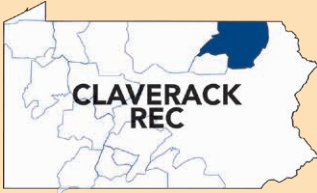


Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

CLAVERACK REC

32750 Route 6
Wysox, PA 18854
570-265-2167
800-326-9799

Email: mail@claverack.com
Website: <https://claverack.com>

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Gary L. Hennip, Zone 4
Chair

570-250-2200

Danise C. Fairchild, Zone 1
Vice Chair

570-265-3599

Timothy T. Tewksbury, Zone 6
Secretary/Treasurer

570-833-2320

Angela S. Joines, Zone 3
Vice Secretary/Treasurer

570-756-4979

Charles R. Bullock, Zone 7
570-280-8470

Dr. Robert R. Faux, Zone 2
570-574-3531

Robert W. Fearnley, Zone 5
570-278-2288

Charles R. McNamara, Zone 8
570-553-4385

Anthony J. Ventello, Zone 9
607-765-2615

Steven G. Allabaugh
President & CEO

STAFF

Annette L. Koder, *Executive Assistant*

Nicholas J. Berger, *Sr. Director, Engineering and Operations*

Jennifer W. Jones, *Chief Financial Officer*

Brian F. Zeidner, *Director, Member Services*

OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Friday
7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Casey M. Wood, *VP, Communications*
C&T Enterprises, Inc.



ENTERPRISES, INC.

C&T Enterprises, Inc. is a jointly owned subsidiary of Claverack (Wysox, Pa) and Tri-County (Mansfield, Pa) Rural Electric Cooperatives. C&T provides shared management and support services for the two parent electric cooperatives, the cooperatives' telecom affiliates of Revolution Broadband and Tri-Co Connections, and C&T's subsidiary utilities of Wellsboro Electric Co. (Wellsboro, Pa), Citizens' Electric Co. (Lewisburg, Pa), and Valley Energy (Sayre, Pa), a natural gas distribution company.

Guest Column

Pollinator Habitats in Utility Rights of Way



BRIAN ZEIDNER

AS ESSENTIAL AS ELECTRICITY IS, the maintenance of electric utility rights of way is often viewed as a nuisance or a challenge. Landowners would prefer to fully use their property with their preferred trees and plantings. Your electric cooperative, however, is required to manage the vegetation around power lines. There can be consensus.

Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) maintains a 40-foot right of way (20 feet on each side of the line) for most of its high-voltage power lines. Our crews follow a maintenance schedule to spray, mow and cut these rights of way.

We are excited to share that Claverack REC is developing a native pollinator habitat evaluation program to help us determine if we can manage our rights of way with a new approach. Enhanced service reliability, reduced costs and minimal environmental impacts — while creating new habitats for pollinators — hold broad appeal for many involved in the maintenance of our 2,800 miles of rights of way. As we have considered this initiative, we feel there are many mutual benefits.

Member relationships

Landowners, forestry and wildlife resource professionals, apiary managers, naturalists, and conservationists have recognized the value of establishing and providing natural habitats for many years, especially pollinator habitats. With minimal maintenance, plant species for pollinators can be established and maintained without growing into power lines, and landowners can enjoy watching pollinators at work.

Costs

Traditional electric right-of-way management programs include tree trimming, tree removal and brush cutting. More recently, strategic spraying has been used for vegetation control. Mechanical cutting costs are high and always increasing.

Costs to establish pollinator habitat usually include spraying, no-till planter rental, seed mix purchase and employee or contractor time. Costs to maintain pollinator habitat would include occasional maintenance mowing, as well as spot treatment of tree seedlings and invasive species. Reduced maintenance costs mean lower rates — another member benefit.

Environmental considerations

Restablishing native species helps control invasive plants and pests and creates greater biodiversity in the environment. Birds, bees, butterflies, and other beneficial insects thrive in areas designed, constructed, and maintained to support them. The decline of the honeybee population in our region has concerned beekeepers for years, and increasing pollinator habitat is a proven practice to help with the recovery of bee populations. Many insects are critical to the pollination of fruits and vegetables and ultimately contribute to the nation's food supply.

Utility rights of way can also provide habitat for declining species of songbirds. Combining early successional low-shrub habitat with pollinator plantings provides

Continued on page 12B

GUEST COLUMN

Continued from page 12A

both food and cover for some of these species.

Rich, undisturbed soils are full of biodiversity, have plants with established root structures, and act as a filter for streams, rivers, and aquifers, so clean water is another byproduct of good soils.

Pollinator habitats contribute to improved water quality compared to soil-disturbing activities done with heavy, traditional right-of-way maintenance equipment. Claverack REC and landowners agree: a healthy and improving environment benefits us all.

Planning

Our native pollinator habitat program will start with lawn conversions on cooperative-owned property and may expand to member pilot projects in the coming years and potentially to larger right-of-way plantings. There will be an opportunity for review and evaluation at each phase of the project.

Projected partners include our local conservation districts, Ernst Seed Company, professional consultants,

local vendors and contractors, and cooperative staff. We also hope to develop on-site field trip opportunities for environmental civic organizations and local students and educators.

Our goal is to prepare the site and plant the seed mixes this spring in an area near the cooperative headquarters. We'll let you know the status of the project, and we encourage you to come and check it out.

With this project, we are evaluating best practices and improvements to our 2,800-mile rights-of-way management program. Through it, we will also lower our lawn-mowing costs, reduce pollution, provide quality native pollinator habitat and promote educational experiences. As an electric cooperative, whose leaders and staff live and work in the communities we serve, we value strong environmental stewardship, and we are proud to share this initiative with you. 🌱

BRIAN ZEIDNER
DIRECTOR OF MEMBER SERVICES

