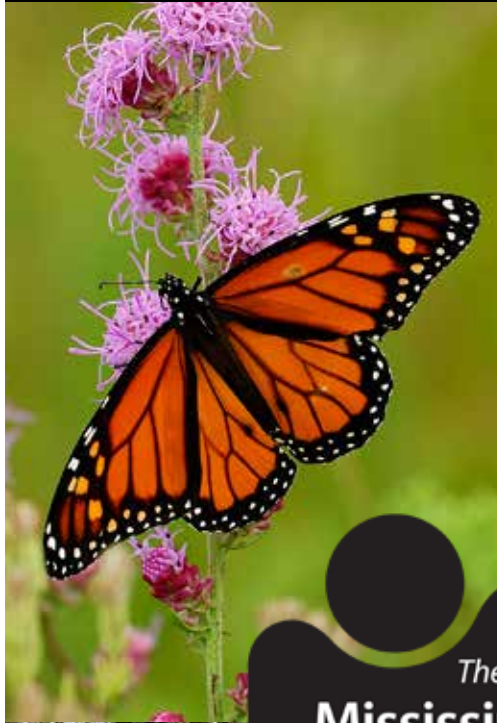


Save the driftless . . .



The land. Our future.
**Mississippi Valley
CONSERVANCY**

. . . for them.

Live Auction

1. Guided Hike at Holland Sand Prairie

Jim Rogala from Friends of the Holland Sand Prairie and the current President of the Regional Prairie Enthusiasts will guide your group of up to six people on an easy hike to discover the amazing biodiversity of this nature preserve located just north of La Crosse. Once part of a vast series of sand prairies on terraces of the Upper Mississippi River created about 12,000 years ago, the Holland Sand Prairie is one of the last large sand prairie remnants remaining in Wisconsin.

The dunes and hollows on the Holland Prairie are the only undisturbed Aeolian (wind-formed) landforms in the entire area. Roughly 150 species of plants have been identified to date, some of which are State threatened species or species of special concern. Large, mature patches of relatively rare plants such as prairie smoke, silky prairie clover, and sand dropseed are scattered throughout the prairie. From early spring until late fall, there are always natural treasures to see at Holland Sand Prairie.

2. Driftless Sweetness

Stay warm and cozy this winter while you delight in local sweetness. This artistically arranged basket containing home harvest syrup, will have you snuggled up with a beautiful mug of coffee or tea and some Rocky Mountain Chocolates to eat and share, along with note cards, napkins, and tea towel. Made and generously donated by Jon and Ann Rigden.

3. Fishing on the Fly

Learn the language of trout on a half-day of fly fishing for one angler with a professional guide from Driftless Angler (fee required for additional guests). All gear provided. Enjoy locally roasted and brewed fair trade coffee with a bite to eat before or after fishing with a \$20 gift certificate from Wonderstate Coffee Cafe in Viroqua.

4. Whole Processed Lamb

If a juicy leg of lamb or the taste of tender chops is what makes your mouth water, this is the way to fill your freezer! Enjoy the savory goodness of lamb that's been pasture raised here in the Driftless Area by donors, Keith and Lynne Valiquette. This delicious meat was processed in October, kept in the freezer and will be personally delivered to the highest bidder. Contact Lynne for delivery 608-526-4339

5. **Birds and Brunch**

Join Audubon Grassland Ecologist, Krysten Zummo, for coffee, birding, and brunch! Following your eyes and ears to observe the spring arrival of migrating birds, Krysten will help you spot and identify them. Many birds depend upon the lands you've helped protect with Mississippi Valley Conservancy.

Krysten can also tell you about the habitat needs of specific birds and the role we all play in protecting these species. The hike will take place on the Koerschner/Woolworth property near Readstown, which is protected with a conservation easement through the Conservancy. This 100 acre property includes woodlands, farmland, and restored prairie and is habitat to many species of birds, including meadowlarks, bobolinks, dickcissel, red-headed woodpeckers, yellow-billed cuckoo, orchard orioles, and many more! After your hike, enjoy a delicious brunch, prepared and served by the Koerschners. For up to 8 people.

Krysten is a wildlife biologist with a Bachelor's degree from SUNY Cobleskill and her M.S. in Wildlife Science from New Mexico State University. Krysten has worked all across the country, from New York to Oregon, researching how different management practices affect local wildlife populations. She comes to the Conservancy after working as a Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist with Pheasants Forever in Northeastern Colorado, where she worked daily with landowners to create and maintain high quality habitat. Contact Lou Anne or Fred at: lkoerschner@gmail.com or 651-485-9966

6. **Willow Creek Ranch Retreat**

Enjoy a 3-night stay with with your group of five in The Trout Lodge at Willow Creek Ranch in a pristine valley of Coon Creek in Vernon County. This ranch experience offers not only a close-up view of a grassfed beef operation – it also offers fun and relaxation for visitors of all ages. Tour the permanently conserved ranch to learn what makes it “carbon-neutral,” hike the hilly pastures, pet the piglets, fish the class 1 trout stream (one of the area's best), or spend your days on the deck with your book or art supplies.

