

2019-2022

# Strategic Plan

Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy



Adopted by the Clear Lake Township Land  
Conservancy Board of Directors  
01/08/2019



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*Many thanks to the Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy (CLTLC) Board of Directors for their hard work and dedication in creating this second Three – Year Strategic Plan.*

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## Executive Summary

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Although officially established on August 19, 1991, the founding members first met in October of 1990 to discuss the creation of the Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy (CLTLC). A survey was sent out to residents of the lake, which identified three components that would guide the Conservancy's future activities: water quality enhancement, natural areas preservation, and environmental education.

In early years, volunteers conducted water quality monitoring to create the baseline data for the lake and the 4 county ditches that drain into Clear Lake. To expand on these efforts, a Water Quality Committee was formed in 2008. The Committee took a larger watershed view of Clear Lake's water quality and started focusing on the importance and function of the adjacent wetlands to the lake.

Since its founding, the CLTLC has actively preserved fifteen properties, one within the lake, thirteen around it, and the Conservancy holds one conservation easement. One of the Conservancy's land project goals is to help residents and surrounding landowners understand the importance of taking a watershed level approach to conservation by looking at sensitive resources beyond Clear Lake. Currently the Conservancy protects over 63 acres of sensitive areas that directly impact the water quality of Clear Lake.

One of the most important aspects of the Conservancy's continued growth is its community environmental education programs. Some of these efforts are demonstrated in CLTLC's 2018 award-winning Knee-High Naturalists and "ASK BRIDGET" programs.

The Conservancy has been organized and led by volunteers for over 27 years. Some have come and gone, others have been involved since the beginning, and some have recently joined the team. This organization is successful because of them. Their time, talent, commitment, and passion have grown the Conservancy and paved the way for our future success!

This is an exciting time for the Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy. As we celebrate our volunteers and past successes, we look to the future. Our focus will remain on the continued growth of our three pillars: **water quality enhancement, natural areas preservation, and environmental education.**

To continue protecting our corner of the state, this Strategic Plan outlines five goals:

GOAL 1. LAND & WATER PROTECTION: The essential character and function of the Clear Lake watershed and township landscape are conserved through proactive and responsive land and water protection. [Led by Lands and Water Quality Committees]

GOAL 2. STEWARDSHIP: CLTLC properties are managed to maintain and enhance their conservation values. [Led by Lands Committee]

GOAL 3. FUND DEVELOPMENT: CLTLC has sufficient funds to meet its land & water protection goals, fulfill its perpetual stewardship obligations, and support annual operations. [Led by Finance and Development Committees]

GOAL 4. COMMUNITY EDUCATION & COMMUNICATION: CLTLC is an essential community organization with an educated, diverse, and active base of support that is knowledgeable about and participates in land & water conservation practices throughout the Clear Lake Township. [Led by Communications and Education Committees]

GOAL 5. SOLID ORGANIZATION: Effective people and systems throughout the organization provide direction, resources, and follow-through to implement CLTLC's mission and goals. [Led by Executive Committee]

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## Mission

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

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## Vision

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A community-engaged and supported organization that protects the natural environment of Clear Lake Township.

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## Our Commitments

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- To work in partnership with the community to promote the understanding of land and water conservation and environmental stewardship and to achieve mutual conservation goals of preservation, protection, and management.
- To be a confident source of information and education in assisting landowners, on and away from the lake in their conservation objectives; and to act as a vehicle to those who wish to donate their land and/or conservation easements.
- To recognize, respect, and support the connections that both landowners and the community have with the Clear Lake watershed and township.
- To maintain a professional, effective, and efficient organization governed with excellence, transparency, and accountability.
- To manage and protect in perpetuity our properties.

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## Goals & Strategies

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**GOAL 1. LAND & WATER PROTECTION: The essential character and function of the Clear Lake watershed and township landscape are conserved through proactive and responsive land and water protection.**

### Strategies

- a. Update our Strategic Land Conservation plan yearly to effectively respond to land protection opportunities that meet the criteria for permanent conservation.
- b. Maintain and expand partnerships that support permanent land and water protection.
- c. Increase awareness of Water Quality Committee (WQC) goals, challenges, and achievements among funders, partners and stakeholders.
- d. Create a plan to improve all water quality measures for Clear Lake and the Harry Teeters and Cyrus Brouse Ditches.

**GOAL 2. STEWARDSHIP: CLTLC properties are managed to maintain and enhance their conservation values.**

### Strategies

- a. Utilize the Lands Committee to guide the land stewardship efforts.
- b. For each new acquisition, develop a baseline report and prioritize stewardship needs.
- c. Create, update and maintain a comprehensive plan and budget for all land stewardship activities.

**GOAL 3. FUND DEVELOPMENT: CLTLC has sufficient funds to meet its land & water protection goals, fulfill its perpetual stewardship obligations, and support annual operations.**

**Strategies**

- a. Identify and apply for grants to support land acquisition, water quality protection, stewardship efforts, and education.
- b. Grow support from individuals, local businesses, and the community.
- c. Continue to diversify funding sources.
- d. Make significant progress towards endowment fund targets to sustain the ongoing CLTLC stewardship obligations.
- e. Initiate an annual giving program with financial and participation targets.
- f. Grow support for funding land acquisitions.

**GOAL 4. COMMUNITY EDUCATION & COMMUNICATION: CLTLC is an essential community organization with an educated, diverse, and active base of support that is knowledgeable about and participates in land & water conservation practices throughout the Clear Lake Township.**

**Strategies**

- a. Foster growth in the Communications and Education Committees to guide the efforts for community engagement.
- b. Maintain a communications plan that acknowledges the symbiotic relationship between landowners, farmers and residents of Clear Lake, which breaks barriers, defines communication goals and strategies, and demonstrates transparency.
- c. Increase public awareness of the organization, our mission and its importance, and encourage involvement, support and volunteerism.
- d. Establish community resources that effectively disseminate information on environmental topics within the Township
- e. Represent the organization on important land and conservation issues.
- f. Organize and host educational events that inspire people to actively preserve, care for, and enjoy our land and water resources.

**GOAL 5. SOLID ORGANIZATION: Effective people and systems throughout the organization provide direction, resources, and follow-through to implement CLTLC's mission and goals.**

**Strategies**

- a. Maintain an active and engaged Board of Directors.
- b. Maintain strong organizational structure, financial systems, and management tools.
- c. Match staff capacity to organizational needs.
- d. Guide the organization with effective planning focused on long-term sustainability.
- e. Maintain best practices in all facets of work and continually strive to improve.

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## Three-Year Benchmarks

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- The Strategic Land Conservation Plan is reviewed regularly and used for all acquisition opportunities.
- Plans are in place to improve Water Quality measures in Clear Lake and in Teeters and Brouse ditches.
- Land Stewardship Plans and Conservation Easement monitoring responsibilities are implemented as planned.
- The Kasota Shoreline and Brennan Woods Restoration Projects are successfully concluded.
- Significant progress is made toward the Stewardship Endowment Fund targets and toward Annual Giving financial and participation targets.
- Adequate unrestricted funds are available to cover annual stewardship commitments.
- Land acquisition funding targets are met.
- Regular communications are shared with the CLTLC community in a variety of formats.
- Two or more community education events occur annually.
- Staff, Board and Committees set and substantially achieve annual work plans.
- Staff and Board maintain mutually constructive and effective communications.
- CLTLC works to incorporate and comply with the Land Trust Standards and Practices guidelines set forth by the Land Trust Alliance and determines whether LTA accreditation is an appropriate goal.