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MONROE COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT



Winter 2021 Newsletter

Volume 44 No. 4

New Farm to School Program Targets Teenagers



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The Monroe County Conservation District (MCCD) is proud to announce that we have initiated a new Agricultural Education Curriculum benefiting roughly 150 Stroudsburg High School (SHS) students. This new U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm to School grant-funded program allows us to bring local, farm-fresh foods directly into the classroom in order to make students, staff, and families aware of the bounty of local food available in our area, its nutritional value, and ideas for integrating it into their home menus. Our other goals for this program are to increase student awareness of future career opportunities in the agriculture industry, as well as increase understanding of how to support ethical and sustainable agriculture.

Working with both the American Foods and Pennsylvania Wildlife Ecology classes, we've hosted "in-school" field trips so that students could meet and converse with two local farmers: Heidi Secord of Josie Porter Farm in Stroudsburg and Chuck Gould of Gould's Produce in Brodheadsville. We've also covered multiple lessons about local foods, food justice, agricultural practices, and how the Conservation District supports local agriculture. We are in the process of planning an outdoor "Ag Day" festival in the spring at the SHS campus, which will increase agricultural exposure to many more students! This event will feature local producers and farmers as well as community organizations and natural resource professionals, and students may meet farm animals too! High school students will get a "taste" of the many different facets and opportunities available in the agricultural, horticultural, and food industries.

Some of the highlights of this program so far have been actively cooking recipes with the American Foods students using fresh local produce, and witnessing their reactions in just how simple yet delicious supporting our local agriculture and our own health can be!





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Conservation District
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The Board of Directors' monthly meeting is held at 8 am on the third Thursday of each month in the District office.

**Kettle Creek Environmental
Fund Update**

As we enter the winter season, the KCEF Board continues to move forward with selecting a major project for the EE Center. A field trip to Nescopeck State Park to view an example of a potential project is scheduled for December 14.

We regretfully accepted the resignation of Stephanie Spotts, but are pleased to announce that Gareth Denniston has joined the Board. He brings considerable experience, and has been an active EE Center member for some time. The Board is also soliciting additional members to fill vacant positions. If you are interested, please contact Diana Flint at the EE Center.

We wish you all the very best during the holidays and thank you for your support. Please stay safe and have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

-John Woodling, KCEF President

**KCEF
Board Members**



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Hello everyone! Kettle Creek is looking forward to a fabulous 2022 as we have expanded our program schedule to reflect the need for all of us to get outside and enjoy the natural world around us and the serenity it can bring. We have scheduled a number of bus day trips, designed some new Saturday public programs, prepped the supplies for maple sugaring season and much more. These programs will be following COVID guidelines as necessary and all bus trips and inside programs will require masks for all participants. Please check out the complete list of programs on our calendar and remember to register early.

This year, we are bringing back the Monroe County Earth Day Celebration on April 23rd, 2022 at Northampton Community College Monroe Campus. It has been 2 years since our last celebration and even though we missed the 50th anniversary, we hope to celebrate Earth Day #51 with the entire community.

At the same time we are happy to report that we are slowly increasing our involvement with local schools once again. We would like to thank all of the teachers and administrators that have worked with us to provide environmental education programs for students of all grade levels. As we move into 2022 we are looking forward to even more opportunities to involve students in a quality educational experience.

We are also excited to partner with the Brodhead Watershed Association to provide unique outdoor activities spread throughout the entire watershed. The staff at Kettle Creek will be busy in 2022, once again providing a wide range of environmental education experiences for people of all ages.

