



# CLEAR THINKING

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## Working for a Common Vision

"The highest reward for your toil is not what you get for it, but what you become by it." - John Ruskin

Spring is showing its colorful face here and there at Clear Lake. We're ready for it! The cold, quiet winter gives us time to reflect, catch up on reading and planning and enjoy the scenery from inside our warm homes. We're ready to experience Clear Lake firsthand and outdoors. We imagine you are, too!

One topic we reflect on in the quiet of winter is the invaluable contribution to the Conservancy made by volunteers. The Conservancy's mission--preserve, protect, and manage the natural environment within the watershed and township for future generations--becomes reality only through the head, heart, and hands of our volunteers.

Our volunteer Board of Directors continues to meet frequently to keep the Conservancy on track with our [Strategic Plan](#) and major projects, including the Kasota Island Preservation, hiking trails in the Clear Lake Nature Preserve, and long-term financial sustainability. We appreciate the time, thoughtfulness, and dedication of our Board members. Our Board is community-based and regularly seeks qualified potential board members as openings occur. If you are interested in board service or know of someone you believe may be a potential candidate, please reach out to Bridget or Nancy.

Committee members provide the hands and heart for the Water Quality, Lands, and Communication work that is the core of the Conservancy's mission. The Finance Committee provides sound reporting and oversight. Most Committees are headed by Board members and we welcome interested community members to join us on many of these committees. Contact Nancy, Bridget or any Board member to get involved.

Year after year, volunteers staff the Knee-high Naturalist programs, put on work gloves for the annual Kasota Island clean-up, produce newsletters, and wade into the brush to remove invasive plants in many Conservancy properties. Many Clear Lakers are also generous with financial contributions that help us fulfill our mission. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Why do these people volunteer and contribute? They tell us it's because they love the land, the water, and the community here. They tell us how satisfying it is to become part of a kindred spirit that began years ago and will continue for years to come. They tell us how much they enjoy spending time together with friends and family in the natural beauty of this place.

We are proud to be part of the Conservancy and value our volunteers and the exceptional work we are accomplishing together. We look forward to being on the exciting journey with you as we continue to work together to preserve, protect and maintain the Clear Lake watershed and township for future generations. We'll hope to see you outside soon!



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. Over the last several issues we have discussed which parameters we test for on the ditches and why. Lake results will be discussed in a future issue. More importantly, we have discussed actions to take or avoid to help protect and improve the quality of Clear Lake. For a review, see prior issues of *Clear Thinking*.

The quality of the lake is in large part determined by what is flowing into the lake so to capture that we test the ditches/streams. It's part of the watershed-level approach to lake management. A Water Quality Index (WQI) is calculated using the results of all the testing parameters for samples collected at the ditch inlets. The scale is from 0 to 100, refer to the chart. Averaging this index over time, the Water Quality Committee reports that the WQI for the Harry Teeters inflow is 65 or a Medium rating, the Cyrus Brouse is Good at 72, the Alvin Patterson is Medium at 60, and the Peter Smith is Good 71. It should be noted that the Alvin Patterson samples are collected

from a wetland, a low flow area, which decreases dissolved oxygen. The results do not factor that in.

Overall there is still room for improvement and we can all help to make a difference! The Water Quality Committee and the Board will continue to monitor results and recommend or pursue steps that will move the scores closer to the top of the range.

Our annual testing will begin in May. For safety and awareness, we will post this sign along the road at the ditches where we test, see our January 2016 issue for a map of the ditches. If you see us out testing, feel free to stop and ask questions!

Hoosier River Watch WQI Ratings	
Excellent	90-100%
Good	70-89%
Medium	50-69%
Bad	25-49%
Very Bad	0-24%



## Natural Area Preservation

Wetlands surrounding Clear Lake serve a vital role in the watershed because they filter and remove sediment and nutrients before the wetland water finds its way to the Lake. Many think of wetlands as the "kidneys" of a lake.

The Lord Wetland is located on the East side of Buck Point Drive near South Clear Lake Drive and is a small but mighty testament to the value of wetlands. The 0.22 acre parcel, outlined in blue on the map, is named for Chuck Lord who contributed the land to the Conservancy in 2009. Chuck Lord passed away last year but his desire to preserve Clear Lake will live on as this parcel will remain undeveloped and serve as a filtering mechanism to water flowing into Clear Lake in perpetuity.



*Photo taken by Don Luepke, a fiddlehead at the Lord Wetland.*



## Environmental Education

Dredging is used by many lake groups to remove accumulated sediment that can impact recreation, wildlife habitat, and water quality. In addition to deepening the lake, dredging allows stratification and can remove excess nutrients.

While helpful in many scenarios, dredging may also have negative impacts on aquatic plants, can be very costly, and often requires a lengthy permitting process. Native aquatic plants are important habitat and help to protect the bottom from turbulence. With the removal of lake-bottom materials the distance from sunlight is increased and thus may negatively impact plant growth. Ideally, efforts will fix the source of sedimentation to reduce inputs and the dredging return interval.

Our current LARE-funded dredging project is complete. The northern channel in Quiet Harbor was hydraulically dredged in the fall of 2015. The lakeside-outlet of the Cyrus Brouse ditch along South Clear Lake Dr, the area around the public launch including the Harry Teeters ditch up to Lakeside Court, and the area near the Round/Clear Lake bridge were all recently dredged. The contractor removed over 600 cubic yards of sediment. CLTLC efforts continue to reduce sediment flow to slow the need for extensive dredging in the future.



## THANK YOU TO OUR RECENT DONORS!

James & Evelyn Bachman  
Jerry & Janice Crawford  
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### Kasota Island Restoration

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Mary Coughlin Jeffery  
Tom & Shelia Hogan

### Land Maintenance:

Stan & Toni Robinson

### Operating Endowment

#### Contributions:

Jim & Annie Skinner

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Nancy & Harold Winch

\*List reflects contributions received after our January 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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*Flip over to see*  
*a list of our*  
*upcoming events!*

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





# A few of our upcoming events!

**Check our website periodically for more details and additional events.**

## **Native Plant Sale with Martha Ferguson of Riverview Native Nursery -**

Sunday, May 28<sup>th</sup> 10 am - 2 pm across from the CL Lutheran Church

## **An Evening of Classic Cocktails -- tickets on sale soon! -**

*A Conservancy event sponsored by Gay's Hops-n-Schnapps*

Saturday, June 24<sup>th</sup> 6 - 11:30 pm at the Yacht Club

## **Knee-high Naturalist program -**

Wednesday, July 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 26<sup>th</sup> 10-11:30 am at the Yacht Club

## **Ice Cream Social & Koeneman Lake Project Tour -**

*A CL Lutheran Church & CLTLC organized event*

Saturday, July 22<sup>nd</sup> 6 - 8 pm at the CL Lutheran Church

## **Our Annual Meeting -**

Friday, July 28<sup>th</sup> 4:00pm at Clear Lake Town Hall