



CLEAR THINKING

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SEPTEMBER 2017

Planning A Healthy Future

ISSUE No. 14

In May, we greet each other with "How was your winter?". In September, we say "Where did the summer go?" The Conservancy was active all summer as we keep our eyes firmly on the Conservancy mission (below). Here are highlights.

Environmental Education. The 11th annual Knee-high Naturalists program gave over 25 youngsters hands-on experience with environmental fundamentals. 2017 topics covered vermicomposting (worms!), reptiles, amphibians, art in nature and our majestic Clear Lake American Bald Eagles. (Adults attend, too, by the way.)

Knee-high convened four Fridays in July at the Yacht Club. Thanks to the Yacht Club, to Tracy Hughes for overall program coordination, and to our presenters Bridget Harrison, Diane McArdle, Bruce Matasick and our friends from Pokagon State Park. The Conservancy knows the children are the future stewards of the land and considers this program a vital link in building ongoing respect and understanding for our precious environment.

Guided hikes at Koeneman Lake (July) and on the proposed trail at Brennan Woods/Clear Lake Nature Preserve (September) offered another form of environmental education. Over 60 friends learned about ecosystems, trees, plants, animals, and birds while getting a positive health boost. Ongoing research confirms that simply being outside in natural settings like the 12 public [Conservancy properties](#) helps us build good health and reduce stress. (Skeptical? Check out [The Nature Fix: Why Nature Makes Us Happier, Healthier, and More Creative](#), by Florence Williams (2017) before or after you take a hike!)

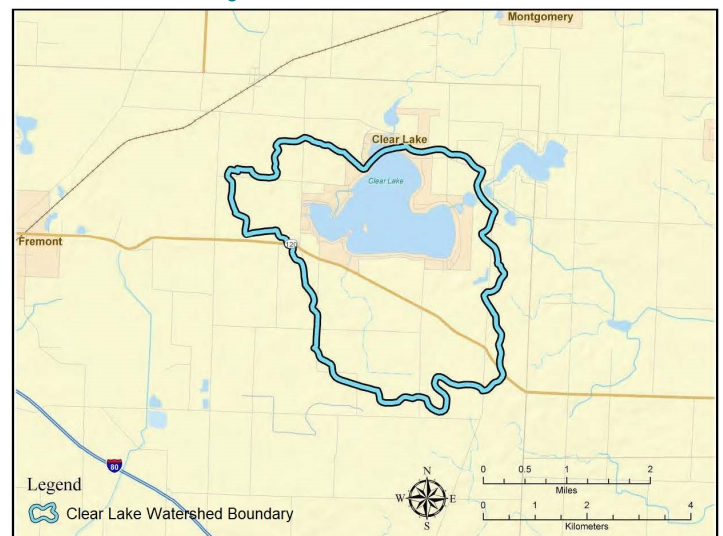
Properties and Projects. At the Annual Meeting in July, Bridget and Nancy gave a positive update on major projects (Kasota Island Restoration, Clear Lake Nature Preserve), community involvement (volunteers and donors), advocacy (on building projects or land use potentially affecting the lake environment) and our strong financial position. Your ongoing support enables all this work.

We welcomed many of you to the June Spiritfest, the July Ice Cream Social (with Clear Lake Lutheran) and the July Lake to Farm Event (with Moody Farms). At these events we are sometimes asked, "What do you get for supporting the Conservancy?" The short answer is clean water. The water quality testing, the shoreline preservation at Kasota Island and rebuilding the open oak woodland and the natural prairie at Clear Lake Nature Preserve all contribute to the clean water.

People are not always aware that a critical part of clean water is the Conservancy's work and partnership with the Township agricultural community. The image of the Clear Lake Watershed [above] illustrates the integral relationship between the Township and the Lake. We value our relationship and conversations about the mutual passion all of us share for clean water.

Most of us want to know what's going on at the Lake no matter where we find ourselves over the winter. Updates on our two major projects will be posted regularly on the Conservancy website, on Facebook, and by email. Stay connected.

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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.

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Leadership. We welcome four new members to an expanded Board. **Peg Zeis** lives on Lake Anne and has a passion for and experience in Conservancy organizations. You may remember her work with Monarch butterflies highlighted in our [May issue of Clear Thinking](#). **Sarah Wilson** grew up on Clear Lake, gained career experience in social work and interior design and now owns a farm in Clear Lake Township. **Bill Greffin**, who lives in the Chicago area and recently completed construction of a new home on the north side of Clear Lake, adds valuable communications and corporate experience to the Board. Finally, **Katy Hoehn** guides high schoolers with college counseling in Orange County, CA for the school year and then joins the summer fun at Clear Lake, where her family has summered for decades. She brings extensive Board experience to us.

