

SUMMER 2022 E-BLAST



CLARION CONSERVATION DISTRICT



Greetings!

*by Hannah Bequeath, Education/Outreach
Coordinator*

Happy Summer! As promised, we have started an E-Newsletter to keep you informed about what we have going on at the District. The content of the Clarion Conservation District newsletters will include information on past and upcoming events, a featured species, and other information that we think is important for you to know regarding conservation in Clarion County. 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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Above: High School students survey for macroinvertebrates in Tom's Run at the Aquatic Ecology station during the 5th Annual Earth Day in Cook Forest event.

RECAP OF SPRING 2022 EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

by Hannah Bequeath, Education/Outreach Coordinator

March ~ A workshop was held titled, "Protecting Water Resources from Pesticides and Fertilizers" at the Clarion Farms beef store off of Route 66 headed towards New Bethlehem. We had about 41 people attend. The workshop sought to educate the community on proper pesticide and fertilizer application and natural alternatives that they might consider trying instead. The Fragrant Cow Compost Co., Clarion Farm's manure compost company here in Clarion County was featured at the event. Lunch, informational flyers, and "natural alternative starter packs" were provided via a Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts (PACD) non-point source pollution grant. Thank you to the following partners that helped to make this event happen: Seneca Rocks Audubon Society, Master Gardeners, Penn State Extension, and the DCNR.

April ~ The CCD Education/Outreach Coordinator visited many local schools and provided educational programs on frogs, birds, nature photography, and Pennsylvania Wildlife. The District also held our 5th Annual Earth Day in Cook Forest event for high schoolers in which they learned about Aquatic Ecology, Forestry, Eagles, and Fly Fishing. The day began with a trout release and an explanation of what the Trout Unlimited: Trout in the Classroom program is. It was a beautiful, sunny day at Cook Forest State Park. We wouldn't have been able to do it without our many volunteers as well as our partners such as the Iron Furnace Chapter of Trout Unlimited, DCNR, PA Game Commission, and more.

May ~ We partnered with the Jefferson County Conservation District to hold the Clarion/Jefferson County Envirothon competition for middle school and high school students at Clear Creek State Forest. We had 9 teams compete in the county competition from Brockway, Redbank, Keystone, and North Clarion High Schools. North Clarion teams won 3rd and 2nd place. A Keystone High School team won 1st place and went on to compete at the state Envirothon competition in Mifflinburg, PA. Though they didn't place in the top 10, we are so proud of the Keystone High School team's hard work and the dedication of their teacher advisors, Pam McCandless and Matt Baker. ****Use the QR code below to watch a recap video of the PA Envirothon competition.**

Also in May, we participated in an Elementary School Trout Release Day for Clarion County 5th graders at Cook Forest State Park and provided programs on birds and trees. Later that month, we assisted with the Keystone Smiles Progressive Agriculture Safety Day for 2nd graders at the Clarion County Park and provided a program on soybeans and what plants need to grow.



Above: Keystone High School students compete at the state Envirothon competition in Mifflinburg, PA.



Right: Third, fourth, and fifth graders at St. Joseph's School learn about birds and gain an appreciation for how birds have adapted skills to build their nests. Students got to see a Bald Eagle mount as well.



Above: This 7' Great Plains No-till Planter is available for rent to producers in Clarion County.

NO-TILL DRILL FOR RENT

by Hannah Bequeath, Education/Outreach Coordinator

The Clarion Conservation District has a new no-till drill available for producers in Clarion County to rent for **\$12/acre**.

- Standard Seed Box
- 10 openers
- Small Seed Box
- 3,800 towing weight
- Native Grass Box
- 75 HP Recommended

"The Great Plains 7' End Wheel No-Till Drill offers the perfect balance between smaller drill versatility and larger drill productivity. Designed for excellent ground gauging in rugged terrain, the drill's inline end wheels minimize sideloading on contours and side-hills, dramatically extending the life of the no-till openers. This drill comes with a standard 17-bushel main seed box, a small seed box, and a native grass box. Other features include 4-speed gearbox, mechanical clutch for end-row turns, a calibration crank, central grease bank, and rain-tight lids for seed protection." ~ Great Plains

Contact the Clarion Conservation District to reserve. Tricia Mazik, Resource Technician. 814-227-5530 mazikccd@gmail.com

RAIN BARRELS FOR SALE

Are you interested in a way to collect **free** water for your garden and/or flowers? Or maybe you have a lot of runoff coming from your roof when it rains causing large mud puddles all over your yard? A rain barrel is a system that collects and stores rainwater from your roof that would otherwise be lost to runoff and diverted to storm drains and streams.

