

WINTER 2022/2023 E-BLAST



CLARION CONSERVATION DISTRICT



Seasons Greetings!

by Hannah Bequeath, Education/Outreach Coordinator

Join us in reminiscing the events and accomplishments that happened this fall and get excited about what's to come! Freezing temperatures have finally found their way to Clarion County, but that shouldn't keep us from enjoying the beauty of nature that surrounds us. Be sure to check out the last page for more information on events we have planned this winter including a Winter Solstice Hike, Coffee with the Birds program, Farmer's Breakfast, and more!

Our main goal at the District is to protect Clarion County's natural resources. Thank you for your interest in our efforts. On behalf of the Clarion Conservation District, we wish you a joyous holiday season and look forward to the new year!



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RECAP OF FALL 2022 EVENTS

by Hannah Bequeath, Education/Outreach Coordinator

October- This fall, the Clarion Conservation District was awarded a grant from the Climate & Rural Systems Partnership project as part of the National Science Foundation Grant #1906774 & #1906368. The grant was used to hold a two-part **workshop** titled "**Gardening for a Changing Climate**" in order to educate and equip members of the community with steps they can take to tackle two noticeable climate change issues that we are experiencing in this region; an increase in flooding and a change in our native plant species populations. Participants gathered at C&A Trees in Clarion, PA to learn about rain gardens and planting native plants as ways to combat climate change issues. Participants also had the opportunity to tour the Clarion Conservation District's (CCD) public rain garden and help the CCD staff make improvements to the rain garden. Cub Scout Pack #51 helped build, paint, and install wildlife habitat structures (2 bird boxes, 1 butterfly box, and 1 bee box). Special thanks to our partners who made these workshops possible; the Mercer County Conservation District for facilitating the grant, Teresa, owner of C&A Trees, Jim Seidle from EADS Group, Alice Thureau and Paulette Colantonio from the Seneca Rocks Audubon Society, and Amy Jewitt from the Western PA Conservancy/PA Natural Heritage Program. We are so excited to see the rain garden "come to life" this spring and encourage the public to come check it out too! Stay tuned for future rain garden programs. In the meantime, check out our rain barrels and gardens page on our website: <https://www.clarionconservation.com/rain-barrels-and-gardens>

Roughly one hundred people gathered on Friday, October 14th at the Wilson Land & Cattle Co. in Tionesta, PA for a **grazing field day** titled, "**Improving Land While Lowering Costs**". See next page for a full recap & pictures!



Above Left: Leaf lantern craft inspired by Little Pine Learners.
Above Right: Leaf Chromatography Observation Station.

November- A Leaf Lantern Program was held at the Clarion Conservation District office in which participants had the opportunity to get some of their "autumn curiosities" answered such as why we have seasons, why leaves change color in the fall, and what happens to the leaves after they fall down. To figure out why leaves change color, participants observed a leaf chromatography experiment. We also discussed a citizen science project folks can take part in called "Nature's Notebook" that allows people to track seasonal changes in plants and animals, such as the timing of when the leaves change.



Right: Close-up of the leaf chromatography observation.



Above & Right: Cub Scout Pack #51 and participants of the Gardening for a Changing Climate workshop help CCD staff improve the CCD public rain garden by planting more native plants and installing plant species labels and wildlife habitats.



Above: Roughly one hundred people gathered on Friday, October 14th at the Wilson Land & Cattle Co. in Tionesta, PA for a grazing field day. Photo credit: Lindsey Shapiro of PASA.