Roger Spotts
Environmental Education Coordinator



CHEMSWEEP 2022 Comes to Monroe County

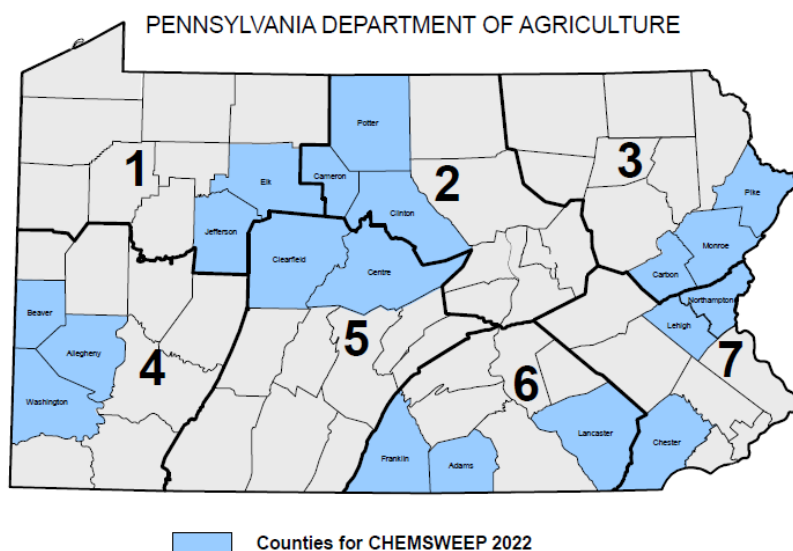
The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture’s CHEMSWEEP program provides Pennsylvania farmers and other licensed pesticide applicators with a means to dispose of canceled, suspended, or unwanted pesticide products. Through CHEMSWEEP, applicators can legally dispose of unwanted pesticides, generally at little or no cost. Almost all the waste pesticides collected are burned in EPA-approved incinerators. The remaining pesticides are treated and placed in EPA-permitted hazardous waste landfills. CHEMSWEEP has collected over 2.9 million pounds of unwanted pesticides through 2021!

CHEMSWEEP operates in a select number of counties each year. Licensed farmers, professional pesticide applicators and pesticide businesses in the counties selected for that year are eligible to participate. If you are a pesticide applicator in agriculture, pest control, lawn care or other professional capacity, or a pesticide dealer, check the CHEMSWEEP 2022 map below to see if your county is eligible. If so, complete the CHEMSWEEP registration form and return to the address shown below by the **deadline of February 28, 2022.**

More information on the CHEMSWEEP program can be found by simply searching “CHEMSWEEP” on your internet browser or clicking the link below. Registration forms can be found on the program website if you did not receive one in the mail. Please contact the PA Department of Agriculture with any questions regarding the program.

James Cunningham
Pesticide Specialist
PA Department of Agriculture
Bureau of Plant Industry
(717) 772-5210
jgcunningh@pa.gov

CHEMSWEEP 2022



CHEMSWEEP map, logo, and program language were used with permission from the PA Department of Agriculture https://www.agriculture.pa.gov/Plants_Land_Water/PlantIndustry/health-safety/environmental-programs/Pages/CHEMSWEEP%20Waste%20Pesticide%20Disposal%20Program.aspx



Bus Trips are Back!

Kettle Creek is happy to announce that we will be bringing back more bus trips for 2022. From one day excursions to look for eagles, snow geese, and mystery natural areas to more extensive multiple day trips to different natural Locations, we will be jumping in the Kettle Creek bus to explore these exciting areas. We will keep you updated in the calendar as we schedule the trips and we hope that you can join us. If anyone has a suggestion about a possible bus trip destination please let us know.





Program Guidelines

Masks are mandatory at all times while indoors, on the bus or where social distancing cannot be maintained.

Preregistration 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.

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

2022 Winter/Spring Programming



Tales on Trails: The Mitten Saturday, January 8th - 10am



Join us for a wintery guided StoryWalk® at Kettle Creek featuring the story, “The Mitten” adapted and illustrated by Jan Brett. We will walk the trails as we read The Mitten then head inside for a small craft. **This program is geared for children ages 3-6. Please dress for the weather. Cost is \$5 per child.** The StoryWalk® Project was created by Anne Ferguson of Montpelier, VT and developed in collaboration with the Kellogg-Hubbard Library. Storywalk® is a registered service mark owned by Ms. Ferguson.

Monday, January 17th —Building Closed—Holiday

KC Discovery Hike Saturday, January 22nd - 10am

Come and hike the trails here at Kettle Creek as we explore our winter landscape. If there is snow, we will discuss animal tracks and tracking otherwise, we’ll learn how to read the forest for signs of wildlife and past events. Please dress for the weather.

Cost: \$5 for adults \$4 for children under 12.

