

Driftless

FALL 2017

A Newsletter from the Driftless Area Land Conservancy



*“Study nature, love nature,
stay close to nature. It will
never fail you.”*

– Frank Lloyd Wright

This Story is Yours: Turning Your Hope into Action



Dave Clutter
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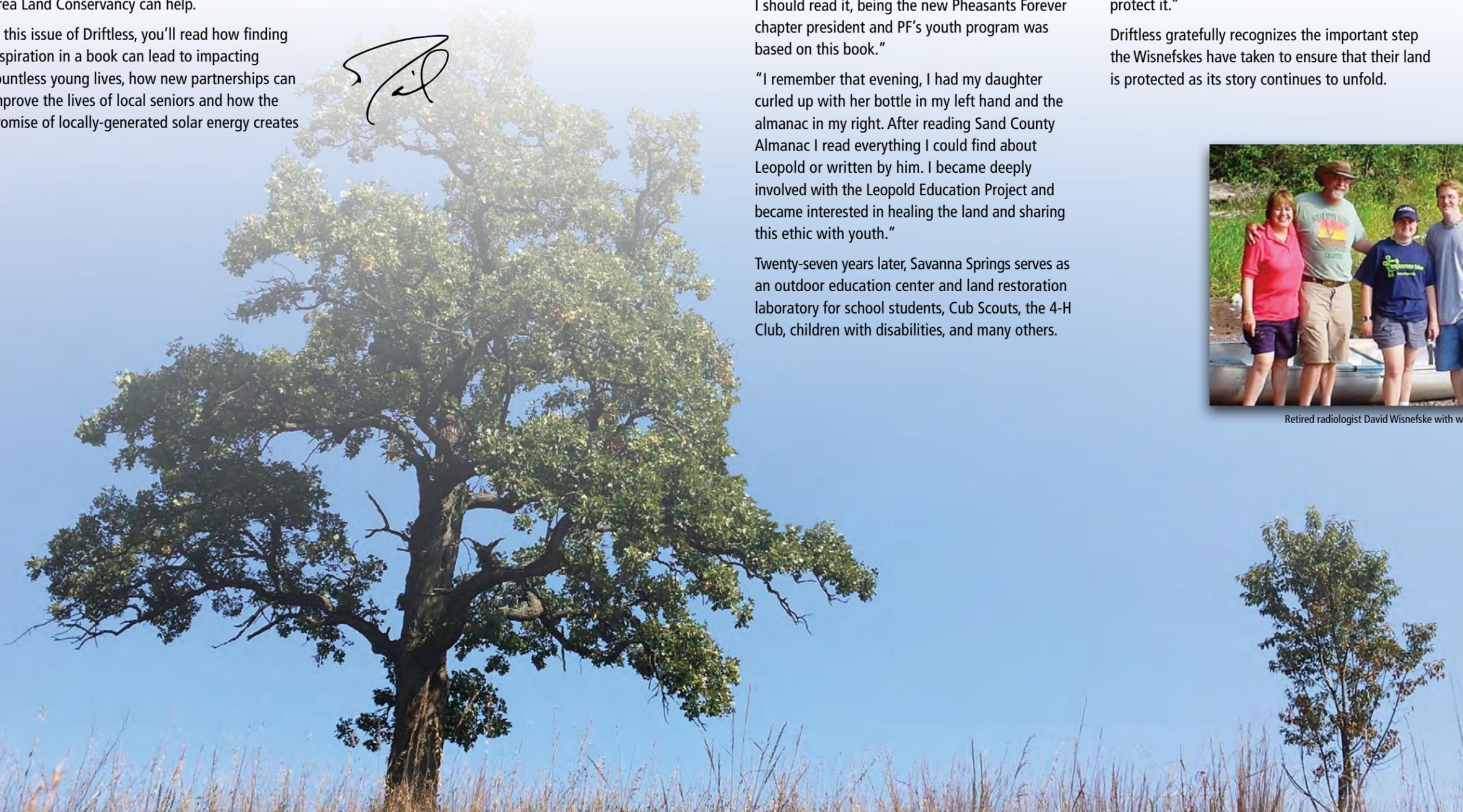
Often hear the phrase "I'd like to make a difference." It is incredibly moving to meet so many people with the desire to step-up and make life a bit better for their families, friends, and our natural world! But how does one actually do it? That little phrase, "I'd like to make a difference" is about hope. Hope for our natural world, hope for our communities, and hope for Wisconsin's conservation legacy. When it comes to realizing one's hopes and turning them into action, Driftless Area Land Conservancy can help.

