



# CLEAR THINKING

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## Seasons of Change

As the writer in Ecclesiastes told us long ago, to everything there is a season. This is true for Clear Lake and for the Clear Lake Conservancy. Happy New Year and our warmest wishes to you and yours as 2017 begins with a wintery blast of beauty at Clear Lake.

Our 25th Anniversary celebrations--Creating a Clear Future--remain a warm memory as we continue three key initiatives: Kasota Island Shoreline Restoration, building Clear Lake Nature Preserve Trails, and adding financial sustainability through the Operating Fund at Steuben County Community Foundation (SCCF). It's a pleasure to bring you the latest news on each of these projects.

Changes are positive for these three areas. We ended 2016 with \$123,848 in our new Operating Fund at SCCF. As it continues to grow, Treasurer George Schenkel tells us that the fund should provide a modest but more steady source of revenue for the Conservancy's mission and core costs.

We will continue to expand grant applications for specific projects (such as Kasota Shoreline Protection) and must be ever-focused on raising funds from those who treasure Clear Lake as much as we do. We ended 2016 with roughly \$88,000 raised for Kasota, including social media matching campaigns totaling \$15,000! We are waiting results of several grants for the estimated \$300,000 project.

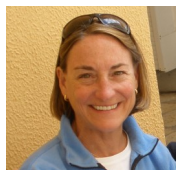
Thanks to all of you who have given and to those of you who will give in the future....or give again. Bridget welcomes any ideas you may have for social media fund/friend making! We passed the 100 mark for Facebook friends in December! Help us expand our natural audience by Liking us and spreading the word with your friends. You'll see some [fun pictures, too!](#)

Spring, summer, and fall are the best seasons to build trails in Brennan Woods. We will update you in the spring as preliminary work to clear the woods of invasive species and open the forest canopy re-starts.

Leadership also has seasons. After contributing to the successful 25th Anniversary and Strategic planning events in 2016, long time Board members Josie Kramer, Chad Korte, and Butch Callison are leaving the Board. Josie co-founded the Knee-high Naturalist program. Butch served as Vice President. All three were active leaders in expanding the Conservancy's communications and raising sponsor support for the 25th Anniversary.

We thank Josie, Chad, and Butch for the many ways they have enriched the Conservancy over the years. As long term Clear Lakers, we value their ongoing interest and support for the direction they helped set. Joining the Board as Vice President is Karen Horrell. Karen's legal and corporate background have been helpful in our branding, communications, and strategic planning. She and husband Jack headed the Marketing Committee for the 25th Anniversary.

Closing on personal change notes, we are enjoying the winter season with a new grandchild (Nancy) and dog (Bridget). We look forward to having you meet baby Jack and Bunk's new friend, Eggy, as we see each other in warmer weather. Stay warm wherever the season finds you and stay current with the Conservancy on the web [clearlakeconservancy.org](http://clearlakeconservancy.org).



Nancy Webster, President & Bridget Harrison, Executive Director

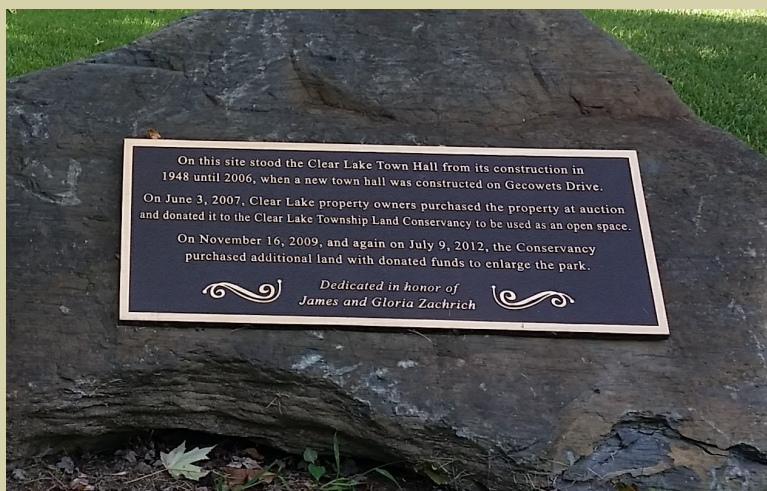


## Water Quality

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.