Grazing Field Day: Improving Land While Lowering Costs

(Tionesta, PA. October 14th, 2022) – Approximately one hundred people gathered at the Wilson Land & Cattle Co. for a grazing field day focusing on “improving land while lowering costs”. Russ Wilson, owner of the farm, stated, “It was the best field day that we have had on our farm.” Participants heard presentations on how to monitor the soil health in a grazing system, the ability of silvopasture and alley cropping to make pastures more profitable, and soil health as a climate change solution and how grazing systems help producers adapt to weather extremes. A demonstration was done with a rainfall simulator showing how different management affects the soil’s health and performance under intense rainfall events. Speakers included: Matt Havens, a Soil Scientist at NRCS in Belmont, NY; Brett Chedzoy, Senior Resource Educator in Agriculture and Natural Resources at Cornell University Cooperative Extension; Dr. Bonnie McGill, Senior Climate and Soil Health Scientist at the American Farmland Trust; and Fay Benson, Small Dairy Support Specialist with Cornell University Cooperative Extension. Information on nutrient management and funding/assistance available to farmers was presented by Tricia Mazik, Resource Technician with the Clarion Conservation District (CCD), Jane Price, Agricultural Technician and Resource Conservationist with the Venango Conservation District (VCD), and Geri Montgomery, NW Pennsylvania Grazing Specialist at USDA-NRCS.

Throughout the day, participants had the opportunity to stop at vendor tables of grazing-related agencies and companies. Wilson gave a field tour highlighting methods and results of intensive rotational grazing and ways to lower costs. The day concluded with a social event led by representatives of PASA Sustainable Agriculture to discuss the Farm Bill. The event was sponsored by CCD, VCD, USDA-NRCS, Forest County Conservation District, U.S. EPA, Pennsylvania Grazing Lands Coalition, American Farmland Trust, PASA Sustainable Agriculture, and the Cornell University Cooperative Extension. The event was made possible through a Non-point Source Pollution (NPS) Mini-grant received by Tricia Mazik of the Clarion Conservation District. Financial and other support for the NPS Mini-Grant Program is provided by the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts, Inc. through a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection under section 319 of the Clean Water Act, administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Special thanks to Russ Wilson & family for opening up their farm for this event.



Clarion County Park Tree Planting

by: Hannah Bequeath, Education/Outreach Coordinator

(Shippenville, PA. October 25th, 2022) – When the Clarion County Park reopens next spring, community members may notice that something is different at the park. Last month, twelve mature trees were planted at the park by Kronospan employees, Clarion County Park staff, and agency partners from the Clarion Conservation District (CCD), Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), and Penn State Extension. The trees were donated by Kronospan, a world leading manufacturer of wood-based panel products using advanced technology while setting high environmental standards. The Shippenville plant manufactures medium and high density fiberboard and laminate flooring. The trees were purchased from C&A Trees and Eisler Nursery and included the following species; Norway Spruce, Exclamation Plane, Honey Locust, Princeton Elm, and Pin Oak.



According to Heather King, Human Resources Manager for Kronospan, "In 2021, the Kronospan Foundation started a mission, 'GROW' with the motto, 'Let's plant the future together!' The mission is to plant 1 million trees and to date, we have planted 879,968 trees." King reached out to the Clarion Conservation District for guidance on a community tree planting and Hannah Bequeath, Education/Outreach Coordinator for the District, helped to coordinate the planting and get approval from the Clarion County Commissioners and County Park staff.



DCNR Service Forester, Dave Cole, and Urban and Community Forestry Specialist with Penn State Extension, Scott Sjolander, gave suggestions on tree placement, species choice, and how to plant the trees to have the most success. The Clarion County Park is located on an area that is heavily populated by white-tailed deer and had previously been stripped for coal mining purposes, therefore, tolerance to soil compaction and the size of the trees had to be considered when discussing which species to plant. Alicia Ramsey, Dirt and Gravel and Low Volume Road (DGLVR) / Erosion and Sediment (E&S) Technician from CCD, provided guidance on excavation as the trees were planted.



"The park is such a great resource for this area and we hope the trees will be enjoyed for years to come. We had around twelve employees help us with the tree planting that day and everyone is anxious to take on our next tree planting project," King stated. "We are currently looking for additional opportunities where we can get involved with tree plantings and would like to make this at least a yearly event. We would love to partner with schools and other organizations and clubs (Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4H, Envirothon, etc.) as well to educate our youth on the environment, the importance of trees, and of course, to plant some more trees," continued King. To contact Heather King regarding a tree planting, please call (814) 226-8032 or send an email to h.king@kronospanusa.com.

