



CLEAR THINKING

MAY 2016

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2016 Board

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Connecting Past, Future, and Present



One of the traits that bonds many of us to the Clear Lake community is the steady connection of the **past** and the **future**. We are equally attracted to the community's spirit of enjoying the **present**! We look forward to seeing you at the "Creating a Clear Future" celebrations on **Saturday, August 6th** at the Clear Lake Yacht Club and **Sunday, August 7th** at Kasota Island. We welcome your ideas and participation as our Committees plan this fun weekend.

A little over 25 years ago, a group of eight Clear Lakers gathered to begin forming an organization to build on the then-recent creation of the Lib Hanna Reserve, the first land in Clear Lake dedicated for open space purposes.

Fast forward to 2016. The Conservancy now protects 15 properties, works effectively to enhance local water quality, and offers education to inspire community members to preserve, care for and enjoy our land and water resources.

We are especially proud that over the past year, one of the original eight founders (Kathy Latz) joined with the Conservancy's first employee (Executive Director Bridget Harrison) to facilitate a thoughtful strategic planning process for our 12-person Board of Directors (listed to the left) as we adopted the Conservancy's first Strategic Plan covering 2016-2019. What a classic Clear Lake connection between the past and the future!

Several items in this Newsletter flow from the Plan. The **new logo** displayed on this first page reflects the many natural features of Clear Lake that we hope vividly connect the Conservancy with your cherished memories of time spent here. The logo and our focused **mission statement** (below) remind us that we are working together as a community to "protect our corner of the state".

In this sixth issue **of our Clear Thinking newsletter**, we continue our commitment to regular communications with the Clear Lake community, including the series of **educational articles on Conservancy properties**. This issue spotlights Spangler Grove, one of the 15 properties currently preserved. We'll add articles as we add properties!

Finally, the **new website** is now live at www.clearlakeconservancy.org! The site offers a fresh, informative and convenient source of information about the Conservancy, its activities, events and beautiful properties. You can even contact us to volunteer and donate to the Conservancy through the new website! We invite you to do both!

Page four of the Newsletter is a handy **summary of currently planned 2016 events**. Post it on your refrigerator door or cottage bulletin board! As the summer season gets underway, we add our welcome and look forward to seeing you at these events.

Nancy Webster, President
Bridget Harrison, Executive Director



The mission of the Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy is to preserve, protect, and manage the natural environment within the watershed and township for future generations.



Water Quality

The Water Quality Committee and volunteers have been collecting water sampling data from the Lake and the four ditches that drain into the Lake for most of CLTLC's existence. Testing parameters include temperature, pH, nitrate, nitrite, E. coli, dissolved oxygen, ortho-phosphate, biological oxygen demand, and turbidity. This section of *Clear Thinking* will continue to explain these testing parameters.

In simple terms, turbidity=clarity. Turbid water is more cloudy and is attributed to suspended matter like clay, silt, organic and inorganic materials, and algae that scatter and absorb light, instead of allowing it to shine through the water in a straight line. Turbid water may be the result of soil erosion, construction site, urban, or agricultural runoff, algal blooms, or lake bottom disturbances caused by boat traffic.

Excess particles can be harmful to fish by clogging their gills and can limit the amount of sunlight penetrating the water, impacting aquatic invertebrates (insects).

What can you do to help with the clarity of Clear Lake? To reduce the amount of particles flowing into the lake, filter strips or grassways can be installed in urban and agricultural settings to capture sediments. Operating your boat in deeper water avoids churning up the bottom and avoid dumping yard waste into the lake or streams that flow into the lake.



Natural Area Preservation

The Lands Committee is up and running and Rick Eckert is leading the charge as our first chairperson. We are thrilled to have Rick at the helm! One of the first goals of the committee is to compile the history, environmental significance, and management/maintenance strategies for each Conservancy preserve. Spangler Grove was the topic of a recent meeting where the proposal to switch the annual prescribed fire from the spring to the fall was discussed, more on this later.

Spangler Grove, a CLTLC preserve since 2005, is located at the corner of East Clear Lake Drive and Lakeview Drive. Honoring the wishes of the donor, Ted Spangler, it's being managed as a native prairie. Slightly over an acre in size, this preserve serves an important function to insects, wildlife, and humans. For insects and wildlife, it functions as a food source and a home, especially to the pollinators (bees, butterflies, etc.). But for humans this 'pocket park' provides a glimpse of how portions of our landscape looked during pre-settlement days. More importantly, perhaps, it filters water, captures carbon, and offers a great spot to observe wild flowers, birds, butterflies, bees, and a variety of other insects. Although the trail is not long in length it meanders in and around the native landscape and when walking among the tall vegetation your senses become engaged with the sweet fragrance of wildflowers and the loud buzzing of bees and insects. It offers a local glimpse of ecological history.

