

FALL 2026 E-BLAST



CLARION CONSERVATION DISTRICT



Hello, Autumn!



by Hannah Bequeath, Education/Outreach Coordinator

Autumn has arrived! Crisp air, crunchy leaves, whimsical fog, late-blooming wildflowers, active wildlife busy preparing for winter- there is so much to enjoy in nature during fall! Not to mention that soon we will be in peak leaf color!

As you enjoy time outside this fall, perhaps you'd be interested to know more about the efforts taking place to protect our beautiful local environment. Read on to learn about what the Clarion Conservation District staff has been up to this past **summer**, meet the District's **new Erosion and Sediment (E&S) Technician**, get a little spooked as you learn about a real-life blood-sucking creature that lives in your backyard- one that you most likely had an encounter with if you spent any time outdoors this summer in Clarion County - on the featured species page (aka **gnats!**), and be sure to check out the last page for more information on **group outdoor recreation opportunities / environmental education programs going on this fall!**

Our main goal at the District is to protect Clarion County's natural resources. Thank you for your interest in our efforts!

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RECAP OF SUMMER 2026 EVENTS

by Hannah Bequeath, Education/Outreach Coordinator

July- The Clarion Conservation District provided two **Firefly Expedition programs** at Lost in the Wilds Brewery/Rail 66 Trail in Shippensburg, PA as part of the Clarion GloWild event. Special thanks to the Clarion County Economic Development (CCED)/Discover Clarion County for including us in the awesome, weekend-long event and to Lost in the Wilds for providing the outdoor field space for the programs. The CCD Rain Gardens were one of the featured gardens during the **Native Garden Tour** hosted by Seneca Rocks Audubon Society (SRAS). CCD provided educational activities pertaining to agriculture/water conservation and a book reading of "The Soil in Jackie's Garden" by Peggy Thomas in the **Kids Barn at the Clarion County Fair**.

August- **Rain Garden Volunteer Days** were held throughout the summer at CCD's public rain gardens behind our office, but the August date was especially notable in that we not only weeded the gardens, but also planted additional native plants graciously donated by SRAS /Alice Thurau. CCD provided **education/outreach tables with information on aquatic invasive species (AIS) at boat launches** throughout Clarion County as part of our Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM) education/outreach grant through the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts (PACD). This effort also brought further community awareness of our newly installed educational AIS signs located at the boat launches (Mill Creek Boat Launch, Gumtown Park/Redbank Creek Kayak Launch, Kahle Lake, Toby Boat Launch, and the East Brady Kayak Launch).

September- CCD hosted a **Farmer Dinner** event directed towards Clarion County farmers at Trinity Point Church in Clarion, PA covering topics such as the Agriculture Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP), cover crops, and no-till planting (see Agriculture page for more info). CCD provided environmental education programming at **Keystone High School on composting/soil health and nonpoint source pollution**. The District tabled at the **Clarion County Association of Township Officials (CCATO) convention**, representing the DGLVR program. CCD, Friends of Cook Forest, and Penn Soil RC&D partnered to coordinate a **Clarion River Clean-Up** that had 74 volunteers in attendance along the Clarion River and roads throughout Cook Forest State Park (more info on Watershed page).

Below: 40 participants gathered to learn about fireflies; our magical state insect, the fascinating lives they lead, and ways we can help protect them.



Below: Keystone High School students learn about vermicomposting and work together to create a worm bin for their school.



Below: Volunteers help weed and plant more natives in the District's public rain garden. A Tiger Swallowtail Butterfly stops at the Butterfly Weed in the small garden.



Below: 74 volunteers help to clean litter out of the Clarion River and nearby roads throughout Cook Forest State Park.



Watershed Updates

Canoe Creek: Watershed Assessment

In partnership with Penn West Clarion University, Armstrong Conservation District, and Venango Conservation District, CCD conducted an assessment of Canoe Creek in northwest Clarion County (pictured to the right). This assessment characterizes water quality, in-stream and riparian habitat, biological diversity, abandoned mine impacts, and waterway encroachments, such as bridges and culverts. This snapshot of resource conditions will be used by non-profit and governmental agencies to prioritize, design, and plan watershed restoration and improvement through the use of best management practices.

