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www.mcconservation.org



MONROE COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT



Winter 2023 Newsletter

Volume 46 No. 4

As we all begin to celebrate the holidays and settle in to endure the cold season, don't forget to appreciate the unique wonders of winter. No matter how you personally feel about the white stuff, the cold and snow of winter play important ecological roles in nature. Many plants and insects go dormant, taking a break from growing to conserve energy and prevent damage from freezing temperatures. A cold blanket of snow helps recharge the water table, insulates the ground, and can provide necessary cover for prey animals. In fact, how animals instinctively respond to the upcoming winter season is fascinating in itself. Some wildlife migrate, some hibernate, some change color, some grow more fat and fur, some stash food, some create their own antifreeze... they've all come up with their own impressive adaptations to deal with cold, dark winters. Don't forget that although frigid temperatures feel unpleasant, the quick onset of cold can help kill ticks too!



Inside This Issue

KCEF Update
Page 2

Around Kettle Creek
Page 3

Why Birds Shy Away From Your Feeders
Page 3

Calendar of Events
Page 4-5-6

Kettle Creek For Kids
Page 6

New PA DEP Bridge & Culvert Online Tool
Page 7

2024 Calendar Photo Contest Results
Page 7

Project Feederwatch Update
Page 7

Project OwlNet Update
Page 8

The Gallery at Kettle Creek
Page 9

Sponsor a Maple Tree
Page 9

And even though most of us want to cozy up indoors with a hot beverage, cold temperatures can benefit our bodies and minds too. Exposure to cold decreases inflammation and can activate metabolism in adults, while shivering stimulates the burning of fat in our bodies. The cold can boost sleep quality and can also help us overcome mental habits, improve focus, and boost creativity. People also tend to reconnect with the people who matter most to us during the wintertime.

With all that being said, Kettle Creek is here to help facilitate your winter enjoyment! In addition to several outdoor family programs like wildlife tracking in the snow, wilderness survival, and full moon walks, we are also offering a full-day immersive winter experience during the holiday break!

This special "Wildly Wintertime" program on Thursday, December 28th is for children ages 7-11 who might need a necessary break from holiday toys and electronics to explore outside all while learning about the many wonders of winter. For more information, please visit mcconservation.org.

And keep in mind, it will soon be time to head into the sugarbush to start tapping trees and cooking up maple syrup once February begins! Maple tree sponsorships make great holiday gifts and show others that you value local environmental education efforts!

We wish you all the happiest of holidays! ❄️

Find us on Social Media!





Kettle Creek Environmental Fund Update



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

Lori Kerrigan
Head Resource Conservationist

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 Bistras
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.



Over three decades ago a group of citizens in Monroe County came together to establish a 501(c)3 non-profit fundraising organization to help the Monroe County Conservation District carry out its mission, especially regarding environmental education of our children, youth, and adults in our area.

During its existence the Kettle Creek Environmental Fund (KCEF) has raised over \$1 million to that end.

Those monies have been used to help construct the Kettle Creek Environmental Education Center, to purchase a 13-passenger accessible bus for trips, to support special programs like the Envirothon and Conservation Camp, to help all four Monroe County school districts provide EE for their students, and other projects as well.

All of these endeavors have been possible due to one thing—your generosity as supporters of KCEF. Over the years many of you have made donations and attended our dinners with regularity. Some of you are new to the area and just beginning to learn about the center and our fundraising organization—we thank all of you for helping to make our recent fundraising dinner a huge success. Attendance at the dinner topped 180 and our net income from dinner tickets, games and raffles, donations, and dinner sponsors was over \$25,400. These donations will be added to our existing funds to continue to provide ongoing EE programs, to develop new EE programs, and to fund special projects that are being proposed.

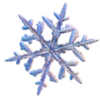
Sadly, our 2023 fundraising dinner would be the last one for KCEF's longest running board member, John Woodling. John passed away October 10th. John had been a board member since 1993 and served as President of the Board for the last 15 years. During the 2022 fundraising dinner, the KCEF Board provided a special commendation to John for his 30 years of service to KCEF. We loved and respected John and will miss him very much.

Donations to the Kettle Creek Environmental Fund may be made in memory of John and will be used to fund a special project in his memory. ❄️

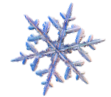
- *Dr. Elaine Rogers,*
KCEF President

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





Around Kettle Creek



The last few months have been a blur of activity at the EE Center and as we get ready for the first snowflakes to fall we are already planning for a big 2024. The fall season saw us working with local schools in the Bog and at Kettle Creek helping the students understand the wide diversity of life that inhabit our area and the unique way they interact with other species and people. It is always interesting to work with local students, some of whom have no idea all the cool things living in their backyard.

