The Clear Creek Forest District Newsletter

Buds and Bark

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Tea Talk**
  September 4th, 6pm
  Clarion, PA
- **Herbal Plant Walk**
  September 5th, 10am
  McKeever Center Tract
- **History and Ecology of Trees**
  September 11th, 6pm
  Clarion, PA
- **Into The Forest with PBS Western Reserve**
  September 12th, 11am
  New Castle, PA
  **Registration required*
- **Monarch Butterfly Tagging at the Knox Public Library**
  September 12th, 11am
  **Registration required*
- **Owl Prowl**
  September 18th, 7:30pm
  Kennerdell
- **Bird Watching and DIY Pinecone Feeder**
  September 19th, 2pm
  Beartown Rocks
- **Full Moon UV Walk**
  September 25th, 7:30pm
  McKeever Center Tract

- Events continued Pg 3



Beartown Rocks Overlook in October 2022

Welcome to the Clear Creek Forest District!

Welcome to the first issue of our quarterly newsletter! The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Bureau of Forestry's mission is to conserve, steward and enhance Pennsylvania's trees, forests, and native wild plants, while connecting with all people and communities. We work to ensure the long-term health and productivity of our forest by providing forestry information and outreach, suppressing and preventing wildfires, protecting our forests from destructive insects and disease, conserving private forest land, and promoting community forests and tree planting.

There are 20 forest districts across the state. The Clear Creek Forest District covers 8 counties: Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Clarion, Jefferson, Lawrence, Mercer, and Venango. Each of these counties is covered by a service forester who is ready to help you find resources for your property and provide technical assistance. Our service foresters and our environmental educator also provide education and outreach opportunities to the community.

Each newsletter will be packed with event details, photos, staff insights, and forest management topics. As you peruse these newsletters, you will see that no two seasons are the same! Some seasons we are busy working with landowners on invasive species control or forest stand improvement, other seasons are focused on education and special events, and some seasons are a mix of it all.

Stay tuned for each issue! - Saahirah Walton, Service Forester

Did you know that private forest landowners own over 70 percent of the total forested area in Pennsylvania? Decisions made by forest landowners have a significant impact on the future health of Pennsylvania's forests.

Service Foresters provide information and resources to forest landowners, including:

Woodland Examinations
Sustainable Forest Management
Forest Improvements
Tree Planting
Forest Health
Available Programs
Forest Wildlife
Timber Harvests
Community Forestry
Educational Programs

Contact your local service forester today to schedule a program or landowner visit.



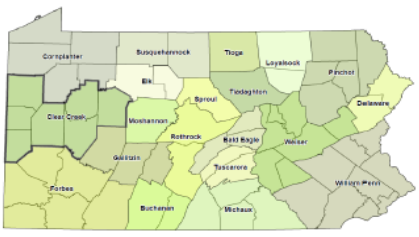
Who to Contact

Clear Creek Forest District Service Foresters:

Beaver and Butler Counties
Jessica Pierce
814-297-5361
jespierce@pa.gov

Mercer and Lawrence Counties
Saahirah Walton
814-297-5366
saawalton@pa.gov

Armstrong, Clarion, and Jefferson Counties
Levi Thompson
814-226-2322
levthompso@pa.gov



Ask a Forester

FAQ from landowners this summer.

- Q. Are my trees ready to cut?
  A. This is a complicated question. If you are curious if your trees are ready to be cut, we will schedule a field visit with you to assess the condition of the forest. We will look for species diversity, tree health, seedling regeneration, invasive plants and other factors to assess whether the forest is ready to be cut. We always recommended working with a consultant forester when selling timber. Learn more about consultant foresters in our next issue!

- Q. Why would I want a Forest Stewardship Plan?
  A. A forest management plan or forest stewardship plan is designed to guide each landowner in the sustainable management of their forested areas as well as serve as a roadmap for achieving the landowner's various goals. These plans are also required when applying for funding through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

While NRCS accepts applications year-round, interested landowners should apply by October 1, 2026, to be considered for fiscal year 2027 funding. Contact your county NRCS office for more information or go to www.pa.nrcs.usda.gov.

Environmental Educator's Year in Review

It can be said that 2026 was one of the most successful years for the Clear Creek Forest District when it comes to environmental education and connecting with the public! The Environmental Education Specialist (EES) and Service Foresters were busy all year presenting educational programs in the classroom, at outdoor school field trips, at the local public libraries, and senior centers.