Overall, the creek has good water quality with a diverse fish community. The main concerns are that a headwater tributary is impacted by acid mine drainage (AMD) and there are areas that lack a riparian buffer and/or have invasives (mostly Japanese Knotweed) covering the banks.

Guidance and financial support was provided by the Iron Furnace Chapter #288 of Trout Unlimited and the Coldwater Heritage Partnership on behalf of the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (Environmental Stewardship Fund), the PA Fish and Boat Commission, the Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds, and the PA Council of Trout Unlimited. **The assessment has been completed and can be viewed at www.clarionconservation.com/watersheds.**



Contact the Clarion Conservation District's Watershed Specialist, Kylie Shaw, at 814-297-8036 or watershed@clarionconservation.com

Master Watershed Steward Training Info for the PA Wilds Region



Join a free webinar through Penn State Extension on **December 8th from 12-1pm** to learn: What is the Master Watershed Steward (MWS) Program and what can we do for your community? This information session is all about the Spring 2027 MWS training program and how you can apply to become a MWS, one of Penn State Extension's fastest-growing and impact-making volunteer programs. This session is geared toward applicants in the PA Wilds region of Pennsylvania, which includes Cameron, Centre, Clarion, Clearfield, Clinton, Elk, Forest, Jefferson, Lycoming, McKean, Potter, and Tioga Counties. Register by December 7th on the Penn State Extension website.

Watershed Updates



Clarion River Clean-Up 2026

A big THANK YOU to the 74 people that attended the Clarion River Clean-Up on Saturday, September 26th! Volunteers ranging in age from 4-78 from the local community and beyond helped to collect ~ half of a dumpster ~ worth of litter out of the Clarion River and nearby roads in Cook Forest State Park. Though litter pollution can be frustrating, it was so encouraging and inspiring to see that so many people do care about protecting our local environment. Prizes were awarded to volunteers that found the weirdest items, largest items, who traveled the furthest to be there, who got the muddiest/wettest, and the youngest volunteer.

Thank you to our many partners and sponsors:

- Carl Harting & Friends of Cook Forest
- Sue Nielson & Penn Soil RC&D
- Michelle's Cafe provided morning refreshments
- Pale Whale Canoe Fleet donated canoes, PFDs, shuttle, & space to set up registration & Cooksburg Cafe cooked us a whole lot of pizzas for lunch.
- Brookfield Renewable purchased the t-shirts
- PennDOT provided free gloves, vests, trash bags
- Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) / Cook Forest State Park staff provided a shelter and dumpster
- Prizes donated by: Clarion Conservation District, Lost In The Wilds Brewing, Almanac Planting, Cook Forest Sawmill Center for the Arts, FL Crooks & Co, Dear Heart Medicinals and Mercantile, and C & A Trees.

Financial support provided by a grant received by Penn Soil RC&D from the Community Conservation Partnerships Program Environmental Stewardship Fund under the administration of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation administered through the Pennsylvania Environmental Council's Pennsylvania Water Trails Partnership Mini Grant Program.

Agriculture Updates

Save the Date:

Western PA Grazing
Conference

March 11th, 2027

Trinity Point Church
Clarion, PA

More info coming soon at
www.westernpagrazing.com

The Agriculture Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP) supports Pennsylvania farmers and agricultural landowners in their efforts to protect and enhance water quality. ACAP provides financial and technical assistance for the implementation of best management practices (BMPs) on agricultural operations within the Commonwealth.

Interested in applying for ACAP?

Schedule a pre-application site visit with Mendy Stewart, CCD Agriculture Specialist, by **Dec 1, 2026.**

Farmer Dinner

The Clarion Conservation District held a Farmer Dinner event on September 10th at Trinity Point Church in Clarion, PA with about 100 people in attendance (pictured left). A delicious meal was catered by Mauthie's Country Corner in Strattanville, PA that featured locally-sourced meat, produce, milk, and honey.

