



FALL/WINTER 2019

# DRIFTLESS

*A Newsletter from the Driftless Area Land Conservancy*

*"An understanding of the natural world and what's in it is a source of not only a great curiosity but great fulfillment."* - David Attenborough

# A NEW CHAPTER



Driftless Area Land Conservancy is thrilled to welcome Jennifer Filipiak as our new Executive Director!

Jennifer joins Driftless Area Land Conservancy (DALC) from the American Farmland Trust (AFT) where she was the Midwest Regional Director. She worked directly with farmers and farmland owners, especially women landowners, to promote and incorporate the concept of conservation cropping systems - suites of practices such as cover crops, strip till and diverse crop rotations - that regenerate soil and improve profitability in any agricultural operation.

She worked collaboratively with agricultural leaders, partner organizations, public agencies and state, local and federal governments to overcome barriers to adopt and advance common ground solutions for agriculture and the environment.

Filipiak also led AFT's new "Women for the Land" national initiative which addresses the obstacles that women landowners, particularly those who do not farm but lease their land to farmers, face in accessing conservation programs and resources. The initiative combines research, on-the-ground projects and policy efforts to transform the agricultural landscape and develop a new voice for conservation.

"DALC is the land trust in Southwest Wisconsin where I live, and where my husband and I recently bought our own farm. We love this place, and are putting down roots. This new opportunity offers me the ability to work on the issues I'm most passionate about and have deeper impact here in my own community. I just couldn't pass up this new challenge. This new role is a growth opportunity for me professionally as well, but mostly it's an organization that I really connected with, having a mission that is focused on conservation (my roots), holistically integrated with agriculture," notes Filipiak.

Filipiak brings more than 15 years of project management experience in conservation and sustainable agriculture having previously worked with organizations such as the Illinois Stewardship Alliance, The Nature Conservancy of Iowa, and the Lake County (Illinois) Forest Preserve District. Filipiak holds a B.S. in Ecology from Northern Michigan University and an M.S. in Wildlife Ecology from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

On behalf of the staff and board, we are thrilled to welcome Jennifer to our DALC family and are truly excited for what's to come. As always, thank you for your continued support and conservation ethic.

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## BOTANICAL INSPIRATION

For David Kopitzke - botanist, artist, conservation easement holder and founding DALC Board member - the beauty and wonder of native vegetation goes far beyond the lush display of color that spring and summer bring: it extends to the minute details that often go overlooked and the subtle changes that transform vegetation throughout the entire year.

"So many wildflower guides focus exclusively on plants when they are in full glorious bloom. While I am attracted to flowers, I also find newly germinating seedlings, ripening fruit, fat roots and bulbs, and even shriveling leaves equally of interest. So my drawings are as likely to focus on these stages of growth and death as on blossoms themselves. My compositions try to indicate the full life cycle of plants even including underground structures and those that one is able to observe in winter," notes David.

*"My drawings are as likely to focus on these stages of growth and death as on blossoms themselves."*

Blending art and science has always been a part of David's background. In graduate school, he was hired as the botany department artist; when he retired, he submitted his work to the prestigious Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation at Carnegie-Mellon.

This past June, David was selected by a committee at the UW-Madison Arboretum to showcase his drawings at the Arboretum Visitor Center. The exhibit, *Wisconsin Flora through the Four Seasons*, will open with a reception on **Sunday, January 12th from 1:00pm-3:00pm**. All are welcome and we encourage you join us. David's artwork will be for sale and he is generously donating 80% of the proceeds to DALC. We hope to see you there!

Thank you, David, for sharing the beauty of the natural world and your continued commitment to conservation! (Note: David's exhibit will be on display and available for purchase beyond the opening reception)

### Driftless Area Land Conservancy

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### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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- Cindy Becker- SW WI Grasslands Network Coordinator
- Emily Benz - Educational Programs Coordinator
- Scott Dyke - Communications & Development Associate
- Theresa Morgan - Easement Monitoring Coordinator
- Natasha Rank - Operations Manager & Conservation Assistant
- Chuck Tennesen - Community Organizer

Cover Photo: Zach Heredia

Is a conservation easement right for you? Give us a call at 608.930.3252 for a confidential discussion.





# CONSERVING GRASSLANDS FOR WILDLIFE, WATER, FARMS, AND COMMUNITIES

Driftless Area Land Conservancy is pleased to host a network of grassland conservation partners with the fall 2018 launch of the Southwest Wisconsin Grasslands Network (SWGNet). Partners include the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy, and other national, state, regional and local agencies and conservation organizations. SWGNet promotes conservation and grass-based agriculture practices that protect grassland bird habitat in a working agricultural landscape.