Our bird seed sale was a big success and we would like to say thank-you to everyone who purchases seed from us at the sale and in the gift shop throughout the year. These sales help support our educational programs and we are pleased with the quality seed we offer through our distributor. Also please be aware that we now accept credit cards for all purchases at the gift shop and for some programs. We are working on expanding our ability to take credit cards for program registration possibly on-line which we will keep you updated on. We will continue to stock birdseed and feeders throughout the winter for all your bird feeding needs.

Our winter program calendar is loaded with program opportunities for you and your family, join us on an Eagle Watch, or a Winter Bog walk. We will also be offering a winter full moon walk and in a few months our annual maple sugaring season will be in full swing. Don't miss one of our public maple sugaring days with the best pancakes in the Poconos served as part of the sugar bush experience.

The staff and Board of Directors thank all of you for your continuing support and we look forward to seeing you at Kettle Creek. ❄️

-Roger Spotts, Environmental Education Coordinator



Don't forget to visit our Gift Shop to find unique holiday gifts this season!

Please see calendar for building hours.



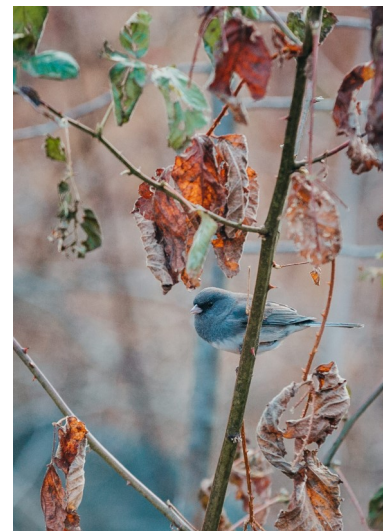
Unlocking the Mystery: Why Birds Shy Away from Your Feeders

If birds aren't coming to your bird feeders, there could be several reasons why they are staying away.

First, consider the location of your feeders. Birds prefer a safe and open spot where they can easily spot potential predators. If your feeders are too close to shrubs or bushes, birds may feel exposed and avoid them. Also, check for any noisy or active areas around your home that might be scaring the birds away, such as loud machinery or pets.

Another reason might be the type of food you're offering. Birds have diverse dietary preferences, so it's essential to provide a variety of seeds and feed. Common options include sunflower seeds, nyjer seeds, millet, and suet. Make sure your feeders are clean and free from mold or spoiled food, as birds are cautious about their health and will avoid contaminated sources.

To attract more birds this winter, you can take several steps. First, create a bird-friendly environment by planting native trees and shrubs that provide natural food sources and shelter. Additionally, adding water sources like a birdbath can be inviting, especially when other water sources are frozen. Regularly maintaining and cleaning your feeders, ensuring they are well-stocked, and offering a range of bird food options will make your yard more appealing to a variety of bird species. Patience is key, as it may take some time for the birds to discover and become accustomed to your feeding station. Over time, with the right conditions and offerings, you'll likely see more feathered visitors to your bird feeders. ❄️





MONROE COUNTY
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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.

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2023 Winter Programming



Winter Solstice Yoga Class Thursday, December 21st - 6pm



Winter Solstice is thought of as a time of death and rebirth when Nature's powers and our own souls are renewed, framing the longest night of the year. This all adult level yoga class will be held in the Gallery at the Kettle Creek Environmental Education Center. **Bring your mat or towel to lie on and an open mind. Optionally, bring blocks or straps you may wish to support your practice. Cost: \$5/person**

Friday, December 22nd—Building Closes at Noon—Holiday

Monday, December 25th—Building Closed—Holiday



Wildly Wintertime: A Full Day Winter Experience Thursday, December 28th - 9am - 3:30pm



Looking to provide your child with a reprieve from electronic toys and indoor activities during holiday break? This winter day camp is an immersive, educational, and fun full-day winter experience at Kettle Creek for ages 7-11. Campers must bring lunch, snack, reusable water bottle, backpacks, extra clothing, hiking shoes or boots. **Cost: \$30 per child, payment due at time of registration. Registration deadline is Thursday, December 21st.**

Friday, December 29th—Building Closes at Noon—Holiday

Monday, January 1st—Building Closed—Holiday

Tracks Telling a Tale Saturday, January 6th - 10am



Join Environmental Education Coordinator Roger Spotts for an outside hike to look for tracks at Kettle Creek. This program will explain the methods of identifying the tracks and hopefully offer insight into the story they can tell about our animal neighbors. **Please dress for the weather. Cost: \$5/person.**

Saturday, January 13th—Building Closed

Monday, January 15th—Building Closed—Holiday

KC for Kids: How Animals Survive the Winter Thursday, January 18th - 1pm

This one-hour program is for children 3-6. See page 6 for details. **Cost: \$5/child.**

