



Rooted in Resilience: 2024 Fall Fundraiser

Friday, November 8, 2024

Details at www.mississippivalleyconservancy.org/events

Call us for tickets at (608)784-3606 ext. 1

SILENT AUCTION LIST

1. Hand-turned Wooden Bowl

Artist Ken Critzman crafted this beautiful hand-turned wooden bowl from a cherry burl. Note the incredible detail and intricate designs in the wood. Food-safe finish. Wipe clean with damp cloth. Wood recovered from a downed tree in Trempealeau County.

2. Ice Age Map, Guidebook, Atlas and Tote Bag

Whether you are just starting to explore the Ice Age Trail or are well on your way to becoming a Thousand-Miler, this package includes all the information you need to plan your next journey! The Atlas and Official Guidebook provide the critical wayfinding information you'll need to enjoy all the Trail has to offer. This handy hike-tracking map is a great resource for aspiring Thousand-Milers or anyone who wants to track parts of the Trail visited. As a bonus, the handmade tote is great for a trip to the store or down the trail. Donated by Sue Knopf.

3. Meringue Bakery \$100 Gift Certificate

The Wisconsin-based pastry chef and owner of Meringue Bakery, Jen Barney, catapulted to fame and proved her fierce culinary skills by winning three Food Network Baking Championship Titles. Use your gift certificate to purchase exquisitely detailed decorated cookies, cupcakes or sheet cakes. Attend classes and learn how the pros create works of art. Check out their special signature cakes for your next big gathering, too! Or ship some scrumptious cookies to a loved one who is far away.

4. Small Quilted Items

A small and practical addition to your kitchenware, you'll wonder how you ever managed before you had a set of soup koozies. Watch the football game and eat a bowl of chili from your favorite chair without burning your hands or lap. Take home your set of 4 bowl koozies with matching wine glass slippers tonight. Your hands and lap will thank you! Donated by Gretchen Pfeiffer.

5. **Hand-carved Walking Sticks**

A swamp white oak was planted, trained, tended and crafted just for this purpose. This pair of walking sticks was inspired by an old German fellow from Red Wing who did likewise 50+ years ago. Donated by Nature Nooks Retreat.

6. **Stained Glass – Great Blue Heron**

Imagine the late afternoon light streaming through the intricate design of this heron as you relax in your living room this winter. The unique colors and textures accentuate the bluffs and river, and will make it stand out as a statement piece in your home. Created by Lu Selover and donated by Linda Schams.

7. **Dianis Book Series – Frank Dravis**

This gripping trilogy follows the struggles and loves of a forgotten colony of humans as they face conflict with star-fairing powers bent on stealing all that Dianis has to offer. Forbidden love, gallantry against despicable foes, and fortitude in the face of despair mark the nature of the Dianis defenders. Humanity's future rests on their honor. **Written by local author and MVC board member Frank Dravis**, this collection of intellectually epic sci-fi stories will immerse you in the quest to of the people of Dianis to protect their priceless planetary bounty.

8. **Barrett Klein – The Insect Epiphany book**

JUST RELEASED! From entomologist Barrett Klein comes a buzz-worthy exploration of the many ways insects have affected human society, history, and culture. *The Insect Epiphany* proves that our world would look very different without insects, not just because they are crucial to our ecosystems, but because they have shaped and inspired so many aspects of what makes us human. This special copy has a one-of-a-kind sketch by the author just for you included on the inside cover of the book! Donated by John Kelly.

9. **Bisqueware Vase – Bob Freedland**

This abstract bisqueware vase was created and hand-painted by Bob Freedland. Bob is a retired ophthalmologist and active Mississippi Valley Conservancy member.

10. **Fish and Lure Print**

This walleye and the lure used to catch it at Pettibone, are printed and donated by Tim Dakin using the Gyotaku process. This Japanese art form was developed over 100 years ago so fishers/anglers were able to keep a record of the fish they caught.

11. **WDRT – DJ Experience & Swag package**

Get ready to turn up the excitement! Win an exclusive one-hour DJ experience that will have you dancing to your favorite beats, plus snag some awesome swag from WDRT! Imagine the thrill of being a DJ and create your one-hour personal playlist to share with the world while you groove with WDRT. Don't miss this chance to take your radio voice to the next level and sport some cool radio gear! Enjoy this rare opportunity to rock the airwaves and show off your WDRT pride with a hoodie, shirt, bumper sticker, and mug! Valid January - April 2025.