The Clarion Conservation District has rain barrels for sale for **\$75 (includes barrel and rain barrel kit)**. They are repurposed barrels from Stello Foods in Punxsutawney, PA. The cost includes a kit complete with everything you need to set up the rain barrel on your downspout. Holes are not pre-made. CCD staff can drill the holes for you upon request.

Call 814-227-5530 at least one day in advance to order one and we will have it ready for you to pick up at our office (249 S. 2nd Ave. Clarion, PA 16214). We are open M-F 8:00am - 4:00pm. Local artist, Cynthia Scandria, can paint a design on your rain barrel (such as the one below). Her contact can be given upon request to have yours painted.



Above: Rain barrel located at the Clarion Conservation District office. Artwork done by local artist, Cynthia Scandria.



FEATURED SPECIES: THE AMERICAN MARTEN (*MARTES AMERICANA*)

by Hannah Bequeath, Education/Outreach Coordinator

General Description:

The American Marten is a member of the weasel family and looks similar to a mink. Their soft, dense fur ranges in color from pale yellow to dark brown. The fur around the muzzle varies from gray to light brown with a short dark line extending up the forehead from the corner of each eye. The marten's throat and upper chest are usually pale or deep orange. The ears are cat-like and rounded. Martens vary in body length from 19 to 25 inches, not including the tail. The tail accounts for nearly a third of the marten's total length. They may weigh up to 4 pounds. Males are considerably larger than females. Martens have sharp, non-retractable claws which they use for climbing as well as for holding their prey. Large furry paws allow the marten to travel easily over deep snow.

Life History:

Martens are usually nocturnal and are solitary creatures except during the mating season. Mating occurs in July and August. The litter, averaging three young, is born in April or May. Young martens are highly dependent at birth and weigh only about 1 ounce (which is about the weight of one slice of sandwich bread!). Juvenile martens, called kits, usually disperse from their mother's territory during the autumn. They feed on a range of amphibians, reptiles, insects, birds, small mammals, vegetation, and carrion. American martens sometimes have fast-paced chases in trees with a favorite prey item, red squirrels. Their predators include hawks, owls, bobcats and even the related fisher.

Range and Habitat:

Also known as the "Pine Marten", American Martens inhabit old growth, evergreen forests in the northern regions of North America. They are closely associated with lodgepole pine, Douglas fir, spruce, and mixed hardwood forests. They den in hollow trees, crevices, or vacant ground burrows. Unlike their close relative the American Mink that live in stream and coastal habitats, American Martens are usually found in uplands. Although populations were greater in the southeastern portion of the species range in Colonial times (1800s), the collection of pelts and loss of forest habitat in these areas since the early 1900s has restricted their range.

Current Status:

American Martens are prevalent in Canada and parts of the Northeast and Midwest U.S., but are considered endangered/extirpated in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Ohio, Maryland, Massachusetts, West Virginia and Illinois. At the July 9th, 2022 board meeting, the Pennsylvania Board of Game Commissioners took the next step in considering American marten (*Martes americana*) reintroduction by directing the Game Commission's Bureau of Wildlife Management to develop a plan for reintroduction and management. The Bureau of Wildlife Management based their proposal for reintroduction on their feasibility study that looked at current habitat suitability, future climatic impacts, interactions with other species and public opinion about American Marten. The bureau concluded that a reintroduction would likely be successful and "would be an appropriate next step" in the commission's species restoration efforts. This is not the first time the Pennsylvania Game Commission has considered an American Marten reintroduction. Another feasibility study was completed in 1996, laying the groundwork for a future initiative.

