



The Clark Chronicle

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Photo by Everett Hook

From the Chair...

Welcome to the fall edition of the Clark Chronicle! It's hard to believe that summer is over. And even though it was a hot and humid summer, we still had a lot of great days at Clark Reservation. There were a lot of weekend activities with some new events. Two of the popular ones, Doggie Social and Yoga in the Park, will continue next year!

As the days get cooler and the leaves are changing, days spent at Clark are as beautiful as ever. We look forward to seeing you at the park on these gorgeous fall days.

We do have two "business" changes at Clark Reservation. One is our address: 6105 East Seneca Tnpk. Jamesville, NY 13078. We did that



for two reasons: to save some money and to streamline our operations.

Another change that is in the works is our name. We are in the process of changing it from Council of Park Friends to Friends of Clark Reservation. We are doing that to reflect who we really are. The original group was designed to support ALL parks in the Central New York area. Over time, it morphed into supporting Clark Reservation State Park alone. Also, our acronym was CPF and there is another organization in this area with the same acronym.

*Tina Redmond, Chair
Friends of Clark Reservation*

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Preschoolers Play at the Park

*by Collette Charbonneau
Environmental Education Steward*

"It's a bird nest!" one little girl proudly shouted as she spotted a bird's nest high up in the tree on Dry Lake Trail. Later on, she saw a hairy woodpecker and pointed it out to our group. Using a pair of homemade binoculars, she easily made her discoveries, which took me several minutes to find! As she stated earlier that morning during the craft, the homemade binoculars were not going to be as effective as real ones because, as she accurately

described, they did not have the glass part. They were still pretty and each pair was uniquely decorated with stickers and crayon artwork.

Nature Play, a new weekly two-hour program at Clark Reservation State Park, offered children ages 3-5 a chance to play in nature in a safe, fun way. The morning started with a craft and story. Then, we walked along a trail to find bugs, birds, mammals, forest homes, and more.

Each week featured a different nature theme, giving preschoolers something new and exciting to look forward to. This program was held Wednesdays in September and October. Developmentally appropriate practices were followed to enhance learning, social skills, self-discovery, and creativity (all skills that are easily enhanced when exploring the nature around you).

Note: You can make binoculars too! All you need are two toilet paper tubes stapled or glued together, decorated with stickers, markers, crayons, etc. String tied to a hole punch on each one will make a lanyard so they can hang around your neck as you search your backyard or nearby park for birds.



Goldenrod: For a Healthy Habitat

by Angela Weiler
Clark Native Plant garden



Goldenrods and asters line our central New York highways each fall, creating a beautiful display of purple, white, and gold. However, few people would have these “weeds” in their gardens; and besides, they’re everywhere, right?

Not anymore. Rampant development is decimating native plant populations, which also decimates insect, bird, and mammal populations. Global insect populations are almost half of what they were 40 or 50 years ago; in Germany insect populations have declined 75% in the same period (Yale Environment 360, October 2017).

Most native insects cannot eat non-native

plants; lawns (i.e., non-native grasses) support virtually no native insect populations. Goldenrod species, on the other hand, support at least 115 species of butterflies and moths alone (Lepidoptera), and asters support at least 112 species. (And that doesn’t include all of the other species of insects which need these plants to survive.) In fact, goldenrod and aster species support an average of 5 times more Lepidoptera species than other supportive native plants of the northeast.

Insects need these plants to survive, and they provide a beautiful display every fall. (And goldenrod does not cause allergies; ragweed is the actual culprit.) There are many different goldenrod species that are not as aggressive as Canadian goldenrod; considering planting some in your yard!

Have You Seen Me?

by Dean Kolts
Friends Board Member

“Hey, that stick just moved!”

Have you ever walked the trails and be startled by the sudden movement of a snake slithering away? There are several species of snakes at Clark, none of which are poisonous, but the most impressive is the Black Rat Snake (*Elaphe o. obsoleta*), which can be from 3 1/2 to over 6 feet long. They have shiny black scales but their chin and throat are white. Being adept at climbing, they can be spotted in trees and can even climb brick walls. They’re also excellent swimmers, which allows them to feed on frogs and amphibians, along with small birds, rodents, and eggs.



