



CLEAR THINKING

NOVEMBER 2019

ISSUE No. 27

OUR MISSION

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

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MAKING MEMORIES TOGETHER

The colorful Fall foliage is now covering the ground. But the summer season memories are still warm! We look back on 2019 and find so much we are grateful for as Thanksgiving arrives. Clean water, education programs for all ages, natural beauty and 60+ acres in our Clear Lake Township and Watershed, protected forever.

Founded in 1991, the Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy has never been a “formal” membership organization. Instead, for over 28 years, CLTLC has brought its mission to life with the financial support and volunteer efforts of people like you who cherish this part of the world. We are all “members” through our support.

We invite you to be a “Conservancy member” by generously supporting the Conservancy with an unrestricted cash contribution before December 31st. Your cash gift of \$100+ to the Conservancy is a **key form of sustaining support**. Your gift ensures routine property stewardship for our growing number of protected properties, water quality testing, community education events, staffing and fundamental office and communications costs.

Our stewardship is more critical than ever if future generations are to appreciate what we treasure today. We often talk about looking ahead 50 or 100 years in our stewardship. It’s hard to see that far sometimes, but here’s a recent example of what can happen in 50 years.

Many of us were disturbed to read recent reports that over the past 50 years (since 1970) nearly three **billion** birds have disappeared in North America.* While there are many reasons for this decline, the biggest reason is the disappearance of natural habitat as more and more land is developed and wetlands are eliminated.

Some birds favor dense forests, some favor open prairies. Some prefer undergrowth in woods, and some like wetland grasses. All of them need clean water sources. Fortunately, the Conservancy’s protected preserves offer many types of habitats, welcoming year-round bird residents and migratory birds. Our water quality testing supports the clean water they need. (Read about recent visiting birds on our [website](#).)

Our preserves include a small lake and stream, forests, wetlands, prairies, oak savannas, a fen. Some have trails. A few are simply left in their natural state and are not open to the public. Some are more groomed and park-like while others resemble the natural Indiana prairies that are almost gone. A handful need water-proof boots for enjoyment. One preserve is an island. **We have something for every nature lover and for many birds!**

The connection? Maintaining these preserves helps combat the loss of bird habitat. With your support, future generations have a better chance, 50 years from now, to enjoy the birds and wildlife in the Clear Lake Township and Watershed, as we do today.

Support comes in many forms. It’s money, investments, in-kind donations of materials and services, land and water quality volunteers, docents, memorials, bequests. Some people use IRA distributions (see inside) as a convenient and tax-beneficial way to support us. And never forget that your positive reports of the Conservancy’s work with neighbors and introductions of the Conservancy to new friends is also valuable support.

Unrestricted cash gifts are a critical key to our everyday work. Some are inspired to give as part of the **national Giving Tuesday campaign**. We love it! Others like to write a check and drop it by the office or put it in the mail. Cash donations are welcome in every form! What do you get for your support? In simplest terms, you get the joy of knowing that the natural beauty and clear water (and the birds, too!) you enjoy in 2019 will be here now and for future generations. You are part of a committed group of stewards paying their good fortune forward.

If you have already donated this year through SummerFest ☀ 2019 or a memorial, we are incredibly grateful. Will you support us again? Your cash donation before December 31st celebrates 2019 and ensures that the Conservancy begins 2020 with funds sufficient to sustain the basic costs at the heart of our mission.

We are building the future together. On behalf of those of us here **now** and those **yet to come**, thank you for your support and generosity for this stewardship and for being a “member” of the Conservancy. Warmest wishes for the holidays and a bright New Year for you and yours.

Karen & Bridget

*Source: K. ROSENBERG ET AL. DECLINE OF THE NORTH AMERICAN AVIFAUNA. SCIENCE. PUBLISHED ONLINE SEPTEMBER 19, 2019. DOI: 10.1126/SCIENCE.AAW1313



Natural Areas Preservation

We are thrilled to announce the addition of 4 acres to our protected properties within the Clear Lake Watershed. This project, outlined in blue, expands the Borton Wetland Nature Preserve, outlined in yellow, to 12 acres of protected land. The property contains a forested wetland which serves to capture, slow, and filter water before entering the lake, on the east side, through the county-regulated Alvin Patterson ditch.

The Lands Committee identified this parcel as an important project through our Strategic Land Conservation planning process. With the support of an anonymous donor, covering half of the total project expenses, we were able to complete this project in August.



Protection has been extended to an additional 4 acres and the water flowing through this parcel into Clear Lake. The Borton Wetland Nature Preserve, now 12 acres, provides wildlife habitat for deer, turkey and a variety of other animals, educational opportunities for the community, and the protection of important wetlands and open spaces for generations to come! Share your ideas on possible recreational and educational opportunities on this expanded preserve!

Get Out What you Put In

For years, you have saved for your retirement. What once worked in your favor—putting money into your IRA and enjoying tax savings—may change when you begin withdrawing funds. If you are age 70 1/2 or older, you can make a direct transfer of up to \$100,000 annually from your IRA account to the Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy—tax-free! There is no easier way to make an immediate impact for conservation at Clear Lake, allowing you to see the difference your donation is making today, and pay less in taxes.

This contribution could be some or all of your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD), or even a more generous contribution. There is no federal income tax realized and no income tax deduction for the donor making this charitable IRA Rollover. It avoids the deduction limitations on your Form 1040 contributions.