In this issue of Driftless, you'll read how finding inspiration in a book can lead to impacting countless young lives, how new partnerships can improve the lives of local seniors and how the promise of locally-generated solar energy creates

long-term benefits right here in the Driftless Area. You'll also learn how the simple act of collecting seeds can help transform our landscape for the better.

Thanks to you we are turning our hopes into a brighter future for the Driftless Area and beyond. As always, we are here to help you tell your story of conservation and to help you make a difference for the Driftless Area that we love.

Thanks again for all that you do to protect and steward our natural world.



The Prairie Doc of Savanna Springs

David and Kristin Wisnefske's land reads as though it were a historical novel, with real scenes from a French trading post, a Native American village, and a stage coach trail to mention a few.

One chapter in this land's history begins in 1990 after David and Kristin purchased "Savanna Springs" a beautiful 217-acre property near Monroe Wisconsin to enjoy with their kids.

"I came across a copy of Sand County Almanac in a used book store," remembers David. "I thought I should read it, being the new Pheasants Forever chapter president and PF's youth program was based on this book."

"I remember that evening, I had my daughter curled up with her bottle in my left hand and the almanac in my right. After reading Sand County Almanac I read everything I could find about Leopold or written by him. I became deeply involved with the Leopold Education Project and became interested in healing the land and sharing this ethic with youth."

Twenty-seven years later, Savanna Springs serves as an outdoor education center and land restoration laboratory for school students, Cub Scouts, the 4-H Club, children with disabilities, and many others.

Savanna Springs features twenty pieces of original, pre-settlement prairie that are home to rare species as well as 100 acres of restored prairie that serves as important habitat for pollinators and declining grassland-nesting birds.

The property also includes a one-mile stretch of Braezel's Branch Creek and 55 acres of oak savanna.

"Over the years I developed a love and respect for our land and its history" shared David. "That love and respect led us to our decision to permanently protect it."

Driftless gratefully recognizes the important step the Wisnefskes have taken to ensure that their land is protected as its story continues to unfold.



Retired radiologist David Wisnefske with wife Kristin and their children

"Over the years I developed a love and respect for our land and its history"



Driftless Area Land Conservancy

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If you would like to explore if conservation is right for you, give Dave Clutter a call at 608.692.2153 for a confidential discussion.

Prairie Harvest: Autumn Seed Collecting Tips

- Always ask permission before collecting on a property you do not own
- Be careful not to over-harvest. Do not harvest more 50% of the common species, or more 10% of a species that is rare at the site
- Seeds should be stored in a cool, dry place prior to being planted
- Grasses prefer to be planted in the spring, while forbs will often establish better if planted in the late fall or early winter



Saving Seeds and Protecting Monarchs

"Hey, we have some of that growing in our yard!" exclaimed one of the 62 Mineral Point second graders who gathered in the prairie atop the Merry Christmas Mine Hill in Mineral Point. "Yeah, we do too!" shouted another.

As a light shower of rain set in, the eager students listened to their instructions. "The seedpods should only be collected after the seeds have turned brown and the 'seam' on the back of the pod splits open easily; green seeds will not continue to ripen after a pod has been picked," shared Sarah Pearce, DALC's Educational Program Coordinator.

Monarchs need more milkweed and nectar flowers on the landscape to thrive in the Driftless Area and Mineral Point's second grade class is joining the effort to help. The goal this year is to collect

50 pounds of milkweed seed, which will be used to create more than 1500 acres of excellent new monarch habitat in our region.

For the Mineral Point students involved, Project Lead the Way is strengthening their science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) programs.

"In second grade, our final project of PLTW is to design a seed dispersal system. It's great for the kids to see some actual ways that seeds disperse in nature," said Susan Kelm, second grade teacher at Mineral Point.



Involving students in the Driftless Monarch Habitat enhancement project allows them to see how these STEM concepts come to life in the real world

If you would like to get your school involved in nature based activities, please contact Sarah Pearce at 608.930.3252 or sarah@driftlessconservancy.org

Birds of a Feather

“The Birding Brunch is worthwhile in many ways. An outing is always welcome, the discussion and watching the birds is delightful, and the food is great!”