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

by Alicia Ramsey, DGLVR/E&S Technician

- **Grant Applications: Due by December 8th** for Clarion County. Projects must be reviewed by CCD before submitting. For more information on filling out the form, contact Alicia Ramsey at the information below or visit <https://dirtandgravel.psu.edu/pa-program-resources/program-specific-resources/blank-forms/>
- All 2022 projects have wrapped up, with the exception of two stream crossings to be installed during the 2023 construction season.
- A Municipality Workshop will be held during the spring of 2023 - stay tuned for more information!
- 2023 allocation amounts: \$356,574 Dirt & Gravel and \$90,039 Low Volume
- For more information on the CCD DGLVR Program, please visit our website www.clarionconservation/dglvr or contact our DGLVR Technician, Alicia Ramsey, at ramseyccd@gmail.com or call 814-221-4094 (cell), 814-393-6139 (office).

EROSION AND SEDIMENT (E&S) UPDATES

by Alicia Ramsey, DGLVR/E&S Technician

- Collaborating with the Clarion County Planning Commission on developing an informational document for municipalities to improve land development compliance.
- Two general National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) amendments have been made.
- Two E&S plans are under review. These are for projects between 5,000 square feet and 1 acre of earth disturbance.
 - One of the plans is for Venango County as they are currently short-staffed.
- Investigating 5 complaints; 3 of which have required DEP assistance.

District Watershed Updates

by: Tricia Mazik, Resource Technician



Clarion County Park: Treatment System Overhaul

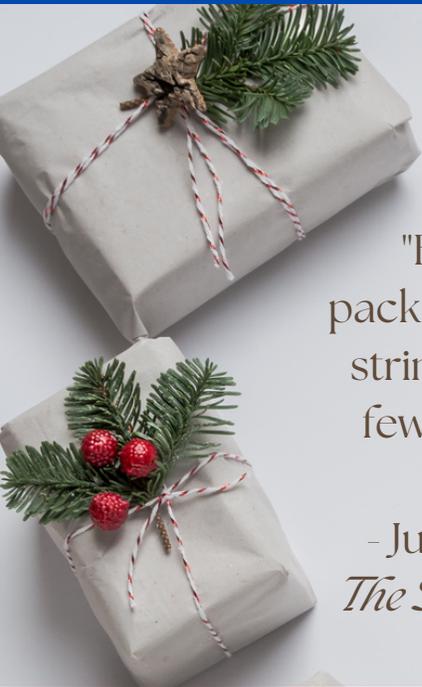
With funding from a Growing Greener Grant, a failing and undersized thirty-one year old acid mine drainage (AMD) treatment system was successfully cleaned out, the vertical flow pond was rehabilitated, and a 13,000 square foot settling pond was successfully constructed. The system now has a better layout to adequately treat and capture iron oxide at the Clarion County Park. Funding for this project was initially granted in 2019 via a Sole Source Award, but due to COVID-19 and other delays, construction could not happen until 2022. The success of this portion of the project is a big step in the right direction! Additional work will need to be done to complete the project, including a second settling pond and a constructed wetland.

Top: Completed settling pond.
Bottom: Vertical flow pond (VFP) outflow to pond.

Winter Water Conservation Tips:



- **Shower Bucket** - Since it takes longer for your shower to heat up in winter, catch that cold water and use it to water plants, clean, wash delicates, etc.
- **Don't leave the doo-doo** - Pet waste that is not properly disposed of washes into storm drains or nearby rivers and streams where it will raise bacteria and nutrient levels, just like human waste. If it builds up on snowy ground, the impact is more concentrated.
- **Keep up with car maintenance** - Fluids such as oil, coolant, and antifreeze that leaks onto pavement ends up in streams and rivers.
- **Easy on the salt** - Salt used to melt ice runs off into our storm sewers and eventually our waterways, where it can damage freshwater ecosystems. Always consider safety first, but when you can, use salt sparingly on your driveway/steps/etc. Manually remove snow and ice with a shovel whenever possible.