Testing for pH is one of the most common analyses in water testing. The relative concentrations of hydrogen ions (H<sup>+</sup>) and hydroxide ions (OH<sup>-</sup>), both found in water (H<sub>2</sub>O), determine if a solution is acidic or basic. The pH scale ranges from 0 to 14, with 0 being acidic, 14 being basic, and 7 being neutral. If more H<sup>+</sup> ions are present than OH<sup>-</sup> ions, the solution is more acidic (less than 7) and if there are more OH<sup>-</sup> ions than H<sup>+</sup>, the solution is more basic (greater than 7).

Basic chemistry aside, measuring pH is important because aquatic organisms are sensitive to pH. A range of 6.5 to 8.2 is ideal for most organisms to successfully reproduce and survive. The pH level can fluctuate naturally but algae blooms, which remove carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) during photosynthesis, can raise pH to 9 or higher. Waterbodies with higher temperature tend to have lower pH values. High water temperatures can be attributed to the removal of shade trees, for example. Inputs from abandoned mine lands can lower pH and with lower levels some heavy metals are able to dissolve in water and may become toxic to aquatic organisms. Mines aren't an issue in our watershed.



## Natural Area Preservation

Just up the road from the Pizza King on East Clear Lake Drive, this quiet park is a great place to stop and enjoy your ice cream cone in the shade of the large oak trees. Enjoy the short walk along the meandering path and appreciate the protected open space of the Old Town Hall Park.

How did this green space on the east coast of Clear Lake become part of the Conservancy? The .84 acre spot was the site of the Town of Clear Lake's administrative home from 1948 until the new, greatly expanded and more functional Town Hall on Gecowets Drive opened in 2007.



The old site was sold at auction in 2007 to help fund the construction of the new facility. The Zachrich family and other Clear Lake residents donated the funds that enabled the Conservancy to purchase the site in 2007. In 2009 and 2012 additional parcels were acquired. The Conservancy added trees, plantings, and the walking paths and maintains the Park as a public open space.

A bench and plaque sit in the Old Town Hall Park to mark the historical location and to honor the families who made this lovely, peaceful setting available to the entire community. Celebrate them as you enjoy an ice cream cone every summer at the Old Town Hall Park.



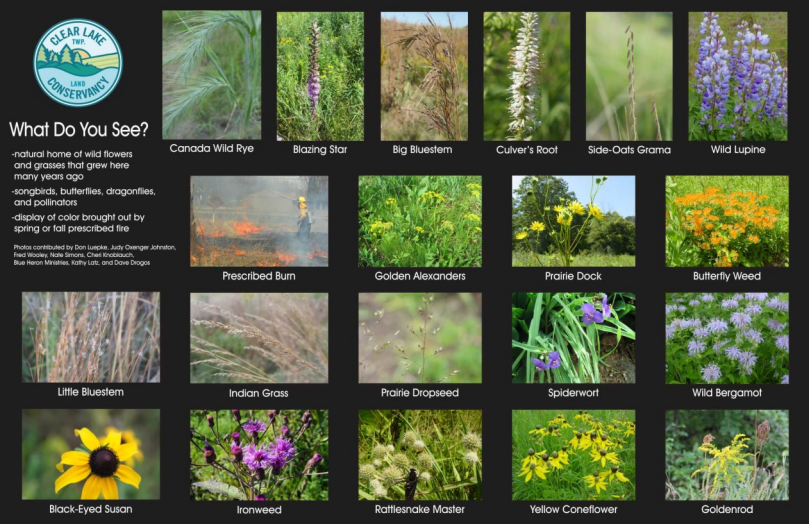
## Environmental Education

Next time you are walking along East Clear Lake Drive be sure and check out our newly-installed educational sign at Spangler Grove! The sign identifies some of the important plant species at our native prairie preserve. Additionally, it reminds us why this small prairie is so important. Not only does it give us a glimpse of what this area may have looked like in the past, but it serves as an important space for songbirds, butterflies, dragonflies, and pollinators! A photograph of the yearly prescribed fire is also included.

