



Mississippi Valley Conservancy

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Media Advisory

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Mississippi Valley Conservancy Earns National Recognition

Strong Commitment to Public Trust and Conservation Excellence

LA CROSSE, WI – August 10, 2017 – At a time of political change, one thing is clear and consistent: Americans strongly support saving the open spaces they love. Since 1997, Mississippi Valley Conservancy has been doing just that for the people of Southwest Wisconsin. Now the Conservancy announced it has renewed its land trust accreditation – proving once again that, as part of a network of only 389 accredited land trusts across the nation, it is committed to professional excellence and to maintaining the public’s trust in its conservation work. Additionally, the Conservancy was awarded a special Commendation for its Project Evaluation Worksheet. The Commission will use this worksheet as an example of excellence to all land trusts nationwide.

“Renewing our accreditation shows Mississippi Valley Conservancy’s ongoing commitment to permanent land conservation in Southwest Wisconsin,” said Carol Abrahamzon, Executive Director. “We are a stronger organization than ever for having gone through the rigorous accreditation renewal process. Our strength means the bluffs, forests, streams, prairies, and farms of the Driftless Area will be protected from development, forever. Places for birds, butterflies, bees, and children to live, grow and thrive, forever.”

The Conservancy had to provide extensive documentation and undergo a comprehensive review as part of its accreditation renewal. The Land Trust Accreditation Commission awarded the renewed accreditation, signifying its confidence that the Conservancy’s lands will be protected forever.

Accredited land trusts must renew every five years, confirming their compliance with national quality standards and providing continued assurance to donors and landowners of their commitment to forever steward their land and easements. Almost 20 million acres of farms, forests and natural areas vital to healthy communities are now permanently conserved by an accredited land trust.

As an accredited land trust, Mississippi Valley Conservancy’s mission is to preserve our bluffs, farm fields, wetlands, prairies and streams in the Driftless Area. The Conservancy serves the Wisconsin counties of Buffalo, Crawford, Grant, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Richland, Trempealeau and Vernon. The staff of conservation and land management experts works with landowners who voluntarily participate in conservation agreements and land acquisition efforts. The Conservancy also owns and manages nature preserves to enhance biodiversity and provide habitat for declining species. The organization’s outreach team provides environmental education in efforts to enrich our local communities.

“It is exciting to recognize Mississippi Valley Conservancy with this distinction,” said Tammara Van Ryn, executive director of the Commission. “Accredited land trusts are united behind strong ethical standards ensuring the places people love will be conserved forever. Accreditation recognizes Mississippi Valley Conservancy has demonstrated sound finances, ethical conduct, responsible governance, and lasting stewardship.” Mississippi Valley Conservancy is one of 1,363 land trusts across the United States according to the most recent National Land Trust Census, released December 1, 2016 by the Land Trust Alliance. This comprehensive report also shows that accredited land trusts have made significant achievements.

- Accredited land trusts have steadily grown and now steward almost 80% of conservation lands and easements held by all land trusts.
- Accredited land trusts protected five times more land from 2010 to 2015 than land trusts that were not accredited.
- Furthermore, accreditation has increased the public’s trust in land conservation, which has helped win support for federal, state and local conservation funding measures.

A complete list of accredited land trusts and more information about the process and benefits are detailed at www.landtrustaccreditation.org.

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ABOUT MISSISSIPPI VALLEY CONSERVANCY

Founded in 1997, Mississippi Valley Conservancy is a nationally accredited regional land trust that has permanently protected more than 18,500 acres of scenic lands in southwestern Wisconsin by working with private landowners, businesses and local communities on voluntary conservation projects. The focus of the Conservancy is to conserve the forests, prairies, wetlands, streams and farms that enrich our communities, for the health and well-being of current and future generations.

ABOUT THE LAND TRUST ACCREDITATION COMMISSION

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission inspires excellence, promotes public trust and ensures permanence in the conservation of open lands by recognizing organizations that meet rigorous quality standards and strive for continuous improvement. The Commission, established in 2006 as an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, is governed by a volunteer board of diverse land conservation and nonprofit management experts. For more, visit www.landtrustaccreditation.org.

ABOUT THE LAND TRUST ALLIANCE

Founded in 1982, the Land Trust Alliance is a national land conservation organization that works to save the places people need and love by strengthening land conservation across America. Based in Washington, D.C., and with several regional offices, the Alliance represents about 1,000 member land trusts nationwide.

The Alliance's leadership serves the entire land trust community—our work in the nation's capital represents the policy priorities of land conservationists from every state; our education programs improve and empower land trusts from Maine to Alaska; and our comprehensive vision for the future of land conservation includes new partners, new programs and new priorities. Connect with us online at www.landtrustalliance.org.

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