



CLEAR THINKING

JANUARY 2019

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Why We Celebrate

A new year calls us to celebrate successes from the past year and build excitement for the new challenges of the coming year. The Conservancy has so much to celebrate for 2018. New property preserved forever! New trails and shoreline restoration progress! Solid start on financial stewardship sustainability! We are grateful to the donors, volunteers and partners who made 2018's progress possible.

Stewardship and Sustainability. We celebrate beginning 2019 with adequate funds to cover our basic stewardship expenses. Annual giving builds a solid financial foundation to keep our stewardship promise for the land entrusted to us. Last November, we asked you to support our first Annual Giving program. Over 100 of you made donations in 2018! Thank you for your generous support! And a special shout-out to those of you who responded to our first ever "Wish List"!

More Reasons to Celebrate 2018. With the blazing-fast support of 18 community donors, we acquired Borton Wetland Nature Preserve last August and now protect over 63 acres in the Clear Lake Township and Watershed. Phase III of Kasota Island Shoreline Restoration Project finished up in November just as the Lake was icing up. Volunteers helped us build hiking trails in Brennan Woods and in the Lib Hanna Nature Preserve.

Our Knee-high Naturalists and "Ask Bridget" Programs won the 2018 "Community Education and Outreach Award" from the North American Lakes Management Society in October. A grateful round of applause to the volunteers who make all this possible.

Planning for 2019. We'll continue progress on two major projects—Clear Lake Nature Preserve Restoration and Trail Building (invasive species control, signage, boardwalk and stairs) and Kasota Island Shoreline Restoration (adding native plants and temporary fencing on the east shore). Our Water Quality testing volunteers will expand 2019 test parameters and take appropriate steps to ensure the Conservancy's most visible mission—clear, clean water in Clear Lake and the surrounding Township and Watershed. Let us know if you'd like to be part of any of these activities and check for regular project updates on our [website](#).

As our Board began updating the Strategic Plan for 2019-2022, members quickly recognized that CLTLC's long-term success and growth calls for a greater pool of permanent funds to support Land Stewardship and Land Acquisition. Some of you have asked when the next Gala will be held. We've decided these ideas go together!

SAVE THE DATE: Saturday, June 22nd at the Clear Lake Yacht Club. We'll gather as a community to celebrate the start of Summer 2019 with great food, beverages, music, auction items and conversation! We can't wait to be with you.

Enjoy the winter wherever you find yourself. Summer 2019 is just over the horizon! We are grateful for your support for the Conservancy and the land we are protecting together for future generations.

Nancy Webster, President
Bridget Harrison, Executive Director



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

Natural Areas Preservation

The Clear Lake Nature Preserve (CLNP) is the Conservancy's largest property at 46 acres and its most diverse with four different ecosystems. This is an update on the Conservancy's multi-year restoration project for CLNP begun in 2014 ([read more details on our website](#)). When fully completed, CLNP will have almost 2 miles of walking trails for the use and enjoyment of the public, FOREVER.

We saw great progress in 2018! On a crisp Saturday early last November, 14 Trine University students from the Phi Kappa Theta fraternity joined 11 Clear Lake Township community members to expand walking trails in the Brennan Woods section of CLNP. What an impact 25 enthusiastic volunteers can make in one day!

The volunteers used sturdy fallen timber branches to outline the trails designed two years ago under the guidance of Executive Director Bridget Harrison with help from summer intern, Jonathan Moss. Donated wood chips were loaded into a utility vehicle and delivered along the trails where waiting work crews spread the chips evenly between the timber sides with wheelbarrows, rakes and shovels. Workers removed trash from the woods in between deliveries of wood chip loads.

Bridget notes that the fraternity earns community service hours for the workday and appreciates the partnership with Phi Kappa Theta. "These guys are great volunteers and hard working land stewards. Their participation made an incredible difference in our progress." Other than the necessary boardwalk, a short stretch still requires wood chips but most of the trail in Brennan Woods is complete.