12. Saint Francis Hermitage – Gift Basket

The winning bidder will receive a beautiful basket of tasty goods produced by Hermitage. If you have not experienced the exquisite service and French cuisine at this tiny chapel in the valley, you are truly missing out. One of the best kept secrets in the Driftless, this restaurant is run by the nuns of Saint Francis who will create the best croissants you have ever eaten as you wait for your apple omelets. Using food grown and raised on their farm, the Hermitage uses the money from their restaurant to help provide food to people in need locally. Their menu is unlike anything you have experienced in the Driftless Area.

13. “A Bit of Heaven” – Deb Conlon – plein air oil on canvas

Donated by Allan Beatty: Deb Conlon is a plein air painter and member of the VIVA Gallery cooperative in Viroqua, WI. “This painting reminds me of the view from the upper trail at Tunnelville,” remarked Allan Beatty. “We appreciate Deb’s paintings and have several in our home.” About Deb: "I paint because I love it, and with a little help from family, friends, and a great arts community, I paint because I can". Deb always loved art class in high school and college. Life took her through many twists and turns, and painting only became a serious pursuit later in life while she spent time with her parents, who were ill. She now lives in the beautiful Driftless Area of Southwest Wisconsin with her family, where she finds great inspiration right outside her door.

14. Nordic Heroes and Rising Stars - La Crosse Symphony Orchestra

4 main floor tickets to "Nordic Heroes," Sat. Mar 1st at 7:30PM

The winning bid will grant you four main floor tickets to an unforgettable evening at the La Crosse Symphony Orchestra’s performance on Saturday, March 1st. Captivating melodies will transport you to a world of musical wonder. Don’t miss this chance to experience a night filled with stunning performances and unforgettable moments!

15. Pump House Family Matinee – Magic of Isaiah

Bring the family to enjoy 60 minutes of incredible magical feats. Isaiah’s show allows you to use your imagination to create the impossible. Watch everyday objects levitate, see amazing sleights of hand, enjoy clean family comedy that tickles your funny bone, and marvel as you become a part of the show. The show is designed with magic for all ages to enjoy. The only requirement is your imagination. Show dates: Jan 18 or Feb 15 2025

16. Pump House – 1 Film Society 3 Pack of tickets and 2 guest tickets

The Pump House shows international, highly acclaimed movies that foster discussion of social issues. Enjoy the benefits a large screen in an intimate, comfortable space with theater seats. People are encouraged to stick around and share their reactions, questions, and takeaways when the credits roll. Savor a light meal from L & M Cafe after the film and discussion, included in your ticket. Explore a menu inspired by the country in which the film was produced. Call 608.785.1434 for more information.

17. Frothbite Beer & Bites Event Basket

December 7, 2024 | 2PM - 6PM | La Crosse Center, Between the Bluffs Frothbite- Beer & Bites
Experience the joy of forty breweries all in one place, featuring their taste of winter beers, ciders, and seltzers plus music, dancing and tasty food. This event promises a good time...the Wisconsin way! Cheers! This basket includes 2 event tickets, 2 Frothbite Koozies (already stocked with a Pearl Street DTB), event glasses, and a trucker hat. Donated by Explore La Crosse.

18. Big River Magazine Subscription + Birding Book

Enjoy endless stories of the Big Muddy with a one-year subscription to Big River Magazine AND your very own copy of Birds of the Upper Mississippi River and Driftless Area. Read stories about how green herons make and use fishing lures; the charm of turkey buzzards; the return of bald eagles, peregrines and pelicans; and flocks of blackbirds that stretch for miles. Reading these stories is just half the fun, because they'll make you want to get outside and join the action. Donated by Big River Magazine.

19. Elmaro Wine Flight & Artisan Plate

Spend a lazy afternoon enjoying the sights, sounds, and tastes of this beautiful winery in the Driftless. Take home a gift certificate good for 2 wine flights and an artisan cheese and salami plate and make a plan for some quality time for two. Donated by Elmaro.