Each year local seniors gather at Bethel Horizons to meet their dear friends and to make new ones as well. The annual Birding Brunch provides a great way to connect with nature and enjoy a delicious meal.

“The residents at the Meadows are once again looking forward to attending the Birding Brunch,” shared Brenda Gasch Mittelstadt, Activity Director at Meadows Assisted Living in Spring Green. “Our seniors often reminisce about their time growing up on their families’ farms.”

“Growing up, we did not have the time or the money to feed the birds at home,” said one of the Meadows residents. “However, living in the countryside the creatures came naturally around the houses and barns – eating from spilled corn and grain – so that they were always around to appreciate.”

“The Birding Brunch is worthwhile in many ways. An outing is always welcome, the discussion and watching the birds is delightful, and the food is great!” added Brenda.

If you would like to join us for an entertaining morning of bird-watching, bird lore, and a hearty breakfast please call our office at 608.930.3252 or email sarah@driftlessconservancy.org to register.

Free transportation is provided through the ADRC—call 608.930.9835 to arrange for a ride.



Driftless Legacy Society Members

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

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 habitats 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 interest in joining our Legacy Society please let us know by contacting David Clutter at 608.930.3252 or email dave@driftlessconservancy.org We value such a profound commitment to our mission and would appreciate the opportunity to thank you in your lifetime.

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

Shining Light: Solar Energy in the Driftless Area

Sunshine – It warms us; it’s critical for every plant that springs from the soil, and it brightens our spirits. Sunshine heralds the promise of every new day and paints the evening sky with a glorious array of color. Increasingly, the sun is also providing electrical energy for residents throughout the Driftless Area.

The recent solar “group buy” program is making this possible for over 30 households in the greater Iowa County area. Working with the Midwest Renewable Energy Association the program offered customers the advantages of buyer-club style discounts making it easier for families to make the decision to harness the sun for their own homes.

Not only will these families lower their long-term energy costs, they will also be promoting sustainability by using renewable energy. “We

were thrilled to install our solar array in order to do our part to reduce carbon increases,” commented participant Bill Menke.

Solar energy – the energy of the future – is already playing an important role here in the Driftless Area. “We’re at a fork in the road” said John Walte’ of Highland. “Now is the time to invest in locally generated wind and solar electricity.”

Driftless Area folks are accustomed to harvesting the bounty this vibrant landscape nurtures. Now, along with the produce, field crops, and firewood the sun’s energy is available to harvest and enjoy.

“We were thrilled to install our solar array in order to do our part to reduce carbon increases,”



Photo of Joe and June Meudt by Denise Thornton

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Driftless Area Land Conservancy

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Our mission is to maintain and enhance the health, diversity, and beauty of Southwest Wisconsin's natural and agricultural landscape through permanent land protection and restoration, and to improve people's lives by connecting them to the land and to each other.

Announcements

www.driftlessconservancy.org



Senior Birding Brunch Bethel Horizons | Dodgeville, WI Monday December 4th – 9:30AM

Join us for an entertaining morning of bird-watching, bird lore, and a hearty breakfast.

This event is free, but space is limited, so please call our office at 608.930.3252 or email sarah@driftlessconservancy.org to register. Free transportation is provided through the ADRC call 608.930.9835 to arrange for a ride.



Holiday Party DALC Office | Dodgeville, WI Thursday December 7th – 5-7PM

The halls will be decked with holly, and we will have plenty of good cheer. Join us for light refreshments at our Dodgeville office for a holiday celebration to commemorate the lands protected this year.



Workday at Erickson Erickson Conservation Area | Argyle, WI Date to TBD

Are you looking for a great community project, time outdoors, and a chance to meet new people? Consider joining us for a work event at the Argyle Conservation Area.

Please contact our office for upcoming workdays or www.driftlessconservancy.org

For more details on these & other events, stay tuned to our:

WEBSITE: DRIFTLESSCONSERVANCY.ORG

FACEBOOK: [FACEBOOK.COM/DRIFTLESSCONSERVANCY](https://www.facebook.com/DRIFTLESSCONSERVANCY)

CALL: 608.930.3252



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Wisconsin's 2017 Land Trust of the Year



- Sound Finances
- Ethical Conduct
- Responsible Governance
- Lasting Stewardship

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