Local producers had the opportunity to visit vendor tables and mingle with each other during a social hour - thank you to all of the vendors that attended (pictured). Info was shared about the ACAP program and one of the first applicants in Clarion County, Andrew Henry of Henry Dairy Farms (Knox), shared a presentation on his now **completed ACAP project** as of this summer. It is so exciting to see completed farm conservation projects in Clarion County that improves both local water quality AND the efficiency of the operation. We finished out the night with a presentation on Cover Crops/No-Till Planting by Ryan Graham of the PA No-till Alliance. Thank you to all who attended!



Agriculture Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP) Time-line for Clarion County

2022: ACAP was created through the Clean Streams Fund established by the FY2022-2023 Pennsylvania State Budget.

2024:

- 1st round ranked & awarded May 2024.
- Governor Shapiro's 2024-25 state budget includes a new investment to continue the Clean Streams Fund to support ACAP *annually*.

2026:

- 3rd and 4th round of applications due March 2026. Ranked and awarded July 2026.
- PACD Technician shortage -private engineering firms for I&Es/designs now necessary.
- Construction underway for the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th rounds of projects.
- All federal funds (1st round) must be disbursed by December 2026. 4 out of 11 projects should be completed by the end of the year!

2023:

- 1st round of applications (federal funding) due March 2023.
- Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts (PACD) Technician available for free Inventory & Evaluations (I&Es)/design work.

2025:

- 2nd round (state funding) of applications due March 2025. Ranked & awarded June 2025.

We are
here

2027:

- 5th round of applications due March 2027.
- Will be awarded in June 2027.

Agriculture Updates

Fence Post Driver for Rent



The Clarion Conservation District has an “extreme post driver” available for producers to rent. It does not require a hook up on a tractor or skid steer. Contact Mendy for more information.



PREPARE FOR CERTIFICATION AS A PRIVATE PESTICIDE APPLICATOR

Train for the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture exam

Find out what you need for certification to safely apply restricted-use pesticides on your farm or other property.

The Private Pesticide Applicator Short Course prepares you to take the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture certification exam. Review key material in the Pesticide Core and Supplemental Manual and learn to safely handle pesticides.

You must bring your own private pesticide applicator Core study manual training materials for this short course. Call 877-345-0691 to order. The licensing exam is not part of this course.

LEARN MORE AND REGISTER:

extension.psu.edu/private-pest-sc
or 877-345-0691



Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences research and extension programs are funded in part by Pennsylvania counties, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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Please visit extension.psu.edu/informational to request this publication in an alternative format accommodation due to a disability.

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PRIVATE PESTICIDE APPLICATOR SHORT COURSE

October 27–28

or

November 18–19

9 a.m. to 2:15 p.m.

Penn State Extension

Butler County

101 Motor Pool Way

Butler, PA

December 3–4

9 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

Penn State Extension

Armstrong County

124 Armsdale Rd.

Kittanning, PA



No-Till Planter Survey

The Clarion Conservation District is considering purchasing a no-till planter that would be available for rent by local producers. We need your help deciding on the size, etc.

Take the survey at clarionconservation.com/agriculture



The deadline for submitting 2026-27 REAP applications is October 30, 2026.

The Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) program is a first-come, first-served program that enables farmers, businesses, and landowners to earn PA income tax credits to offset the cost of implementing conservation best management practices (BMPs)- benefiting their farms and protecting water quality at the same time. For more info, go to: www.clarionconservation.com/agriculture

Contact the Clarion Conservation District's Agriculture Specialist, Mendy Stewart, at (814) 393-6139 or agriculture@clarionconservation.com

DIRT, GRAVEL, & LOW VOLUME ROAD (DGLVR) UPDATES

Clarion County DGLVR 2027 Grant Application Deadline: October 31st, 2026



Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance (ESM) Certified Municipalities wishing to submit a project application for a dirt and gravel road OR low volume road should reach out to Brett Whitling, DGLVR@clarionconservation.com or call (814) 221-4094. Applications can be found online at www.clarionconservation.com/dglvr or can be picked up at the Clarion Conservation District office (249 S. 2nd Ave. Clarion, PA). Applications will be awarded in January 2027.

What is the Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Road (DGLVR) Program?

