



# CLEAR THINKING

CLEARLAKECONSERVANCY.ORG

MARCH 2022 | ISSUE NO.42

## OUR LETTER

# ECHOES OF WINTER

Spring is coming! We can imagine spring beauties popping up even as our eyes look at snow and ice on the lakes.

People sometimes ask us (especially Bridget) what we do with our downtime in the winter season. Often, that triggers loud laughing (especially from Bridget), followed by a response along these lines. “The Conservancy has gotten to be a good-sized community organization, stewarding 100+ acres plus water quality in the lakes within those acres. We are thrilled with the growth, but there’s plenty to do as a result, even in winter!”

Our staff, the Board, and committees work year-round. The current winter has been a time of enormous productivity and warm reflections.

### PRODUCTIVITY

Over the winter we have focused on two key 2022 projects—the Aquatic Vegetation Management Plan (AVMP) and the Watershed Diagnostic Study (WDS). Both projects are multi-year efforts. AVMP treats an existing problem, an infestation of *Eurasian watermilfoil* and other invasives. The WDS is collecting reliable data so we can enhance water quality and prevent future problems. Your donations are making both projects possible. Thank you!

### REFLECTIONS

This winter we also reflected on our mission and our 2021 work. This review made us smile because it calls up images of you and our other community members. We were especially impressed with the number of young people who were active with the Conservancy in 2021.

The next section of this issue should make all of us smile. You’ll see some wonderful photos and stories about what our young community members are doing to make the Conservancy’s mission come alive. We are grateful for the energy and contribution of every one of them. They are incredible role models by ensuring that this special place will thrive for the generations that come after them.

We are equally grateful for the volunteers of every age who supported the Conservancy last year. The Conservancy is stronger and more productive with every volunteer hour and every dollar donated.

There are endless ways to support the Conservancy in addition to building trails and pulling invasive plants. Some supporters contribute monthly as “sustainers” to give us a steady financial base through every season. One family set up a fund they call the “Land and Water Fund” to be ready to provide funding quickly for Conservancy land acquisition and water quality projects as opportunities arise. Other families have a passion for building a permanent endowment to ensure that Conservancy operations can be funded year after year. Some community members have included the Conservancy in their estate planning. We love them all!

The spring beauties are getting clearer in our imaginations. The images of our future are stronger, too, as we reflect on our volunteers and supporters. Let’s enjoy every season together in this beautiful place.



**Karen Horrell**  
President



**Bridget Harrison**  
Executive Director

### 2022 BOARD

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### 2022 STAFF

**Bridget Harrison**  
Executive Director

**Tracy Hughes**  
Program Assistant

**Elizabeth Strick**  
Land Steward

### COMMITTEES

Development

Executive

Finance

Lands

Outreach & Education

Water Quality

SPRING BEAUTY ADDING AN EARLY GLIMPSE OF SPRING COLOR.



# OUR THREE GUIDING PILLARS

Natural areas preservation, water quality enhancement, and environmental education.

You have heard us talk about the three pillars that guide our everyday work – natural areas preservation, water quality enhancement, and environmental education. We often focus on what WE are doing in those areas to support our mission. We've been inspired to highlight how area youth have supported our three pillars.



LILY HENSCH PICKING UP TRASH IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD CLEANUP PROJECT.

STUDENTS FROM FREMONT MIDDLE SCHOOL BUILDING THE TRAIL IN BRENNAN WOODS.

## NATURAL AREAS PRESERVATION

Through trail building and maintenance at the Clear Lake Nature Preserve, planting trees and pulling invasive species on our properties, and collecting trash in the annual Neighborhood Cleanup Project, our dedicated youth stewards have contributed many hours to natural areas preservation. We've also appreciated the partnership with FIST (Forever Improving Steuben County Together), Phi Kappa Theta of Trine University, Fremont Middle School, and local Girl Scout troops.



EDDIE HUGHES LEARNING TO SAIL AND PARTICIPATING ON TEAM WIND IN THE CLEAR & HEALTHY EVENT.



AERIAL DRONE SHOT FROM CONNOR OILER.

## SUPPORT IN OTHER WAYS

Youth have supported our mission in other ways. Conner Slee, a Fremont Sophomore, donated a cash gift to the Conservancy in December. When asked why he wanted to support the Conservancy, he said, "I have lived most of my life at Clear Lake and for several years I have been mowing lawns and doing other odd jobs for people around the lake. I wanted to give back to the community since everyone has always been so generous to me. Clear Lake has been such a big part of my life and my family's life as my grandparents as well as other family members have cottages here. I want to make sure that the lake and its surroundings are here for many years to come." How inspiring!

for using his drone to capture such wonderful photos. We are lucky to share them as well as his video.