To ensure the wildflowers and other native plants continue to grow in our prairie, we burn it on a yearly basis typically in the spring. This year we plan to burn in the fall. This change supports a different component of the managed prairie, the 'forbs' or the flowering plants. One disadvantage of the fall burn this year is the spring growing season will not start with a 'clean slate' since the dead stand will remain intact until the new plants grow in. Also, burning in the fall may not look as clean as the plants won't have been dead nearly as long compared to a spring stand. Another change under consideration is to add signs identifying some of the native plants and why the prairie ecosystem is so important for our landscape. If you have ideas for a sign at Spangler Grove please reach out to us!



e-Newsletter:

To sign up for our e-newsletter email:
info@clearlakeconservancy.org

Environmental Education

One Clear Laker recently declared May as her favorite calendar month yet in the 2016 Conservancy Calendar. May's photos of a township farm, a lake rainbow and some curious cows reminded her of a lifetime of summers spent here.

For 2017, we've selected the "Birds of Clear Lake" as the theme for the Conservancy calendar. All proceeds from calendar sales benefit the CLTLC's mission and activities. Use your phone or camera this summer to capture shots of the eagles, ducks, cardinals, or any of the other feathered friends that live or visit here.

Send us your favorite shots by July 31st to be considered for next year's calendar. Your photo could be featured in next year's Calendar, or may appear in a future newsletter or on the website!

Contact Bridget at bridget.harrison@clearlakeconservancy.org with questions and to contribute your photos to the Conservancy.



Partner's Spotlight

Many of our accomplishments rely on successful partnerships. In this Partner's Spotlight, we highlight the Steuben County Lakes Council.

For 44 years the Steuben County Lakes Council has been working to protect the lakes and streams of Steuben County. As a fellow environmental organization, they work to educate the public about local water quality issues. They also sponsor water quality testing, including testing on one of the streams that flows into Clear Lake. Representatives from the Steuben County lakes attend the monthly meetings to share information about issues affecting the lakes. The Lakes Council, a membership organization, is run by volunteers who are interested in maintaining and improving the lakes environment here in Steuben County.

In addition to sharing important lakes-related information in the *Bobber Watchin'* and *Soundings* publications, the Council periodically offers scholarships. CLTLC's Executive Director, Bridget Harrison was recently awarded a scholarship to attend the Indiana Lakes Management Society Conference. Afterwards, Bridget commented that the "conference was a great opportunity to network and learn about solutions to some of the same issues we are seeing here at Clear Lake." CLTLC looks forward to a continued cooperative endeavor to protect our precious lakes!



GREAT TAX NEWS FOR IRA OWNERS

If you are over 70 1/2, you can now make a TOTALLY INCOME TAX FREE **IRA Charitable Rollover contribution**, to support the [Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy](#). This new tax law, (The PATH ACT) signed on December 18, 2015, makes permanent for future years, the opportunity to withdraw up to \$100,000 annually from your IRA for charitable purposes. This contribution could be some or all of your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD), or even a more generous contribution. There is no federal income tax realized and no income tax deduction for the donor making this charitable IRA Rollover. It avoids the deduction limitations on your Form 1040 contributions.

To see if this new tax opportunity fits your charitable giving plans, talk to your tax preparer or telephone George Schenkel, our Treasurer at (260) 417-0564. If you would like to receive an *Overview Synopsis* and a *Charitable Rollover Withdrawal Request Form* to send to your IRA Custodian, call Bridget Harrison, Executive Director at (260) 316-1397. Gifts must be directly transferred from your IRA Plan Administrator to CLTLC. We look forward to your continued support.

THANK YOU TO OUR RECENT DONORS!*

Including Timothy & Lynn Speiser, the Bok Family, Jim & Annie Skinner, Steuben County Lakes Council Scholarship Program **Endowment Contribution****: Mr. & Mrs. William Bloebaum Jr.

*List reflects contributions received after our March issue of *Clear Thinking*. We make every effort to be as accurate as possible, please contact us if you see a mistake.

**Our Operating Endowment & Maintenance Endowment Funds are held at the Steuben County Community Foundation.

To get involved or support:

(260) 316-1397 • www.ClearLakeConservancy.org

111 Gecowets Drive – Clear Lake • Fremont, IN 46737

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*Look inside for the
details about our new
website and logo!*

Email: info@clearlakeconservancy.org to receive this in your email!

SEVEN WAYS TO SUPPORT CLTLC

- 1) Unrestricted donation;
- 2) Honor gifts for weddings, birthdays, anniversaries and births;
- 3) Sustaining gifts to CLTLC Operating fund at the Steuben County Community Foundation;
- 4) Sustaining gifts to CLTLC Maintenance fund at the Steuben County Community Foundation;
- 5) Memorial bequests for Clear Lake community members;
- 6) Gifts to specific projects such as education, dredging, land acquisition;
- 7) Include CLTLC as a beneficiary in your will or trust.

Contact us for more information on how you can support CLTLC. The success of the Conservancy depends on the tax-deductible contributions of individuals and the community.

A few of our upcoming events!

Check our website periodically for more details and additional events.

Knee-High Naturalist program -

July 6th, 13th, 20th, and 27th 10-11:30am at the Yacht Club

Our Annual Meeting -

Friday, July 22nd 4:00pm at Clear Lake Town Hall

Creating a Clear Future -

Saturday, August 6th at the Yacht Club & Sunday, August 7th at Kasota Island