Clarion County's Dirt and Gravel Road program provides funding to townships and eligible applicants to eliminate stream pollution caused by dust and sediment from unpaved roads. DGLVR program eligible applicants include any state or local public entity that owns and maintains public roads. Successful applicants will enter into a contract with the Clarion Conservation District to complete project work. All public entities must have an ESM certified employee as the on-site project coordinator.

Contact the Clarion Conservation District's DGLVR Technician, Brett Whitling, at (814) 221-4094 or DGLVR@clarionconservation.com

PA One Call Trainings:

- **October 13th (Jefferson County) - Paradigm Coordinated Response and Excavator Safety Program** from 5:30-8pm at the Bellamauro Social Hall, Reynoldsville, PA.
- **October 14th (Clarion County) - Paradigm Coordinated Response and Excavator Safety Program** from 5:30-8pm at the VFW in Clarion, PA.
- **October 16th (Mercer County) - Excavator Program** from 8-10am in Grove City, PA.
- **October 22nd (Armstrong County) - Excavator Program** from 8-10am in Kittanning, PA.

For more info and/or to register, go to pa1call.org.



EROSION AND SEDIMENT (E&S) /STAFF UPDATES

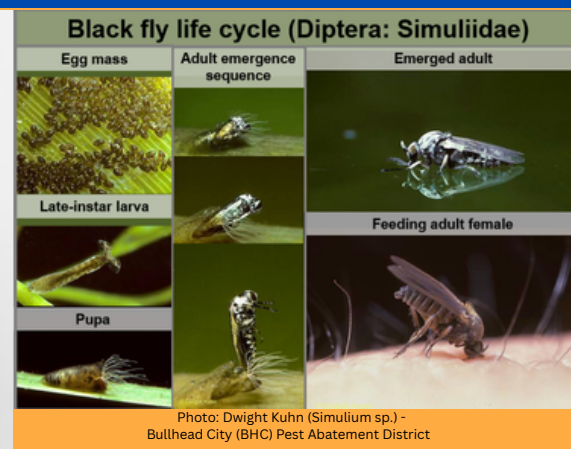
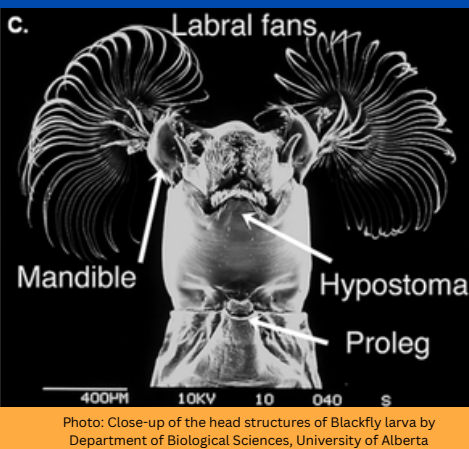
Jordan Hufnagel



Hello there! I'm excited to begin my role as the new Erosion and Sediment Technician at the Clarion Conservation District. For the last 5 years, I've been working as an Engineering Technician, preparing CAD drawings and designs for a variety of different construction projects from storm and sanitary sewers to site designs and just about everything in between. Outside of work I enjoy spending time with my son, wrangling 2 cats and a dog, building or making just about anything I can with a limited set of tools, deep-diving into a number of different nerdy topics, and reading very long and convoluted epic fantasy series.

PA Code, Title 25, Chapter 102 mandates that anyone engaged in "earth disturbance activities" must develop, implement, and maintain erosion control best management practices (BMPs) to minimize the potential for accelerated erosion and sedimentation into Pennsylvania waterways. Locally, the Clarion Conservation District administers this program.

To contact the Clarion Conservation District's E&S Technician, call 814-221-1941 or email permits@clarionconservation.com.



FEATURED SPECIES: BLACKFLY/GNAT (SIMULIUM JENNINGSI SPP.)

by Hannah Bequeath, Education/Outreach Coordinator

General Description:

Black flies (aka gnats) are much smaller than the common house fly and closer to the size of a fruit fly - about 2-5mm in length. Fifty-three (53) black fly species in 7 genera have been found in Pennsylvania and approximately 2,000 species have been discovered worldwide. The aquatic stages are often abundant and important organisms in river ecosystems, where the larvae filter and eat fine food particles from the water column and are preyed upon by many insects, fish, amphibians, and birds.