There are plenty of amenities for you to grill the trout you landed or some of the tastiest grassfed burgers you've ever eaten. You can purchase meats and eggs for your use directly from the on-farm store. And, if you time things right, you might even have a chance to taste a cold, locally crafted brew at one of Rod's exclusive Saturday afternoon

happy hours. You'll be just minutes from some of Vernon County's most charming villages and towns, where farmers markets, antiques, Amish farm tours, and excellent restaurants will delight you. Reservations subject to availability for your group of up to five. Visit www.willowcreekfoods.com/the-trout-lodge to learn more and book your reservation. Donated by Rod and Deb Ofte.

7. River Restoration Cruise

Join Gretchen Benjamin and Joe Pfeiffer on a tour of one of the world's most extensive large river restoration projects (near Stoddard and Brownsville). Gretchen, our board president, grew up on the banks of the Mississippi River and has spent her career working to restore it. She'll share the river's history, ecology, and full potential. If conditions are right, you can get off the boat and pollywog for native mussels. The entire trip is 3 hours (longer if desired). Delicious foods and beverages will be served, along with comforts necessary for the journey.

8. Get'er Done – a full day of field work by the summer intern crew

Sit back and sip your iced-tea while Levi and the summer intern crew clear your invasives, plant your trees, or tackle whatever restoration work you need done on your land. This crew can do an amazing amount of work in one day saving you time to enjoy your land! This full day of fieldwork is donated by Conservancy staff.

9. The Viroqua Experience

Head to the organic epicenter for gourmet goodies, a seasonal farmers market, eclectic shopping, entertainment, food, and outdoor fun with this Viroqua get-away package! Enjoy a two-night stay at the retro-chic 217 on Main AirBnB (Blue Door apt. sleeps 4) where you can make yourself at home in an inviting and stylish 2 bedroom apartment on the first level. It has a modern living room, a vintage kitchen with modern updates, and two simple serene bedrooms. It contains a full bath and an inviting sitting porch. The entrance is in the rear of the building. While in Viroqua, enjoy a delicious and locally sourced meal at the Driftless Café (\$50 gift certificate); breakfast/brunch/lunch at Maybe Lately's (\$20 gift certificate); Farmstead cheeses at Noble Rind (\$10 certificate). From there, you can enjoy hiking or stargazing at the Conservancy's Tunnelville Cliffs nature preserve, golfing at the public golf course, cycling Sidie Hollow, or paddling the Kickapoo River! Lodging reservations subject to availability at www.217onMain.com.

10. Carol and Bill's Farm to Fork Dinner (for 6)

Have you ever dined on a farm where every item on the menu was grown? Here is a chance to invite a few of your friends and experience a farm-to-fork dinner. You will start with a meet and greet with the critters, from cows to pigs and even a guard donkey, you'll then tour the orchard and gardens to get a sense of what might be on the menu. Carol will cook a farm to fork dinner complete with pork, beef, chicken lots of veggies and of course dessert! Enjoy this farm fresh meal complete with plenty of stories by Bill. Donated by farmers Carol & Bill Abrahamzon.

11. "Snowy Dogwood" – framed print by photographer Tom Rhorer

Bring the serenity of a quiet winter day to your home with this elegant image of a snowy branch photographically printed on metallic paper. Tom Rhorer is a member of the Viva Gallery artists' cooperative in Viroqua. He serves as a volunteer on the Conservancy's Communications Committee, and he generously donates his time and talents as a photographer to help us tell the story of saving the driftless. Dimensions including the frame are 42" wide x 16" tall.

12. Cocktails and Dinner with the Madam at the Castle

Inspired by the famous Bordello Cookbook (celebrating the owners of a magnificent Chicago bordello in 1900-1911), dinner will be served at Castle La Crosse in grand style. Infamous local Madam Kelly Krieg-Sigman will share stories of La Crosse's bordello history before dinner and possibly more scandalous stories while after-dinner drinks are served. Dinner for up to 8 guests will be served with local wines and other tasty treats. Donated by Kelly Krieg-Sigman and the owners of the Castle La Crosse.

13. Nature Nooks Retreat on the West Fork

Relax to the sights and sounds of nature along the West Fork of the Kickapoo River, during your 2-night stay for two* at Nature Nooks Retreat. Enjoy Class 1 trout fishing, hiking, birding, stargazing, kayaking, and tubing; or ask Tom or Pam to give you a tour of all the conservation projects on this beautiful 87-acre protected property with abundant wildlife. Choose between The Lodge, the Little Barn Cabin, or Kinship Place, depending on availability. You'll also be close to Viroqua, Kickapoo Valley Reserve, and Tunnelville Cliffs nature preserve. On your way, stop in at the Viroqua Food Co-op (\$25 gift card) to pick up provisions. Donated by Tom Lukens and Pam Saunders, and the Viroqua Food

Co-op. Reservations subject to availability at <https://www.naturenook-sretreat.com>. Pam Saunders phone 608-637-3928 text 608-632-6927
*\$25 per additional guest

14. Flying High

Soar over the beautiful Driftless Area in a Cessna 172 piloted by Carol or Drake. Take in the spring greening, the fall colors, or see what your home looks like from above. You get two window seats for the 45-minute flight. Donated by Carol Kratz and Drake Hokanson.

