



Mississippi Valley  
CONSERVANCY

Spring 2016



## We'll be back

**B**eaver-gnawed wood chips dotted the snow around the stump of a small tree felled next to the banks of the La Crosse River. A grandmother on snowshoes lifted her gaze from the beaver's tooth marks to the swift current of the open river flowing between snowy banks. She said it was her first time on snowshoes and that she had no idea "all of this" was here. Her grandchildren were with their father nearby along the trail where others were pointing to an eagle perched high in a cottonwood tree.

The family was among some 200 people who took guided winter snowshoe hikes this winter on the La Crosse River Conservancy, the broad expanse of land along the river behind Stoney Creek Inn and Valley View Mall.

The popularity of this chance to see so much nature in the heart of the city is a tribute to a host of donors, starting with those who, starting in 1999, donated land or conservation easements to Mississippi Valley Conservancy to create

the reserve— Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center, Western Technical College, Coulee Region Humane Society, Don and La Vonne Zietlow, and the city of La Crosse.

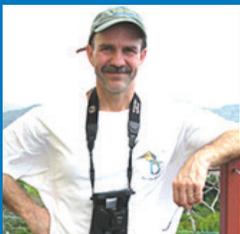
Redfeather, a local snowshoe company, donated 20 pairs of its snow shoes used in these hikes and others on MVC lands, Coulee Connections added 13 pairs and eight pairs of snowshoes for kids, Texas Roadhouse donated hot buns and chocolate for the hikers, Stoney Creek donated parking, and various agencies have donated funds for restoring the ecological integrity of the land.

Volunteers guide and maintain trails, and donors to MVC ensure that the hikes and other land conservation services will continue year after year, making nearby nature available to all. Volunteer guides repeated this often in response to questions from the hikers: "Yes, this land is open to the public, anytime." Their response was often: "We'll be back."

*“Yes, this land is open to the public, anytime.”*



*Photograph courtesy of Tom Rhorer.*



## Member Meeting

Saturday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> 9–11 AM  
1827 Sims Place, La Crosse

**Bring your friends and neighbors and join us for our annual Member Meeting.** Our featured speaker will be migratory bird expert, Craig Thompson. Craig will talk about how our members contribute to bird conservation efforts across the hemisphere through land and habitat protection projects right here in the Driftless Area. We will provide coffee; bring your favorite baked goodies to share!



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*Mississippi Valley Conservancy is a regional, non-profit land trust based in La Crosse, Wisconsin. MVC has permanently conserved 17,369 acres of blufflands, prairies, wetlands, and streams in and around the Mississippi, Kickapoo and Wisconsin Rivers since our founding in 1997. Over 4,000 acres are open to the public for hiking, bird watching, hunting, fishing, photography, and snowshoeing.*



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## Chipping away

Even while you were sitting in your warm, cozy home next to the fire reading a good book this past fall and winter you were helping to refurbish the homes of plants and animals that live on Sugar Creek Bluff State Natural Area. Your donation helps support Mississippi Valley Conservancy's land restoration activities every day. Land manager Levi Plath and his 43 fabulous volunteers have been chipping away at habitat rebuilding work, out at Sugar Creek Bluff in Ferryville, WI. Through help and funding from our donors and volunteers as well as 3M, Partners for Fish and Wildlife, and WI DNR we have cleared approximately 8,000 feet of firebreak, made 5,000 feet of new trails, and improved the home for turkeys, redheaded woodpeckers, American kestrels, barred owls, and Northern flickers to name a few. The work involved rigorous hiking and chainsaw work in order to improve the land, and create trails for you to enjoy hiking, birding and snowshoeing.

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