



Prairie singer



MVC-member Bruce Bartel photographed this Bell's vireo, a threatened species in Wisconsin, while visiting the Holland Sand Prairie, a property conserved by MVC and turned over to the Town of Holland.

Bluff purchase completed

Stewardship Fund paid half

With help from the Stewardship Fund, we have purchased a 144-acre bluffland on the Great River Road that was slated for residential development!

MVC received 50-percent support from the Knowles Nelson Stewardship Fund to buy the land that is next to our Sugar Creek Bluff State Natural Area from Thomas and Paul Sampson, who had the property for sale as a residential site with a view of the Mississippi River. The state funds were matched by a \$50,000 grant from the Paul E. Stry Foundation of La Crosse and other donors, including the Prairie du Chien Rod and Gun Club, the Wisconsin Land Fund, Whitetails Unlimited and individual donors, including one anonymous donor who contributed \$10,000.

State funds for the Sampson purchase were from the current state budget.

Open to public, draws students

Carol Abrahamzon, MVC executive director, said this purchase provides a total of 420-acres open to the public for hunting, fishing, hiking, bird watching and other family recreation. "Adding this parcel will benefit the students of De Soto Junior High and High School, who have adopted Sugar Creek Bluff, doing restoration workdays as well as environmental education activities. They work to control invasive species, conduct invertebrate surveys, do GIS mapping, stream shocking, and other projects on the land."

See more on this at www.mississippivalleyconservancy.org

Summer school students fight invasive shrubs

**By: Ellen Smith
Communications Intern**

"We're letting the trees be able to breathe, and I think that's important" said Skyler, a middle school student while clipping away at an invasive buckthorn bush. On June 10th, a group of La Crosse summer school students gathered on Mississippi Valley Conservancy's property Miller Bluff in an effort to remove invasive plant species buckthorn and honeysuckle. The outing was organized by the Mississippi Valley Conservancy's Outreach program in cooperation with WisCorps.

Provided with loppers and hand saws, the students produced an enormous pile of invasive brush that had been suffocating the bluff. By spraying herbicide on the cut roots, they ensured that the destructive species would not return the following year.



MVC Outreach Coordinator Kathy Frise Groth, center front, and her band of invasive species fighters on Miller Bluff.

Ferryville celebrates SNA addition

MVC members joined Ferryville area residents to celebrate the recent addition to the Sugar Creek Bluff State Natural Area (see story, page 1).

According to Sherry Quamme, with the Crawford County Community Fund, the Sugar Creek Bluff State Natural Area has helped support the local economy by offering a beautiful natural area for people to hike, hunt, bird watch and snow shoe. After hiking the property, members and supporters met at the Ferryville Village Hall, where food and beverage was provided by the Ferryville Tourism Council and MVC. For more on this, see the website, mississippivalleyconservancy.org

Volunteer brings fire savvy to MVC burns

Jeremy Burt, one of the owners of Coulee Region Ecoscapes in La Crosse, was 20 in 2000 when he worked on his first prescribed fire at Perrot State Park.

Subsequent jobs, including five years with the U.S. Forest Service, led him to serve on a Hot Shot Crew in Arizona -- the crew that hikes into forest fires using mostly hand tools to battle the wild fire.

Jeremy has fought wild fires in 17 different states.

He now serves as certified arborist for the company he joined in 2014.

"I've volunteered my time to the MVC whenever there is a need for volunteers to help with prescribed fires. This is something that's always been important to me and has been encouraged by my business partners, friends, and family as a way to utilize my unique experiences to give to the MVC and to the local community."



About the Stewardship Circle

The Stewardship Circle is a very special group who have made a lasting

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 or gifts of life insurance. Please consider joining this dedicated group of conservationists today. Contact Carol Abrahamzon, executive director, (608) 784-3606 x4

MVC receives \$35,000 in land restoration grants

Mississippi Valley Conservancy has received two new grants for property management and restoration efforts. A \$25,000 grant came from the Wisconsin DNR Wild Turkey Stamp fund, which will be used to restore wild turkey habitat on MVC's Tunnelville Cliffs State Natural Area (SNA), Sugar Creek Bluff SNA, Cassville Bluffs SNA, Boscobel Bluffs SNA, Holland Sand Prairie SNA, Fish Creek, and Cardinal Bluff.