15. "Winter Sunset" – framed painting by Sara Lubinski

The stillness, softness, and color harmonies of a winter landscape are the most beautiful to me. I like seeing the "bones" of the hills and the trunks and branches of trees relieved of their greenery, resting until spring. The covering of snow can bring a dazzling brightness or blue shadows, changing throughout the day.

We typically see winter colors of cool hues - blues, greys, pale pinks of the sky, and deep browns and blacks of bare trees. This painting, however, was inspired by an unusual sunset that cast warm tones into the clouds scuttling across the sky, the warmth of the setting sun highlighting the red-stemmed shrubs along the river. It was like a Charles Warren Eaton painting coming to life. I can't remember exactly where I was but somewhere along the Root River around Hoka. The Root River valley has always been a great place to catch the sky and water, search for animal tracks in the snow, and then head home to a warm fire after catching the glory of a winter sunset! Oil on linen on birch panel. 18" x 22" with frame.

16. Drone video/photographs of your property

Soar high in the sky when you watch the footage taken on Rich Radek's 4K resolution videography drone. Schedule a sunny day to capture the beautiful views of your property or a favorite public land during a 40 minute flying session with Rich and his drone (broken into 2x 20 minute sessions). You can also choose still shots from the video that will make for breathtaking photos of your chosen landscape. Weather conditions must be ideal on the day of flight. No flying in storms, rain, snow, heavy wind, or close to trees, power lines, building, airports, restricted areas, or other hazardous objects. Contact Rich to Schedule: 847-302-7025

17. Otter Lake Cabin Retreat

Set out for relaxation and/or adventure with family and friends at Dave and Karen Lange's lovely fishing cabin on 600+ acre Otter Lake. It's the

Natural Resources (WI-DNR). With your ongoing support, the land will be protected and restored to provide natural services such as flood protection, recreation opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts, and an expanded area of connected lands that provide refuge for wildlife whose native habitats are threatened by climate change and development.

20. Private Tour of Kickapoo Caverns

Bring your group of 8 to a guided tour of the recently acquired and now protected Kickapoo Caverns – seasonal home of four rare bat species, oak savannah, and many birds and wild-flowers. Conservancy staff will guide the tour and provide light refreshments, subject to other scheduled tours. (June 15-August 15, 2024). Donated by the Conservancy staff. Contact Chris Kirkpatrick to schedule your tour at chris@mississippivalleyconservancy.org.

21. Dessert of the Month

Save room for Dessert! Or just skip dinner altogether! When you win a delectable dessert of the month, a homemade sweet treat will be delivered to the Conservancy office each month (for 12 months) for you to pick up. Conservancy Committee and Board members Sue Dillenbeck, Allen Beatty, and Gretchen Pfeiffer are the pastry chefs, and we can attest to their talents in the kitchen! Contact Sue to schedule your first dessert: sdillenbeck0264@gmail.com

22. “Summer Blooms” quilt by Susan Carpenter

Susan Carpenter, a long-standing supporter and landowner with the Conservancy, named this quilt “Summer Blooms.” It features bright summer colors and has images of flowers, insects, leaves, as well as geometrics. The quilt pattern is “The Lady” by Villa Rosa Designs. Susan used fabric designer Robin Pickens Dear Mum collection and a white background. The quilting was done by Katie Luyk of Third Coast Quilting, Holland, MI. The quilting pattern is “Peak Blooms” by Jess Ziegler. Fabrics are 100% cotton, with 80/20 cotton/poly batting. It measures 54 x 72 inches (throw size). Donated by Susan Carpenter.

23. Fund the future

Tonight, we've come together to celebrate what your support has accomplished in 26 years and a bright future that includes YOU! Your support will give an added boost to saving the driftless in 2024! A gift tonight ensures that land is protected from future development for the health of our habitats, wildlife, and children.

When you give, you are supporting healthy communities by protecting climate and clean water. You are helping a long list of families who are conserving their land for all of us. And more who are lining up for our services. This all takes resources, time, and money. Tonight, you can bolster the resilience of the beautiful bluffs, farms, prairies, wetlands, and streams so they'll be here in the future for all living things, including our children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren.

A generous couple has started our fund off with \$5,000. Please dig deep and join them with your own bid. Our goal tonight of \$30,000 reflects our goal to protect 30,000 acres by our 30th anniversary year. I'm confident that with your help we can reach that goal and Save the Driftless for Them.

Every bid matters. Every bid counts.

Please bid what you can.

Thank you from all of us at Mississippi Valley Conservancy!

* Bids for *Fund the Future* may be paid with Donor Advised Funds, retirement accounts, and gifts of Appreciated Stock. Just let Nancy know your intention at check out! Thank you!