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Conservancy Board View

On behalf of the entire Board, I thank you for your support, suggestions and interest in the Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy as we see you in the community. I've personally enjoyed conversations with many of you at Lake events, on walks, getting ice cream and even at the grocery store! Thank you for sharing our passion and commitment to keep Clear Lake vibrant and healthy -- now and into the future.

We hope you learn something new about the Conservancy's mission and programs in each Newsletter and in Bridget's regular postings on our Facebook page www.facebook.com/pages/Clear-Lake-Township-Land-Conservancy. Bridget and I also look forward to sharing more about the current strategic planning process with you in our next Clear Thinking scheduled for early 2016. Until then, we wish you a Happy Holiday season and a wonderful New Year!

Nancy Webster, President



Director's Update

Fall is settling in quite nicely around Clear Lake Township. As I am driving to meetings or visiting project sites I am delighted to be enjoying a new season in our beautiful region. I recently attended Rally, the national land conservation conference hosted by the *Land Trust Alliance* in Sacramento, CA. After successfully applying for a grant to attend, I enjoyed 3 full days of workshops, seminars, and networking, all focused on land trust topics and issues. I returned to the Midwest inspired, excited, and thankful that we live in the County of 101 Lakes! We have so many resources worthy of our appreciation, protection, and efforts. I invite you to support our work in protecting our special resources.

Our 3-pillar focus of water quality, natural areas preservation, and environmental education continues to guide our efforts. The Water Quality Committee completed four rounds of testing this year and invites you to hear about our results early next spring. Details to come. The LARE funded dredging project is well underway as well as the cost-share projects through the St. Joe River Watershed Initiative. Native plant installations have been completed and glacial stone installation projects have begun. Volunteers and I spent a day with the 7th graders at Fremont Middle school enjoying hands-on water quality lessons. Events for next year are being discussed. Let us know if you have any ideas!

Help our e-image grow! Follow us on [Twitter](#), like us on [Facebook](#), and be sure to sign up for our e-version of Clear Thinking to stay up-to-date on our most exciting news and projects.

Happy Holidays and warm wishes for 2016!

Bridget Harrison, Conservancy Director

CLTLC Mission Statement

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.*

*The success of the Conservancy depends on the tax-deductible contributions of individuals and the community.

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, orthophosphate, biological oxygen demand, and turbidity. This section of Clear Thinking will continue to explain these testing parameters.

The presence of phosphorous in our environment is natural and essential to plant and animal life. Most fresh water has naturally low levels of phosphorous. Orthophosphate, the form of phosphorous that we test for, exists in a dissolved state. Because it is dissolved in water, it is readily available for plant uptake. Just as phosphorous aids in plant growth on the land, it can also aid in aquatic plant growth. When high levels of orthophosphate are present, algae and weeds can flourish, increasing the potential for an algal bloom. These blooms can impact swimming and recreation on Clear Lake, and have the potential to impact human health.

As stated, issues don't arise until there is an excessive amount present. You can reduce phosphorus inputs by cleaning up after your pets, using only phosphorous free fertilizer, and by keeping your grass clippings and leaves out of Clear Lake and the ditches that drain into it. For more tips, check out the Oct-Dec 2015 issue of Clear Lake News for 'Fall Tips for a Healthy Lake' from our Water Quality Committee.

Natural Area Preservation

The Brennan Woods preserve is located on the northwest side of Clear Lake on the south side of 675 E. In 2009 the Brennan Family donated this parcel to the Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy. Upon acceptance, we began plans to protect this beautiful 25 acre parcel from development. Brennan Woods provides habitat for a variety of bird, mammal, and amphibian species. The rolling landscape at Brennan Woods is defined by a dense canopy of upland hickory and oak species; however, the preserve also contains scattered patches of wetlands and prairie habitat.

As you travel towards the Lake on County Road 675 E, you notice that the Brennan Woods are currently under construction. CLTLC is working on a long term restoration project funded through a grant from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. Brennan Woods will be restored to an oak savanna ecosystem that likely existed there many years ago. In removing existing trees, the canopy will open up, allowing more light to reach the forest floor. These changes will allow a rich diversity of native flora to return to the preserve. Along with tree clearing, invasive species will continually be managed, and fire will be reintroduced into the Brennan Woods. Once a naturally occurring process, fire is one of many tools that will be employed to restore and maintain the Brennan Woods preserve.



