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Conserving native and working landscapes that enrich our communities through private, voluntary action, for the health and well-being of current and future generations.



News & Views

March/April 2012 • Volume 14, Issue 3

Mississippi Valley Conservancy Earns National Recognition Accreditation

Awarded by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission



The Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, announced that Mississippi Valley Conservancy, Inc. has been awarded accredited status.

"Accredited land trusts meet national quality standards for protecting important natural places and working lands forever," said Commission Executive Director Tammara Van Ryn. "The accreditation seal lets the public know that the accredited land trust has undergone an extensive, external

review of the governance and management of its organization and the systems and policies it uses to protect land."

"Mississippi Valley Conservancy's accredited status demonstrates our commitment to permanent land conservation," says board president George Kerckhove. "Our land trust is a stronger organization today having gone through the rigorous accreditation program."

Mississippi Valley Conservancy, now in its 15th year of operation, was founded in 1997 and works throughout nine counties in southwestern Wisconsin. The land trust has worked with more than 100 conservation-minded landowners to protect more than 14,100 acres of natural lands and working farms in the scenic blufflands region of the Upper Mississippi River Valley and its tributaries.

Land is America's most important and valuable resource. Conserving land helps ensure clean air and drinking water, food security, scenic landscapes and views, recreational places, and habitat for the diversity of life on earth. Across the country, local citizens and communities have come together to form land trusts to save the places they love. Community leaders in land trusts throughout the country have worked with willing landowners to save over 47 million acres of farms, forests, parks and places people care about. Strong, well-managed land trusts provide local communities with effective champions and caretakers of their critical land resources, and safeguard the land through the generations.

Mississippi Valley Conservancy was awarded accreditation in February and is one of 158 land trusts out of about 1,700 from across the country that has been awarded accreditation since the fall of 2008. This puts MVC above the 90th percentile with respect to accreditation of its land trust peers. Accredited land trusts are able to display a seal indicating to the public that they meet national standards for excellence, uphold the public trust and ensure that conservation efforts are permanent. The seal is a mark of distinction in land conservation.

Archaeology Center Awards MVC

The University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center recognized Mississippi Valley Conservancy with their "Regional Archaeology Award" for 2011. This award is given to organizations or individuals who have brought a heightened awareness to archaeology and site conservation in the region. Although Mississippi Valley Conservancy has as its mission "conserving native and working landscapes" of southwestern Wisconsin, it also helps protect rare geological and archaeological features and remnants. These features are a priceless and informative part of these lands.

Mississippi Valley Conservancy is committed to identifying and protecting evidence of earlier cultures to inhabit the Coulee Region. This evidence of early Native American cultures in southwestern Wisconsin and along the Upper Mississippi River can be found at thousands of sites in this region. With the help of such organizations as Mississippi Valley Archaeological Center in La Crosse, The Archeological Conservancy (a national organization), and the Wisconsin Historical Society, these places are being identified and studied. There are about a dozen such sites within MVC's protected lands.

For details on the projects that led to the award, please visit MississippiValleyConservancy.org and click on our MVC Blog page.

Upcoming Events

May 19: Public hike to honor the McDowell family for their generous land donation. Explore this scenic Mississippi Bluff in DeSota, WI.

Check out ustream.tv/greatspiritblufffalcons to follow the arrival of the Peregrine Falcons on Great Spirit Bluff.

Meet our Board Members, Staff, and Officers by visiting MississippiValleyConservancy.org and click on our About MVC page.

Like us on Facebook!
Twitter: #MissVallyConsvr

Bonnie Wideman Chooses Mississippi Valley Conservancy



Bonnie Wideman views the conservation easement she has placed on her 160-acre farm as a “true gift” to her children “as well as a gift to the public at large.” With the support of her children she worked with Mississippi Valley Conservancy to protect her Crawford County land forever.

Wideman said that a friend had asked her if she had ever considered a conservation easement for her land. After looking into easements, Wideman said, “it was clear that this was the way to go”.

She started working with Mississippi Valley Conservancy and found the organization to be very professional. She felt that her land and role as a farmer were honored. “In no way did I feel pushed or directed,” she said. “The easement unfolded as a manifestation of shared values between me and Mississippi Valley Conservancy.”

Wideman met with Abbie Church, Conservation Specialist at MVC. She felt like Church and the rest of the staff at MVC were compatible with her conservation values. Wideman learned how a conservation easement would ensure that the natural resources of her land could be protected, and still be farmed according to her standards. “Even while working with a tight timeline to complete the easement in 2011,” she tells MVC, “Abbie Church took the time to really work through the agricultural limitations with me to make sure that it was exactly what I wanted.”

Wideman encourages other landowners who are looking to donate a conservation easement to Mississippi Valley Conservancy to consider it seriously. “Think about what aspects of your land you would like to see preserved for coming generations.” she said, “If you have children, talk to them about your wishes for the land and involve them in discussion of how a conservation easement might provide a means to meet your wishes and theirs.”

Help Save Falcon & Eagle Habitat – Permanently!

Like the sharp vision of a raptor, Mississippi Valley Conservancy focuses its conservation efforts on permanently protecting the scenic bluffs of the Upper Mississippi River Valley—habitat for the beautiful and swift peregrine falcon and the majestic bald eagle. The Conservancy has saved more than 14,100 precious acres of critical raptor habitat in North America’s major migratory flyway from destruction.