Eagle Watch Bus Trips January 19th & February 2nd



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 by 5:30pm.** Participants should pack a lunch and binoculars and dress for the weather. Stops will be made for coffee and snacks. **Pre-registration and payment required for all trips. Seating is limited. Cost: \$35 and includes bus transportation.**



Winter Survival Skills Saturday, January 20th - 10am

Join us for a morning of outdoor exploration and putting our winter survival skills to the test. We will learn about foraging local wild edibles in winter, learn basic fire

building skills and construct shelters from materials found in nature. This program is geared for **children ages 8-14**.
Please dress for the weather. Cost: \$5/person.

Saturday, January 27th—Building Closed

KC for Kids: All About Owls
Thursday, February 1st - 1pm

This one-hour program is for children 3-6. See page 6 for details. **Cost: \$5/child.**

Reading the Winter Landscape
Saturday, February 3rd - 10am

Come hike the trails at Kettle Creek and see what is revealed when the forest takes its long winter's nap.
Please dress for the weather. Cost: \$5/person.

Valentine's Day in the Natural World
Saturday, February 10th - 10am



Join us for a look at how wildlife celebrates Valentine's Day. Humans aren't the only romantics as several different species of animals' instincts turn to romance in mid- February. We'll look at these wildlife romantics and their February breeding seasons. We may go outside, so **please dress for the weather. Cost: \$5/person.**

Winter Bog Walk

Sunday, February 11th - 1pm

Weather permitting, we will be venturing into the Bog to view this unique habitat at a different time of the year. 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. Pre-registration is required. **Participants should dress for the weather and wear proper footwear.**

Cost: \$6/person. Meet in the Bog parking lot located at 552 Cherry Lane Road, East Stroudsburg, PA.

KC for Kids: Herping Wonders - A Scaled & Slimy Journey into the World of Cold-Blooded Creatures

Thursday, February 15th - 1pm

This one-hour program is for children 3-6. See page 6 for details. **Cost: \$5/child.**

Saturday, February 17th—Building Closed

Monday, February 19th—Building Closed—Holiday



Full Moon Walk at Kettle Creek

Friday, February 23rd - 6:30 pm

Join us for the opportunity to take a walk under the light of a full moon on a clear winter night. Even though it is the middle of winter there are many things going on outside at Kettle Creek. This is a walk for the whole family to enjoy.
Please dress for the weather and possibly snow covered trails. Hot chocolate will be served at the end of the walk.

Cost: \$5/person and registration is required and limited.

KC for Kids: Walking in a Winter Wildland

Thursday, February 29th - 1pm

This one-hour program is for children 3-6. See page 6 for details. **Cost: \$5/child.**



Maple Sugaring Public Day

Saturday, March 2nd or Saturday, March 9th

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.





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KC for Kids: The Wonders of Weather Thursday, March 14th - 1pm

This one-hour program is for children 3-6. See below for details. **Cost: \$5/child.**

Red Cross Blood Drive

Saturday, March 23rd - 9am - 2pm



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.**

KC for Kids: Blossoming Discoveries Thursday, March 14th - 1pm

This one-hour program is for children 3-6. See below for details. **Cost: \$5/child.**

CALL FOR SATURDAY GIFT SHOP

VOLUNTEERS!

We are seeking reliable individuals who wouldn't mind spending some occasional Saturday mornings (9am to noon) helping out at Kettle Creek! Volunteers will help staff the gift shop and will be trained to answer phones, check in program participants, and do transactions on our simple cash register while our environmental educators lead on-site programs. If you're interested or have any questions, please contact Brittney at bcmccd@ptd.net. We greatly appreciate the community's help!



Kettle Creek for Kids



KCK is back this winter! Programs are at 1pm every other Thursday for ages 3-6. Parent or guardian must attend with their child. Please dress for the weather. Cost: \$5 per child, cash or check only. Payable day of program. Registration is limited, please call to sign up!



January 18	How Animals Survive the Winter - Learn how animal instincts & survival strategies help animals deal with the cold of winter.
February 1	All About Owls - Learn all about our nocturnal feathered friends through hands-on activities, a story and a craft.
February 15	Herping Wonders: A Scaled and Slimy Journey into the World of Cold-Blooded Creatures - A hands-on introduction into the captivating world of reptiles and amphibians.
February 29	Walking in a Winter Wildland - Learn how animals move through the winter world when snow blankets the ground. This program will take place both indoors and out, so dress for the weather.
March 14	The Wonders of the Weather - Discover the wonders of sunshine, clouds, wind, and rain through outdoor explorations & sensory activities.
March 28	Blossoming Discoveries - A Springtime Adventure in Nature





PA DEP Announces Launch of Bridge & Culvert Maintenance & Repair Tool Online



The Chapter 105 Program just released a new and innovative online tool on their webpage.