Sources:

- *American Marten (Martes americana)*. Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Retrieved July 1, 2022 from <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=americanmarten.printerfriendly>
- Ellis, Eric J. *Martes americana (American Marten)*. Animal Diversity Web. University of Michigan Museum of Zoology. Retrieved July 1, 2022, from https://animaldiversity.org/accounts/Martes_americana/
- Lau, Travis. *Highlights From Today's Commissioner's Meeting*. Pennsylvania Pressroom. Retrieved July 11, 2022, from <https://www.media.pa.gov/Pages/game-commission-details.aspx?newsid=552>

DGLVR/E&S UPDATES

by Alicia Ramsey, DGLVR/E&S Technician

DGLVR Updates:

- Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance training:
 - Must be taken in order to be eligible!
 - 10 new certified participants
 - 3 recertified participants
- 2022 projects underway:
 - Love Road, Limestone Township
 - Fairview Road, Knox Township
- 2022 project design:
 - Smith Road, Porter Township
- 2023 grant interest! Discussing potential projects for next year.



Above: Love Road in Limestone Township.

E&S Updates:

- Received 3 new NPDES permits:
 - sewer/waterline replacement, 2 gas line projects, and a solar panel installation
- Clarion Cricket Field project still under review
- Permit transfer to a stove mill
- Received 7 E&S plans to review:
 - Farm buildings, AMD treatment site, high school sports complex, PennDOT waste sites, streambank restoration, and gas line work
- Investigated several complaints with regional DEP assistance, conducted inspections and pre-construction meetings, and presented at an informative workshop for an Amish community



Above: The settling pond at Little Coon Run's acid mine drainage (AMD) passive treatment system.

District Watershed Updates

by: Tricia Mazik, Resource Technician

Little Coon: Treatment System Maintenance

We received a Growing Greener grant to conduct maintenance on the existing acid mine drainage (AMD) passive treatment system on Little Coon Run located in the northern part of the county in State Game Lands 24. This treatment system was constructed in 2007, and has successfully removed the majority of AMD impairments from Little Coon Run. The iron oxide sludge and excess vegetation will be cleaned out this fall in partnership with Hedin Environmental and the PA Game Commission. An assessment on the headwaters will be conducted to identify other contributors of acid loading in the stream.

Paint Creek: Watershed Assessment

CCD will work closely with the Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation (BAMR) and Hedin Environmental on a large assessment of Paint Creek including the two large tributaries Mahles Run and Licking Creek. The watershed was subject to intensive mineral resource mining operations which have left the stream impaired from AMD and sediment loading. In the early 2000s several artesian wells were plugged in an attempt to abate AMD. This assessment will provide an analysis of historic sampling points and data from new sample points. A watershed implementation plan will be developed to characterize the plugging efforts and any AMD resolutions that may be achieved.

Clarion County Park: Treatment System Overhaul

If you visited the Clarion County Park in Shippenville recently, you may have noticed the orange water and construction vehicles in the southeast corner of the park just over the hill. The orange ponds are part of an AMD passive treatment system in the process of being overhauled. We received a Growing Greener grant to replace the old system built in 1991 that was undersized and failing. The new system will be more than double the size of the original system and will adequately treat the high levels of iron and acidity found in the AMD waters. An educational event including field tours of the system will be held this fall.



JAPANESE KNOTWEED WORKSHOP SERIES WITH THE COOK FOREST CONSERVANCY

by Hannah Bequeath, Education/Outreach Coordinator

Our Resource Technician, Tricia Mazik, has partnered with Kelly Culbertson from the Cook Forest Conservancy to assist them in getting a grant to tackle the Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) problem that many landowners in the Cook Forest region are having. Japanese Knotweed is an invasive plant species that spreads quickly, crowds out native plant species, impacts wildlife habitat, and increases the chances of soil erosion. This plant is often found near water ways, such as the Clarion River, and can grow to be 10-15 feet tall.

Originally from Eastern Asia, Japanese Knotweed was introduced to the U.S. in the late 1800s and was sold as an ornamental plant for landscaping. It was also thought that it could prevent soil erosion, which we later found it did the opposite. It spreads via disturbance in the form of construction/earth moving activities and improperly mowing/cutting. It multiplies by seed dispersal as well as through root fragmentation. Root fragments can be dispersed via waterways or soil movement.



Above: Japanese Knotweed is an invasive plant species that has a hollow, segmented stem that looks similar to bamboo.

