



CLEAR THINKING

CLEARLAKECONSERVANCY.ORG

MARCH 2021 | ISSUE NO.36

OUR LETTER

VOLUNTEER POWER

The arrival of Spring brings thoughts of the work ahead to preserve, protect and manage 100 acres of natural beauty in the Clear Lake Township and watershed. Spring also brings gratitude for the year and winter behind us.

We have so much to be grateful for, especially the volunteers and donors who are behind the 2020 accomplishments.

The 2020 work is reflected in the Annual Report you'll find with this issue of *Clear Thinking*. We hope you will enjoy reading the report and will recall your 2020 experiences and memories that benefit from the Conservancy's work. Watch the video again if you want to jog more memories!

The Conservancy's work is made possible because of the talent, hours and money our volunteers invest in the Conservancy's mission. In 2020, our VOLUNTEERS partnered with our staff to:

- Build trails, a kiosk and a boardwalk.
- Pull invasive plants and plant native plants and trees.
- Take water samples and analyze the results.
- Help identify the infestation of Eurasian Watermilfoil we are now addressing.
- Participate in six committees that form the work engine of the Conservancy.
- Hold Knee-high Naturalists and Porch Chat programs.
- Plan and produce our first video, Protecting What We Love.
- Serve on the Board as the community's representatives to guide the long-term sustainability of our mission.

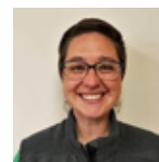
We thank each and every one of these volunteers. We also thank the 324 donors who contributed generously in 2020 to support the work, and we are proud to list all donors in the Annual Report. While we won't name all of our volunteers, we especially remember township resident and Board member Paul Crawford for his years of service and still mourn his untimely death in June 2020. We also welcome Doug Mulvaney as a new Board member. Doug practices law in Elkhart and has a family cottage on the south shore of Clear Lake. His volunteer service began at Brennan Woods workdays.

All Board members, committees and staff welcome your questions, suggestions and participation relating to the Conservancy.

We celebrate Spring's arrival and we celebrate our volunteers and donors. We hope to see you soon.



Karen Horrell
President



Bridget Harrison
Executive Director

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HONEY BEE VISITING A COMMON MILKWEED FLOWER





SWEET AS HONEY



Did you hear the latest buzz?

HONEY BEE ON AN ASTER BLOOM

By **DON LUEPKE**

This is the second in our series of articles on Pollinators.

When thinking about pollinators, the first to come to mind is often the European honey bee (*Apis mellifera*). Although not native to America, it is the most well-known member of the bee family. Familiar sayings abound such as “Busy as a bee”. It is the only insect that directly produces a food for human consumption – delicious sweet honey.

Honey and beeswax are commodities prized for thousands of years in civilizations all around the world. But interestingly, the majority of the beekeeping industry’s income is not from honey but rather from pollinating services. Bees are economically important as they are extremely competent pollinators who dwell in highly populated social units (hives) that are relatively easy to regulate by controlling their numbers, location, and ability to move them to new areas. This makes them valuable partners in specific agricultural areas. For instance, the almond crop is almost totally dependent on honey bees for pollination and successful harvests.

Honey bees are highly social beings, dwelling together with thousands of fellow “citizens.” And thus communication is absolutely essential in their “work”, including pollination. In fact, honey bees have one of the most complex symbolic languages on Earth. Their basic modes, similar to humans, use various stimuli – light, chemical and physical – that are perceived by sensory organs. They use a variety of different dances to “talk” with each other and emit chemical pheromones to send key messages to other members of the colony.

Honey bee population has declined recently through events such as the colony collapse disorder in 2006. What can private citizens do to help honey bees thrive? The University of Missouri Extension office suggests that “...gardeners can make a difference by increasing habitat favorable to pollinators and reducing insecticide use.” Favorable habitat in northeast Indiana includes planting species pictured in this article, including asters, milkweed and also bee balm.

