



CLEAR THINKING

SEPTEMBER 2019

ISSUE No. 26

OUR MISSION

is to preserve, protect, and manage the natural environment within the watershed and township for future generations.

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END OF SUMMER SCENES

It's 10:30am on a Tuesday in mid-August. The Lake is smooth as glass. The sounds are locusts, the hard cry of a kingfisher landing on a branch over the water and of young kids laughing somewhere on the shoreline. No boats are visible at Kasota Island. That's Karen's scene as she sits on the porch, reflecting on the Conservancy and its mission as a full, active summer winds down.

In another part of the Township on the same morning, Bridget's view features a gigantic chipping machine in the middle of the Clear Lake Nature Preserve (CLNP). The sounds also include chainsaws and heavy trucks. She is overseeing the clearing of tree and brush debris mounded in the soon-to-be restored Indiana native prairie at CLNP. (Learn more in our Partner Spotlight inside right.)

Both scenes reflect the vibrant past, present and future of the Conservancy. Your love and support of our Lakes, Township and Watershed have made the scenes possible and we thank you. The magical effect of being in and around nature, water and wildlife is increasingly recognized by scientists and has always been appreciated by artists. This place in the northeast corner of Indiana is our haven from our busy daily lives of work and school.

So far in 2019, two major projects are nearing completion and an incredible array of educational programs have informed, educated and inspired both kids and adults.

Drumroll, please! The **Kasota Island Shoreline Restoration Project** is completed and the work staging area along South Clear Lake Drive all cleaned up. The protective fencing on the East side of Kasota will be removed by early spring as the native water plants gain a foothold. Thank you to Amy Culler for making the staging area available and to the many folks who championed the project. We will measure Project success yearly as we monitor shoreline erosion rates because winds, rains and boat wave action remain significant risk factors.

The Conservancy undertook the five-year Kasota project so that families and individuals can continue to enjoy this beautiful island nature preserve for years to come. Next, we will turn to the **planned landscaping phase** to freshen up the entire almost two acre Nature Preserve. Stay tuned. We'll need your help. In fact, mark your calendars for **June 13, 2020 for Kasota Clean-Up Day**. We welcome your participation and support.

The completion date for the **Clear Lake Nature Preserve & Brennan Woods Project** is getting closer and closer. The hiking trails are used by more people every year. Check out the gorgeous and informative educational signs! New oak seedlings are thriving in the cleared underbrush of the open oak canopy. The restored prairie will come to life in early 2020 as native plants are seeded and take root. Plans for a bridge or boardwalk over a lovely wetland area are taking shape. All of us can be proud of this accessible nature preserve and enjoy it in every season!

The **Water Quality Committee** is helping us understand how rain patterns are changing and affecting the entire Watershed. We are working with our restoration partner, Blue Heron Ministries, and with Steuben County and the Town of Clear Lake to effectively respond to the unprecedented rainfall encountered in 2019 as we manage CLNP now and for the future.

We are bursting with pride about the many community **environmental education programs** the Conservancy sponsored in 2019. Read about them inside. The goal is to help us **all** be better stewards for our land and water.

This letter marks a transition in leadership from Nancy Webster's four years as Conservancy president. The Conservancy grew in so many ways under Nancy's leadership and through her partnership with Executive Director Bridget Harrison. They joined the Conservancy at about the same time in 2015!

At the recent Annual Meeting, Nancy presented Karen with a relay baton rather than a more traditional gavel (which she gave later). The relay baton recognizes that the officers, board, staff, committee members, donors and volunteers are all part of the same team. I am honored to follow Nancy as president and be part of a team that works together to accomplish the Conservancy's mission for future generations.

Bridget and I are glad each of you is on the team. We look forward to your continued support and to hearing your ideas for preserving, protecting and maintaining our shared treasure.

Karen Horrell, President
Bridget Harrison, Executive Director



Environmental Education

Thanks to our motivated Education Committee, the CLTLC sponsored eight events this past spring and summer that reached over 265 community members of all ages. We were supported by many individuals and organizations to bring a top notch educational line up to you this season. We are so grateful for all of that support and for all of our community members who joined in the fun.

We hosted a native plant sale and held three educational programs about local and neighboring community happenings. Martha Ferguson of Riverview Native Nursery, alongside Executive Director Bridget Harrison, set up at the Lion's Club chicken BBQ sale in May. Martha had native plants for sale and Bridget shared details about the Conservancy and upcoming events. Many thanks to the Lions for sharing their space at the Lutheran Church pavilion. Thanks to a partnership with the Town of Clear Lake and support from the Clear Lake Yacht Club, more than 70 interested residents attended an informative presentation by Dr. Jeremy Rentz about the Michindoh Aquifer project, a proposed project to draw water for residents of the surrounding Toledo suburbs. Visit our [website](#) to view the presentation or Dr. Rentz's slides. Next, interested community members were educated about the ever growing field of solar power on a tour of Fremont Middle School's solar farm hosted by Superintendent Bill Stitt and Kim Quick. Finally, outdoor lovers of all ages looked to the sky for an exciting session on constellations and light pollution by local naturalist, Fred Wooley. Those in attendance enjoyed stargazing in the native prairie on Gary and Judy Johnston's farm, near the Borton Wetland Nature Preserve, a CLTLC property.

