



The Resource

A Newsletter of the Mercer County Conservation District

Volume 22, Number 1

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Welcome Kelcy Marini



Kelcy Marini joined the Mercer County Conservation District in October as the new Environmental Education Coordinator. She was born and raised in Mercer County and graduated from Reynolds High School in 2011. She then graduated with a BA in Environmental Studies from Allegheny College where she also served as a Project Assistant at Creek Connections. After that, she earned her Master of Sustainability degree from Chatham University and was the first-ever Field Trip Coordinator for the Falk School of Sustainability's K-12 Program. Most recently, Kelcy was the Specialty Conference Program Administrator for The Minerals, Metals, and Materials Society. In her free time, Kelcy enjoys kayaking, camping, and sitting around a fire with her friends and family. She married her husband Nick in 2020, and they have a dog named Maci.



"Full Steam Ahead in Environmental Ed"

2022 is shaping up to be an exciting year for environmental education at the Conservation District! For almost two years now, our events looked a lot different than they did before. Field trips, workshops, camps, and more were put on pause, cancelled altogether, or turned to virtual. I should probably "knock on wood" after I say this, but I'm confident that we will be back to normal (or whatever our *new* normal is) very soon.

Our calendar is starting to fill up with both virtual and in-person programs – black bears with second graders, maple sugaring with homeschoolers, and climate change with retired teachers – just to name a few. We're also very excited that Envirothon will be back to in-person this year, and we're hoping to bring back the Summer Discovery Series. Of course, we have many more returning and new projects in the works. Be sure to keep an eye on our website and Facebook for more information.

Since I am still new to this position (and have *very* big shoes to fill), I would love to hear from you about what you'd like to see from the Conservation District this year! I welcome any ideas for new events we can offer or other ways I can bring environmental education to the community. Feel free to email me at kmarini@mcc.co.mercer.pa.us with your ideas or just to say hello!

Mercer County Conservation District Staff:

Jay Russell, District Manager	Jennifer Medberry, Office Manager	Nick Trivelli, Ag. Resource Conservationist
Bob McDonald, Conservation Technician		Shawn Hedglin, Conservation Resource Specialist
Larissa Cassano-Hamilton, Watershed Specialist		Kelcy Marini, Environmental Ed. Coordinator

ATTENTION 9th-12th grade TEACHERS

Plant Camp July 26-28th \$75.00

(Formal and Informal Edu)

- Expand aquatic plants knowledge (Invasive vs. Native)
- Hands-On Experiences @ Pymatuning State Park, Presque Isle State Park, Conneaut Lake, Maurice K. Goddard State Park
 - *meals and transportation provided
- Discover ways to incorporate the resources, lesson plans, and tools provided into your classroom
- Receive ACT 48 credits
- For more details and to apply, contact Emily Borcz at eborcz@pa.gov or call (724) 932-3142 ext. 106.

This year the No-Till Alliance will once again host their popular Winter Soil Health meeting. The event will focus on a variety of topics of interest to both new and experienced no-tillers through a combination of presentations dedicated to the latest research and trends, to farmer experience with transition to full no-till and cover cropping and discussion of practical methods to reduce costs in the face of expected high input costs in 2022. The meeting will be held on Friday, March 18 at the Hickory Post 6166 VFW Club (Hermitage, Mercer County, PA). Additional details, agenda and registration information can be found at <https://panotill.org/>



Ross Paulenich Memorial Conservation Scholarship

Ross was raised in Hermitage and graduated from Hickory High School. He then graduated from Clarion University with two bachelor's degrees – one in Environmental Biology and another in Geographic Information Systems. Ross was passionate about conservation and loved the outdoors. In addition to working in the environmental field, he spent much of his free time hunting and fishing. He also enjoyed mushroom hunting and cheering on the Pittsburgh Penguins. This scholarship is awarded in his honor. The application is open to Mercer County high school seniors that plan on majoring in Environmental Science/Studies, Agriculture, Biology, Engineering, Conservation, Natural Resource Management, or similar. For more information and to download the application, go to the Scholarship page under the Education tab of our website. Applications are due by February 28, 2022.

AgriLink

Treasurer Stacy Garrity and Secretary of Agriculture Russell Redding announced the relaunch of the Agriculture Linked (Agri-Link) Investment Program on December 20, 2021. The Program provides the opportunity for low-interest loans to Pennsylvania agriculture operations implementing conservation best management practices (BMPs) listed in approved Act 38 nutrient management plans, Chapter 91 manure management plans, agricultural Erosion and Sedimentation plans (Ag E&S) or conservation plans. The Program has several significant changes, including a maximum loan amount of \$250,000 and a maximum term of 12-years. Please visit the following website for AgriLink Program information, questions regarding eligible projects, and required documentation forms: https://www.agriculture.pa.gov/Plants_Land_Water/StateConservationCommission/Pages/Agriculture-linked-Low-Interest-Loan-Program-.aspx

Please direct any questions about this program to Nick Trivelli at 724-662-2242 or ntrivelli@mcc.co.mercer.pa.us

Stormwater and Your Backyard

Conservation of natural resources starts on your property, you can do your part to help. Did you know that sediment is the number one pollutant of rivers and streams in the nation? Every year tons of sediment is washed away and flows downstream which can impact downstream communities. Erosion and sediment control is one way all landowners can protect our water resources which include waterways, wetlands, lakes and ponds. The District has lots of information on Best Management Practices to control erosion and help with stormwater control. Stormwater can have dramatic impacts on downstream areas. Did you know Stormwater is also considered pollution? We all have felt the impacts of stormwater over the past 5 years with the heavy rains that have occurred. Stormwater can damage our property and local infrastructure. If you have questions about your property and how you might be able to help with controlling sediment or stormwater contact the District Office for general information or technical assistance. We are here to help!