CLTLC remains grateful to the Brennan family for donating this beautiful preserve.

That's not all that's happening at Brennan Woods. Recently a basin was constructed in the large historic gravel pit and is being filled with sediment that is being dredged from the west side of Clear Lake. This project is funded through a Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) grant. The basin will remain intact through next year while three remaining areas of Clear Lake are dredged. The basin will be smoothed out and seeded with a mixture of native species. The reseeded area will complement our other restoration efforts on the preserve.

As part of our strategic planning process we are developing long term goals for Brennan Woods. If you have a vision for the future of the preserve, we would like to hear from you! We encourage you to explore this majestic property and watch as the restoration efforts progress.



e-Newsletter:

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

Environmental Education

Did you know that the Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy is a land trust? A **land trust** is a community based, nonprofit organization that works to permanently protect wetlands, prairies, forests, farms, parks, or other treasured places that enhance our lives and define our communities. As nonprofits, land trusts depend on individuals, businesses, and the community for support to protect sensitive resources and wildlife habitats. Land trusts rely on successful partnerships, assistance from volunteers, land donations, conservation easement donations, and bequests.

CLTLC is one of approximately 1,700 land trusts within the United States. Data from the 2010 Land Trust census found that 47 million acres of land are protected nationwide. CLTLC works to preserve, protect, and manage the natural environment within the Clear Lake Township and currently owns approximately 55 acres. With the support of the Clear Lake Township we can continue this important work for generations to come!

THANK YOU TO OUR RECENT DONORS!

Including Barb Wenger, Kenneth & Robin Smith, Byram Dickes, Betty & Leo Weber, Bob Lewis, Don Steininger, Cynthia & Larry Landmeier, Harold & Nancy Winch, Bob & Beth Martin, Jim Horein, Willow Hollow, the Clear Lake Fund of the Community Foundation, the Lincoln Financial Matching Gift Program, and Bob & Nancy Webster

Partner's Spotlight

Many of our accomplishments rely on successful partnerships. In this *Partner's Spotlight*, we highlight Bruce Moody--a Clear Lake neighbor who operates Moody & Crew, and Paul Crawford, part of the Crew and recently named CLTLC board member. We recognize all farmers in the Township as partners in the Conservancy's mission of preserving and protecting the natural environment we all share.

Moody & Crew co-sponsored the Conservation Cropping Systems Workshop with the Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District and others at Moody & Crew Farms in August. Bruce Moody invited Conservancy Director Bridget Harrison to represent CLTLC at the Workshop to learn from two nationally known speakers on Soil Health: Dr. Ray Weil,

Soil Science professor at University of Maryland; and Dan Desutter, full-time farmer and spokesman / advocate for conservation agriculture.

The Workshop attracted over 100 participants who had the opportunity to hear about current research, and obtain hands-on experience with cover crops, grown onsite, as a best practice in soil management.

In Dr. Weil's words: "We want soil to work for us. We want it to hold water, recycle nutrients and keep diseases at bay." Cover cropping contributes to this goal. Dr. Weil supports a reduction in the use of phosphorus in farming practices and homeowner landscaping, an initiative long supported by CLTLC with the Town of Clear Lake. Speaker Dan Desutter promoted the practical economic payback of sound soil health systems for farmers.

Why is this important to Clear Lake?
Erosion of farmland in our watershed

sends sediment to ditches and streams that flow to Clear Lake. Expanded use of cover crops reduces this flow. Promoting agricultural and environmental education leads to expanded use of best management practices.

Hats off to Moody & Crew Management for co-sponsoring this Workshop and for including the Conservancy in the educational opportunity. We are excited about plans to continue the partnership with Moody & Crew through an upcoming "Farm to Lake" program in 2016. More details later.



Volunteer or Donate:

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

111 Gecowets Drive – Clear Lake • Fremont, IN 46737

2016 CALENDAR FUNDRAISER

Only a few left!

Act now, while supplies last and keep Clear Lake's beauty with you throughout 2016 AND benefit the Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy! These Calendars, featuring Don Luepke's wonderful photography, also make great holiday gifts. Contact Bridget at (260) 316-1397, bridget.harrison@clearlakeconservancy.org, or at the Conservancy's office in Town Hall for your copies--\$20 each or three for \$50, payable by cash or check to CLTLC. Hurry before they are gone!



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