With a focus on our youngest followers, the Knee-high Naturalist program was held each Friday in July and spanned topics from raptors, bats, and pollinators to art in nature. Our biggest program was held at Memorial Woods where Soarin' Hawk Raptor Rehabilitation Center brought raptors of all sizes for the nearly 120 kids and adults in attendance to view, learn about, and photograph. As July continued, kids from ages 2 to 12 enjoyed building bat houses with David Syler, actively pollinating a garden of paper flowers with their deliciously pollinated "busy bee fingers" with Tara Lee from the Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District, and drawing in "plein air" with local artist Tammeron Francis from ClayWood Studio. Fun was had by all and kids were extra excited to receive new Knee-high t-shirts for their participation!

The Conservancy and its Education Committee have thoroughly enjoyed educating, informing, and entertaining all of you this season. We are pleased to bring such unique programs to our community and are thrilled for all of your support and attendance. As we look to next year, please keep us posted on topics you would like to see on our upcoming educational schedule. Now, get outdoors and explore!



Photo credit: Mike Franz

To get involved or support:

(260) 316-1397 • www.clearlakeconservancy.org
111 Gecowets Drive – Clear Lake • Fremont, IN 46737

Partner's Spotlight

Many of our accomplishments rely on successful partnerships. In this *Partner's Spotlight*, we highlight the Northeast Indiana Solid Waste Management District (NISWMD), who partnered with us to remove the gigantic piles of brush at the Clear Lake Nature Preserve's soon-to-be-restored prairie.

NISWMD is a joint solid waste district comprised of DeKalb, LaGrange, Noble and Steuben Counties. NISWMD is supported primarily by property taxes and is governed by a board of directors made up of elected officials from each county. The mission of the NISWMD is to provide meaningful solid waste reduction services

and programs to the residents it serves.

To ensure good seed to soil contact this winter when the prairie is seeded, tree debris, comprised mostly of cottonwood, was piled by Moody & Crew in January. The Conservancy explored several options for removing the piles including burning, burying, hauling, and mulching. We chose mulching as our best option and looked for a partner to help us.

NISWMD's gigantic tub grinder was hauled onto the preserve in mid-August and set up near one of the large brush piles on the west end. Charlie Cowl, Don Luepke, and Chris Hughes were instrumental in their efforts to cut up and combine the three piles into a single location near the huge grinder. Staff from NISWMD continuously fed the tree debris

into the grinder as a steady stream of mulch was ejected. Three truck loads were saved on site for the trail project at Brennan Woods. The remaining mulch was trucked to nearby Pidgeon Farms of Montgomery, MI for composting. Many thanks to them for using the mulch!

The Conservancy is grateful for the support from Steve Christman and the Northeast Indiana Solid Waste Management District. The piles have been removed and a clean, usable product was created. It was a win/win for everyone!

Find out more about NISWMD at: www.niswmd.org.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Terry & Rita Brown
John Curin & Colleen Barry
Marilyn & Tom Lindenberg
Cat & Jim Nevin
Terry & Koggy Newcomb

Land Acquisition:
Anonymous (2)

Water Quality:
Dan & Chris Rippe

Honorarium:
Dick Waterfield
From Anonymous

Memorial:
Don Ayres
From Dave & Judy Russert

Barbara Spangler Fredericks
From Greg & Mimi
Spangler

Donna Ludgate
From David Baxter
Alan & Emma Brown
Vicki & Bob Hill
Sue Meyer & fellow
pickleball players
Dave & Judy Russert

Kristi Kliefgan
From The Maley Family

Nancy Wilhelm
From Jonathan Close &
Paula Opatrny
Sally Eckrich

Rick & Kris Gartner
Bob & Karen Lewis
Mary & Lawrence Potter

Ruth Groene
From Carol Frese
Joanee Van Pelt
Judy & Dexter Witt

In-kind:
Northeast Indiana Solid
Waste Management District

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

Wish List



Friends of the Conservancy have asked for a list of items the Conservancy needs in the day-to-day work of operating our office and maintaining our properties. Thank you for the suggestion! Below is a current Wish List our staff and Committee volunteers can put to good use.

Thank you always for your generous support of the Conservancy's work on your behalf. We'll update the list as new opportunities arise for the Wish List. Contact Bridget with questions and to make a donation.

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|---|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Copy & Print Paper | • Shovel* | Sound System |
| • AA & AAA Batteries | • Enclosed Utility Trailer* | THANK YOU! |
| • Forever Stamps | • Backpack Herbicide Sprayer | • Post hole digger |
| • Recyclable Coffee Pods
(caffeinated or decaf.) for
single cup coffeemaker | • Chain Saw* | THANK YOU! |
| • Snacks for Workdays | • Wheelbarrows* | • Utility Vehicle |
| • Rakes* | • Laminator | THANK YOU! |
| | • Portable Microphone/ | |

**New or used, in good working condition*



Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy
111 Gecowets Drive - Clear Lake
Fremont, Indiana 46737

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Birds of Clear Lake Twp.



**What species of bird
sounds like an
oinking pig?**



[Find out on our website!](#)