



# CLEAR THINKING

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NOVEMBER 2016

## 2016 at a Glance

ISSUE No. 9



The Water Quality Committee completed four rounds of water testing at the outlets of the four agriculturally modified streams, or ditches, that flow into Clear Lake. See the January 2016 issue of *Clear Thinking* for a detailed map ([clearlakeconservancy.org/news](http://clearlakeconservancy.org/news)). The Committee will analyze the data this winter.

For most of the summer our Koeneman Lake Nature Preserve and trail were closed. Partnering with the Clear Lake Lutheran Church for access, we were able to dredge the lake and rebuild the dam. With a stable dam in place, the lake can continue serving as the settling point for sediment and pollutants flowing through the Harry Teeters ditch on the way to Clear Lake. We encourage you to take a walk on the preserve, especially with the beautiful fall display, to see the completed project. To see photos during construction and learn more details visit [clearlakeconservancy.org/news](http://clearlakeconservancy.org/news) for the full article.

The Knee-high Naturalists Program celebrated 10 years this past July! With financial assistance from the Dekko Foundation, we offered lessons on water quality sampling, snakes, birding, and fishing to over 20 youngsters in 2016. Dana Buehrer has volunteered each summer, for several years now, in support of the Knee-high Program. With a heavy heart she expressed the need to step back to devote more time to her quickly growing children. We would like to thank Dana for her commitment to youth education at Clear Lake! She will be truly missed and has done an outstanding job of educating and inspiring our Knee-highs to care for Clear Lake. Thank you Dana and thank you to everyone that has come to Knee-highs over the last decade! If you have suggestions for our 2017 program please reach out and let us know.

Many of you took part in celebrating our 25th Anniversary. An energetic group of volunteers stepped up early this summer to plan two spectacular events on August 6th and 7th. These events represented the Clear Lake community at its best, coming together for a great cause at the Yacht Club and on Kasota Island. The Conservancy was able to raise important financial support for projects and through the Steuben County Community Foundation (SCCF) grow our Operating Endowment by over \$50,000. Thanks for the wonderful celebration as we created a Clear Future for the Conservancy together!

Finally, we'd like to point out a few other key results from our 2015 Strategic Planning Process. A shorter Mission Statement appears below and has not changed, but reducing it to one sentence keeps us better focused. Our new logo displayed on this first page reflects the many natural features of Clear Lake that we hope vividly connect the Conservancy with your cherished memories of time spent here. Finally, the new website [www.clearlakeconservancy.org](http://www.clearlakeconservancy.org) offers a fresh, informative, and convenient source of information about the Conservancy, its activities, events and beautiful properties. You can even contact us to volunteer and donate to the Conservancy through the new website! We invite you to do both!

Thank you for sharing our passion and commitment to keep Clear Lake vibrant and healthy -- now and into the future. We wish you a Happy Holiday season and a wonderful New Year!

Nancy Webster, President  
Bridget Harrison, Executive Director



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

## Water Quality

The Water Quality Committee and volunteers have been collecting water sampling data from the lake and the four ditches that drain into the lake for most of CLTLC's existence. Testing parameters include temperature, pH, nitrate, nitrite, E. coli, dissolved oxygen, orthophosphate, biological oxygen demand, and turbidity. This section of *Clear Thinking* will continue to explain these testing parameters.

Oxygen is essential for life on land and in the water to survive. Most aquatic plants and animals require dissolved oxygen (DO), a testing parameter that we measure. The presence of oxygen in water is a sign of a healthy system and the lack of oxygen may indicate pollution. Water temperature, turbidity, as well as the breakdown of organic materials can impact the amount of oxygen present. Water at higher temperatures cannot hold as much dissolved oxygen. Water that doesn't mix or churn is not exposed to atmospheric oxygen and will have a lower level. Finally, as organic materials like leaves, lawn clippings, and manure break down dissolved oxygen is used at a rapid rate. This rapid breakdown may also contribute to foam forming on the surface of water. In many cases it's harmless and dissipates quickly. For additional information check our Facebook page for a fact sheet called "Foam on Water" from the IN Dept. of Environmental Management.

