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CLEAR THINKING

JULY 2023 | ISSUE NO. 49

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CLEARLAKECONSERVANCY.ORG

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OUR LETTER



WHO OWNS THIS LAKE? ALL OF US!

When my two-year-old granddaughter visited Clear Lake in June, she pointed to the lake as she arrived and said with a big grin: “MY lake!” Don’t we all think the same thing when we look out at the quiet mornings, sailboats and breathtaking sunsets? MY lake. OUR lake.

The number of ways the community supports the Conservancy’s mission of preserving our natural environment and water quality in this shared treasure makes me incredibly proud. Let me share some recent examples as I finish four years as President and turn the gavel over to Doug Mulvaney in July.

Twenty-six volunteers joined together for the annual Kasota Island Work Day on June 10th. Board member Bill Geiger led the crew as tree limbs were cleared, beds weeded and mulched, grass mowed, glacial stones re-stacked and trash removed. Kasota Island was sparkling as it got ready for hundreds of visitors over the summer! Thanks to the volunteers. You can help us keep it trash- and glass-free all summer as you visit.

Dozens of community members have contributed to the Aquatic Vegetation Management Plan fund over three years. The 2023 treatment of Eurasian watermilfoil went just as planned on June 12th in Clear and Round lakes. The population of this invasive plant declined from over 100 acres in 2022 to less than 30 acres in 2023. We’ll check progress in July. Keep giving—we’ll likely be treating some form of invasive plants for the foreseeable future.

The July 8th CLTLC Fun Day and Run will be over by the time you read this. We’ll probably still be smiling, though. Event sponsors and an awesome volunteer team made this event successful from the very beginning. Give a shout out with me to Board members Barb Wenger and Zach Dean, idea spark Alison Rhinehart, staff Tracy Hughes, and the entire Development and Event Committees for bringing the community together for the benefit of Conservancy operations and projects.

Have you met our new full-time Land Steward and Communications Manager, Amy Oberlin? Read about her longtime connection with the Conservancy in the inside article! Help us make Amy welcome in the community as she works with us to take care of OUR land, water and education. We are excited that Amy has joined the Conservancy team.

Donors, volunteers, fellow officers, Board and Committee members, staff—I have been awed and grateful over these four years by YOUR support. The best part is that the Conservancy’s foundation is strong and the work we do to bring our mission alive, day by day, continues.

Thank you for supporting the work we do for future generations—including my granddaughter who firmly believes this is HER lake! It’s also OUR lake.



Karen Horrell
President



Doug Mulvaney
Vice President

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Land Steward

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*“Appreciation is a wonderful thing.
It makes what is excellent in others belong to us as well.”*

— VOLTAIRE

MISSION STATEMENT

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

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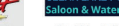
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BLACK EYED SUSANS AT SETTLERS WETLANDS

SETTLERS WETLANDS PRESERVE ON TOUR

CYRUS BROUSE CLEAN STREAM PROJECT

The Cyrus Brouse Clean Stream Project at Settlers Wetlands is being featured on the 2023 Statewide Conservation Tour sponsored by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources for state legislators and state agency leaders. The tour visit on July 12th recognizes the Conservancy's two-stage ditch project as an outstanding example of a creative and successful conservation project in northeastern Indiana. Settlers is a successful model for filtering sediment from a county-regulated agricultural ditch before the ditch water flows into a recreational lake such as Clear Lake.

The tour recognition reminds us of our gratitude for the many donors and grants that made this project a reality. These donations and grants are gifts that keep on giving, year after year.

You can read more about the Clean Stream project and our generous donors and grant makers in the July 2020 Clear Thinking [clearlakeconservancy.org/news/powerd-by-people] and in the July 2021 Clear Thinking [clearlakeconservancy.org/news/clear-lake-prepares-for-battle-clear-thinking-issue-38].



MEET AMY OBERLIN

CONTACT ME
 EMAIL: STEWARD@CLEARLAKECONSERVANCY.ORG

PHONE: (260) 527-1072

As the new Land Steward for the Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy, I am excited to join a vibrant and environmentally conscious community.

I grew up in Steuben County, and in my years writing for the Herald Republican, I was often dazzled by the generous conservation of woods, common areas and wetlands that create a natural setting amid Clear Lake's summer resort atmosphere.

I remember visiting longtime Clear Lake resident Papa Joe (Driver), lingering over the many shiny rocks and train sets in his

barn and hearing sailing stories. I helped plant the first plugs at Spangler Grove with my then-kindergarten-aged daughter and a Blue Heron Ministries crew. Five years ago, I returned with former CLTLC Executive Director Bridget Harrison and Conservancy founder Kathy Latz to write an article about an interpretive sign.

I grew up in rural Pleasant Lake and graduated from Angola High School and Indiana University/IPFW. Though my career has been journalism, my passion

has been the environment. A memorable topic I covered for the newspaper was the Michindoh Aquifer, and efforts to siphon the rich underground resource underneath Pioneer, Ohio to the Toledo area for private profit.

Michindoh was named for the three states it is under – Michigan, Indiana and Ohio. Clear Lake sits right at the intersection of those three states at a relatively high elevation. Data presented during the meetings concerning the proposed water sale showed that Clear Lake would be the first water body to show the effects of a massive withdrawal from the aquifer. It wouldn't happen immediately, of course, and by the time water levels start lowering in Clear Lake due to heavy water usage in Ohio – maybe 25 years later -- it could take hundreds of years to reverse the course.

Thankfully, the Toledo proposition did not go through but we must remain vigilant. With shrinking natural resources, I think it is important for people to protect the water and land in their back yards. I applaud the residents of Clear Lake and the Conservancy for their successes and am honored to be a steward.

Last year, I completed the Indiana Master Naturalist Course. I've volunteered with Blue Heron Ministries and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources and have taken every opportunity over the past couple of decades to learn about our environment, from garlic mustard pulls to beekeeping to volunteer butterfly monitoring for the Michigan Butterfly Network.

I am a member of the McClue Reserve Board of Directors and serve as secretary on the board of the 101 Lakes Trust, a land trust started by the Steuben County Lakes Council in 2006 to facilitate the protection of the property that is now Trine State Recreation Area. I chair the annual Adopt A Tree Festival in Angola and serve on the Angola Tree Board. I am on the board of the Pleasant Lake Historical Society and am president of Cahoots Coffee Café, a youth outreach in Angola, which recently wrapped up its third annual signature fundraiser, Angola's Got Talent -- our best year yet.

I love community. I love the environment. Clear Lake is a celebration of both - and I am so happy to be joining it.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

2023 CONSERVANCY ANNUAL MEETING

PLEASE JOIN US
 JULY 28TH
 AT 4 P.M.

Please plan to join us for the Conservancy's 2023 Annual Meeting on Friday, July 28th at 4 p.m. We'll meet at the Clear Lake Lutheran Pavilion on Outer Drive, weather permitting. At the annual meeting, you will hear updates on Conservancy operations, finances and projects, hear reports from all Committees about their work and members, and participate in the Question & Answer session that is always a valuable part of the Annual Meeting. Elections will be held for new and renewing Board members and 2023 officers. You can view the 2023 slate on our website [clearlakeconservancy.org]. We hope to see you at the Annual Meeting. There will be cookies and conversation afterwards!

William and Carol Berning

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*List reflects contributions received before June 26, 2023. Contact us if you see a mistake.