: \$15 per person.

Hike at Mount Wismer Preserve Sunday, April 28th – 1 - 2:30pm



Join us for a hike and enjoy the panaromic views from the top of Mount Wismer. Participants should dress for the weather, wear sturdy footwear, and bring water. In cooperation with the Brodhead Watershed Association and a grant through the William Penn Foundation there will be no charge for this walk. Register online at brodheadwatershed.org.



Meet the Artists: "Artists in Nature: Tricia Lowrey Lippert & Friends" Saturday, May 4th – 11am

The month of May will feature local artists Tricia Lowrey Lippert, Peter Salmon, Joni Oye-Benintende, and Marilyn Pastor in our art gallery. The show will include a variety of art mediums, including clay, oil painting, and watercolors to make for a unique nature-themed show that will be on display all month long. There is no charge.

Hike at Timber Hill Farm

Sunday, May 5th – 1 - 2:30pm

Join us for a visit to Timber Hill Farm in Paradise Township, a 100 year-old farm protected with a conservation easement. We'll be exploring and learning about vernal pools—a unique type of wetland habitat that is typically a small, shallow, ephemeral water body. Participants should dress for the weather, wear sturdy footwear, and bring water. In cooperation with the Brodhead Watershed Association and a grant through the William Penn Foundation there will be no charge for this walk. Register online at brodheadwatershed.org.

Birding the Bog

Wednesday, May 8th – 7am

Combine one of the most unique natural settings with one of the most spectacular natural phenomena and you get a morning of migration birding at the Bog. Pre-registration is required and limited. Meet at the Tannersville Bog parking lot. Cost: \$6 per person.

Back to Basics Plan Designers Workshop at Skytop Lodge Friday, May 10th – 8:30 - 3:30pm

See box on page 7 for details.



Saturday, May 11th—Building Closed

Birding the Bog Wednesday, May 15th – 7am See listing on May 8th for details.



April Showers to May Flowers

Saturday, May 18th – 10am

Come and explore the unique world of flowers by visiting those present here at the Kettle Creek Environmental Education Center. Weather permitting, we will spend time hunting for flowers on the Kettle Creek trails. Cost: \$5 per person

Sunday Bog Walk Sunday, May 19th – 1pm

Join us at 1pm at the Bog parking lot and take a 2 ½ hour guided journey into the unique Tannersville Cranberry Bog. Along the way, our environmental educators will explain the Bog's formation, its interesting plant and animal life, and the role the local Preserve Committee and the Nature Conservancy play in its continued protection. Please wear appropriate footwear. Pre-registration is required and limited. Meet at the Tannersville Bog parking lot. Cost: \$6 per person.



Introduction to Wildlife Photography and Conservation Thursday, May 23rd – 4 - 6pm

This program is designed to acquaint beginners with the essentials of wildlife photography, with a special focus on understanding animal behavior. Through interactive sessions, participants will learn how photography serves as a powerful tool in wildlife conservation efforts, highlighting the important connection between artistry and advocacy. Don't miss this opportunity to embark on a journey of discovery, honing your photography skills while contributing to the preservation of our planet's precious biodiversity. Remember to bring your own equipment, whether it's a camera or phone, as we dive into practical exercises to capture the wonders of the natural world.

Pre-registration is required and limited. Cost: \$10 per person.

Saturday, May 25th—Building Closed



Monday, May 27th—Building Closed—Holiday

Kayak Trip at the Bog Thursday, May 30th – 10am

Join us on a paddling trip into the Bog Preserve on Cranberry Creek. The program lasts about 3 hours. Participants can supply their own kayak or canoe, paddle and life jacket or specify rental needs at time of registration. Our limited kayak rentals are first-come, first-serve, and come with a paddle, life jacket, and whistle. (cont'd next page) Meet at the Bog parking lot at 10am to caravan to the creek put-in. Pre-registration is required and limited. Cost: \$15 per person.



Saturday, June 1st—Building Closed

Wednesday Bog Walk Wednesday, June 5th – 10am

Join us at 10am at the Bog parking lot and take a 2 ½ hour guided journey into the unique Tannersville Cranberry Bog. Along the way, our environmental educators will explain the Bog's formation, its interesting plant and animal life, and the role the local Preserve Committee and the Nature Conservancy play in its continued protection. Please wear appropriate footwear. Pre-registration is required. Meet at the Tannersville Bog parking lot.

Cost: \$6 per person.

Kayak Trip at the Bog

Thursday, June 6th – 10am See listing on May 30th for details.

Meet the Artists: Pocono Photo Club "Nature Through Our Lenses"



Saturday, June 8th – 11am

Join us to view a collection of photos from various members of the Pocono Photography Club. The exhibit will reflect the natural beauty of the Poconos as seen by our diverse group of photographers and will be on display for the month of June. There is no charge.

