



CLEAR THINKING

CLEARLAKECONSERVANCY.ORG

SEPTEMBER 2024 | ISSUE NO.56

OUR LETTER



ACCOMPLISHING OUR MISSION TOGETHER

As autumn approaches and we reflect on another memorable lake season, we realize how truly fortunate we are to be part of this exceptional community that works together to ensure our future generations will enjoy what we love today. Through environmental education, land restoration, and water quality projects, our volunteers and supporters have come together to accomplish amazing goals.

This spring, we were able to complete two anticipated land preserve projects and continue volunteer cleanup projects. Our new **Clear Lake Nature Preserve Prairie Trail near Brennan Woods** has already been traveled by dozens of community members admiring the native flowers, grasses, pollinators, and butterflies. On the opposite side of the lake, the **Memorial Woods Tribute Garden** has continued to grow this year with memorial plaques to honor and remember our loved ones. Information for memorial plaques can be found on our website or by contacting our office. **Our Neighborhood Cleanup** and **Kasota Island Cleanup** annual projects were carried out by 30 dedicated volunteers working together to prepare for the busy season.

As we moved into summer, our community's love for the land and water was highlighted through participation in our fundraising celebration, educational events, and water quality programs. On July 13th, our community came together for a day of celebration at our second annual **Run Day, Fun Day** fundraiser which netted over \$38,500 in support of our mission! Through four **Knee-high Naturalists** sessions, we made over 207 impressions educating our youth and adults on protecting our land and water resources. As part of our **Glacial Stone Cost-Share Grant** from the Land Trust Alliance, five residential seawalls totaling 264 feet of shoreline were resurfaced with glacial stone to prevent further erosion of our shoreline and lake floor.

While it is impossible to squeeze all our season highlights into one article, we hope to find room for one last thing: **Thank you!** Thank you for supporting our work as we have grown through the years, for volunteering your time and talent to our projects and for participating in our educational events. Thank you for the role that you play in accomplishing our mission together.



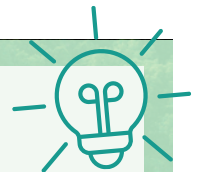
Caroline Barth
Executive Director



Doug Mulvaney
President

KNOW YOUR CONSERVANCY

Exploring the various committees and roles within the Conservancy, this month's newsletter features Outreach & Education.



OUTREACH & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Outreach and Education Committee is an energetic group of volunteers interested in building our outreach strategies, communications, and educational opportunities. This committee provides support for Conservancy events and assists with communications through newsletters, emails, and social media.

2024 OUTREACH AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Bill Greffin (chair), Bill Culbertson, Ann DeWert, Don Luepke, Amy Michael, and Jessica Sattison

VOLUNTEER | CONTACT | DONATE clearlakeconservancy.org or call (260) 527-1072

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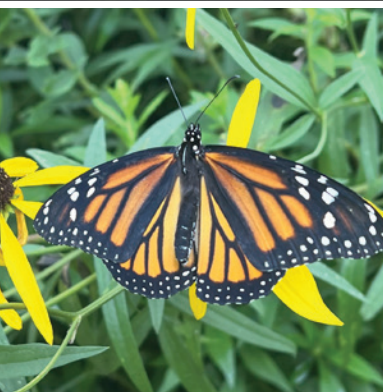
2024 STAFF

Caroline Barth
Executive Director

Tracy Hughes
Program Assistant

COMMITTEES

- Development
- Executive
- Finance
- Lands
- Outreach & Education
- Water Quality





CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF KNEE-HIGH NATURALISTS

Founded in 2005 by Conservancy friends Josie Kramer and Megan Morris, Knee-high Naturalists is the Conservancy's leading youth education program. The aunt-niece duo started Knee-high as a way for families to learn together when Megan's children were young. Their vision has introduced generations of Clear Lake youngsters to the wonders of nature. One of the biggest reasons parents bring their kids to the lake, summer after summer, is the chance to learn and experience this beautiful place up-close and hands-on. That is Knee-high education.

Today, the Knee-high Naturalists program is held on the Conservancy's own Memorial Woods property and has an energetic following of young environmentalists and their adult learners. This year, we had almost 150 participants, including some with perfect attendance at all four sessions! Through the years, a variety of topics have been led by volunteers and environmental educators including:

- Frogs, Turtles, and Snakes, Oh My!
- Birds 'N Bats
- Beautiful Butterflies
- Wild about Wildflowers
- Terrific Trees
- Let's Be 'Clear' Gone Fishin!
- Sssss...Snakes!
- Reptiles and Amphibians
- Art and Nature
- Vermi(worm)-composting
- Bald Eagles
- A Day on the Farm
- Buzzing Bees
- Reduce, Reuse, Recycle & Rock Out!
- All About Oaks
- Hike and Hunt
- Cicadas
- Family Yoga in Nature
- Mighty Mushrooms
- Wilderness Camping Skills
- Smokey Bear and Woodsy Owl

This program has made a lasting impact on generations of youth and adults at Clear Lake for 20 years. We are honored to continue fostering these environmental connections and excited as we look forward to our 21st Knee-high Naturalists program next July.