To see if this tax opportunity fits your charitable giving plans, talk to your tax preparer or telephone Bridget Harrison, our Executive Director at (260) 527-1072. If you would like to receive an [Overview Synopsis and a Charitable Rollover Withdrawal Request Form](#) to send to your IRA Custodian, visit our website or call our office. Gifts must be directly transferred from your IRA Plan Administrator to the Clear Lake Conservancy. We look forward to your continued support.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Tom & Marie Felger
Nancy Fenton & Richard Karlsson
Jack & Karen Horrell
Terry & Koggy Newcomb

Land Acquisition:
Devon & Trey McArdle

Honorarium:
Molly Wehrenberg & Brian Weber Wedding
From Dave & Judy Russert

Memorial:
Donna Ludgate
From Diane Eisenhower

Nancy Wilhelm
From Mary Jo Fitzenrider

Grant Support:
Great Lakes Restoration Initiative

Wish List:
Don & Ellen Luepke

In-kind:
Dave Drogos
Jack & Karen Horrell
Bob & Nancy Webster

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

To get involved or support:

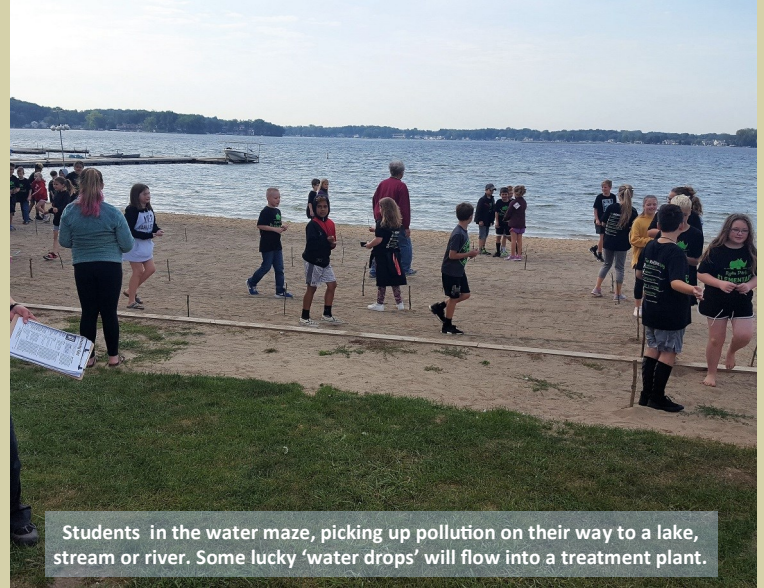
(260) 527-1072 • www.clearlakeconservancy.org
111 Gecowets Drive – Clear Lake • Fremont, IN 46737

Environmental Education—reaching over 600 kids

Staff and volunteers of the Conservancy have thoroughly enjoyed educating our area youth this past Summer. In September, over 250 4th graders participated in the annual Youth Conservation Field Day, organized by the Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District. 'A-maze-ing Race', a maze on the beach at Potawatomi Inn was organized and led by our staff and volunteer, Don Luepke. This station gives students the chance to learn about how water flows over our streets, lawns, and sidewalks, all while collecting and carrying pollution to nearby lakes, streams and rivers. This hands-on activity teaches that we can positively impact waterways by not littering, cleaning up after our pet and following labels for common lawn care items.



Students sharing examples of what pollution they might find on streets, parking lots, lawns and sidewalks.

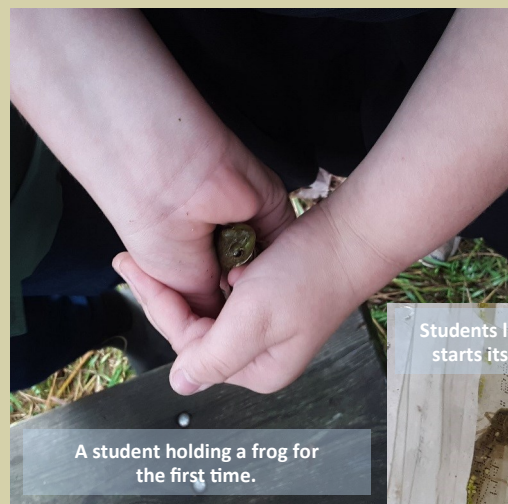


Students in the water maze, picking up pollution on their way to a lake, stream or river. Some lucky 'water drops' will flow into a treatment plant.

In early October, we led the 'Swamp Zoo' station at Duck Day, organized by Ducks Unlimited and several partners. Just under 350 7th graders participated in the event, spanning two full days. At 'Swamp Zoo' students learned about the function of wetlands acting to filter pollutants out of water before flowing into streams, lakes and rivers. They held and learned about critters that rely on this important ecosystem and how to use macro-invertebrates, big bugs, to determine water quality.



Students learning about leeches, tadpoles, and fishes (invasive and native) to our wetland ecosystems.



A student holding a frog for the first time.



Students learned that a dragonfly starts its life as an aquatic bug.

Stay Connected. Email info@clearlakeconservancy.org to sign up for e-news and events.

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 an updated 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. Contact our office with questions and to make a donation.

Office needs:

- Copy & Print Paper
- File Organizer
- AA & AAA Batteries
- Forever Stamps
- Recyclable Coffee Pods

Outreach & Education needs:

- Custom Retractable Banner
- Custom Stationery

Stewardship needs:

- Boxes of Granola Bars
- Gatorade Powder
- Rakes*
- Shovels*
- Wheelbarrows*
- Weed Eater*
- Chain Saw*
- Enclosed Utility Trailer*
- Storage barn/shed*

THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH!!

- ~~Laminator~~
- ~~Portable Microphone/Sound System~~
- ~~Post hole digger~~
- ~~Utility Vehicle~~
- ~~Backpack Herbicide Sprayer~~

**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 visiting birds have
solid bones, making them
less buoyant and able to
dive deep for food?

[Find out on our website!](#)

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