## Natural Area Preservation

Elizabeth (Lib) Anderson Hanna was connected to almost every shore of Clear Lake in her 94 years of life. She first visited Clear Lake on the north shore in 1917 as a twelve year old girl from Toledo. She met her husband Bob at Clear Lake and they spent virtually every summer at the Lake, retiring full-time to their west shore home overlooking Kasota Island in 1967.

Lib loved Clear Lake and loved to write. She edited the "**Clear Lake Story 1932-1982**", penned many articles on Clear Lake for the *Herald-Republican* newspaper and lauded the changing seasons for readers of the Clear Lake Association newsletter.

Fittingly, her name is attached to the very first Clear Lake property dedicated to public open space. The Elizabeth Hanna Nature Reserve was formerly a landing strip located on Clear Lake's east shore, see blue outline above, and dedicated in 1988 to honor Lib Hanna's commitment to wildlife preservation. Now known as the Elizabeth Hanna Nature Preserve, the six-acre site became part of the Conservancy in 2010 to be protected in perpetuity for its wildlife habitat and important ecosystems.



### THANK YOU TO OUR RECENT DONORS!\*

Including William & Carol Berning, Don & Beth Bieberich, Jeanne Coffman, Jerry Crawford, Miles & Eleanor Durfey, Bert & Brenda Elliott, Penny Hallock, Dan & Myra Koop, Kathy Latz, Claudia Sundberg  
**Kasota Island Project Support:** Anonymous, Rick Behnfeldt Family, Bill & Margaret Bloebaum,

Tom & Kathy Reifel, Lindsey & Nick Ruskowski, Chris Slee Family **Memorials & Honorariums:** Jack & Karen Horrell, Laura & Dan McArdle

\*List reflects contributions received after our September issue of *Clear Thinking*. We make every effort to be as accurate as possible, please contact us if you see a mistake.



## 2017 Conservancy Calendar

The Holiday Season is right around the corner. Do you have any Clear Lake lovers or avid birders in your life? If so, they would surely enjoy this 'Birds of Clear Lake calendar!' The photos, contributed by local Clear Lake photographers, beautifully depict birds in and around the Clear Lake area.

Calendars are available for purchase from any CLTLC board member, Bridget in the CLTLC office, or upstairs inside the front door at Town Hall. \$20 each or 3 for \$50. Funds raised from the 2017 Calendar support the Conservancy's mission and operations.

**e-Newsletter:** To signup for our e-newsletter email: [info@clearlakeconservancy.org](mailto:info@clearlakeconservancy.org)

## Environmental Education

In the July 2016 issue of *Clear Thinking* ([clearlakeconservancy.org](http://clearlakeconservancy.org)), the topic was invasive plants. Bullies. Bad guys. This issue we highlight **rain gardens**. Advantageous plants, especially for water quality and beauty. As you enjoy the fall and winter seasons, think ahead to spring and consider adding a rain garden to your lake property.

What is a rain garden and why have one? A rain garden resembles regular perennial gardens and borders but plays a more important function in the landscape. Its function is to absorb and filter **storm run-off water** from impervious surfaces--driveways, roofs or parking areas--into the rain garden rather than into a storm drain or local water bodies. There is a shallow dip in the rain garden to hold the water for a short time while it soaks into the ground and filters through the soil. This improves overall water quality for the community by keeping more sediment in the ground and out of the lake. You and your neighbors will also enjoy the beauty of the plants!

What plants work best? Choose a variety of native plants as they do not need special care, are resistant to most insects and diseases, and attract beneficial insects. Good choices include: asters, milkweed, coneflowers, bee balm, black-eyed susan, and many sedges.



Photo courtesy of Martha Ferguson

Resources? These sources for this article provide more details on designing and planting rain gardens: The Rain Garden Alliance ([raingardenalliance.org](http://raingardenalliance.org)); Michigan State U. Extension Service ([msue.anr.msu.edu](http://msue.anr.msu.edu)); a how-to manual published by Catching Rain, a Fort Wayne Green Infrastructure Initiative ([catchingrainfw.org](http://catchingrainfw.org)); and Riverview Nursery ([riverviewnativenursery.com](http://riverviewnativenursery.com)). Example rain gardens can be viewed locally in Angola along Martha St., east of the circle.