Every one of these folks believes in the mission of the Conservancy and brings thoughtful leadership to the hard-working Board. We now have 14 Board members (listed on the front page) and will continue to use our committee structure for effective focus in achieving the Conservancy's mission. Let us know if you are interested in serving on a committee.

Enjoy the Fall and know that we appreciate the many ways you support the Conservancy's work and mission. Don't forget about the health benefits of hiking Conservancy properties as you plan your future!

Nancy Webster, President

Bridget Harrison, Executive Director



Natural Area Preservation

A **conservation easement** offers a flexible way for a donor to protect his or her land from future development while continuing to own, use, and enjoy the property. The CLTLC properties include one conservation easement, the **Woodland Conservation Easement**.

What is it: The Land Trust Alliance (landtrustalliance.org) defines it as: "a voluntary legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust or government agency that permanently limits uses of the land in order to protect its conservation values."

Conservation easements often include a transfer of money to the receiving organization to defend the easement from development should the easement be challenged and to offset the cost of the required annual monitoring by the organization.

What's the value: Landowners protect land they love from the threat of development but retain many of their rights, including the right to own and use the land, sell it and pass it on to their heirs. Tax benefits may also flow to donors setting up conservation easements.

CLTLC experience: The Woodland Conservation Easement, located on the South shore of Clear Lake, was established in 2007 by Mary Ellen Spalding and includes 4.15 acres of land currently planted with majestic black walnuts that provide a windbreak on the South Shore and wildlife habitat to a variety of species. This privately owned property is maintained by the family of Mrs. Spalding, Jim and Joan Eckstein.

But just as Mrs. Spalding envisioned, the family also rests easier knowing that the land will be preserved in a natural state forever, benefiting future family members and the Clear Lake Twp. community.

Want more information?: The Conservancy appreciates the foresight of the Spalding family and encourages others interested in this preservation concept to contact Executive Director Bridget Harrison and your financial planning advisor for more information.



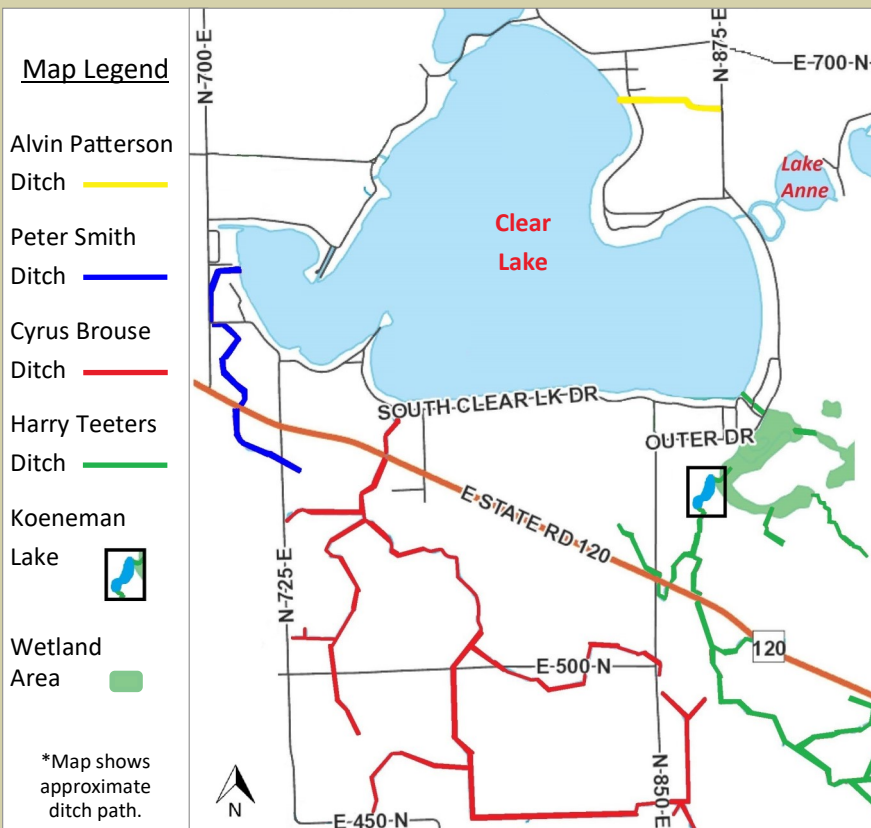
Water Quality The Water Quality Committee and volunteers have been collecting water sampling data from the lake and the four ditches that drain into the lake for most of CTLC's existence. In prior issues of *Clear Thinking* (visit ClearLakeConservancy.org to review), we covered which parameters we test for in the ditches and in the lake and why. Just as importantly, we discussed actions to take or avoid to help protect and improve the water quality.