20. Hand-stitched Lap Quilt – Chris Saudek

Snuggle up on the couch this winter with this beautiful lap quilt. This 48 x 64 lap quilt was designed, made, and donated by Chris Saudek for tonight's auction. A William Morris pattern was used for the backing and all of the binding was done by hand.

21. Creative Clay Class – Two One-on-One Lessons at the La Crosse Clay Center

Win TWO one-on-one lessons at the La Crosse Clay Center and unleash your creative spirit. Go home tonight with two handmade mugs as an added bonus. Donated by La Crosse Clay Center.

22. Explore La Crosse on the River

La Crosse Queen sightseeing cruise for 2. All aboard! Watch for eagles and wildlife while you and a friend cruise the main channel of the Mississippi and admire the beautiful bluffs you've helped protect. Duration of 1.5 hours. Donated by the La Crosse Queen.

23. Children's Book: "What Do You Spy with Your Eagle Eyes" by Jean Maher

Narrated by a bald eagle, the young explorer is given clues to find what is hiding in the photo, supported by More to Explore fun facts and teacher tips. A fun, seek-and-find book for children and adults about nature, using actual photos of creatures and organisms. The book encourages parents, grandparents, teachers and others to start conversations about nature with the child. Donated by Sarah Bratnober.

24. Frozen River Film Festival

Enjoy the art of filmmaking, while also considering new perspectives with two tickets to the Frozen River Film Festival. The festival also provides attendees an opportunity to engage with people from across the state, the country, and the world, to both share ideas and expand their minds. These passes allow access to all films and events February 9-16, 2025. Donated by the Frozen River Film Festival.

25. La Chateau Dinner and Capella Show

Plan an evening of the finest La Crosse has to offer. An elegant dinner at La Chateau followed by local jazz at Cappella Performing Arts Center. The winning bidder will receive a \$100 gift certificate to La Chateau and 2 tickets to one of the following La Crosse Jazz Orchestra performances:

A Holly Jazzy Christmas

Dec. 6, 2024 @ 7:30pm

Dec. 7, 2024 @ 7:30pm

Spring Concert

April 24, 2025 @ 7:30pm

April 25, 2025 @ 7:30pm

26. Driftless Angler T-shirt and Hat

Show your pride in what you have helped protect. The Driftless Angler is also very involved in protecting the streams and habitat in the Driftless Area. They are a full-service fly shop located on the historic main street in Viroqua, Wisconsin. With a huge selection of local flies and some of fly fishing's finest gear, they can outfit you for your trip on our local streams. Donated by the Driftless Angler in Viroqua.

27. White Claw Mango Vodka Package

This kit contains all the ingredients for a festive White Claw Mango Royale...just add a reason to make a toast! Donated by La Crescent Wine & Spirit and Shane Drey.

1 part mango vodka, 1 part mango juice, 2 parts Prosecco

Pour chilled vodka over mango juice into a champagne flute and stir

Slowly top with chilled Prosecco

Raise your glass

28. Upper Mississippi River Map

This unique map is the perfect gift for someone who has it all and loves spending time in Pool 8. Alexandra Aaker of AA Topo designed this detailed, custom map with all of the islands identified by name. Backed with styrene, this print is ready for framing.

29. Zippered Travel and Carry-all bags

Keep all your things well organized while on the go. Neatly categorize your toiletries, electronics, small belongings, art supplies, or even medication to avoid the hassle of searching through one big bag. Easily identify your items with these unique zippered carrying cases. Set of 3, made and donated by Robin Schmidt.

30. TBD Information coming soon

31. Dog Treat Basket – Big River K9

Big River K9 is a local dog grooming and pet dog store in Onalaska with an online dog food store for local curbside pickup. Make your dog's tail wag with delight when you take home your goodies basket tonight!

32. “Cottonwoods in Gold Light Oil Painting

Jennifer Williams is a local artist who lives and explores the beautiful natural areas of the Driftless looking for the art in nature. She created “Cottonwoods in Gold Light” as a celebration of the majestic trees that are rooted especially at the river's edges, immersed in the late afternoon light that turns brown-gray bark to gold.

