



THE CLEAR LAKE TOWNSHIP LAND CONSERVANCY  
111 GECOWETS DRIVE  
FREMONT, INDIANA 46737  
clearlakeconservancy.org

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# CLEAR THINKING

MARCH 2025 | ISSUE NO.59

## GLOSSARY TERMS TO KNOW

**ALGAL BLOOM:** Rapid population growth of algae in water. This is often caused by pollution with excess nutrients. Large algal blooms can deplete oxygen in water, reduce light levels, and certain types of algae may release toxins harmful to fish, birds, and animals including humans.

## 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



## 2025 COMMUNITY EVENT CALENDAR

- NEIGHBORHOOD CLEANUP PROJECT** – March 22 through April 22 (Earth Day)
- GARLIC MUSTARD PULL** – Friday, April 25, 10 a.m. to noon at Elizabeth Hanna
- SPRING GUIDED HIKE** – Saturday, May 10, 10 a.m.
- NATIVE PLANT SALE** – Saturday, May 24, 9 a.m. to noon
- MONTHLY WATER QUALITY TESTING** – Contact our office
- KASOTA ISLAND CLEANUP** – Saturday, June 7, 9 a.m. to noon
- KNEE-HIGH NATURALISTS** – Fridays, July 11, 18, 25, August 1 from 10 to 11:30 a.m.
- RUN DAY, FUN DAY** – Saturday, July 12, 8 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
- ANNUAL MEETING** – Friday, July 25, 4 p.m.
- SUMMER GUIDED HIKE** – Saturday, August 9, 9 a.m.
- LABOR DAY EDUCATIONAL EVENT** – Saturday, August 30
- BIG DAY HIKE** – Saturday, October 11



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## OUR LETTER



## CONSERVATION & COMMUNITY

Some of the best experiences we have at Clear Lake are the ones we spend outside with friends. As winter comes to an end and we anticipate the arrival of spring, let's look ahead to the warmer weather and how you can admire our environment and spend time with the community. Whether you are looking to meet new people, spend more time in natural spaces, learn more about the Conservancy, or simply offer up your time, our volunteer opportunities and outreach programs might be just what you need! We have a variety of events, programs, and volunteer days lined up for the 2025 season that involve people of all ages and skill sets.

The annual Neighborhood Cleanup Project welcomes its 6th year of community members teaming up to clean up the roadways in our watershed and township. Check out the latest cleanup map on our website and sign up to help with this community project running March 22 to April 22, Earth Day!

Speaking of Earth Day, look out for our Countdown to Earth Day emails, celebrating the stewardship of land and exploring the different ways that we can all care for and protect our unique environment. We will share the progress of our winter land maintenance work, insight into our long-term restoration goals, tips on how you can introduce conservation on your own property, and how we can continue to work together in stewarding our special corner of Indiana.

Our team has been working away on plans for the upcoming educational, stewardship, and fundraising activities coming soon. From Kasota Island Cleanup and Garlic Mustard Pulls to Run Day, Fun Day and Knee-high Naturalists, there are plenty of ways to participate in the Conservancy's mission this year. For a full list of events and dates, view the Event Calendar within this newsletter and stay updated on our website.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- |   |  |
|---|--|
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*Executive Director*
- Tracy Hughes**  
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- Joseph Bernard**  
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## COMMITTEES

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- Finance**
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- Water Quality**



RICK ECKERT DRIVES CONSERVANCY GATOR



**Caroline Barth**  
*Executive Director*



**Doug Mulvaney**  
*President*

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# WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL WITH PHOSPHOROUS?

If you have been following our water quality communications, you have likely seen continued mentions of phosphorus which plays an important, but complex, role in our land and water. To better understand how phosphorus affects plant and algae growth in our lake, let's start with the basics.

We all remember the periodic table from middle school science – right? This is a list of natural elements in an organized table, where element number 15 is phosphorus. Symbolized by the letter P, phosphorus is one of the **three essential nutrients** for plants along with nitrogen (N) and potassium (K).

Phosphorus, nitrogen, and potassium are found throughout our natural environment. They are bound within our soils, dissolved in our groundwater, and stored in the cells of all living things. Plants, animals, algae, and fungi require each of these nutrients to grow, and return these nutrients to the environment through decomposition and decay.

So, if all three nutrients are essential for growth, why do we focus on phosphorus? Nutrient studies within the Great Lakes region, including our own Watershed Diagnostic Study at Clear Lake, consistently show **phosphorus as a limiting nutrient**. This means that the growth rate of plants and algae is controlled, or limited, by the amount of phosphorus in the lake. Too much phosphorus entering the lake allows aquatic plants and algae to grow uncontrollably, overwhelming the lake's ecosystem.

**What does this mean for Clear Lake?** The excessive growth of invasive aquatic plants and threats of harmful algal blooms can be reduced by limiting the amount of phosphorus flowing into the lake each year. However, this process requires a collective effort to limit the use of phosphorus. Our conservation Checklist on Page 3 shares four ways to reduce the input of phosphorus into our lake while preserving its precious water quality.