“[The Southwest grasslands] are vital for grassland birds, regal fritillary and monarch butterflies, and many other plants and animals that depend on grasslands for their survival. If we want to save these species, we need to engage many more people and restore many more acres in Southwest Wisconsin. **One organization or agency cannot do it alone,**” notes Steve Richter, Director of Conservation Programs at the Wisconsin Chapter of The Nature Conservancy.

By honoring the historical union of agriculture and conservation in the Driftless Region, SWGNet aims to create a region that is rich in healthy grasslands, successful working farms, clear-flowing streams, diverse wildlife,

and people who value and enjoy the landscape. To reach this vision, SWGNet promotes grassland, prairie, and savanna restoration and grass-based agriculture through landowner outreach, community events, and financial and technical assistance. We are educating landowners and farmers who directly affect the regional landscape through farming and land stewardship practices.

DALC serves an integral role in the partnership by housing the SWGNet Coordinator Cindy Becker and through sharing in the vast web of experts and champions of conservation that support this good work. Visit [www.driftlessgrasslands.org](http://www.driftlessgrasslands.org) to learn more or stop by the office to get involved.

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 608-930-3252

## A DRIFTLESS GEM PROTECTED

This past February, thanks to a generous donation from Darrel Morrison and support from the DNR Knowles Nelson Stewardship Program, DALC acquired a special 20 acres of land tucked away on the southern edge of the Lower Wisconsin River Valley: *The Morrison Prairie & Forest Preserve*.

This scenic bluff property includes dry remnant prairie, oak woodlands and savanna, and mesic north facing woodlands. These diverse native communities, all of which are rated top priorities by the DNR, provide habitats for a number of rare or state-threatened species. From the top of the bluff, visitors can see a broad swath of the Lower Wisconsin River Valley to the north, as well as expansive views of the wooded hills and valleys to the south.

“Although a small site, Morrison contains a high quality remnant prairie bordered by restorable oak savanna and forest. These fragments of pre-settlement ecosystems are reservoirs

of biodiversity, that if protected and managed are critical to the conservation of rare species in the Driftless Area,” notes Nate Fayram, Southwest Ecologist for the Wisconsin DNR.

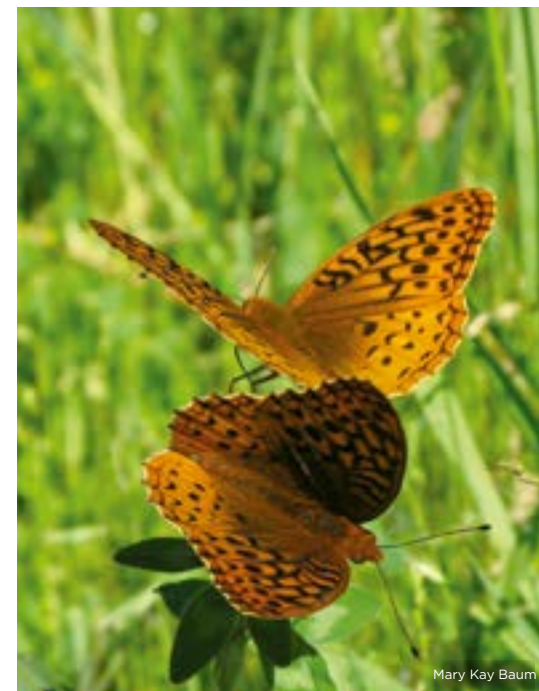
DALC has secured funding to see through an ambitious but achievable series of needed habitat improvement measures. Fortunately, the plant and animal communities have persisted relatively intact, despite decades without prescribed fire, control of invasive species, or other management efforts. Restoration work has already begun, such as the clearing of invading red cedar off the core remnant prairie area in the winter of 2018.

The protection and restoration of Morrison complements existing conservation efforts in the area that are already solidified. The preserve is adjacent to an 800-acre property permanently protected by a conservation easement held by DALC, and less than a mile from a 630-acre property protected by a second

DALC conservation easement. It’s also located less than a mile south of large tracts of land owned and managed by DNR as part of the Lower Wisconsin Riverway.

Thank you, Darrel, for creating a new land legacy in Southwest Wisconsin. Your generosity has established a refuge for rare plants and animals, and a place where people can truly connect to nature.