Eagle Watch Bus Trips January 25th, February 4th, February 11th

Join an Environmental Educator on this field trip to the Upper Delaware River in search of our national symbol, the Bald Eagle. Once a rare sight, many wintering and resident eagles now inhabit this region and the probability for sightings is high. **Meet at the EE Center at 8:30am and return 5:30pm. Cost: \$30 and includes bus transportation.** Participants should pack a lunch and binoculars and dress for the weather. Stops will be made for coffee and snacks. **Preregistration and payment required for all trips. Seating is limited.**

Western Fishing Off The Beaten Path Saturday, February 5th - 10am

Join local artist Don Baylor at the debut of his exhibit in the Gallery at Kettle Creek as he discusses hike-ins, pack trips, and a llama trek into beautiful out-of-the-way locations in Montana, Colorado, and Wyoming. Though these were fishing trips, the spectacular scenery will be emphasized for the non-angler. Don’s work will be on display in the gallery through February 28th. **There is no charge for this program.**

A Wildlife Valentine Saturday, February 12th - 10am

Humans are not the only species that celebrate “love” in Feb. Many different species of local wildlife do their courting in January and February. Join Environmental Educator Roger Spotts for this informative presentation on wildlife love. **Cost: \$5 for adults \$4 for children under 12.**

Winter Bog Walk

Saturday, February 12th - 2pm

Weather permitting we will be venturing into the Bog to look at this unique habitat at a different time of the year. **Pre-registration is required by February 9th. Cost: \$5 per person. Participants should dress for the weather and wear proper footwear.** Meet in the Bog parking lot located at 552 Cherry Lane Road, East Stroudsburg, PA.

Saturday, February 19th—Building Closed

Monday, February 21st—Building Closed—Holiday

Saturday, February 26th—Building Closed



Middle Creek Birding Bus Trip

Wednesday, March 2nd - 8:30am - 6pm

Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area is a major stop-over for tremendous numbers of Snow Geese—their huge flocks in flight sometimes create a “blizzard” of birds. Join Roger Spotts on this trip to observe a truly stunning spectacle of nature. In addition, a variety of waterfowl, raptors, and other birds should be seen. **Cost: \$30 and includes bus transportation. Participants should pack a lunch and binoculars and dress for the weather. Pre-registration and payment is required and limited.**

Maple Sugaring Public Day

Saturday, March 5th or Saturday, March 12th



Take a 90-minute tour of our Meesing sugarbush focusing on the history of maple syrup from the Native Americans to the early settlers in this region. Learn how to “tap” a maple tree to obtain sap, and watch as we demonstrate how to cook the sap until it is sweet maple syrup. You’ll complete the tour at our pancake station where the finished product is served over freshly made pancakes. **Preregistration is required by calling 570-629-3061. Participants may choose a time from 10am-2pm for their 90-minute tour. Cost: \$6/adults, \$4/children under 12. Tree sponsors attend free of charge. PLEASE DRESS APPROPRIATELY FOR THE WEATHER INCLUDING SHOES APPROPRIATE FOR TRAIL WALKING!**

Red Cross Blood Drive

Saturday, March 19th

We are proud to be hosting another blood drive from 9am-2pm. Call Barbara at MCCD at 570-629-3060 for more information. **To register or learn more about American Red Cross blood drives, visit redcrossblood.org or call 1-800-RED CROSS**

April Fools Mystery Bus Trip

Friday, April 1st - 8:30am—4pm

Jump on the Kettle Creek Bus with EE Coordinator Roger Spotts as we spend the day exploring locations in Monroe County searching out the early signs of spring. **Participants should dress for the weather, pack a lunch, binoculars, and something to drink. Registration is required by Wednesday, March 30. Cost: \$25 per person.**

The Gallery
Kettle Creek



Upcoming Artists

- January - Photo Contest Display
- February - Don Baylor “Inspired by Nature”
- March - Ray Roper “The Birds and the Bees and Beyond”
- April - Nancy Embich “Capturing the Music in Nature”

What to Photograph During the ‘Blah’ Months

By Matt Giambra, Environmental Educator

The change of seasons is always an exciting time. After all, the warmer spring air is a welcomed feeling after the brisk winter winds whipping at our faces – and the cool crisp air in the fall certainly feels refreshing after the dog days of summer. From a photographic standpoint, the change of seasons means a whole slew of fresh subjects are now available for us to capture i.e. the first of the spring flowers, the glorious sunsets in the summer, the wonderful fall foliage and of course the first frost... but then there’s that time of year after the winter holidays where everything is just kind of, “blah”.



Junco on a Thorny Branch—my first KC bird Photo

It can certainly be a time where you don’t really feel your creative juices flowing, nor is it a time you’d like to go out and explore new landscapes. For me this is the time of year that I get to experiment and it’s this time of year that I can give credit to for my growing excitement for photographing birds, and just birding in general.