MVC also received a \$10,000 grant from 3M to improve the community accessibility and wildlife habitat of MVC's newest addition to the Sugar Creek Bluff State Natural Area. The 144-acre new addition is open for public recreation and environmental education. This grant will support land management and establish hiking trails on the property, connecting to the previously protected 276-acre Sugar Creek Bluff and allowing access throughout the new addition.

Executive Director Carol Abrahamzon expressed appreciation to the WI DNR and 3M for supporting conservation through these grant programs.

Elmwood Bluff transferred to City of Onalaska

MVC has transferred ownership of Elmwood Bluff to the City of Onalaska as part of the land conservation agreement with the city. MVC purchased the 30-acre property located along Country Club Lane in Onalaska in December 2010,

This ecologically significant land is even more important because of its location and proximity to other protected natural areas, including more than 100 acres of natural bluffland already protected by MVC and the City of Onalaska. The Elmwood land also is at the center of the City of Onalaska's "Natural Lands Protection Program" and "Central Greenway Plan" areas.

Funding for the bluff purchase came from the City of Onalaska, the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, and the local Paul E. Stry Foundation, as well as a donation of some of the land value by the seller Elmwood Partners.

Have you checked out these website features?

@

mississippivalleyconservancy.org

MVC Explorer video series, including videos of people and their connection to nature, invasive species and more. Also provides a link to our YouTube videos. (Click Videos.)

Events

7/23/15 Volunteer Work Day - Eagle Eye SNA near Viroqua

7/28/15 Volunteer Work Day - Tunnelville Cliffs SNA near La Farge

8/8/15 Seasons in the Coulee Region Summer Hike sponsored by Gundersen Health Systems

8/22/15 Linked to the Land Hike at New Amsterdam Grassland sponsored by Mayo Clinic Health System

9/19/15 Linked to the Land at FSPA Garden Tour/Hike sponsored by Mayo Clinic Health System

10/10/15 Seasons in the Coulee Region Fall Colors Hike sponsored by Gundersen Health Systems

10/24/15 Linked to the Land Fall Hike sponsored by Mayo Clinic Health System
See Mississippivalleyconservancy.org for more info.

Fighting skeeters with vanilla

Say goodbye to chemical mosquito sprays—vanilla’s a great natural pest deterrent. It’s extremely effective at repelling mosquitoes because they don’t like the smell. Just combine 2 ounces vanilla extract and 2 ounces water in a small spray bottle; spritz onto your exposed skin. Here’s a way to make homemade vanilla extract.

Homemade Vanilla Extract

INGREDIENTS:

10 – 12 vanilla beans, split lengthwise
1 liter vodka

DIRECTIONS:

Place the vanilla beans in the bottle of vodka and seal. Store in a cool, dark area such as a kitchen cabinet for at least 2 months, 6 months will give you the best flavor. Shake the bottle every week. After using, replace with more vodka. The same beans will continue to flavor the vanilla for up to a year.

Why we care

A message from Gundersen Health System, our partner in conservation

Gundersen Health System is committed to improving the health of the communities we serve. Balancing the dimensions of wellness includes appreciating where we live and the connection we have to the world around us. Our partnership with MVC and the Seasons in the Coulee Region events have provided an opportunity for those who live here to get a deeper sense of understanding of this connection.

Contributions help save our beautiful lands

Payment Information: _____ **Amount:** _____ **Total**

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Please return this form & your donation to:
Mississippi Valley Conservancy
PO Box 2611
La Crosse, WI 54602-2611

Donate online at:
www.mississippivalleyconservancy.org

(By signing above I authorize Mississippi Valley Conservancy to charge my credit card as listed above according to the amount indicated.)

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Here’s my extra donation in the amount of:

- \$50.00 \$250.00
- \$75.00 \$500.00
- \$100.00 Other: _____

Mississippi Valley Conservancy is a 501c(3) Non-Profit Organization. Contributions are tax deductible as provided by law.

YES, Please accept my extra gift to support saving western Wisconsin’s Scenic Areas!



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For information on how to permanently protect your land, contact Conservation Director Abbie Church at 608.784.3606 ext. 2 or achurch@MississippiValleyConservancy.org

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