



CLEAR THINKING

CLEARLAKECONSERVANCY.ORG

NOVEMBER 2023 | ISSUE NO.51

OUR LETTER



RETURNING TO A SPECIAL PLACE

Oh, how happy I am to be back again. Clear Lake is a special place -- to me, to my family, and to us all. As a child, Clear Lake hosted many of my "firsts" -- my first boat ride as a baby, my first major sunburn as a youth, my first attempt (and failure) at skiing in my teens, and now, I am back again for another first: my first position in my conservation career. How fortunate am I to get to have yet another "first" at this wonderful lake.

In undergraduate school, I was deeply interested in chemistry. My greatest interest was using chemistry to understand real-world phenomenon. In graduate school, I finally began to connect the chemical processes to environmental trends. While I focused my research on nutrients in agricultural soils, this connected to a broader focus of understanding the land and water trends that impact water quality and the aquatic environment. I had one of the most dynamic study sites available, the western basin of Lake Erie, which historically suffers from large-scale annual algal blooms. Now I am applying my knowledge and experience at Clear Lake.

Being able to focus on a place that I hold so dearly in my heart is an opportunity that seems to have come from a dream. From understanding the movement of nutrients in our watershed to protecting the natural resources available to sharing the passion of conservation with the public, I am extremely excited to begin this journey.

The mission of the Conservancy is to preserve, protect, and manage the natural environment within the Clear Lake Watershed and Township for future generations. I hope to enhance this mission by leading the Conservancy staff and volunteers, as well as working together with the Board and community to further our goals.

I think every resident and visitor at Clear Lake finds common ground with one desire: to keep the "clear" in Clear Lake. This means being educated on the processes that can lower water clarity and being proactive in preventative measures to balance the natural environment. Our lands, our water, and our behavior are all connected.

In the near future, I am excited to see the progress of our efforts. Our Watershed Diagnostic Study is finishing up three years of data collection. This means that we will soon begin to see comprehensive reports, trends, and data to better understand how our lake behaves. We will continue sharing these results and will begin using this information as a foundation for informed decisions regarding projects for nutrient and sediment control.

Finally, I am extremely grateful to be working alongside such a gracious community, one that continues to believe in and support our work year after year. It is through this commitment and partnership that we can continue our work.

I look forward to meeting all of you in person and hearing your ideas for our shared environment.



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Executive Director

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GEIGER FAMILY – PHOTO CREDIT JESSICA CAIRL

BILL & CHRIS GEIGER AND FAMILY BELIEVE IN GIVING BACK

Good things happen when you give back. Businessman Bill Geiger along with his wife, Chris, strong supporters of the Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy and a member of its Legacy Society, are testament to giving back to the lake and running a successful business.

When industries were leaving Steuben County because of lack of connectivity to high-speed internet services, Bill and his partner founded an entity to build a fiber network throughout Steuben County to bring high speed internet services to serve county businesses and, in addition, giving back by funding community endowments held at the Steuben County Community Foundation.

When Kasota Island was in danger of being developed, Bill and a small group of concerned property owners put together a plan to purchase the island, raising \$1.78 million insuring the purchase of the island along with an island maintenance fund. To this day, Bill, Chris, and friends enjoy the island most every Wednesday to get together, have a cookout and enjoy the Kasota Island landscape.

“The Conservancy is the best way to give back to the lake, to keep an eye on the future,” said Bill. He has been actively volunteering his time with the Conservancy since 1998. Bill and Chris became members of the Legacy Society by declaring that they will include the Conservancy in their estate plan.

This summer, Clear Lake pilots Bill Geiger and his friend Marty Zachrich donated plane rides that were raffled off. Proceeds of \$3,550 were donated to the Conservancy. Bill and Chris are long time Clear Lake residents. Bill grew up in Defiance, Ohio and started spending his summers at Clear Lake when he was two years old. Chris, from West Unity, Ohio, began her love of Clear Lake when her parents purchased a cottage in 1964. They raised their family and have lived full time at the lake since 1982.

“Back when I was growing up on the lake, after a major storm, the lake was dirty for days because of the runoff from the incoming streams. Today, the Conservancy working side by side with local farmers have implemented greenways along streams to filter the run-off from the field. The community sanitary sewer system has also been an important contributor for the quality of the lake.”

Thanks to people like Bill and Chris Geiger, the Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy protects more than 100 acres around the lake. Remembering the Conservancy in your estate planning is a way to have a “forever” Clear Lake legacy. There is still a \$25,000 Challenge Grant that will donate \$1,000 to the Conservancy for each of the first 25 families who join the Legacy Society. We currently have 8 Legacy Society Members. Simply scan the QR Code on the next page and then complete the CLTLC Bequest Challenge Form to follow the lead of the Geigers and other future-focused families

A huge thank you to all our supporters who join us in our mission of preserving, protecting, and managing the natural environment within the watershed and township for future generations.



OUR WATERMILFOIL JOURNEY

As we near the end of 2023, let's reflect on the journey of one of our largest water quality projects yet – our invasive watermilfoil treatment. This treatment, part of our Aquatic Vegetation Management Plan, has met and exceeded our expectations.

In 2020, our community felt overwhelming concern about an aquatic weed that was quickly taking over the shallow waters. After extensive survey and observation, we learned that almost 110 acres of an invasive watermilfoil was rapidly commandeering our clear waters. With support from the community, we worked with Aquatic Enhancement & Survey to begin what would amount to three total treatments in the span of two years, using an herbicide named ProcellaCOR. With less than four acres of invasive watermilfoil remaining and to avoid the development of genetic resistance, our treatments using ProcellaCOR are finished for now. However, we will continue to work with the community and collaborators to further our Aquatic Vegetation Management Plan and take part in managing our natural environment.

A public meeting on November 16th gives our consultant, Aquatic Enhancement & Survey, a place to answer community questions. See our website for details.



With the generous support of an anonymous donor, a **\$25,000 grant has been created, of which \$1,000 will be donated to us** for every new Legacy Society member who joins.



SCAN THE QR CODE TO GET STARTED

The form is also available on our website under "Donate"

WHAT GIFTS QUALIFY

- Will/Living Trust
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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

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*List reflects contributions received before October 20, 2023. Please contact us if you see a mistake.



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GLOSSARY TERM: **TERMS TO KNOW**

INVASIVE SPECIES:

A new, non-native species which enters an ecosystem. If there are no natural predators, the population of an invasive species can explode, threatening to crowd out other native species. Invasive plant species in the Clear Lake watershed include starry stonewort, Eurasian watermilfoil, curly leaf pondweed, coontail, and garlic mustard.

MISSION STATEMENT

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

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clearlakeconservancy.org
 or call (260) 527-1072



COMMUNITY EVENTS



SAVE THE DATE

Together we give.

Nov 28, 2023

GIVING TUESDAY