Before last year, I never really considered myself a ‘birder’. I’ve certainly had co-workers, many of which you may know, that are considered true professionals in the birding world and I cannot even try to compare my knowledge with theirs. However, if it wasn’t for these “blah” months, my knowledge of birds would have remained at the bare minimum and birds and wildlife in general would have never been added to my photography portfolio.

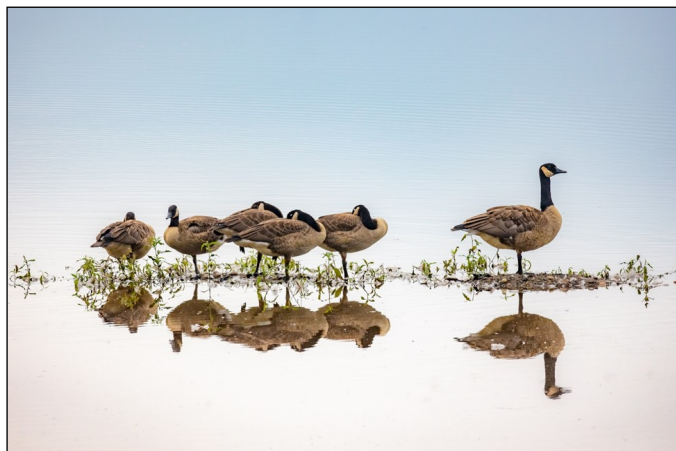
I can remember the first time I took a picture of a bird here at Kettle Creek. It was an image of a junco sitting on a thorny branch. I can’t say it is my favorite image but it’s definitely the one that sparked my motivation to seek out techniques to take better bird photos. (See left)

It was from that image that I found myself not only wanting to take better pictures of birds but then I also found myself wanting to identify the bird I was photographing and therefore my knowledge of bird species started to grow.

What makes these upcoming “blah” months so great to photograph birds is **one**; there are no leaves on the trees which makes seeing and photographing them a whole lot easier. And **two**; if you put out a bird feeder, you are almost guaranteed to have birds coming to your yard because food at this time of year is scarce and more than likely they will be happy to visit your feeder for an easy meal.

Personally, I prefer to take a bird’s photo not when they are actually on the feeder, but when they are perched in the branches around the feeder which helps to make the photo look less staged. (See right)

So if you are starting to feel a little “blah” yourself during these next few months, why not try out a new hobby and begin photographing birds? You never know what passions it may lead you to. Happy Birding!



Project OwlNet 2021

By Jackie and Darryl Speicher, Pocono Avian Research Center

Project OwlNet is a study of the migratory ecology of the northern saw-whet owl through Pennsylvania. These owls have a reliable migration, moving through our region from October through November. This is also a continent-wide study, meaning that banding stations in southern states continue to report new owls, even as we close for the season.

Visitors to the research station have the rare opportunity to see how we age the owls. Using a black light, the reflective pigment porphyrin shows up as a pink coloration in the wing feathers. Juveniles or hatch year birds (those that were eggs last spring) will show pink on all of the flight feathers. This is because the wing feathers are the same age, and all just freshly molted. An older bird will have a mixture of fresh pink and worn feathers. The bird wing pictured (bottom right) has a traditional second year pattern in the wing, with bright pink feathers close to the body and farthest out on the wing. The remaining middle feathers have less porphyrin and will likely be replaced during next year's molt.