SCAN THE QR CODE



SCAN THE QR CODE TO VIEW THE FULL ARTICLE ONLINE AT CLEARLAKECONSERVANCY.ORG/NEWS

A WALK IN THE WOODS

The Clear Lake Land Conservancy made great progress in 2020 improving the trails in Brennan Woods, a part of Clear Lake Nature Preserve (CLNP). Over the summer, Bob Martin, George Schenkel, Terry Newcomb, Mary Ann Walter, John Wilhelm, and Dave Drogos designed, constructed, and installed our trailhead information kiosk. The roofed double-sided structure, near the preserve parking area, will house our trail map, announcements, and educational posts. The kiosk was installed in memory of Nancy Wilhelm, as our “doorway to the preserve.” Once the signage is complete, our kiosk will welcome visitors to the preserve, offer helpful information and connect visitors to the Conservancy website through a QR code accessible with a smartphone.

Bob Webster, Bob Martin, Bruce Matasick, and Tim Miller supported the design and installation of a floating boardwalk across a wetland area of Brennan Woods, bringing us one step closer to a completed loop trail in CLNP. Late last summer, the team took a field trip to explore some boardwalk options. The E-Z dock available locally from the Pier

Place in Angola seemed to best fit our needs to take our hiking trail across the wetland located at the south end of Brennan Woods. Volunteers Dave Drogos, Matt Hilliard, Ryan Johnson, Guy Rodgers, and Chris Hughes spent an afternoon prepping the site. The Pier Place helped us complete the installation this January. We had support for this project from Jim and Karen Bushey, Nancy Andrews and an anonymous donor. Huge thanks as well to Gerald Dirig for access through his property for the installation.

As we welcome Spring, we hope to organize volunteer workdays to complete the trail on each end of the boardwalk. We also plan to line and mulch the trail with woodchips on the west end and install steps along the steep slope to the east. Workdays will be announced on our website and social media.

We are also working with our partners at Indiana Fish & Wildlife Service and Blue Heron Ministries to improve the wetland on the west end of Clear Lake Nature Preserve. We will replace a failing drainage tile and install a water control feature to help us store stormwater and prevent flooding on CR 675. Once these steps are complete, we can extend our hiking trail through the restored prairie, bringing us to just under 2 miles of trail on this 46-acre preserve. The figure-eight configuration will cover five different ecosystems and allow hikers to trek through the woods, through the prairie or both.



THE NEWLY-INSTALLED BOARDWALK
IN BRENNAN WOODS



THE PIER PLACE INSTALLING THE E-Z
DOCK ON A COLD JANUARY DAY

VIEW ADDITIONAL
PROJECT PHOTOS ONLINE AT
[CLEARLAKECONSERVANCY.ORG/NEWS](https://clearlakeconservancy.org/news)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Anonymous (2)

**The Blackbaud Giving Fund on
behalf of Jeff & Kathy Greer and
Cardinal Health**

Jim and Biz Martella

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Gregory and Cynthia Smith

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**KASOTA ISLAND
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Norman Hipkind**
H: Julianne & Norman Hipkind

The Kramer Family at Willow Hollow
H: Josie Kramer

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M: Nancy Bordner

Judy and Bill Greffin
M: Dan Skinner

Kevin and Deb Gerbers
M: Deborah Ann Gerbers

*List reflects contributions since our January issue of Clear Thinking. Contact us if you see a mistake



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We preserve, protect, & manage the natural environment within the Clear Lake Watershed and Township for future generations.

“All truly great thoughts are conceived while walking.”

– FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

VOLUNTEER | CONTACT | DONATE
clearlakeconservancy.org
 or call (260) 527-1072



CONTACT US TO SIGN UP

WHEN: Saturday, April 10
 Along each road in the Clear Lake Township, including the Town of Clear Lake
 Earth Day on Thursday, April 22nd

EVENT NAME: Neighborhood Cleanup Project

COMMUNITY EVENT

MEMBER OF
 LAST YEAR'S
 HENCH FAMILY
 CLEANUP CREW



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