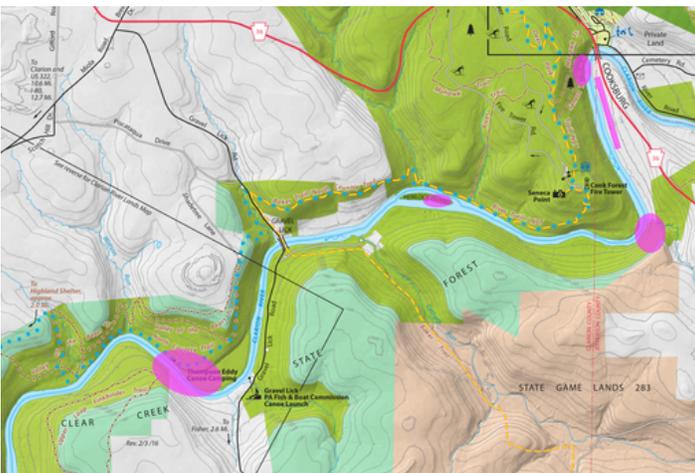
Japanese Knotweed Workshop Q&A with Kelly Culbertson, Cook Forest Conservancy

Q: What is the Cook Forest Conservancy?

A: The CFC was formed to maintain and improve the ecosystem in and around Cook Forest State Park. It is our goal to preserve and better our local wildlife habitat, water quality, native plant and insect communities, and general forest health in all aspects. We work with the Allegheny National Forest, DCNR, Bureau of Forestry, the PGC, local conservation districts, and private landowners to address issues that have become problematic for forest health in our area.

Q: What caused you to feel there was a need to help tackle this problem?

A: Japanese Knotweed is a destructive invasive that is found primarily along our protected Wild & Scenic portion of the Clarion River and can quickly form a monoculture if left unchecked. It is one of the easier of our non-native invasive plants to manage and only three years of treatment can drastically improve conditions. Although its control is daunting for any singular landowner on their own, as a neighborhood-wide effort and with the help of the CFC, it becomes a simple series of treatment steps that occur consistently at a coordinated time. The CFC is working to connect neighbors and public land managers, host educational and training sessions, and provide support.



Above: Japanese Knotweed (represented by the pink highlighted areas on the map) is spreading, especially near our natural water resources such as the Clarion River.



Above: : Vegetation management specialists demonstrating how and when to treat Japanese Knotweed at the second session of the workshop series.

Q: What does the workshop series consist of?

- A: 1st Session: May 2022- Provided information on why we need to address Japanese Knotweed before it reaches monoculture coverage and allowed interested landowners and entities to join the program.
- 2nd Session: June 2022- Vegetation management specialists answered questions and led sessions on how and when to treat knotweed, including field demonstrations and review of a site treated the prior year.
- 3rd Session: August 2022 - Penn State Extension will lead a spraying demonstration, including sprayer calibration for laypersons. Those attending these sessions may borrow equipment from the CFC to carry out these annual treatments. The key to effective Japanese Knotweed suppression is consistency and timing - plants must be sprayed with glyphosate annually, before the leaves fall, for 2-3 years.

Q: What is your end goal for this workshop series?

A: After two consecutive autumn treatments on the Clarion River knotweed, landowners will be able to start planning how they'd like to use the riverbanks they're reclaiming. The CFC will partner with local specialists on native vegetation, such as Ernst Seed, to help landowners re-establish their riverbanks with plants that help filter water, reduce erosion, and benefit wildlife and insects. It is also our hope that word of mouth will enable the program to continue for multiple years until Japanese Knotweed is controllable by hand-pulling and that many of our native plants are able to return and provide the services we're losing each season invasives spread.

