



# CLEAR THINKING

MAY 2020

ISSUE No. 30

## OUR MISSION

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

## 2020 Board

Karen Horrell  
*President*  
Dan Rippe  
*Vice President*  
Bruce Matasick  
*Secretary*  
Terry Newcomb  
*Treasurer*  
Brandy Brown  
Paul Crawford  
Brenda Elliott  
Bill Geiger  
Bill Greffin  
Katy Hoehn  
Laurie Sellers  
Nancy Webster  
Peg Zeis

## 2020 Staff

Bridget Harrison  
*Executive Director*  
Tracy Hughes  
*Program Assistant*

## Committees

Development  
Executive  
Finance  
Lands  
Outreach & Education  
Water Quality

## ADAPTING FOR PROGRESS

The beauty of spring is showing across the Clear Lake community and summer is not far behind. That's comforting, isn't it! These unsettled times of Covid-19 pandemic and economic turmoil have taught us to be adaptable as we keep our focus firmly on our mission and stewardship commitments. We value the practical advice from Theodore Roosevelt: "Do what you can, with what you have, where you are."

Fortunately, we start from a good place. Nature is a formidable model for adaptability. The Conservancy's 29 years of experience in this special corner of northeast Indiana makes us optimistic as we look ahead, even in unsettled times.

Our optimism starts with being incredibly grateful for a healthy, dedicated staff and for generous volunteers and supporters who allow us to sustain our mission and stewardship commitments. Staff adapted smoothly to operating the Conservancy from home. With your support, we started 2020 with a solid cash position for our stewardship work and can't thank you enough for your vital and continuing financial support.

Our Board and Committees are using video conferencing to stay up with planning and many exciting projects. We're all getting better at interacting on our phones, tablets and computers connected coast-to-coast.

Bridget and Tracy keep all of us connected through our website and social media posts. Each of us can learn through our expanding environmental education library of Blue Papers, including the [latest series on trees](#). Some planned educational projects and events will likely be delayed or converted to digital events, but the planning has already been done. We'll be ready to launch as restrictions on group activities lift.

We have almost 100-acres of protected land. Our land stewardship can't pause. We are adapting by tackling projects that can be done with social distancing. You may see invasive brush clearing in Borton and Koene-man Preserves and planned tree maintenance on Kasota Island. You'll see steady progress on the Constructed Wetland project on our new preserve south of SR 120 along the Cyrus Brouse Ditch, improving water quality and sediment control as Brouse flows into Clear Lake. Our traditional water quality testing will take place as government restrictions permit. We will keep you updated on all events as the summer unfolds.

We close with two projects that inspire and energize us. The first is the enthusiastic response to the Township-wide Neighborhood Cleanup Project highlighted later in this issue of *Clear Thinking*. It's a tremendous example of adapting to the times to produce a Win/Win/Win for the environment, personal health and the community! Thanks to everyone who pitched in. We all benefit.

Last, we are so proud of the new Conservancy flags flying in the community! We thank Bill and Judy Greffin for seeding the idea and the first round of flags. The flag is a new and visible way to show support and benefit the Conservancy. Contact our office to purchase yours!

You have our grateful wishes for a healthy summer as we stay connected with nature and each other across the entire Clear Lake community.

Karen Horrell, President  
Bridget Harrison, Executive Director





## Natural Areas Preservation—Neighborhood Cleanup Project

The natural environment in our 11-square mile community still needs protection and care as we humans navigate the world-wide pandemic. We are thrilled to share an inspiring project that combines land stewardship and personal health while social distancing.

Research continues to confirm that being active in a natural environment promotes good health, both physical and mental. Our **Neighborhood Cleanup Project** invited community members to “adopt a road” in the Township and pick up trash (safety guidelines provided) while getting daily exercise. During March and April, 45 volunteers spent over 84 hours collecting 86 bags of trash and recyclables. A few volunteers are pictured below. Celebrate their hard work with us!