33. Irving Berlin's White Christmas – 2 tickets

Veterans Bob Wallace and Phil Davis have a successful song-and-dance act after World War II. With romance in mind, the two follow a duo of beautiful singing sisters en route to their Christmas show at a Vermont lodge. With a dazzling score featuring well-known songs, White Christmas is an uplifting,

wholesome musical that will delight audiences of all ages. Donated by the La Crosse Community Theatre.

34. Chainsaw Carved Tree

Crafted from a cedar tree, this adorable pine tree will be a great addition to welcome guests to your front porch in any season. Created and donated by Keith Kohnert.

35. Chainsaw Carved Morel Warrior

Peeking out from his morel helmet, this unique, carved warrior is sure to claim a place of honor on your mantle or fireplace. Created and donated by Keith Kohnert.

LIVE AUCTION LIST

1 Guided Hike at Holland Sand Prairie

Jim Rogala from Friends of the Holland Sand Prairie and the current President of the Regional Prairie Enthusiasts will guide your group of up to six people on an easy hike to discover the amazing biodiversity of this nature preserve located just north of La Crosse. Roughly 150 species of plants have been identified to date, some of which are state threatened species or species of special concern. Bring along your new natural walking stick from Nature Nooks! From early spring until late fall, there are always natural treasures to see at the Holland Sand Prairie.

2 Family Fun Day on the West Fork

Enjoy a rare opportunity to enjoy the use of Nature Nooks Retreat for a day outing. This includes a day of outdoor games, kayaking, swimming, fishing or tubing on the West Fork, and if desired, a tour of two decades of habitat work on this MVC easement property (for a group of up to 6). End your day by returning to a well-stocked refrigerator and prepare your own picnic barbeque (food provided) on a prairie-view deck.

3 Pasture-raised Whole Processed Lamb

If a juicy leg of lamb or the taste of tender chops is what makes your mouth water, this is the way to fill your freezer! Enjoy the savory goodness of lamb pasture raised here in the Driftless Area by donors Keith and Lynne Valiquette. This delicious meat was just processed in October, kept in the freezer and will be personally delivered to the highest bidder.

4 Birds and Brunch

Join Audubon Grassland Ecologist, Krysten Zummo, for an early bird hike on the conserved land of Fred and Lou Anne Koerschner in Vernon County. Krysten will help you spot and identify the birds of the spring migration and tell you about their habitat needs. The 100-acre property features diverse habitats for many bird species, including meadowlarks, bobolinks, dickcissel, red-headed woodpeckers, yellow-billed cuckoo, orchard orioles, and many more! After your hike, your party of up to eight people will enjoy a delicious brunch, prepared and served by Fred and Lou Anne in their ridge-top home.

5 Willow Creek Ranch 30# Pork Bundle

At Willow Creek Ranch, the care of the land and animals is the top priority. Free range pork is lower in the fats you don't need, and richer in texture and flavor. Your 30# pasture-raised pork bundle is at the auction, ready for you to take home tonight.

6 River Restoration Cruise

Join Board President, Gretchen, and Joe Pfeiffer on a tour of one of the world's most extensive large river restoration projects (near Stoddard and Brownsville). Gretchen grew up on the banks of the Mississippi River and has spent her career working to restore it. She'll share the river's history, ecology, and full potential. The entire trip for your group of 4 is 3 hours (longer if desired). Delicious foods and beverages will be served, along with comforts necessary for the journey.

7 Get 'er Done – Full Day of Field Work

Sit back and sip your ice-tea while Levi and his summer intern crew clear your invasives, plant your trees, or tackle whatever restoration work you need done on your land. This crew can do an amazing amount of work in one day, saving you time to enjoy your land! This full day of fieldwork is donated by Conservancy staff and the summer intern crew.

8 Viroqua Experience

Head to Viroqua for gourmet goodies, eclectic shopping, culture, and outdoor fun with this getaway package! Enjoy a two-night stay in any available two-BR apartment at the retro-chic 217 on Main Air BnB, locally sourced culinary goodness from the Driftless Café (\$50 gift certificate), provisions from the Noble Rind Cheese (\$10 gift certificate), and a hearty breakfast or lunch at Maybe Lately's on Main Street (\$25 gift certificate). Spend your time hiking, golfing, cycling, or paddling on the nearby Kickapoo River!

