

2016-2019

Strategic Plan

Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy

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Adopted by the Clear Lake Township Land
Conservancy Board of Directors April 2016



Many thanks to the Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy (CLTLC) Board of Directors for their hard work and dedication in creating this Three – Year Strategic Plan.

Special thanks and sincere appreciation to Kathy Latz for facilitating our meetings and for guiding us through this planning process.

Executive Summary

Although officially established on August 19, 1991, the founding members first met in October of 1990 to discuss the creation of the Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy (CLTLC). A survey was sent out to residents of the lake, which identified three components that would guide the Conservancy's activities for the following 24 years: water quality enhancement, natural areas preservation, and environmental education.

In early years, volunteers conducted water quality monitoring to create the baseline data for the lake and the 4 county ditches that drain into Clear Lake. To expand on these efforts, a Water Quality Committee was formed in 2008. The Committee took a larger watershed view of Clear Lake's water quality and started focusing on the importance and function of the adjacent wetlands to the lake.

Over the last two decades the CLTLC has actively preserved fifteen properties, one within the lake, thirteen around it, and the Conservancy holds one conservation easement. One of the Conservancy's land project goals is to help residents and surrounding landowners understand the importance of taking a watershed level approach to conservation by looking at sensitive resources beyond Clear Lake. Currently the Conservancy protects over 55 acres of sensitive areas that directly impact the water quality of Clear Lake.

One of the most important aspects of the Conservancy's continued growth is its environmental education programs. Some of these efforts are demonstrated in CLTLC's Knee-High Naturalist Program and Neck-High Naturalist Program.

The Conservancy has been organized and led by volunteers for almost 24 years. Some have come and gone, others have been involved since the beginning, and some have recently joined the team. This organization is successful because of them. Their time, talent, commitment, and passion have grown the Conservancy and paved the way for our future success!

This is an exciting time for the Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy. As we celebrate our volunteers and past successes, we look to the future. Our focus will remain on the continued growth of our three pillars: **water quality enhancement, natural areas preservation, and environmental education.**

To continue protecting our corner of the state, this Strategic Plan outlines five goals:

GOAL 1. LAND & WATER PROTECTION: The essential character and function of the Clear Lake watershed and township landscape are conserved through proactive and responsive land and water protection.

GOAL 2. STEWARDSHIP: CLTLC properties are sustainably managed to maintain and enhance their conservation values.

GOAL 3. FUNDRAISING: CLTLC has sufficient funds to meet its land & water protection goals, fulfill its perpetual stewardship obligations, and support annual operations.

GOAL 4. COMMUNITY EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT: CLTLC is an essential community organization with an educated, diverse, and active base of support that is knowledgeable about and participates in land & water conservation practices throughout the Clear Lake Township.

GOAL 5. SOLID ORGANIZATION: Effective people and systems throughout the organization provide direction, resources, and follow-through to implement CLTLC's mission and goals.

Mission

Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy works to preserve, protect, and manage the natural environment within the watershed and township for future generations.

Vision

A community-engaged and supported organization that protects the natural environment of Clear Lake Township.

Our Commitments

- To work in partnership with the community to promote the understanding of land and water conservation and environmental stewardship and to achieve mutual conservation goals of preservation, protection, and management.
- To be a confident source of information and education in assisting landowners, on and away from the lake in their conservation objectives; and to act as a vehicle to those who wish to donate their land and/or conservation easements.
- To recognize, respect, and support the connections that both landowners and the community have with the Clear Lake watershed and township.
- To maintain a professional, effective, and efficient organization governed with excellence, transparency, and accountability.
- To sustainably manage and protect in perpetuity our properties.

Goals & Strategies

GOAL 1. LAND & WATER PROTECTION: The essential character and function of the Clear Lake watershed and township landscape are conserved through proactive and responsive land and water protection.

Strategies

- a. Establish a Lands Committee to guide the land protection efforts.
- b. Foster the growth of the Water Quality Committee.
- c. Define a plan for acquisition that outlines criteria for purchase, donation, or creation of conservation easement.
- d. Develop a budget for land acquisition and water quality enhancement and sustainability.
- e. Respond to land protection opportunities that meet the criteria for permanent conservation.
- f. Maintain and expand partnerships that support permanent land and water protection.

GOAL 2. STEWARDSHIP: CLTLC properties are sustainably managed to maintain and enhance their conservation values.

Strategies

- a. Utilize the Lands Committee to guide the land stewardship efforts.
- b. Develop a baseline report for each property and prioritize stewardship needs.
- c. Create a stewardship/management plan that is sustainable, efficient, and effective.
- d. Develop a budget for land stewardship activities.

GOAL 3. FUNDRAISING: CLTLC has sufficient funds to meet its land & water protection goals, fulfill its perpetual stewardship obligations, and support annual operations.

Strategies

- a. In conjunction with the Finance Committee, create an annual budget.
- b. Identify and apply for grants to support land acquisition, water quality protection, stewardship efforts, and education.
- c. Grow support from individuals, local businesses, and the community.
- d. Complete a three-year fundraising campaign.
- e. Continue to diversify funding sources.

GOAL 4. COMMUNITY EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT: CLTLC is an essential community organization with an educated, diverse, and active base of support that is knowledgeable about and participates in land & water conservation practices throughout the Clear Lake Township.

Strategies

- a. Develop a Communications Committee to guide the efforts for community engagement.
- b. Outline a communications plan that acknowledges the symbiotic relationship between landowners/farmers and residents of Clear Lake which breaks barriers, defines communication goals and strategies, and demonstrates transparency.
- c. Increase public awareness of the organization, our mission and its importance, and encourage involvement.
- d. Represent the organization on important land and conservation issues.
- e. Organize and host educational events that inspire people to actively preserve, care for, and enjoy our land and water resources.

GOAL 5. SOLID ORGANIZATION: Effective people and systems throughout the organization provide direction, resources, and follow-through to implement CLTLC's mission and goals.

Strategies

- a. Maintain an active and engaged Board of Directors.
- b. Maintain strong organizational structure, financial systems, and management tools.
- c. Match staff capacity to organizational needs.
- d. Guide the organization with effective planning focused on long-term sustainability.
- e. Maintain best practices in all facets of work and continually strive to improve.

Three-Year Benchmarks

1. The Lands, Water Quality, Communications, and Finance Committees are formed, filled, chaired and meet regularly.
2. Each committee has developed and updates yearly a work plan with objectives, goals, and strategies.
3. Every Board member is active on a committee or other Board-specific project.
4. CLTLC works to incorporate and comply with the *Land Trust Standards and Practices*, guidelines set forth by the Land Trust Alliance (LTA).
5. Management & Stewardship plans for CLTLC's properties are drafted and implementation has begun.
6. The yearly monitoring obligation for our conservation easement(s) is fulfilled.
7. Sufficient funds have been raised to increase the CLTLC's endowments such that sustainability will be ensured.
8. Staff is reviewed yearly and constructive feedback is provided.
9. Annual work plans are drafted for the staff.
10. Board meetings have at least 80% attendance.
11. Regular communications are shared with the community via print, website, and social media.