



CLEAR THINKING

JULY 2020

ISSUE No. 31

OUR MISSION

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

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POWERED BY PEOPLE

The mission of the Conservancy is powered by people. Volunteers. Donors. People who spread word of the Conservancy's work. People who expand the base by bringing others to volunteer, donate, support.

In the middle of this unsettling year, we pause to recognize the people who have made the Conservancy's Three Pillars of work come to life. Volunteer, supporter and Board member **Paul Crawford** was a quiet worker for the first Pillar – Natural Areas Preservation. Time and again Paul's farming experience, work ethic and generosity benefited the Conservancy's nature preserves and projects. He left us too early and we join his family in mourning his death last month.

The June 13th Kasota Island Work Day offers another reminder of people powering natural areas preservation. The Work Day attracted 40 hardworking people and capped the 3-year Shoreline Restoration Project with a thorough landscape clean-up and tree planting. We've heard nothing but praise for the landscaping project. The recent 4th of July weekend demonstrated the intense popularity of this nature preserve. We can keep the Island well cared for by coming together every year for this Work Day. We'll see you next June!

Environmental Education is the second Conservancy Pillar. Talk about the power of people! In June, we concluded we could safely hold the planned 2020 Knee-high Naturalists programs. The Dumpster Drummers rocked the environmental education message to over 100 community members in [Memorial Woods](#) on July 3rd. These Friday sessions ensure future generations of young people learn to appreciate all that nature offers. *Blue Papers* on ["Why Trees Matter"](#) and the upcoming "Which Trees Matter" help all of us appreciate why trees are such a vital part of the Conservancy's stewardship. These programs and papers were powered by the people on our Outreach & Education Committee.

People also power the third Conservancy Pillar – Water Quality. This issue of *Clear Thinking* showcases a new protected property, **Settlers Wetland Nature Preserve**, also the site of a new water quality improvement project. Enhancing the health of 800-acre Clear Lake is the heart of the Conservancy's mission.

People who donate money are also powerful mission drivers. Thank you to the 66 community members who have contributed through June 30th. We now offer the ability to become a Sustaining Donor with an easy online monthly gift by credit card or PayPal. In unsettled years like 2020, Conservancy Sustainers will form the vital foundation of our stewardship for almost 100 protected acres, FOREVER. Please join this group if you are able with a monthly amount that works for you. Details are [here](#).

The Conservancy's mission doesn't change, even in a crazy year. We are active every day, every year through the Three Pillars of Natural Areas Preservation, Environmental Education and Water Quality Enhancement. This mission happens through people. People who volunteer. People who donate. People who spread the story. People who bring others with them. People Power. We thank you. The Clear Lake Township community thanks you. And we need your ongoing people power.

Karen Horrell, President
Bridget Harrison, Executive Director



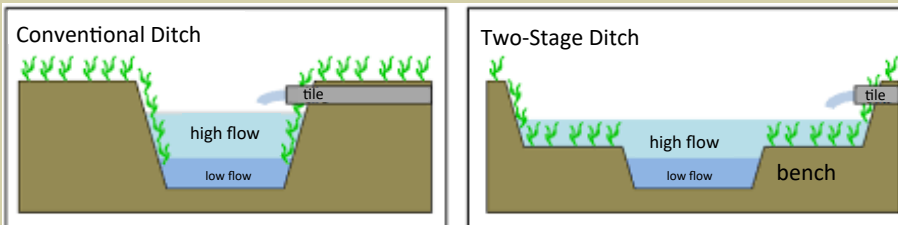
Natural Areas Preservation

We are pleased to share details about an exciting acquisition and water quality improvement project! The **Settlers Wetland Nature Preserve**, outlined in yellow, is a ~3.5 acre closed preserve (not open to the public) located on the south side of State Road 120. The name recognizes the early settlers to our area and the function of the water quality improvement project planned for the site.

The creation of the odd shaped parcel was made possible by the donation of land from Jim and Annie Skinner with purchase support from the Waterfield Foundation on behalf of Richard D., Richard R., Randy, & Jill Waterfield. Additional funds to support the purchase came from several community members who regularly donate to our Land Acquisition Fund. Many thanks to the generous supporters who made the protection of this preserve possible!

The name Settlers recognizes the function of the proposed water quality improvement project that we are currently designing. As indicated by the teal lines on the map to the right, the property is located along the Cyrus Brouse Ditch. This area was identified in a 1993 Watershed Study completed by Cardno, formerly JFNew, as a possible site for a wetland installation. Jim and Annie Skinner, former President and current Water Quality Committee member, respectively, have envisioned the positive impact of this project for many years.