Finally, several of you participated in the Clear and Healthy Wellness Challenge last summer, but don't realize how many young people were involved. Evelyn, Annie, and Eddie Hughes each joined a team, logged daily activities, and raised over \$1,000 for the Conservancy. When asked which activity was their favorite, Annie said tennis, Evelyn enjoyed playing basketball, and Eddie said it was fun to learn how to sail and be on Team Wind.

You may have seen the striking aerial lake shots, like pictured above, or you may be enjoying the view of your 2022 calendar (flip back to February!), or appreciating the photos on our website highlighting our township. All of these are from high school senior Connor Oiler. He has a talent for photography and

We appreciate involvement and support from our community members of all ages. Youth involvement ensures we are fulfilling our mission for generations to come!

## WATER QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

Each year we collect 'water bugs' or macro invertebrates to help determine the quality of water flowing into Clear Lake. This is a great opportunity for kids to get involved with hands-on, bug pickin' fun! For the last several years Ava, Easton, Amelia, Chloe and family friend, Jennifer, or collectively, 'The Cramer Kids' have supported this work. More recently Madi Parker, a college student with ties to the Clear Lake West shore, and Camry and Cruz from Angola have joined the water testing fun!



MADI PARKER FILTERING WATER COLLECTED FROM CLEAR LAKE.

THE CRAMER CREW LOOKING FOR MACRO INVERTEBRATES.

## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

We have seen our youth education come full circle with a former Knee-high attendee turn Knee-high instructor! Madeline Buehrer spent her younger years attending Knee-high with her brother and sister, as mom was a key volunteer for the program. Now, a high school (and Knee-high) graduate, Madeline returned to Knee-high in the summer of 2021 to lead a session on her favorite nature topic, The Mighty Mushroom. She is currently studying Environmental Science at the University of Washington in Seattle and attributes an early beginning in the Knee-high program to her aspirations of today. "Learning about the importance and vastness of the environment from such a young age instilled a level of curiosity and sense of responsibility that still motivates me today."



MADLINE POINTING OUT FEATURES OF A MUSHROOM.

THE MUSHROOM SNACK CREATED BY MADLINE BUERHER AND OFFERED AT THE KNEE-HIGH SESSION SHE LED.

# THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

James and Lynda Bradley

Debra Hensch

John and Lisa Lumpe

Rick and Dorian Maples

Philip and Suzanne McHugh

### MEMORIAL

Anonymous

Norb and Judy Bauman

Rick and Angie Behnfeldt

Sue Compo

Bill and Chris Geiger

Rita Helmuth

Tom and Jenny Parker

Chris Slee Family

M: Don Crapo

Kris Jensen

M: Dr. Robert Jensen

Jane Kaiser

M: Tom Kaiser

### CONSERVANCY SUSTAINERS

Alex and Susan Connett

Jack and Karen Horrell

Terry and Koggy Newcomb

Deborah and Erik Oiler

Tom and Jenny Parker

Nancy and Bob Webster

### GRANT SUPPORT

Network For Good

Natural Resource Conservation Service

PayPal Giving Fund

\*List reflects contributions received before February 24, 2022. Contact us if you see a mistake.



THE CLEAR LAKE TOWNSHIP LAND CONSERVANCY  
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*“A species and a culture that treat the natural world with respect and reciprocity will surely pass on genes to ensuing generations with a higher frequency than the people who destroy it.”*

— ROBIN WALL KIMMERER,  
 BRAIDING SWEETGRASS (2013)

## MISSION STATEMENT

We preserve, protect, & manage the natural environment within the Clear Lake Watershed and Township for future generations.

**VOLUNTEER | CONTACT | DONATE**

[clearlakeconservancy.org](http://clearlakeconservancy.org)  
 or call (260) 527-1072



## COMMUNITY EVENTS

**Neighborhood Cleanup Project**  
 WHEN: 3/22 – 4/22

**Spring Wildflower Hike at Clear Lake Nature Preserve & Brennan Woods**  
 WHEN: 4/30 at 9:00 am

**Garlic Mustard Pull Week: Koeneman Lake & Clear Lake Lutheran Woods**  
 WHEN: 5/3 at 2:00 pm

**Flora Husselman Trumbull Nature Preserve**  
 WHEN: 5/5 at 2:00 pm

**Monthly Water Quality Testing**  
 WHEN: 5/4, 6/1, 7/6, 8/3 at 8:30 am

**Kasota Island Cleanup**  
 WHEN: 6/11 at 9:00 am

**Knee-high Naturalist**  
 WHEN: 7/1, 7/8, 7/15, 7/22, 7/29 from 10:00 am – 11:30 am

**Summer Wildflower Hike at CLNP & BW**  
 WHEN: 8/6 at 10:30 am

**Macro Day**  
 WHEN: 9/14 at 9:00 am

CHECK OUR WEBSITE  
 FOR MORE DETAILS

SCAN THE  
 QR CODE