"Brown paper packages tied up with strings. These are a few of my favorite things!"
 - Julie Andrews in *The Sound of Music*.

Zero-Waste Wrapping Ideas

- Newspaper/Magazines
 - Brown Packaging Paper/Brown Paper Bags
 - Reusable drawstring bags
 - Fabric- use a t-shirt, scarf, towel, or blanket
 - Bag that's part of the gift- tote bag, reusable produce bag, etc.
 - Reusable Beeswax Food Wrap
 - Stainless Steel Container
 - Basket
- **Decorate with foraged branches and berries**

8 Eco-Friendly Gift Ideas

Help decrease single-use plastic in our landfills and gift some of these zero-waste products!



1. Reusable Produce Bag



2. Reusable Safety Razor



3. Beeswax Wrap (instead of plastic wrap)



4. Rechargeable Electric Lighter



5. Collapsible Leftover Containers (instead of restaurant take-out boxes)



6. Bamboo Toothbrush



7. Bar Soap (shampoo, shaving cream, etc.)



8. Compostable Dog Poop Bags

UPCOMING EVENTS

****To register for any of the following free events for all ages, please use the contact info below. Please register at least 2 days prior to the event.****

December

- **15th- Crafts & Conifers** - 5-6:30pm at the Clarion Conservation District Office (249 S 2nd Ave. Clarion, PA). Learn about native, coniferous tree species and create a natural ornament to take home. Craft supplies provided. Limit of 15 participants.
- **21st - Winter Solstice Hike** - 10am-11:30am at the Redbank Valley Trail, Hawthorne, PA. Park at Pottery Field (soccer complex). Hot Cocoa provided afterwards. Dress for the weather!

January

- **21st- Coffee with the Birds**- 9:00-10:30am. Join us for a leisurely walk around the Beaver Creek Nature Area in Knox, PA. Coffee provided. Bring a reusable travel mug to fill and don't forget your binoculars! Binoculars will be provided for those that need them.
- **27th- The 2nd Annual Farmer's Breakfast** - for more info, reach out using the contact info below. **Register by 1/20/23.

February

- **2nd- Life Underground: Groundhogs & Other Rodents of PA** - 5-6:30pm at the Redbank Valley Public Library in New Bethlehem, PA.
- **23rd- Tracks, Scats, & Signs:** 5-6:30pm at the Clarion Conservation District Office (249 S 2nd Ave. Clarion, PA). Learn how to spot and identify the tracks, scats, and signs PA wildlife leave behind. Limit of 15 participants.

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

World Soil Day- December 5th



What is World Soil Day?

World Soil Day (WSD) is held annually on the **5th of December** as a means to focus attention on the importance of healthy soil and advocating for the sustainable management of soil resources. An international day to celebrate soil was recommended by the International Union of Soil Sciences (IUSS) in 2002. Soil nutrient loss is a major soil degradation process threatening nutrition and is recognized as being among the most pressing problems at a global level for food security and sustainability all around the globe. World Soil Day 2022 (#WorldSoilDay) and its campaign "Soils: Where Food Begins" aims to raise awareness of the importance of maintaining healthy ecosystems and human well-being by addressing the growing challenges in soil management, increasing soil awareness and encouraging societies to improve soil health.

Ways to celebrate:

- **Start composting**
- **Educate yourself on soil -read a book or check out one of the documentaries below.**
 - Kiss the Ground (2020)
 - Symphony of the Soil (2012)
 - The Biggest Little Farm (2018)
- **Get your hands dirty- plant a new house plant or re-pot one that needs more space to grow.**
- **Plan how to reduce soil erosion on your property - plan a rain garden or buy a rain barrel**
- **Participate in a contest- FAO has prepared multiple contests for the international day such as baking a cake as a tribute to soil (deadline: December 10, see link below for more info)**

Check out www.fao.org/world-soil-day/en/ for more soil activities, contests, and more!

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.