# CONSERVATION CHECKLIST

Thinking ahead to opening up your lake property for the spring and summer seasons, here are four tips on what you can do in the process to support our natural world.

### 1 GRASS MANAGEMENT

- BUFFER** - Leave a buffer of grass between the lawn and the water's edge or seawall.
- CLIPPINGS** - Keep grass clippings and yard waste out of the water.
- MOW HIGH** - Keep grass length between 2 ½ to 3 ½ inches. The rule of thumb is to mow often enough that you never cut more than 1/3 of the height of the grass.

### 2 FERTILIZER

- INVESTIGATE** - Always test your soil first. Fertilizer may be unnecessary.
- PHOSPHORUS-FREE** - Use fertilizers that are phosphorus free.
- LIMIT** - Use fertilizer sparingly and follow product label rates.

### 3 PET & WATERFOWL DROPPINGS

- REMOVE** - Dispose of droppings in the trash.
- REDUCE** - Pick up droppings promptly.

### 4 NATIVE SHORELINE BUFFERS

- NATURE'S FILTER** - Plant deep rooted native plants to filter water.
- PROTECT** - Discourage geese from grazing in yards with native plant barriers.
- ATTRACT** - Watch and welcome the pollinators and birds!

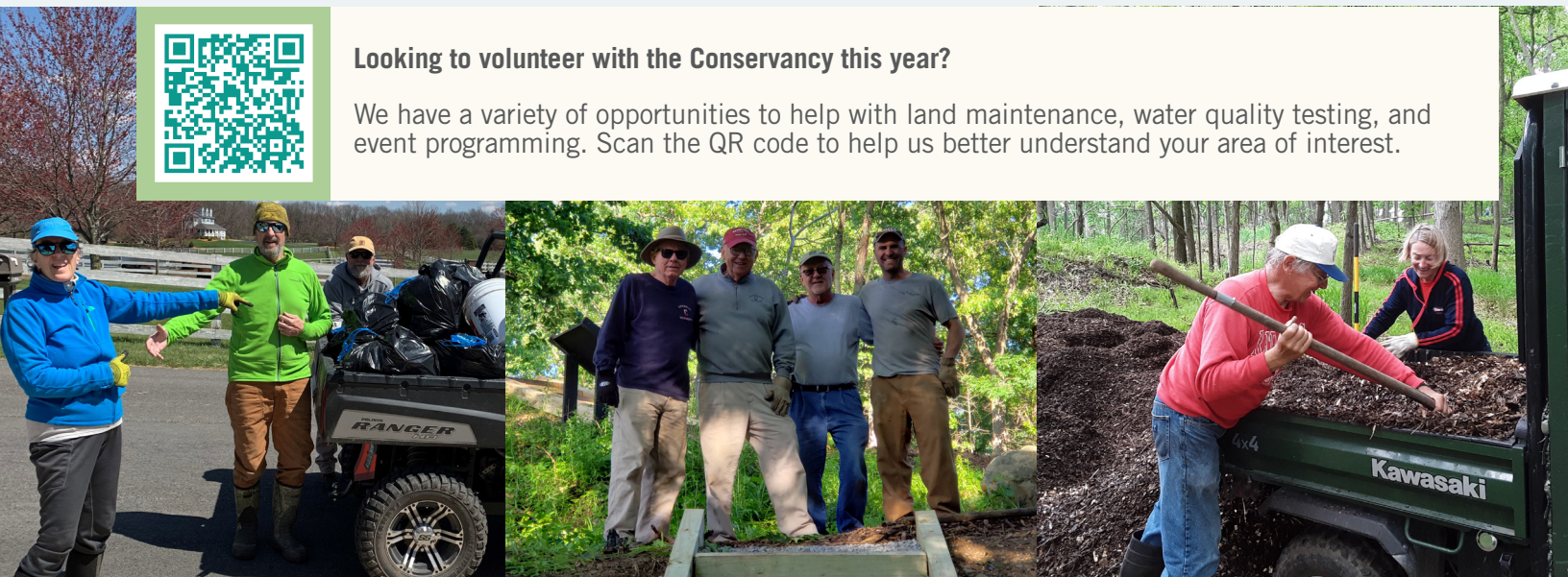
## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

# VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES



Looking to volunteer with the Conservancy this year?

We have a variety of opportunities to help with land maintenance, water quality testing, and event programming. Scan the QR code to help us better understand your area of interest.



Carol Beming Family  
Debra Hench  
Beth and John Lundy  
Wendorf Family  
Bob and Patti Winzeler

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M: Kevin Foss  
Barb Wenger

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**GRANT SUPPORT**  
US Fish & Wildlife, Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership

**WISH LIST**  
Matt and Claire Timmer

**IN-KIND SUPPORT**  
Essentially Clean & More

\*List reflects contributions received between January 1, 2025 - February 25, 2025. Contact us if you see a mistake.

M: = Memorials