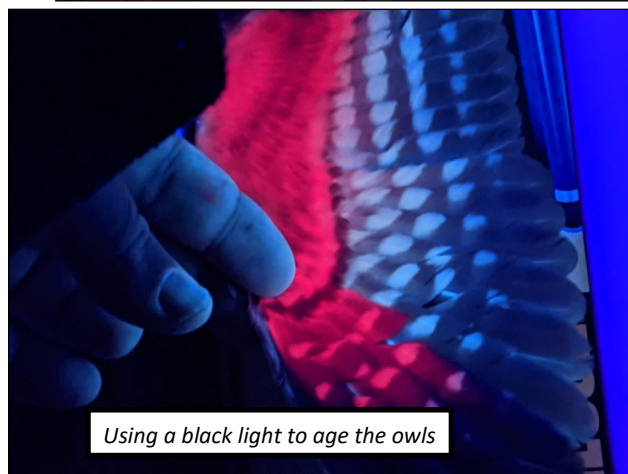
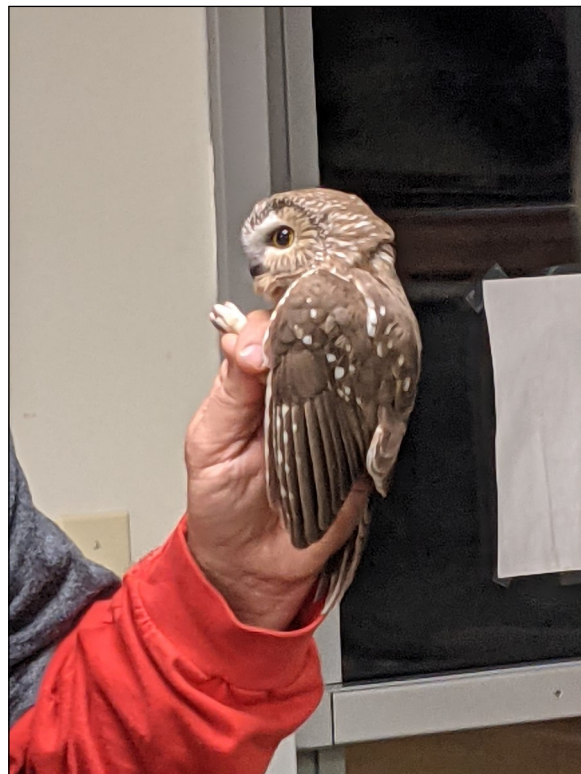
Overall, we had a very good owl year. The first few nights at the banding station were slow, with only a few avian visitors. As the season progressed, we had some multi-owl nights. This was especially welcome on the Friday nights when we had visitors at the station. The first owl of the 2021 migration season was a second-year female on 14 October. We had a mixture of older and hatch year birds, ending the season on 6 November with a flutter of three hatch year birds. We ended the season with 39 new owls banded and released. We had two owls remain at Kettle Creek for several days, but even those birds finally moved on. We wish them well as they continue their migration from Kettle Creek.

Thank you to all came out late at night to see the owls and support the EE center with your donations and your energy. We are looking forward to next summer MAPS banding season.

2021 Final Tally: 39 new northern saw-whet owls.

By sex: 31 Female, 4 Male, 4 unknown

By age: 14 hatch year, 17 second year, 8 after second year



Using a black light to age the owls



Stanley Becker Memorial Scholarship Applications Available

The Monroe County Conservation District and members of the Stanley Becker family are pleased to

announce that applications are now being accepted for the fourteenth annual Stanley Becker Memorial Scholarship. This scholarship will be awarded to a graduating senior in Monroe County who is planning on attending college and majoring in an environmental field. **The recipient will receive a \$500 scholarship. To receive an application or for more information, please visit mconconservation.org. Deadline to submit an application is Friday, April 1st, 2022.**

Volunteers Needed for Project Feederwatch



Become a Citizen Scientist by joining us for Project FeederWatch at the Kettle Creek Environmental Education Center! Watching the Center's bird feeders and recording the species and number of birds that visit them is what it's all about. You will receive training in bird identification and counting protocol from experienced volunteers and staff. Counting is done from indoors, so comfort is not a problem. Time commitment is as little as one to three hours twice a month from now through March. The data gathered from the Center's feeders is sent to Cornell Lab of Ornithology to be combined with feeder bird data from all over the continent to create a large database used by scientists studying the presence, distribution and movements of bird populations. If you are interested, please contact Matt at the Kettle Creek Environmental Education Center at mgmccd@ptd.net or 570-629-3061.

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MONROE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
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WEBSITE: mcconservation.org

Conserving Natural Resources for Our Future



SAVE THE DATE!

APRIL 23, 2022

Visit mcearthday.org for more information.

Exhibitors wanted!

Email Roger at rmccd@ptd.net

Sponsor a Maple Tree

Maple tree sponsorships are here again! For \$25/tree each sponsor receives a half pint of our fresh maple syrup, a certificate, free admission to one of our Public Day Programs on Saturday, March 5th or 12th for up to four people and a map showing the location of your tree in our Sugarbush. This year's public day event will be held on two separate days and the number of guests will be limited so preregistration is required. Download a Sponsor a Tree form on our website or give us a call at 570-629-3061 for more information.