The **ditches** are tested because the quality of the lake is in large part determined by what is flowing into it. We test ditches for seven critical parameters four times a year--in May, June, July and August--and test for aquatic macroinvertebrates in September, all through the Hoosier Riverwatch Program. Thank you to our volunteers this summer and the landowners that allow us access to the testing sites!

The overall **lake** testing is conducted through the Clean Lakes Program to assess the lake's water quality, as a whole, and to track trends in the quality. Joann Stanley has conducted this lake testing for the past five years with help from her husband, Jim, and Ken Goeckel assists in July.

Joann and Jim recently sold their Clear Lake home and will be leaving our community. The Conservancy is grateful for Joann's dedication in conducting the lake testing every summer for all these years. Thank you, Joann and Jim, and best wishes to you.

Contact Bridget if you are interested in volunteering with the Water Quality Committee for either ditch or lake testing. As we often say, the core of the Conservancy's mission is Water Quality. We need your help to accomplish this core stewardship.



GREAT TAX NEWS FOR IRA OWNERS

With the passage of the Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes Act of 2015, individuals, age 70 1/2 and older, may direct any sum up to \$100,000 directly from an IRA to any qualified charitable organization, like the Clear Lake Conservancy. This form of giving would not produce a charitable income tax deduction, but it would fulfill your required minimum distribution or RMD. This contribution could be some or all of your RMD, or even a more generous contribution. To see if this 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, at (260) 316-1397. Gifts must be directly transferred from your IRA Plan Administrator to the Conservancy. We look forward to your continued support.

THANK YOU TO OUR RECENT DONORS!*

Don Bieberich
Bert & Brenda Elliott
Mike & Pat Franz
Donna & Jay Ludgate
Jan & Bruce Matasick
Jennifer & Eric Rockhold
Dave & Judy Russert

Grant Support:

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Lincoln Financial Foundation

Kasota Island Restoration Project Support:

Char & Robert Ekroth
Bill & Chris Geiger
Kenny & Linda Walter
Bob & Nancy Webster

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Jerry McArdle
From Mike Todoran / Keystone Builders Inc.

Mary Jane Millikan
From Nancy Andrews
Pam & Tom Reith

Janet Thompson
From Nancy Andrews

In-kind Support:

Bob & Nancy Webster

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

To get involved or support:

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Partner's Spotlight

Many of our accomplishments rely on successful partnerships. In this *Partner's Spotlight*, we highlight the **Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)**. The IDNR celebrates its 50th Anniversary this year and shares a common interest with the Conservancy of protecting and maintaining the outdoor natural beauty of Indiana's water, land and wildlife.

In addition to enforcing the rules and regulations in place for Indiana lakes, the IDNR provides funding for land acquisition through the Bicentennial Nature Trust and for other preservation efforts through the President Benjamin Harrison Conser-

vation Trust Fund. In 2016, Bicentennial funds contributed to the Conservancy's acquisition of the Clear Lake Nature Preserve. The Benjamin Harrison Trust makes conservation funds available when Indiana "Environmental" license plates are purchased.

In 2017, the Kasota Island Shoreline Preservation Project was awarded \$96,000 from the IDNR's Division of Fish & Wildlife's Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) Program. Earlier LARE grants supported the Aquatic Invasive Species Survey, and the recent Clear Lake dredging project.

Did you know that LARE funds are generated when we buy boat and recreational licenses and permits? The Program makes a portion of these fees available to pro-

tect and enhance aquatic habitat for fish and wildlife, and to insure the continued viability of Indiana's publicly accessible lakes and streams for multiple uses, including recreational opportunities. Grants support measures that reduce non-point sediment and nutrient pollution of surface waters to a level that meets or surpasses state water quality standards.

We are grateful for IDNR's partnership in Clear Lake Township. It's fitting that your boating fees will help us preserve Kasota Island for future generations of Indiana residents and visitors to enjoy.



2018 Clear Lake Calendar

Talented nature photographer, Don Luepke, has compiled and is selling the 2018 Clear Lake calendar. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to support the Conservancy. We have copies at the Town Hall or you may reach out to Don directly at donluepke@juno.com or call 260 495-1253.

You will enjoy Don's wonderful photography through all seasons next year. The cost is \$20 with a dollar discount per calendar if multiple copies are purchased. They make great gifts!





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*The proposed trail has
been flagged at Brennan
Woods! Take a hike and
share your input! Details
and a map are on our
website. Contact our
office for a guided tour.*

Email info@clearlakeconservancy.org to receive this in your email.