UPCOMING EVENTS

by Hannah Bequeath, Education/Outreach Coordinator

July:

- **Watershed Wednesday Day 3: Lakes** - July 13th
 - See brochure to the right
- **Watershed Wednesday Day 4: Rivers** - July 20th
 - See brochure to the right
- **Come see us at the Clarion County Fair** - July 23rd-30th
- **Community Event : Zoom Webinar- Intro to the Invasive Species Scavenger Hunt** - July 28th @ 10:00am , Register by July 27th
 - Zoom in for a brief training through Pennsylvania iMapInvasives to learn about how you can help stop the spread of invasive species in our community. **Prerequisite for the Community Event: Invasive Species Scavenger Hunt (Hike) on August 1st. Scan the QR code to the right for more information and to register. Contact us if you cannot attend, but would like to participate in the scavenger hunt below.**

August:

- **Community Event: Invasive Species Scavenger Hunt (Hike)** - August 1st @ 5pm, State Game Lands #63 , Register by July 25th
 - Join us as we kick off the scavenger hunt with a hike that will guide you through how to record invasive species using the iMapInvasives App. **Must attend prerequisite webinar training on July 28th prior to attending the hike. Contact us if you cannot attend training, but would like to participate**
- **Community Event: Turtles of Pennsylvania** - August 12th from 6 - 7:30pm behind our office! Register by August 5th
 - Bring a chair and your favorite movie snacks and join us for a program on turtles featuring a backyard showing of the PBS Nature documentary, "The Reptiles: Turtles and Tortoises"
- **Farm Series for kids ages 5-9.**
 - More information coming soon!

For more information on our upcoming events please view our Facebook or Instagram page, our website, or contact us at hbequeathccd@gmail.com or 814-393-6147.



@conserveclarion
www.clarionconservation.com

Summer Nature Series: Watershed Wednesdays (Ages 10-15)



General Description:

This summer series provides hands-on learning about our local watersheds. Students will get the opportunity to learn about and engage with four different local aquatic habitats that we have in Clarion County. The series will end with a canoe trip on the Clarion River with a parent or guardian. We ask that parents/guardians provide transportation to each location. Carpooling is encouraged.

Ages: 10 – 15 years old

Fee for Series: \$35 (\$5/per individual session plus \$15 for canoe trip for 1 adult and 1 child)

What to Bring: Clothes you are not afraid to get dirty or wet, hiking shoes, water shoes, water, *jackets and umbrellas depending on the weather

Registration Requirements: Complete a summer nature series registration form (found on our website under the "Events" tab). Please note that there is a small fee. If your child cannot attend all of the programs, that is okay. Select which ones your child can attend on the registration form.

Series Dates and Highlights

Wednesday, June 22nd (5-7pm)

***Topic:** Streams

Location: Tom's Run, Cook Forest State Park
Meet at Shelter #2

**Please wear water shoes or rain boots

Students will:

- Learn what a watershed is, why they are important, and what role streams have within a watershed.
- Get in the stream to assess the water quality of Tom's Run. They will do so by looking at the biological (macroinvertebrates/ underwater creatures), chemical, and physical properties of the stream.
- Learn about food chains that occur in stream habitats as well as the species that live in and around streams and the adaptations that help them to survive.

Wednesday, June 29th (5-7pm)

***Topic:** Wetlands

Location: Beaver Creek Nature Area, Knox, PA
**Hiking shoes recommended

Students will:

- Learn what a wetland is and its primary functions within a watershed.
- Assess the soil, plants, and presence of water in the area to verify that it qualifies as a wetland.
- Record the number of species present within the wetland and learn more about them.

Wednesday, July 13th (5-7pm)

***Topic:** Lakes

Location: Kahle Lake – Clarion Access, Eminton, PA

**Please bring hiking shoes and water shoes

Students will:

- Learn about the role of a lake within a watershed.
- Observe and record species that live in and around the lake and discuss their place within food chains and their adaptations that help them to survive.
- Learn the impact that pollution, invasive species, and an abundance of nutrients might have on a lake habitat.

Wednesday, July 20th (4-6pm)

Please note the change in time

***Topic:** Rivers

Location: Clarion River – Meet at the Cook Forest Canoe Rental in Cook Forest State Park

**Please wear water shoes

Students will:

- Learn about the history of the Clarion River and the conservation efforts that led to better water quality.
- Learn about species that inhabit the Clarion River and ways we can help them.
- Celebrate our local natural water resources by canoeing down the Clarion River with a parent/guardian.



Scan the QR code below for more information on the Invasive Species Scavenger Hunt and to register.



Do you know someone that is interested in receiving the Clarion Conservation District newsletters? To subscribe or unsubscribe, please contact us at hbequeathccd@gmail.com or call 814-393-6147.