## Partner's Spotlight

Many of our accomplishments rely on successful partnerships. In this Partner's Spotlight, we highlight the Land Trust Alliance (LTA). The LTA, an umbrella organization for land trusts across the U. S., brings more than 1,100 member land trusts together to increase each one's success. They advocate for the policies and incentives to save millions of acres every year. They're the go-to source for training for people who work in conservation, and when threatened, they help to defend the places that land trusts vow to protect. The Alliance has a national office in D.C. and regional offices located in the Midwest, Northeast, Southeast, and West. More details at [landtrustalliance.org](http://landtrustalliance.org).

Templates, in-person trainings, peer-to-peer conference calls, webinars, access to an online library, and an annual land conservation conference are a few resources that the Conservancy has access to with our LTA membership. Additionally, Executive Director, Bridget Harrison has been able to successfully apply for financial support for LTA-sponsored trainings including 2015 Rally, the annual land conservation conference. Having just returned from 2016 Rally held in Minneapolis MN, Harrison feels energized, inspired, and full of new ideas to guide the Conservancy's land and water conservation efforts right here in the Clear Lake Township.



## GREAT TAX NEWS FOR IRA OWNERS

If you are over 70 1/2, you can now make a TOTALLY INCOME TAX FREE **IRA Charitable Rollover contribution**, to support the Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy. This new tax law, (The PATH ACT) signed on December 18, 2015, makes permanent for future years, the opportunity to withdraw up to \$100,000 annually from your IRA for charitable purposes. This contribution could be some or all of your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD), or even a more generous contribution. There is no federal income tax realized and no income tax deduction for the donor making this charitable IRA Rollover. It avoids the deduction limitations on your Form 1040 contributions.

To see if this new tax opportunity fits your charitable giving plans, talk to your tax preparer or telephone George Schenkel, our Treasurer at (260) 417-0564. If you would like to receive an *Overview Synopsis* and a *Charitable Rollover Withdrawal Request Form* to send to your IRA Custodian, call Bridget Harrison, Executive Director at (260) 316-1397. Gifts must be directly transferred from your IRA Plan Administrator to CLTLC. We look forward to your continued support.

To get involved or support:

(260) 316-1397 • [www.ClearLakeConservancy.org](http://www.ClearLakeConservancy.org)  
111 Gecowets Drive – Clear Lake • Fremont, IN 46737





Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy  
111 Gecowets Drive - Clear Lake  
Fremont, Indiana 46737  
Celebrating 25 years in 2016!

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*Flip over for an  
opportunity to support  
the Kasota Island  
Shoreline Protection  
Project!*

Email: [info@clearlakeconservancy.org](mailto:info@clearlakeconservancy.org) to receive this in your email!



## Kasota Island Shoreline Protection Pledge Form

Kasota Island is eroding at a rate of 2-4 in/yr. Help us protect the shoreline! Any funds raised above and beyond the need of this project will be transferred into CLTLC's Property Maintenance Endowment Fund held at the Steuben County Community Foundation. All gifts to Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy, a 501(c)(3) organization, are tax deductible.

### Pledge Information

I (we) pledge a TOTAL of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to be paid: ☐ now ☐ yearly for \_\_\_\_\_ years. I (we) plan to make this contribution in the form of: ☐ cash ☐ check payable to Clear Lake Conservancy ☐ PayPal at [clearlakeconservancy.org](https://www.clearlakeconservancy.org) ☐ other.

### Donor Information (please print)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Billing address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, ST Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Phone & Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### Acknowledgement Information

Use the following name(s) in all acknowledgements: \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ I (we) wish to remain anonymous.

Signature(s)	Date
111 Gecowets Drive Fremont, IN 46737	Office (260) 316-1397 clearlakeconservancy.org
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