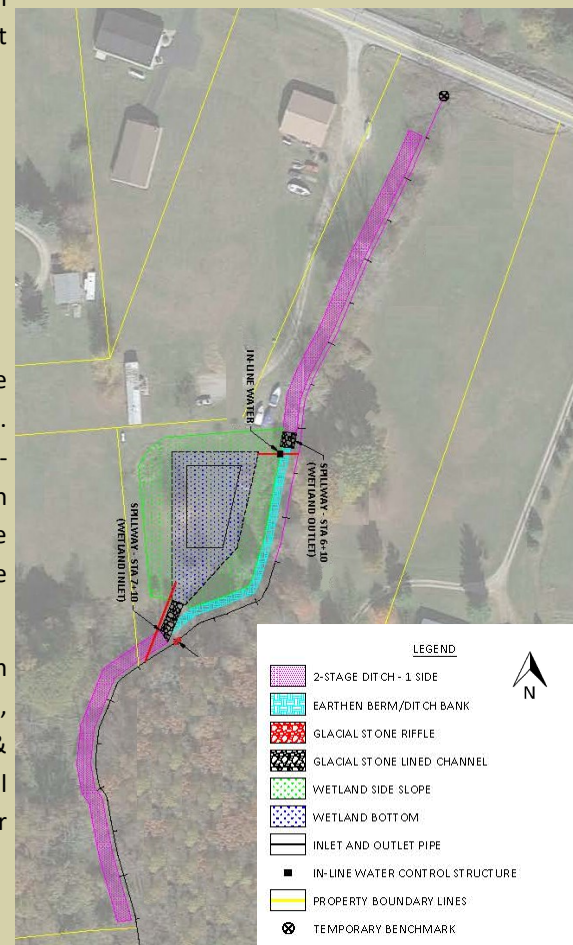
Working with the County Surveyor's office, the project consists of the construction of a two stage ditch on the west bank of the Cyrus Brouse Ditch, highlighted in pink on the map below. The graphic below shows a conventional ditch on the left. The two stage ditch, on the right, creates a bench to allow the water flowing through the ditch during heavy rain events, or high flow, to slow down and spread out. In doing so, the sediments and suspended nutrients like phosphorous or nitrogen have a chance to **settle** out. Our project will be similar to the graphic on the right, but a bench will only be constructed on the west side of the ditch.



During large rain events the two stage ditch will flow into a constructed wetland, the green and dark blue area on the map to the right, to provide stormwater storage. This allows suspended solids to **settle** out and the up-take of nutrients by water-loving plants. Wetlands—the “kidneys” of our lakes—function to remove pollution from the waters flowing into and through them and ultimately into our lakes. The preliminary design to the right outlines the project. As we work through the permitting process, final project design and details will be completed.

Funding support for the “Cyrus Brouse Clean Stream” project has been secured from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources’ Lake & River Enhancement Program, the Clear Lake Fund held by the Steuben County Community Foundation, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and NiSource Foundation and NIPSCO. We are seeking additional funding support to complete this water quality improvement project. Contact our office if you wish to support the “Cyrus Brouse Clean Stream” project.

Source: Indianawatershedinitiative.com



To get involved or support:

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

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NEW Conservancy Sustainers

Creating streams of income!

Conservancy Sustainers is a new opportunity to provide consistent and vital support for our mission. Join this group in providing a continuous stream of income to protect Clear Lake Twp. year-round. Select "recurring" on our [donate page](#) to set up your monthly gift.

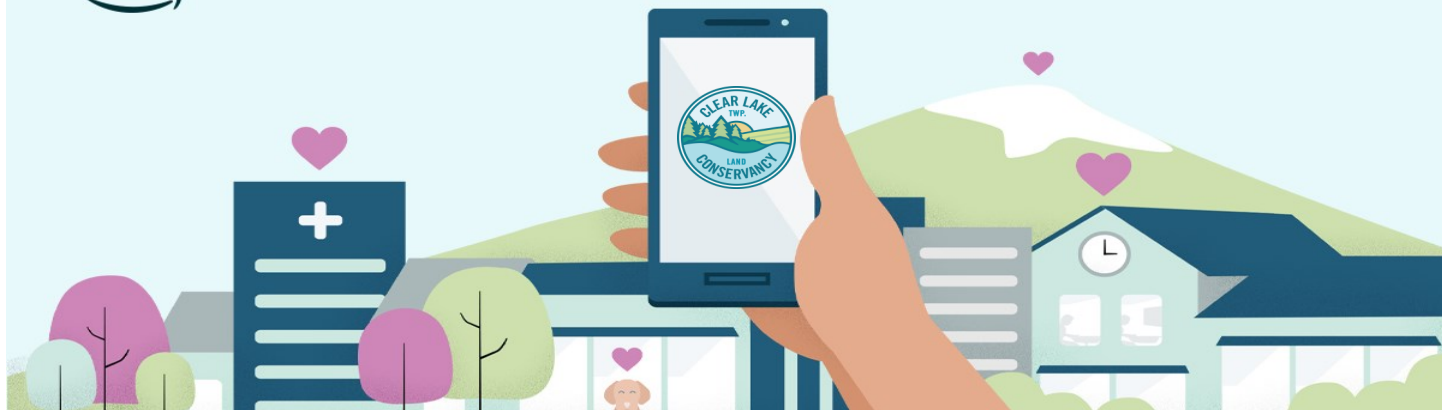
Would you give \$10, \$25, \$50 or \$100 per month to support local land and water conservation?

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

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always be
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by its
bark?

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