This photo was taken along the Cliff Trail



This Black Rat Snake was spotted by the drinking fountain behind the Nature Center. It was about six feet long.

As constrictors, they coil around their prey and suffocate it. When black rat snakes are threatened or frightened, they can emit a foul odor as protection. They brumate in cold weather, which is similar to hibernation. It means they’re mostly asleep and occasionally wake up to drink water, but don’t eat.

Males will fight for the opportunity to mate with females. Reportedly, they’re able to care for themselves after birth, and seem to be loners. Anecdotally, many visitors to the Nature Center this summer reported seeing them, seemingly more than in other years.

Borers And Worms And Flies, Oh My!

by Mike Serviss
Conservation Project Coordinator
Clark

Forest health is a major concern for any nature lover. Invasive insects, fungi, and earthworms can dramatically alter the forest, affecting wildlife, native plants, and the safety and enjoyment of park patrons. One only needs to walk to the Nature Play area to find that a stump is all that remains of an old Ash tree that was decimated by the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). Just this past summer, Asian jumping worms (aka Alabama jumpers, crazy snake worm), a newer subterranean threat, were discovered near a population of American hart's-tongue fern in the park.

The arrival of the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA) appears imminent, however,

a survey of the park in September by NYS Parks Forest Health Specialists did not locate any of the "woolly bullies." A new threat also looms on the horizon, the dreaded Spotted Lantern Fly (SLF). SLF has recently been observed in Albany and Yates counties, yet no major infestations have been detected in the state.

Despite these frightening threats to our beloved park, all is not lost! Surveys and management recommendations for each of these pests is a top work priority for my crew this fall. Furthermore, you can help! We ask that you keep an eye out for any of these pests and please report them to us at Michael.Serviss@parks.ny.gov.



Asian jumping worms, recently discovered at Clark Reservation, thrash violently when handled.

Yoga In The Park: The Perfect Place

"Yoga In The Park" was held in August, and again at 8 am on September 16, led by yoga instructor Helena Zera, founder of Vyana Yoga (<https://www.vyanayoga.com>). The weather was perfect, and it's hard to imagine a better way to experience the serenity of mind and body than by an early morning yoga practice among the trees and the birds at Clark Reservation. (And the dragonflies came in right on cue -- an extra perk!)

Don't miss it next season! Follow the Clark Reservation Nature Center facebook page to get updates:

<https://www.facebook.com/NatureCenterCPF/>



Ticks: It's Not Only The Deer

White-footed mice are also primary carriers of the Lyme bacterium *Borrelia burgdorferi* and are a common host of black-legged ticks, which makes them a key in the spread of Lyme disease. More at the Cary Institute: <https://www.caryinstitute.org/newsroom/why-adorable-mouse-blame-spread-lyme-disease>

Create a Tick-Free Zone at Home (from the NY Dept. of Environmental Conservation):

- Keep grass mowed.
- Remove leaf litter, brush and weeds at the edge of the lawn.
- Restrict the use of groundcovers in areas frequented by family and roaming pets.
- Remove brush and leaves around stonewalls and wood piles.
- Discourage rodent activity; seal small openings around the home.
- Move firewood piles and bird feeders away from the house.
- Place children's swing sets and sand boxes on a wood chip or mulch type foundation.
- Trim tree branches and shrubs around the lawn edge to let in more sunlight.





Friends of Clark Reservation
Clark Reservation State Park
6105 E Seneca Tpke, Jamesville, NY 13078

Love your park? **Donate today!** (PayPal accepted)
<http://www.councilofparkfriends.org/index.php>
(scroll down to “Donate”, on right side)

Don't Miss These!

Details at <https://www.meetup.com/Clark-Reservation-Meetup-Group/>
and <https://www.facebook.com/pg/NatureCenterCPF/events/>

Friday, October 19, 3 - 5 pm:

Fall Foliage Frolic (hike)

Wednesday, October 24, 7 - 9 pm:

Full Moon Hike

Tuesday, January 1, 2019:

First Day Hike!