Sunday Bog Walk Sunday, June 9th – 11am See listing for May 19th for details.



Bus Trip to Trexler Nature Preserve

Monday, June 10th – 9am

Join us for a family-friendly daytrip to the Trexler Nature Preserve in Schnecksville PA! This 1,495 acre natural preserve is the largest park in Lehigh County and a diverse natural gem with over 18 miles of trails. We'll drive through the game preserve to view herds of bison and spend time snorkeling in the Jordan Creek. We will depart from Kettle Creek at 9am and return by 3pm. Pre-registration is required and limited. Cost is \$30 per person.

Wednesday Bog Walk Wednesday, June 12th – 10am See listing on June 5th for details.



Saturday, June 15th—Building Closed

Wednesday Bog Walk Wednesday, June 19th – 10am See listing on June 5th for details.

Sunset Bog Walk

Thursday, June 20th – 7pm

Explore the beauty of the bog during the golden hour just as the sun sets. Please wear appropriate footwear. Pre-registration is required and limited. Meet at the Tannersville Bog parking lot. Cost: \$6 per person.

Pond Peeking

Saturday, June 22nd – 1pm

The pond at Kettle Creek is full of fascinating critters that are a wonder to observe. Join us at 1pm as we explore the life in Swink Pond. Participants should be prepared to get muddy feet. Cost: \$5 per person.



PA Dept. of Agriculture Adopts New Fertilizer Law



In July 2022, Pennsylvania adopted a new <u>fertilizer law</u> designed to minimize the movement of nutrients into our waterways. According to the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), Pennsylvania now contains *over 2 million acres of lawn.*

Anyone who applies fertilizers should be aware of the requirements of the new fertilizer law. This includes lawn care providers and homeowners/residents who self-apply fertilizer.

What do I need to know about fertilizing my lawn?

Homeowners/residents must be aware of and follow the nutrient application rate limits, fertilizer application location restrictions, and best management practices as specified in the law and written on the product label.

How do I know how much fertilizer I should apply to my lawn?

The best way to determine the amount and type of nutrient your lawn & garden needs is to **test your soil**. Over fertilizing can be detrimental to plant growth and an expensive loss of nutrients that has negative environmental consequences.

Soil sampling instructions and Soil Test Kits are available from your local Penn State Extension Office on the <u>Resources</u> page. You can also find more information about soil testing <u>here</u>.

You must follow prescribed application amounts found on the product label and not exceed the following limits:

- 0.7 lbs/1000 ft² of plant available nitrogen per application.
- 0.9 lbs/1000 ft² of total nitrogen per application, unless it is an enhanced efficiency nitrogen fertilizer.
- No phosphate may be applied unless you are establishing, reestablishing, or repairing a turf area or you are using an enhanced efficiency phosphorus fertilizer.

Application of enhanced efficiency phosphorus, natural organic fertilizer or organic-based fertilizers may not exceed 0.25 lbs/1000 ft².

What are the fertilizer application restrictions?

Keeping fertilizer where it is needed for plant growth is important for meeting your lawn needs. Therefore, following the best management practices outlined on the product label will help keep your fertilizer in place.

Here's a summary of the restrictions:

- Maintain a 15-foot buffer from top bank of lakes, ponds, wetlands, or flowing bodies of water.
- Do not apply near water, storm drains, or drainage ditches.
- Do not apply if a heavy rain is expected.
- Do not apply to impervious surfaces. Promptly sweep any material that lands on an impervious surface back onto turf.
- Do not apply if the ground is frozen or snow covered.
- Apply fertilizer using a properly calibrated device designed for fertilizer.
- Do not use fertilizer to melt snow or ice.
- Do not store or dispose of fertilizer inconsistent with its label or in a manner that would result in a direct discharge to waterways.

Thanks for doing your part to ensure we protect our natural resources from nutrient pollution!

2024 Back to the Basics Plan Designers Workshop

Presented by Monroe and Pike County Conservation Districts

- E&S Design and BMP Selection
- Upcoming Chapter 102 changes
- Site Evaluation
- Preparing the NPDES Permit Package

Registration is now open

<u>Click to pay</u>

Contact: 570-629-3060 monroecd@ptd.net MONROE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT



May 10th , 2024

Skytop Lodge

8:30 AM-3:30 PM

www.mcconservation.org







The 43rd Annual Christmas Bird Count Results

With the peepers peeping, the wood frogs croaking and geese streaming over head it's finally time to share with you the results of the **2023 Pocono Mountain Christmas Bird Count.**

There were **4,694** individual birds of **65** different species counted. Here are a few highlights:

- 15 Green-winged teal were a record for this species, more than doubling the previous high of 7 in 2014.
- 2 Bufflehead were significant in that it was only the fifth time the species was recorded on the PM CBC.
- The ring-necked pheasant was regularly recorded during the first decade of the count but the one found this year was the first in a very long time.