Range and Habitat: The immature stages (eggs, larvae, and pupa) of black flies are aquatic and exclusively inhabit flowing streams and rivers where there is food and oxygen available- not found in lakes, ponds, swamps, and other standing water habitats. They can be found in almost every stream in Pennsylvania. Only streams that are severely impaired by acid mine drainage (AMD) or pollution will not support black fly populations.

Life History: Adult females lay 150-500 eggs in flowing water- dropped singly from the air or deposited in masses on vegetation, rocks, and debris. Eggs hatch in 2 days to 8 months, depending on the species. Larvae anchor themselves to vegetation, rocks, or debris by spinning a small silken pad with their mouthparts and inserting a row of hooks at the end of their abdomen into the silk pad- allowing them to secure themselves in areas of fast water velocity and orient their body with the abdomen upstream, and head downstream to feed. Feeding is accomplished by expanding a pair of fan-like structures on their head (pictured above left) to filter microscopic food particles from the water. They eat fine organic matter, algae, bacteria, and tiny aquatic animals from the current or substrates. Larval develop in 1 week-6 months depending on species and habitat conditions. Mature larvae construct a silk cocoon where metamorphosis takes place. Adults emerge from the pupal skin and ride a bubble of air that propels them to the water surface. Freshly emerged adults fly to streamside vegetation where their wings and bodies quickly dry and harden. Mature adults immediately seek food (nectar, sap, or honeydew) and mates. Only females feed on blood required to nourish their eggs. Adults are strong fliers, capable of dispersing many miles from their larval habitats.

Human Connections:

Adult black flies (Diptera: Simuliidae) are a severe worldwide pest of humans and animals. Through blood feeding, black flies can be important vectors of diseases. They are responsible for transmitting onchocerciasis (river blindness) to millions of people in tropical areas of the world as well as other diseases. Black flies can also vector serious diseases in wild and domestic animals.

Fortunately, most Pennsylvania black fly species do not feed on human blood and, therefore, do not transmit parasites, pathogens, and diseases to people, however, they do have an annoying habit of swarming around the heads of people outside on warm days and disrupt outdoor activities- often flying into people's eyes and sometimes delivering a painful and itchy bite. Severe allergic reactions to black fly bites are known to occur in some cases. This can result in significant economic losses for areas that depend on recreation and tourism. Large black fly populations have also been shown to cause enormous agricultural losses through livestock mortality and by decreasing milk, beef, and egg production in livestock and poultry industries.

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has a **Pennsylvania Black Fly Suppression Program** with the goal of reducing gnat populations to tolerable levels during the spring and summer outdoor recreational season using environmentally compatible methods. The program involves monitoring and treatment of approximately 1,800 miles of 45 Pennsylvania rivers and streams. DEP biologists and student interns conduct black fly monitoring, laboratory identification of samples, data entry, treatment operations and management of aerial spray contracts. Treatments are done by helicopter or hand applications, using *Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis* (Bti), a naturally occurring soil bacterium, to selectively target four black fly species in the *Simulium jenningsi* species group that bother people. The Black Fly Suppression Program is a cost share program with Pennsylvania Counties. The bulk of funding to operate the program is state funded, but counties must pay a portion of application costs associated with spray operations. The program currently conducts control work in 35 participating counties with over 6.6 million residents. **Clarion County is among one of the "non-participating counties" within the program (Redbank Creek & the lower portion of the Allegheny River were treated though) which could explain why we had such a high population of gnats this summer.**

For more info on the Pennsylvania Black Fly Suppression Program, protection from black flies, how to submit a complaint, how a county can get involved, the Bti soil bacterium, etc. go to www.pa.gov/agencies/dep/programs-and-services/bureau-of-labs/vector-management/black-fly

Sources:

1. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. "Black Fly Biology and Life History". Department of Environmental Protection. <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dep/programs-and-services/bureau-of-labs/vector-management/black-fly/biology>. Accessed 6 October 2026.
2. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. "Vector Management: Black Fly". Department of Environmental Protection. <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dep/programs-and-services/bureau-of-labs/vector-management/black-fly>. Accessed 6 October 2026.
3. BugGuide. "Fly - Simulium". Ohioyle State Park, Fayette County, Pennsylvania, USA. October 7, 2017. Iowa State University Department of Plant Pathology, Entomology, and Microbiology. <https://www.bugguide.net/node/view/1452142>. Accessed 6 October 2026.
4. Bullhead City (BHC) Pest Abatement District. "Black Fly: Life Cycle and Biology". <https://www.bhcbugs.org/insect-programs/black-fly-control/pages/black-fly-life-cycle-biology>. Accessed 6 October 2026.

UPCOMING EVENTS

CCD is busy planning future programs, in the meantime, we encourage you to attend the following events lead by other organizations in the area!

October

- **8th - Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Treatment Training** coordinated by Cook Forest Conservancy. Meet at Shelter #2 in Cook Forest State Park at 5:30pm. Wear rubber-soled shoes and long sleeves.
- **10th or 11th - Old Growth Forest Ecology Outing** with Learn Your Land at Cook Forest State Park from 10am-4pm. Choose one date. Both programs will cover the same material. Register at learnyourland.com/events/.
- **10th - Group Hike** led by the Clarion County Chapter of the North Country Trail Association. 5-6 mile loop. Start at Cook Forest Log Cabin Enviro. Learning Center at 10am. Wear orange.
- **14th - Grazing Field Day** coordinated by the Jefferson County Conservation District at Meadowlark Farm in Corsica, PA from 9am-3:30pm featuring Steve Campbell and Russ Wilson. Lunch provided. Registration required **by Oct. 7th** to Jefferson CD.
- **15th - Spooky Night Owl Prowl** with the DCNR Clear Creek Forest District at the Cook Forest State Park Log Cabin Environmental Learning Center from 7-8:30pm. For more information, please call Gene Krasicki at (814) 319-1681.
- **17th - Women's Outdoor Workshop (WOW)** coordinated by Penn Soil RC&D in Tionesta, PA from 8am-5pm. Registration/more info at pennsoil.org.

November

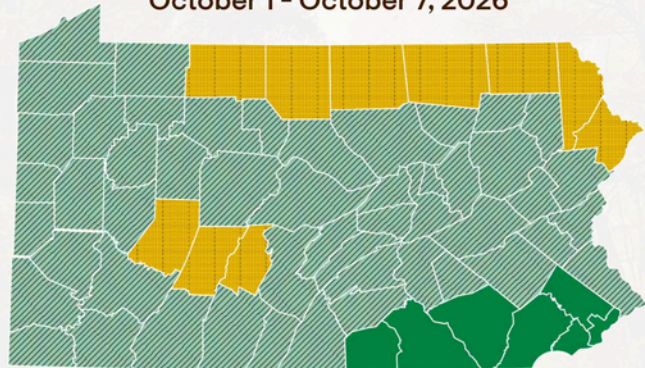
- **4th - Owl Prowl** with the Seneca Rocks Audubon Society from 6-8pm at State Game Lands 63 (Shippenville). More info at senecarocksaudubon.org.

For more information on our upcoming events please view our Facebook or Instagram page, our website, or contact us at education@clarionconservation.com or 814-227-5530.

@conserveclarion
www.clarionconservation.com

Pennsylvania's Fall Foliage Report

October 1 - October 7, 2026



No Change



Just Starting



Approaching Peak Color



Peak Color



Still Nice, But Declining



Season Over



www.pa.gov/FallFoliage



Pennsylvania Association of Environmental Educators (PAEE) Conference
Save the Date
Open to informal and formal educators.



Teachers/Advisors: Pennsylvania Envirothon
Save the Date



Info about the local, Tri-County Envirothon will be sent out soon!

Do you know someone that is interested in receiving the Clarion Conservation District newsletters?

To subscribe or unsubscribe, please contact us at education@clarionconservation.com or call 814-227-5530.