Next for the CLNP project is a collaboration this spring with Fremont Middle School to design and create educational signs explaining the CLNP ecosystems, final trail installation in Brennan Woods, and invasive species removal. Over the next year or so, we hope to connect the existing trails in Brennan Woods with the installation of a boardwalk over a large wetland. Finally, a loop trail will be mowed into the prairie as the restoration phase continues in 2020. The trail will form a figure 8 with the circles adjoining where prairie meets woods.

We are grateful for the energy and commitment of every person who volunteered time, loaned equipment and tools and provided lunch for this Conservancy Workday! The progress is exciting. We hope to see you on the trails in 2019. Share photos of your hikes!



The Conservancy notes with sadness the death of former Clear Lake resident Dave Brennan in October 2018 at the age of 87. He was an Akron (OH) entrepreneur and attorney, generous philanthropist with his wife, Ann, and longtime resident of Naples (FL). Brennan Woods was acquired from the Brennan family in 2009 and named in their honor. Earlier, Mr. Brennan contributed the property now used for the Clear Lake Yacht Club tennis courts. We appreciate the Brennan family's support of the Conservancy and the Clear Lake community.

To get involved or support:

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

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Wish List:
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Philip North

In-kind Support:
Amy Culler
Sally Eckrich
Mike & Pat Franz
Larry & Cindy Landmeier
Todd & Barb Rumsey
S&L Environmental
Bob & Nancy Webster

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

Partner's Spotlight

Most of the Conservancy's Partner Spotlights feature organizations. In this issue, we spotlight a group of committed volunteers who spent a weekend trail building in the Lib Hanna Nature Preserve.

Clear Laker Tom Milligan has been gathering with friends from Sidney, OH on a Fall weekend for more than 15 years. This group of friends tackles a project together while renewing longstanding friendships with the shared project and good food. For 2018, Tom approached the

Conservancy about clearing a walking trail in the Lib Hanna Nature Preserve located near Tom and Mardie's home on the east shore of Clear Lake. Tom and Bridget met to set a plan for the work.

On a rainy October weekend, Tom and 16 friends put on work boots, unpacked tools and began a full day of clearing a quarter mile path along the eastern border of this former landing strip. They removed invasive plants and created an easy-to-follow walking trail for future use once arrangements for easier access to the Preserve are finalized. Referring to the weather on their workday Tom said, "A rainy day at

Clear Lake is better than a sunny day anywhere else."

Executive Director Bridget Harrison commented: "Volunteer Workdays are the lifeblood of land stewardship for land conservancies. This event was a wonderful gift to the Conservancy. Tom supplied the workers and organized the entire process. We always value community members who participate in planned Workdays (such as regular ones at Brennan Woods) but we also welcome other volunteer groups like Tom's for "group" land stewardship projects! Just give me a call."

Recent Memories – Coming Again Soon

The majestic **Osprey** (*Pandion haliaetus*) is often mistaken for another Clear Lake Township resident, the Bald Eagle. At 24 inches tall with a 5 1/2 feet wingspan, ospreys are slightly smaller than eagles and distinguished by the black streak through the eyes on a white head. They usually visit from April through August, migrating singly rather than in flocks as they head north to breed. Nests are built in tall trees or on utility poles and re-used, making them gigantic as sticks are added each year.

Almost entirely fish eaters, ospreys can be seen regularly in the spring and summer cruising over water looking for fish. Their technique is to fly slowly over water, hover when they spot fish and then plunge feet-first to capture the fish. They are ambitious fishers, often landing fish 4 - 12 inches long. Eagles sometimes chase ospreys to get them to drop the fish just caught.

Clean, healthy water in the Clear Lake Watershed attracts these beautiful raptors for Conservancy friends to enjoy year after year. We'll see them again in the spring!

[Source: National Audubon Bird Guides on [Audubon.org](https://www.audubon.org/).]

Photo credit: Cindy King.





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Winter in Brennan Woods

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