- For the second time in the last 3 years every species of woodpecker was recorded.

- 22 Field sparrows was the second highest total for the species after the 28 recorded in 1994.

- 140 American goldfinches are not a record for the species but after several years of much lower totals it was nice to see the numbers rebound a little.

- Turkey vultures outnumbered black vultures this year, and chickadees once again outnumbered titmice.

Thank you all for participating in the PM CBC and all that you do for bird conservation. If you're interested in participating in the Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge Bird Blitz on May 11-15, contact <u>poconoavian@hotmail.com</u>.



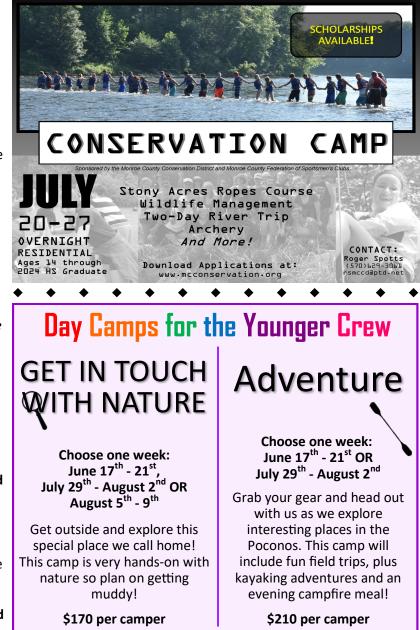


Help get the word out about our longest-running summer camp— CONSERVATION CAMP!

For the past 49 years, MCCD along with Monroe County Sportsmen's clubs have held an outdoor camp for teenagers. This camp is truly a unique experience which has exposed over 1200 teenagers to the outdoor world and all its resources. We feel the camp creates an environment where every camper can participate in numerous outdoor activities while being a part of a group of 30 teenagers plus staff. We do not allow cell phones for the campers hoping to encourage more open communication and interaction with fellow campers, staff, and environmental professionals. Campers from past years have commented on being a bit uncertain when first arriving at camp but by the end of the week they considered it one of the best experiences ever. We strive to make the camp a positive experience for all participants and we feel the campers not only learn about the outdoors from many professionals in the field but also push out of their comfort zone and learn a

little more about themselves. Activities include programs on **natural history**, **wildlife management**, **water quality**, **archery**, **trap shooting**, **a high adventure ropes course and a 2-day canoe trip on the Delaware River**. Each activity is led by professionals in the field and is designed to be both informative and enjoyable. The camp is held at Stony Acres, an East Stroudsburg University facility near Marshall's Creek. The cost for the entire week is \$200 and it includes everything. We also have scholarships available for qualified campers. The 2024 camp will be held Saturday, July 20th - 27th and applications are on our website at <u>www.mcconservation.com</u>.

Camp is limited to 30 campers so please register early! ♦



Day camps are Monday through Friday, 8am-3:30pm with late pick-up available for an additional fee. See application or give us a call for details. Applications can be found online at www.mcconservation.org. ◆

Our Winter "Eagle Watch" Bus Trips



We went out several times this winter looking for eagles... as you can see, we were successful!

Notable moments included witnessing two eagles briefly lock talons in courtship, as well as an eagle peacefully bathing in the Lackawaxen River. Thank you to our attendees!



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Conserving Natural Resources for Our Future



The **MCCD Dirt and Gravel Road Program** awarded a \$113,420.50 grant to Middle Smithfield Township on March 21st, 2024 for Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance practices on Firestone Road. The investment will enable rehabilitation of 3,760' of the Firestone Road, including additional drainage pipes, swales, road fill and Driving Surface Aggregate installation. The maintenance work will facilitate better road drainage and correct the erosion issues caused by an entrenched road surface, eroded ditches and excessive loss of road fines. The project will minimize sediment discharges to multiple tributaries to Bushkill Creek, a high quality stream that supports natural trout reproduction. Firestone Road provides access to the Resica Boy Scout Camp and several residences which see heavy use in the summer months. The township will offer an in-kind contribution of \$151,193.44 labor and equipment for the total project value of \$264,613.94. ◆

The Gallery at *Kettle Creek*

<u>April</u> Deanna Heffner *"Tiny Details"*

Drawings and paintings exploring the moments and little things that make up life in the Poconos. Focusing mainly on animals and the vibrance they bring to everything.

<u>May</u>

"Artists in Nature: Tricia Lowrey Lippert & Friends"

A variety of art mediums, including clay, oil painting and watercolors make for a unique nature-themed show.

<u>June</u>

Pocono Photo Club "Nature through our Lenses" A collection of photos from various members of the Pocono Photography Club. The District says a fond farewell to our former Head Resource Conservationist and friend in conservation Lori Kerrigan. Lori was responsible for providing leadership and support to the technical section of the District. We wish her well in her endeavors and lots of adventures to come! ●