Schools are perhaps our most important connection when it comes to environmental education, and this year our four educators taught a record number of students. Schools visited our State Forest Lands for outdoor field trips; Brookville High School attended a bird banding program at the Clear Creek tract and Greenville Elementary's 3rd graders (all 110 of them) visited the McKeever tract for an educational forest themed field trip. The educators also had an opportunity to visit many schools in 2026. We assisted with Hillview Elementary's Field Fest with 130, 5th graders and a flint and steel fire making program at Clarion Elementary's Pioneer Days to name a few. Our nature lessons were not just limited to public schools, we also brought environmental education to home schools, summer schools, and nature camps. Our partnership with local libraries has also been very beneficial in reaching young minds. While most of our library programs are for younger children, we do occasionally have adult-oriented educational programs, like Medicinal Plants of the Forest.

We have also expanded our partnerships with other organizations that teach environmental education. More than ever before, we have forged partnerships with County Conservation Districts, State Parks, PA Game Commission, Penn State Extension, public libraries, and even county tourism departments. In addition, we are now visiting senior centers in several counties and providing them with fun and educational programming. We feel it is important to give back to our seniors, who have done so much to pave the way for us.

Finally, weekend program attendance has grown leaps and bounds over the years! Popular programs like Birdwatching for Beginners, UV Light Night Hike, Owl Prowl, Firefly Fun, Salamander Safari, Stream Stomp, Tea Talk, Medicinal Plant Walk and more, have had record attendance in 2026. This August, we even had our first boat float down the Allegheny River! Our highest attended program, perhaps ever, was this year's The Misunderstood Timber Rattlesnake, which attracted over 60 people!



No doubt there are even bigger and better things planned for Clear Creek Forest District's environmental education programming in 2027!

– Gene Krasicki, EES

UPCOMING EVENTS CONTINUED

- **Full Moon Owl Prowl**

  September 26th, 7:30pm
  Beartown Rocks

- **Tree ID Bingo at the Greenville Senior Center**

  October 2nd, 11am

- **Echo's Across the Water: Stories and Artifacts from Mercer County's Past at M.K. Goddard State Park**

  October 3rd, 10am – 1pm

- **Walk in Penn's Woods**

  John C Oliver Bike Trail
  October 3rd, 8:30am

  Glade Run Lake, Butler Co.
  October 4th, 2pm

- **Kennerdell History Hike**

  September 10th, 9am

- Contact us for specific event information.

**Registration required for some events*

Do you have an education request or idea? Contact Clear Creek State Forest's Environmental Educator
Gene Krasicki
(814) 226-1681
ekrasicki@pa.gov

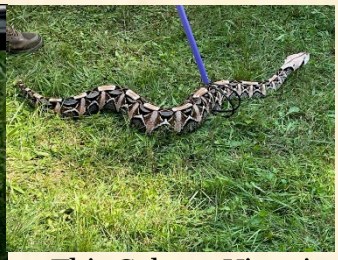
OR

The Clear Creek Forest District Office
(814) 226-1901
fd08@pa.gov

Photos From the Forest

Each season we encounter interesting, cool and beautiful things. Here are our top photos from this summer!





This Gaboon Viper is native to Africa but made an appearance at our Misunderstood Timber Rattlesnake event this August.



Above: Male polyphemus moth or giant silk moth.

Below: You never know what you will find when removing old tree tubes!







Above: A carpet of red oak seedlings in Mercer County!

Below: UV light can reveal a whole different world!



For more photos, updates on programs, trail closures, and other important Clear Creek information, follow the Clear Creek Forest District on Facebook!