To get involved or support:

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



## Environmental Education—Health Benefits of Nature Therapy

By Megan Moss

Spending time outside is nice, and, if it's in a natural space, it might also be good for you. According to an article published on June 11, 2019 in the online version of *Outside*, "more than 100 studies have investigated the potential mental-health benefits of exposure to natural stimuli." After spending time in a natural setting people feel calmer, have less negative thoughts, feel happier, and are more in-tune with their needs.

If that wasn't enough reason to get outside, the opposite is also true. Not spending time in nature can contribute to feelings of anxiety, stress and depression. According to Dr. Jason Strauss, director of geriatric psychiatry at Cambridge Health Alliance, "When people are depressed or under high levels of stress, this part of the brain [pre-frontal cortex] malfunctions, and people experience a continuous loop of negative thoughts."

The article goes on to state that in addition to spending time outside, looking at views of nature and listening to nature sounds can have a positive effect. In addition, an article in Harvard Health Publishing states that "calming nature sounds and even outdoor silence can lower blood pressure and levels of the stress hormone cortisol, which calms the body's fight-or-flight response." So even if you can't get out into nature, being near a nature preserve and sitting and looking at nature or listening to nature will both provide positive health benefits.



Gracie McClellan is enjoying a quiet moment in Brennan Woods.

While studies are unclear as to how much time in nature is enough, even 10 minutes outside in a natural setting has been shown to have a positive effect. Our [nature preserves](#) offer many options for getting some nature therapy. Brennan Woods has trails for walking or hiking, and a parking area with nice views. Old Town Hall Park has a nice, sunny clearing great for a picnic. Koeneman Lake Nature Preserve has a variety of wildlife and birds, ideal for birdwatching. Wildflowers are starting to bloom at Spangler Grove, providing opportunities for photography, journaling and writing.

No matter how you get your nature therapy, given the extra stress we are all under, it is more important than ever to take advantage of all the benefits that being in nature offers and that we are working to protect so that all can enjoy.

Sources: <https://www.outsideonline.com/2397694/nature-mental-health#close>  
<https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/sour-mood-getting-you-down-get-back-to-nature>

-> -> -> Trees! It is the perfect time to plant a tree. We have Bur Oak and Tulip Trees for \$5 each. Limited quantities. Contact us to get yours!

**THANK  
YOU FOR  
YOUR  
SUPPORT!**

Mary Jo Fitzenrider  
Bill & Judy Greffin through  
the Chicago Community  
Foundation  
Jack & Karen Horrell

**Memorial:**  
Brenda Isaac  
From Nancy Andrews

**Grant Support:**  
PayPal Giving Fund

**Land Stewardship:**  
Anonymous

**In-kind:**  
The Boathouse Boutique

As a non-profit, we rely on community donations. With the current state of the economy, and as a precaution, we have identified cost reductions and trigger points. One area is our land stewardship expenses. We would like to **highlight and thank** [B&W Lawn & Landscaping](#) for helping us reduce our mowing expenses for the 2020 growing season. We appreciate the support from Ben and Morgan Walker!

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

**Stay Connected. Email [info@clearlakeconservancy.org](mailto:info@clearlakeconservancy.org) to sign up for e-news and events.**

# A few of our upcoming events!

*We hope to gather, as we have in the past, this summer season.  
For now, tentatively mark your calendars to join us!*

***Check our website periodically for more details and updates.***

## **Kasota Island Nature Preserve Annual Cleanup—**

Saturday, June 13th from 9 am to noon at Kasota Island\*

*\*Contact our office for a ride to the island.*

## **Knee-high Naturalists Program—**

Friday, July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, and 31<sup>st</sup> from 10 to 11:30 am

## **A Day at the Farm—**

Thursday, July 23<sup>rd</sup> at Moody & Crew Farm. More details to come!

## **Our Annual Meeting—**

Friday, July 24<sup>th</sup> at 4 pm at the CL Town Hall



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

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage PAID  
Fort Wayne, IN  
Permit No. 760



Who is this  
and what  
does he  
have to  
do with  
our next  
native tree  
feature?

**Find out on our website! - Trees of Clear Lake Twp.**