Over the next few months, as you are thinking about spring and planning your yard projects, our hope is that this educational sign might offer ideas for native plants that you can plant in your yard. Many are important for water quality, pollinators, birds, and butterflies, and require much less work and maintenance than many non-native landscaping options.

Thank you to those that contributed photos, including Don Luepke, Judy Oxenger Johnston, Fred Wooley, Nate Simons, Cheri Knoblauch, Blue Heron Ministries, Kathy Latz, and David Drogos. We would especially like to thank Kathy Latz for spearheading this project!

This project was completed in honor of our 25th Anniversary and the funding was provided by anonymous support here at Clear Lake. A detailed article including a brief history of the preserve was published on the front page of the **Herald Republican** on January 13, 2017. We have a copy of the newspaper in our office or access that article online at [clearlakeconservancy.org/news/check-out-our-new-sign](http://clearlakeconservancy.org/news/check-out-our-new-sign).



### THANK YOU TO OUR RECENT DONORS!

Norbert & Judy Bauman  
Jeanne Coffman  
Bill & Judy Greffin  
Rita Helmuth  
Steve & Cindy King  
Terry & Ann Melton  
Tim & Lynn Speiser  
Harold & Nancy Winch

### Operating Endowment & Maintenance Endowment Contributions:

Anonymous (2)  
CJ & Bea Geiger Family Fund  
iMANAGE, LLC  
Jim & Annie Skinner  
Steuben County Community Foundation 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Campaign

### Grant Support:

Bicentennial Nature Trust  
Steuben County Lakes Council

### In-kind Support:

Bob Burris  
Bob & Nancy Webster

### Memorials:

Michael Kinder  
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Chris & Marti Slee Family  
Arnold and Minnie Koeneman &  
Henry and Mark Wehrenberg  
From Beverly Maxfield  
Daniel J. Obendorfer  
From John & Devon McArdle

### Kasota Island Restoration Project Support:

Anonymous (5)  
Matt Akeman  
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Brooks Family  
Derrow Family  
Larry Finn  
Amy Fitzenrider  
Andrew Fitzenrider  
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Tim & Lynn Speiser  
Alex Stamatoglou  
Jack & Judy Stenger  
Claudia D. Sundberg

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

\*\*Our Endowment Funds are held at the Steuben County Community Foundation.

To get involved or support:

(260) 316-1397 • [www.ClearLakeConservancy.org](http://www.ClearLakeConservancy.org)

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# 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). 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.

## Partner's Spotlight

Many of our accomplishments rely on successful partnerships. In this *Partner's Spotlight*, we highlight the Bicentennial Nature Trust. In our January 2016 issue we announced the addition of 15.6 acres to our protected properties within the Clear Lake watershed. With a grant

from the Bicentennial Nature Trust (BNT) and other funding sources, we were able to purchase this property. This project unified and increased environmental value for two existing Conservancy properties: the Hanson Wetlands and the Brennan Woods. This contiguous 45 acre preserve, now known as the Clear Lake Nature Preserve, provides wildlife habitat, educational opportunities, and the

protection of important wetlands and open space.

The BNT was established in 2012 by former Governor Mitch Daniels to honor Indiana's 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The BNT was created to preserve and protect important conservation and recreation areas throughout the state by matching donations of land or dollars. After submitting an application and securing

matching funds, the Conservancy was awarded a grant that covered half of the purchase price of this important property. Without the support from the BNT, the Conservancy may not have been able to move forward on this project. We look forward to protecting this space for generations to come and we appreciate the opportunity provided by the state to do so.



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

See inside for  
update on Kasota  
Island Fundraising!

Nonprofit Org.  
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