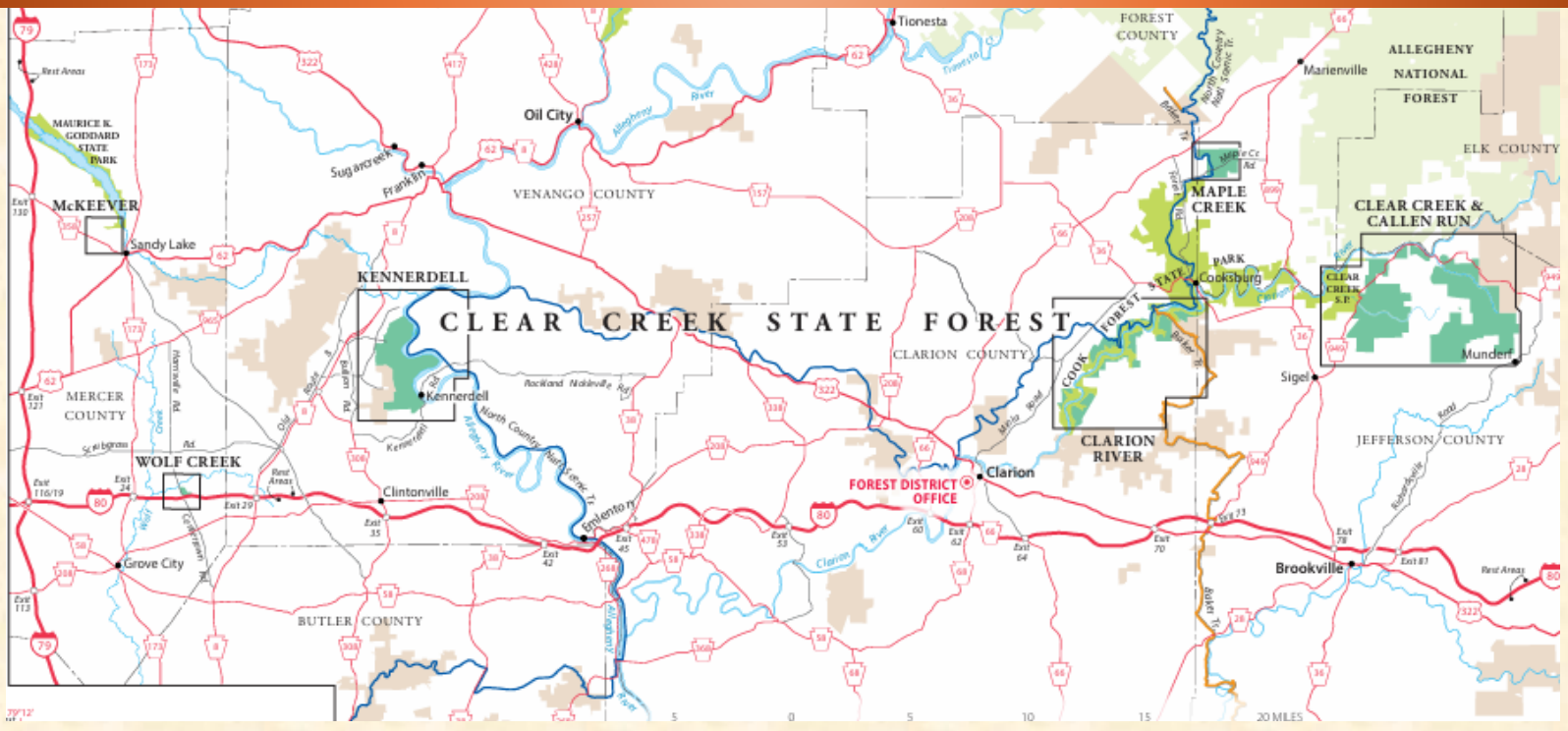
Our Clear Creek State Forest Tracts

The Bureau of Forestry has approximately 2.3 million acres of land across Pennsylvania that is open to the public and offers recreational opportunities such as hiking, sightseeing, camping, hunting, fishing, cross-country skiing, picnicking and horseback riding. The Clear Creek State Forest manages 16,727 acres of state forest land across seven separate state forest tracts located in Clarion, Jefferson, Venango, Forest and Mercer counties. Visit the Clear Creek State Forest DCNR Website for maps.

- Kennerdell Tract– Venango County – 3,243 acres with 7 miles of shoreline along the Allegheny River and camping options for canoers and kayakers traveling the river. This tract also contains a designated wild plant sanctuary and two naturally producing native brook trout streams. Historical remnants of the iron furnace and oil pumping station can be found in this area.
- McKeever Tract – Mercer County – 201 acres of low impact recreation, education and forest conservation. This tract contains our only designated old growth forest. Home to former Rocky Basin and later, the McKeever Education Center, this property contains many historical markers.
- Wolf Creek Tract – Mercer County – 62 acres of formerly cultivated fields and mining land that are now being managed for healthy forests and wildlife habitat. This tract has a unique history of coal extraction and early drift mining.
- Clarion River Tract – Clarion County – This tract surrounds Cook Forest State Park lands, with trail systems traversing both, including the North Country Nation Scenic Trail.
- Maple Creek Tract – Forest County – 1,116 acres surrounding a Maple Creek, a stocked brook trout stream.
- Clear Creek Tract and Callen Run Tract – Jefferson County – 9,876 acres named after the crystal-clear waters that run through it. The Clear Creek and the Little Clear Creek are designated high-quality steams and stocked with trout. With 18 miles of trails, Beartown Rocks Overlook and primitive and motorized camping, there is something for everyone.

2026 hunting season is currently open.

Always wear orange when recreating on public land during hunting seasons.



Pennsylvania
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
Bureau of Forestry


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Save The Date!
Caring For Your Woods Workshop
January 23, 2027 | 8:00 am - 12:00 pm
Become a better steward of your woods, no matter the size! Learn about the land around you and how to care for it from local forestry and environmental professionals!
Thiel College
Bly Auditorium, Academic Center Building
Amelia Earhart Drive, Greenville, PA 16125