MVC is the single most active force today in protecting the rugged bluffs of the Upper Mississippi River Valley. Sadly, development pressure and mining are fragmenting and destroying habitat at an alarming rate. In the short span between 1990 and 2002, a whopping 888,000 acres of the Wisconsin countryside was chopped up and paved over. Right now, MVC is actively working to save a peregrine falcon nesting site from becoming an ugly and lifeless frac sand mine. You have the power to make a real and substantial difference in rescuing this and other properties!

Follow the arrival of the Peregrine Falcons on Great Spirit Bluff through our USTREAM page found at ustream.tv/greatspiritblufffalcons. Watch as they nest, brood eggs and hatch the chicks. Follow their progress as the chicks develop feathers and practice flapping their wings - all the way until the day they fledge out on their own!

Kwik and Easy Way to Raise Cash for MVC

Don Hultman, MVC Board Member



Kwik Trip, Inc. stores throughout Mississippi Valley Conservancy’s conservation area provide a wonderful way to support our mission. By using a Kwik Card (either credit or debit) for gasoline or other items, Kwik Trip offers a rebate of 3 cents a gallon on fuel and 10% on most in-store purchases.

You can designate that this rebate go to an organization of your choice, and Kwik Trip will throw in another 5% donation based on in-store purchases.

Since I always paid for gas with my regular debit card, I chose the Kwik Card Plus debit card so that my purchases come right out of my checking as before.

There is no annual, card, or transaction fee. I buy at least 50 gallons of fuel per month, or the equivalent of a \$1.50 rebate. That doesn’t sound like much money, but what if 100 MVC members used Kwik Cards and designated MVC as the recipient? Now we are talking \$150 per month plus any in-store rebates year after year just for doing something we all do anyway!

So if you have a Kwik Card, please designate MVC as your organization of choice, and if you don’t have a Kwik Card, get one! The process is very easy (it took me about 5 minutes) and I never need to do another thing except use my card.

Message from
Advancement Director,
Carol Abrahamzon:

Mississippi Valley Conservancy currently has only five members signed up for the Kwik Trip rebate program. Since July, those five members have brought nearly \$600 in rebates to MVC and it hasn’t cost them a dime! Imagine what we could do if 500 members signed up!

Go to kwiktrip.com and click on the “kwik card” link to open an account and designate MVC as the organization of choice. The lands we care about will thank you.



Stewardship Circle

The Stewardship Circle consists of a very special group of Land Conservancy supporters who have made a commitment to land protection through a variety of estate-planning tools, including bequests in a will or trust, charitable gift annuities, charitable remainder trusts, IRA designations, gifts of life insurance or memorial designations. Please consider joining this dedicated group of conservationists today.

Phone: 608.784.3606 E-mail: info@mississippivalleyconservancy.org

Some Gifts Last a Lifetime, Others Longer.

The Mississippi Valley Conservancy’s Stewardship Circle is a very special group of land conservancy supporters who have made a lasting commitment to land protection through a variety of estate-planning tools. Please consider joining this dedicated group of conservationists today.

- I have already included Mississippi Valley Conservancy in my estate plan and would like to be listed as a member of the Stewardship Circle.
- Please send information of how I can include Mississippi Valley Conservancy in my estate plan and become a member of the Stewardship Circle.
- Please contact me to discuss how I might include Mississippi Valley Conservancy in my estate plan and become a member of the Stewardship Circle.

Name

Phone Number

Address

Email

Ron and Jane Rada Join the Stewardship Circle



Ron and Jane Rada joined the Mississippi Valley Conservancy in 1998 and have continued to increase their level of support over the years because they wholeheartedly believe that “MVC is built on a visionary mission and has demonstrated exceptional integrity and expertise as stewards of the funds and lands entrusted to it.” They also believe that MVC is well suited for sustaining the unique and irreplaceable resources of the Driftless Area through its many excellent collaborations and educational programs. The Radas recognize the Mississippi as one of the great rivers of the world and realize its importance for present and future generations. Not only is the high quality of life of this region closely linked to the river and its watershed, but so too is the economy by attracting tourists, sports enthusiasts, new industry, and skilled workers to the region.

Ron and Jane have become members of MVC’s Stewardship Circle by naming MVC in their will as a way to give back to the community. In doing so, they hope to help ensure that this great river valley is sustained for generations to come. They were drawn to the region in 1975 not only because of career opportunities but also because of the unique natural resources of the area. They feel privileged to have lived here and want others to be able to experience the great river valley as they have.

The Radas encourage prospective Stewardship Circle members to review the record of the Mississippi Valley Conservancy, its plans for the future, and how these plans will sustain this unique natural environment and benefit the community.

Kurt Brownell
Frank & Kristi Cadwell
Tim Jacobson
David Linton & Maggie Jones
Mike & Kathy Ripp
M. Jane Greenewald
Anonymous
George & Sharon Kurckhove
Maureen Kinney
David Morrison
Martin & Pamela Murphey
Ron & Jane Rada
Mr. and Mrs. Kenny Salwey
Barbara and Donald Frank
Emily Campbell
Eric Thompson and Mary Graziano