This tool, *the Bridge & Culvert Maintenance and Repair Tool*, is conveniently designed to help bridge and culvert owners understand and be informed of permitting and notification requirements for bridge and culvert maintenance under various scenarios, including emergency situations.

It does this by asking a series of questions about the proposed work, the condition of the structure, current situation, etc. and includes helpful photographs, examples, and links. ❄️

⇒ Find the tool here: <https://tinyurl.com/2p9xw82s>



Monroe County Photo Contest Results



The results are in! This year we were faced with a very tough challenge to pick only 12 out of all the fantastic photos that were submitted. Regina Matarazzo's macro photo of a bumblebee pollinating an allium flower earned the top spot as the cover winner.

All winners receive a copy of the 2024 calendar and a pint of maple syrup from our very own Meesing Sugarbush. The cover winner receives a calendar and a *quart* of maple syrup.

Kettle Creek is pleased to offer the 2024 calendars for sale in the Gift Shop for \$9.95 plus tax. All winners will have their photographs on display in the Art Gallery at Kettle Creek through January 31st.

Stop in today to browse the photos and purchase a calendar! ❄️

Project Feederwatch Update

Project FeederWatch is off to a great start this season with our dedicated volunteers spending roughly 15 cumulative hours biweekly observing our feeders. Project FeederWatch is an important citizen science project that provides valuable information to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology about bird populations and distribution. So far this season we have observed 15 bird species at our feeders, as well as mammals such as chipmunks and squirrels.

This year, Project FeederWatch has added some new interesting components to its data collection including mammal counts, disease or mortality counts, notes on any site changes, as well as asking participants to record their personal emotions while observing the feeders. Participants have the option to take note of how they were feeling while watching birds, mammals, or any sick or dead birds that may have been encountered. The range of emotions includes angry, surprised, sad, neutral, excited, happy, and love it. The goal of this new component is to gather information to better understand the human connection to animals and their interactions at the bird feeders. For more information or to get involved as a volunteer, call our office or email clmccd@ptd.net. ❄️



A Mysterious Project Owl-net Season

By Jackie and Darryl Speicher, Pocono Avian Research Center

Project Owl-net 2023 was one we'll remember for a long time, not because of how many owls we encountered but how few. The nets opened for the season the first week of October and remained quiet for two weeks, including the first open house of the season at Kettle Creek.

Eventually owls began to show up and participants at the second and third open houses got to see these cute little owls, many of them for the first time.

The timing of the migration was later than usual and there were very few HY (hatch year) birds among those we banded. In the end we banded a total of 15 saw-whet owls. We also did not encounter any

owls that were already banded. We still need to sift through the data from other locations, the late season push did raise totals for many stations across the mid Atlantic region. To what extent the massive wildfires in Canada this past summer had on the breeding cycle and timing of this years migration we may not fully understand for some time. It will be interesting to see how this season compares with the seasons that follow. ❄️



Pocono Mountain Christmas Bird

Audubon's Christmas Bird Count is the nation's longest-running citizen science bird project. This community effort fuels Audubon's work throughout the year. You can add to a century of community service by joining a count near you!

This year's Pocono Mountain Christmas Bird Count will be **Sunday, December 17th**. Anyone interested in participating can contact Darryl and Jackie Speicher at poconoavian@hotmail.com ❄️



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WEBSITE: mcconservation.org



Conserving Natural Resources for Our Future



**The Gallery at
*Kettle Creek***

December & January
Photo Contest Display
Enjoy the entrants in our Monroe County Natural Resources Photo Contest.
The top 12 photos will be available on a 2024 calendar.

February
Chester Rideout *"The Wide Blue Sky"*
The photography of Chester Rideout's tours and travels will be featured.

March
Stephanie Spotts *"Birds of a Feather"*
A collection of one-of-a-kind, hand-crafted bird houses to make your wild birds very happy.



Sponsor a Maple Tree

Maple tree sponsorships are here again!
For just \$25/tree, each sponsor receives:

- ⇒ a pint of our **fresh maple syrup**,
- ⇒ a certificate,
- ⇒ **free admission** to one of our Maple Sugaring Public Day Programs on Saturday, March 2nd or 9th for up to four people,
- ⇒ and a map showing the location of your tree in our Meesing Sugarbush

This year's Maple Sugaring Public Day event will be held on two separate Saturdays and the number of guests will be limited so pre-registration is required.

Download a **Sponsor a Tree** form on our website at mcconservation.org or give us a call at 570-629-3061 for more information.

We thank you for your support!