The District is looking to provide outreach and education opportunities for the public so we can all better understand our natural systems, the way changes in climate impacts our lives and how to manage the impacts in our communities. We would like to hear from you. Contact us with your concerns or questions so we can all work together to improve our communities.

General NPDES Permit PAG-01 for Small Sites

The PA Department of Environmental Protection has announced the availability of a new General NPDES Permit PAG-01 for small sites that involve less than 5 acres of earth disturbance. The PAG-01 Permit will become effective March 1st, 2022. The application will require a \$500 administrative filing fee payable to the County Clean Water Fund, and a disturbed acres fee payable to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Clean water Fund.

The total area of impervious following construction must be:

- a. Less than or equal to Thirty Thousand Square feet (30,000sf) within the disturbed area and**
- b. Less than or equal to twelve percent (12%) of the total project area.**

No stormwater from off-site areas (i.e. outside of the project site boundary) may flow into the PCSM BMPs implemented under the Concentrated Flow and Sheet Flow Standards.

Stormwater discharges (during or after construction) may not be directed to a combined sewer system.

Regulated fill requiring a Waste Management permit may not be used for projects requesting coverage under this General Permit.

Applicants must select E&S BMPs to control stormwater runoff during earth disturbance activities that will be designed, installed and maintained in accordance with DEP's Erosion and Sediment Pollution Control Manual (363-2134-008) (E&S Manual0), as amended, with the exception of sediment traps (compost sock sediment traps are allowable) and sediment basins which cannot be utilized under this General Permit. In addition, applicants are not authorized to use alternative E&S BMPs unless authorized to do so by DEP in writing.

Additional information, Instructions and application forms are available in the PA DEP eLibrary at [- DEP eLibrary \(state.pa.us\)](https://dep.eLibrary.state.pa.us).

The NPDES General Permit PAG-01 will expire February 28, 2027.

Road Infrastructure In Our Communities: A Look at Funding Opportunities

We've all traveled that public road that frustrates us. Did you know that these types of situations you experience during your drive are often symptoms of underlying road system conditions? Addressing those underlying conditions which cause the problems are sometimes too costly for local road owners to undertake either financially or in terms of manpower. Each year Mercer County receives an allocation of Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Road Maintenance funds dedicated to improving these situations. This grant program utilizes maintenance practices or techniques that work with natural systems. Road owners need only make an application for grant funding to (MCCD) to potentially be selected and receive funding.

The grant procedure is a six-step process for local road owners to apply for and receive funding to conduct road maintenance improvements. **STEP 1:** To be eligible for funding the person in charge of developing a work plan and overseeing its completion must attend an Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance (ESM) training within the last five calendar years. **STEP 2:** Locate a worksite on a roadway that is paved and has 500 or less cars per day or one that is unpaved. **STEP 3:** Discuss the project with the grant administrator early in the application process. **STEP 4:** Submit a grant application. **STEP 5:** If awarded, local road owners sign a contract for the work outlined to improve the road system. **STEP 6:** Road owners complete the work specified in the work plan and submit a Completion Report.

For more information on the Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Roads grants available, please contact Shawn Hedglin at shedglin@mcc.mercer.pa.us



The Watershed Protection: Stormwater and Flood Resiliency subgroup created a storymap about the Shenango River: <http://arcg.is/15zmD10>. Check it out and leave some input! The storymap was done in part to celebrate the Shenango River as the 2021 River of the Year. Voting just wrapped for 2022 River of the Year. Nominees included French Creek, Monongahela River, Connoquenessing Creek and Catawissa Creek.



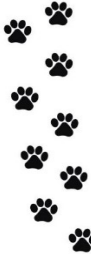








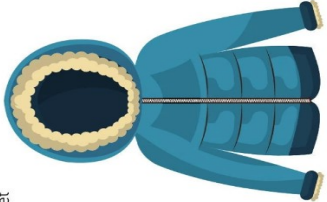

Shenango CREST is a network of local organizations, businesses, groups, and nonprofits in northwestern PA and the surrounding regions. Collaboratively we strive to open the climate change conversation and provide opportunities for climate education

Want to learn more about SCREST or become part of the network? Call the office or visit our website for more information <https://mercercountycd.com/>


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Winter Scavenger Hunt

 <small>snowman</small>	 <small>snow</small>	 <small>animal tracks</small>	 <small>bird</small>
 <small>sticks</small>	 <small>icicles</small>	 <small>sled</small>	 <small>gray clouds</small>
 <small>human footprints in the snow</small>	 <small>Conifer tree</small>	 <small>pinecone</small>	 <small>jacket</small>
 <small>snow plow</small>			

Winter Scavenger Hunt Digital PDF | Etsy



Take a walk outside and see if you can find all of the items listed on the Scavenger Hunt.

Nature is a tool to get children to experience not just the wider world, but themselves.

-Stephen Moss