Darrel Morrison is a distinguished landscape architect known for designing prairie-inspired gardens using native plants, and is a former professor at UW-Madison, University of Georgia, and Columbia University. One of his biggest projects is a partnership with David Letterman on Letterman’s 30,000 acre ranch in Montana.



# THE DRIFTLESS THROUGH YOUR LENS

Thank you to those who shared photos for “The Driftless Through Your Lens” newsletter feature! It’s wonderful to get a glimpse of our collective Driftless experiences and share the diversity and beauty of the region. Whether you are an avid photographer or you just like to snap the occasional photo with your phone, we encourage you to share your perspective and connection to the Driftless Area.

Just a reminder that once we have collected enough photos, we will have a photo contest where you’ll be able to vote for your favorite image. If you would like to share your photo(s), please email [scott@driftlessconservancy.org](mailto:scott@driftlessconservancy.org) along with a brief description. We look forward to sharing your experiences, encounters and perspectives of our Driftless home.

Disclaimer: If your photo(s) include people, be sure to get consent before sharing.



Rob Baller



Zach Heredia



Debi Morton



Bob Laeser



Susan Dvorak

## NO LIMITS

Marcia Kinder Geer

If I only value prairie plants  
I will never discover the fragrance  
of yellow ladyslippers  
deep in a woods.

If I only like sunshine  
I will miss the pleasure of dark rainy  
soul rummaging days and  
the luxurious dry warmth  
of burning wood.

If I only accept people like myself  
I will not be challenged  
or energized by other  
thinking, feeling, seeing.

If I only know happiness and contentment  
I will never learn how much growth is possible,  
How much courage and strength  
are available.

If I only accept what I know now,  
If I only accept the thinking of others as true  
then I deny the reality of this  
ongoing process of which  
I am a part.



Melissa Roelli



## THE DRIFTLESS LEGACY SOCIETY

There are few places in the world as unique as the Driftless Area of Southwest Wisconsin. That is why protecting its critical habitat and beautiful spaces is vitally important. We gratefully thank our Driftless Legacy Society members for their commitment to this distinctive landscape. By including DALC in your estate plan, you too can protect and care for the land you love for generations to come.

If you have an interest in joining our Legacy Society please let us know by contacting us at (608) 930-3252 or email [info@driftlessconservancy.org](mailto:info@driftlessconservancy.org). We value such a profound commitment to our mission and would appreciate the opportunity to thank you in your lifetime.

Thanks to you, and to those who treasure these lands, the future looks brighter.

### DRIFTLESS LEGACY SOCIETY MEMBERS

- Anne Bachner
- Helen Boley
- David Kopitzke & Paul Klawiter
- Ted Ross
- Roland Sardeson
- Ellyn Satter
- Mary Trewartha
- Susan Trudell
- Marta Voytovich & Laurie Gauper

# DRIFTLESS

Driftless Area  
Land Conservancy

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

[www.driftlessconservancy.org](http://www.driftlessconservancy.org)



### DRIFTLESS HOLIDAY PARTY

Thursday, December 5th | 4PM - 6PM

Cobblestone Coffee House, Dodgeville, WI

Join staff and board for holiday fun and light appetizers and refreshments. Come meet our new Executive Director, Jennifer Filipiak. Bring your good cheer (required) and wear your best ugly sweater (optional).



### DRIFTLESS SKIES SOLSTICE EVE STARGAZING

Friday, December 20th | 6:30PM - 8:30PM

Spring Green Preserve, Spring Green, WI

Enjoy an evening of stargazing under the dark skies of the Driftless Area. View stars through a telescope and binoculars, learn winter constellations, and hear stories of the stars. Bring the kids! Stop by when you can.

Please note: If the skies are cloudy, the back-up date will be Sunday, December 22nd. Registration is required. Go to <https://driftlessconservancy.org/events-draft/> for more information.

## WANT TO STAY UP TO DATE WITH THE LATEST DRIFTLESS NEWS & EVENTS?

Stay in the know... Sign up for Discover Driftless and get the latest on local conservation news, programs and issues. This free eNews will come just once a month, so don't worry, we won't flood your inbox. Visit [www.driftlessconservancy.org](http://www.driftlessconservancy.org) to register today. Also, please share your thoughts and see what we're up to by liking us on Facebook! ([www.facebook.com/driftlessconservancy](http://www.facebook.com/driftlessconservancy))

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