PHOTO CAPTIONS TOP ROW

(LEFT)
2015 Terrific Trees in Brennan Woods with Nate Simons

(SECOND)
2021 Mighty Mushrooms with Knee-high student turned presenter, Madeline Buehrer

(THIRD)
2017 Reptiles and Amphibians led by Pokagon State Park Naturalists

(FOURTH)
2020 Oak tree planting with Don Luepke

Special thanks to Josie Kramer and Megan Morris for their vision and dedication. Thank you to Dana Buehrer who served as the Knee-high Naturalists volunteer coordinator from 2011-2016 and to Tracy Hughes who has led the program since 2017 both as a volunteer and now staff member.

PHOTO CAPTIONS BOTTOM ROW

(LEFT) 2018 On the Farm with Purdue Extension at Moody Farms

(RIGHT) 2024 Butterfly Hikers





DUNK TANK (LEFT): Barb Wenger, Sandy Ginn, Larry Koesters, Chris Hughes, and Jon Moss ready for the Dunk Tank!



PHOTO CAPTIONS

FINISH LINE (TOP MIDDLE): Father-Daughter Duo, Craig & Mia Huntermark finish the 5K.

FACE PAINTERS (BOTTOM MIDDLE): Talented Face Painters and their Happy Subjects

TOP FINISHERS (TOP RIGHT):
 10K Female Alena Tonne
 5K Female Kaitlynn Hansen
 10K Male Brad Schmidt
 5K Male Alex Harrell

START LINE (BOTTOM RIGHT): Kent Buehrer, 1979 10K founder, and other runners starting the race.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! SATURDAY, JULY 12TH - RUN DAY, FUN DAY 2025

THE NUMBERS ARE IN!

Thanks to our many sponsors, volunteers, and participants, our Run Day, Fun Day community celebration and fundraiser was a tremendous success. Your contributions raised over \$38,500 to support the Conservancy's ongoing expenses of water quality monitoring, land conservation, educational programs, and operations. Thanks to your support, we can continue our work to preserve, protect, and manage our Clear Lake environment so that these summer celebrations and fond lakeside memories will continue for generations to come. Thank you for your support!

53 pre-registered **10K RUNNERS**
64 pre-registered **5K RUNNERS**
42 pre-registered **1M WALKERS**
33 walk-in **PARTICIPANTS**
25 5K/10K runners **21 YEARS OLD OR YOUNGER**
22 5k/10k runners **OVER THE AGE OF 55**
14 1-mile run/walkers **UNDER THE AGE OF 15**
4 **WINNER TROPHIES** - charcuterie boards handcrafted by Jay Ludgate
5 dunkees generated **MORE THAN \$1,200 IN DONATIONS**
36 **SCAVENGER HUNTS COMPLETED** in our Waterfield Preserve

44 children enjoyed the **CARNIVAL BOUNCE HOUSE**
52 children's **FACES PAINTED**
150 **BANANAS**
75 **TANGERINES**
175 **GRANOLA BARS**
100 **16 OZ BEER CUPS**
300 **BOTTLES OF WATER**
4 **HOURS OF GREAT MUSIC** provided by DJ Jarvis D
64 **VOLUNTEERS INVOLVED** in the planning and implementation of this successful event
UNLIMITED SMILES & MEMORIES MADE

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

RUN DAY, FUN DAY CONTRIBUTORS

- Anonymous (2)**
- Terry and Rita Brown**
- Jim and Jody Horein**
- Wendorf Family**
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- M: Brady Duvendack**
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- M: Jack and Carolyn Eyster**
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- Tom and Jenny Parker**
- Nancy and Bob Webster**

M = Memorials
 H = Honorariums

- DONATIONS**
 Anonymous (5)
Buckeye Trout House
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- The Mill District**
- Jack & Dawn Musson of Musson Builders**
- IN-KIND SUPPORT**
Julie Barth and Don Fleetwood
- Amy and Adam Michael**
- Sawyer Owens**
- Matt and Claire Timmer**
- Tribune Printing Inc.**

*List reflects contributions between July 1, 2024 - August 23, 2024 plus all RDFD event contributions. Contact us if you see a mistake.



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GLOSSARY TERMS TO KNOW

PRAIRIE: Large open grassland with minimal tree cover.

NATIVE PLANTS: A plant is native if it occurs naturally in an ecosystem without either human introduction or migration due to climate change.

MISSION STATEMENT

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

VOLUNTEER | CONTACT | DONATE

clearlakeconservancy.org
 or call (260) 527-1072



COMMUNITY EVENTS

MACROINVERTEBRATE TESTING
WHEN: Sept. 18, 9:00 am
date change

ILPA OCTOBER BIG DAY HIKE
WHEN: Oct. 12, 10:00 am



OCTOBER BIG DAY

Saturday, Oct. 12, 2024



White-throated Sparrow | Shari McCollough