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## Clear Lake Conservancy receives NIPSCO grant

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Harrison

**CLEAR LAKE** — The Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy is one of 18 organizations that received a \$4,000 NIPSCO Environmental Action Grant on Wednesday.

Each organization receiving a grant applied earlier in the year. To date, the program has awarded \$370,000 to help 92 projects become reality across the northern portion of Indiana.

This year's projects include multiple wetland restoration projects, including the project at Clear Lake that will help restore the hydrology of a wetland on the west end of the preserve.

Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy Executive Director Bridget Harrison said over the last seven years, work has been ongoing to restore the preserve at Clear Lake to create opportunities for public access.

“One of the last phases of this restoration project is to restore the hydrology of a large wetland on the west end,” she said. “Our project goals include reducing flooding along C.R. 675 and improving stormwater holding capacity.”

There are four key ecosystems at the Clear Lake Nature Preserve and Brennan Woods; wetland, oak woodland, prairie and fen. The hydrology on the west half of the preserve was altered by tile drainage associated with previous farming activity.

“Once acquired by the Conservancy in 2015, we started restoring the acres around the wetland back to native tall-grass prairie,” said Harrison. “The tile, once buried and functioning, is daylighting with each passing winter.”

This is causing the water level for the wetland to no longer be consistent with seasonal rains and it has begun flooding the road on the north side of the preserve, which Harrison said is a dangerous driving hazard.

“Partnering with the Steuben County Highway Department, to protect the road and ensure safe passage, we will balance and restore the hydrology with the installation of a 48-foot vertical drop pipe structure connected to a 12-inch tile. The drainage feature will be positioned to capture and drain high rain events, thus regulating the wetland water level,” said Harrison. “The 12” tile will divert the water south, once again, to flow toward Clear Lake.”

Once the water control structure and tile are in place, the wetland will be seeded with native seed and plant plugs.

Once the project is complete, Harrison said, the hiking trail on the 25 acres on the east end of the

preserve will connect into the restored prairie and newly restored wetland.

“The figure-eight hiking path will provide residents and visitors with the opportunity to see and learn about a wetland, oak woodland, prairie and fen,” said Harrison. “As preserve visitors hike the roughly two-mile trail, they will enjoy the ecosystem educational signs, previously installed with support from the NiSource Foundation.”

Harrison said she hopes the 46-acre preserve will be a place for all to visit and enjoy.

NIPSCO Environmental Action Grants are a integral part of the company’s commitment to strengthen and support partnerships with programs improving quality of the environment, said Rick Calinski, public affairs and economic development director with NIPSCO.

“Working together with the communities and conservation groups in our territory, we’re working to be a leader in the preservation, protection and restoration of critical habitats and to help make a positive difference in the places we call home,” he said.

To learn more about what NIPSCO does to support the environment, visit [NIPSCO.com/environment](https://www.nipSCO.com/environment).

### Adopt a tree is Saturday

ANGOLA — Saturday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. people can drive through the parking lot at the Selman Timber Frame at Commons Park to adopt a free tree for the 2021 Adopt-a-Tree Festival.

There will also be a take-home suet feeder craft children can receive during the event. You do not have to be an Angola city resident to pick up a tree or a suet feeder craft.

Tree saplings available include cedar, chinkapin, oak or tulip.

The festival is being hosted by the Angola Tree Board and the Adopt-a-Tree Committee.

For more information call 624-5588.