9 Carol and Bill's Farm to Fork Dinner

Have you ever dined on a farm where every item on the menu was grown? Here is a chance to invite a few of your friends and experience a farm-to-fork dinner. You will start with a meet and greet with the critters, from cows to pigs and even a guard donkey, you'll then tour the orchard and gardens to get a sense of what might be on the menu. Carol will cook a farm to fork dinner complete with pork, beef, chicken, lots of veggies and of course dessert! For 6 people.

10 "Butterfly Weed" triptych photo print by Tom Rhorer

Bring the feel of a native prairie to your home with this elegant triptych photo of butterfly weed (*Asclepius tuberosa*) at New Amsterdam Grasslands. The image is photographically printed on metallic artist canvas with archival inks and acrylic coated for durability. Donated by Tom Rhorer, a member of the Viva Gallery artists' cooperative in Viroqua and volunteer on the Conservancy's Communications Committee, he generously donates his time and talents as a photographer to help us tell the story of saving the driftless. This set includes 3 framed prints that are each 14" x 14." Take your new artwork home today!

11 Cocktails and Tales with the Madam at the Castle

Inspired by the famous Bordello Cookbook (celebrating the owners of a magnificent Chicago bordello in 1900-1911), spend an evening enjoying various drinks and nibbles at Castle La Crosse with the infamous local Madam Kelly Krieg-Sigman. Hear the local lore of La Crosse's bordello history and scandalous stories while enjoying cocktails and hors d'oeuvres served with tales of ill repute. Group of up to 20 guests. Donated by Kelly Krieg-Sigman and Castle La Crosse.

12 **Nature Nooks Getaway**

Relax to the sights and sounds of nature along the West Fork of the Kickapoo River, during your 2-night stay for two* at Nature Nooks Retreat. Choose between The Lodge, the Little Barn Cabin, or Kinship Place, depending on availability. You'll also be close to Viroqua, Kickapoo Valley Reserve, and Tunnelville Cliffs nature preserve. *Extra charge for additional guests - \$25 per person/per night.

13 **Flying High**

Soar over the beautiful Driftless area in a Cessna 172 piloted by Carol or Drake. Take in the spring greening, the fall colors, or see what your home looks like from above. You get two window seats for the 45-minute flight. Donated by Carol Kratz and Drake Hokanson.

14 **Driftless Guardians Restoration Services (10 full hours)**

Justin Nooker of Driftless Guardians, LLC. has extensive experience working with the DNR and the Conservancy, and has created his own business to help landowners meet their unique needs. Justin works with landowners to complete habitat management for rare and declining species, manage Driftless Area woodlands sustainably, control invasive species, conduct surveys and inventories, guide land management planning and so many other contracted services.

15 **Drone Video/Photos of Your Property**

Soar high in the sky when you watch the footage taken on Rich Radek's 4K resolution videography drone. Schedule a sunny day to capture the beautiful views of your property or public land during a 40-minute flying session with Rich and his drone (broken into 2x 20-minute sessions). Choose still shots from the video that will make for breathtaking photos of your chosen landscape. Weather conditions must be ideal the day of flight.

16 **Luxury at the Lake**

(5 days/4 nights on Leech Lake near Walker, MN)

Grab your fishing gear and golf clubs and voyage up north to stay at this newly-constructed vacation rental on 2 acres with 130 feet of lakeshore on Leech Lake. This 2-bed 1-bath home is ideal for groups that want to ditch the city and spend quality time out on one of Minnesota's largest lakes. The nearby town of Walker has plenty of options if you're looking for a meal after the lake, and there are 3 golf courses within 25 miles - giving you plenty of opportunities to play a round of golf or enjoy a round of beers! Property includes a private dock, kayaks, paddleboards, gas fire pit, game room, washer/dryer, fishing gear, and so much more. Available Sept. 3, 2025 – Nov. 30, 2025. Donated by Sheri and Andy Allen.

17 **An Evening at the Rivoli**

Roll out the red carpet for your guests at your own private party in the Rivoli Theatre's Screening Room for 15-20 people! Package includes theatre admission, movie screening, pizza and beer for you and your guests on a scheduled date. This item excludes the Rivoli's previously scheduled events including Packer football games and may be limited by movies the Rivoli Theatre is able to secure.

18 Early-bird Tour at Plum Creek Conservation Area

Join biologist Rob Tyser with your group of 4-6 people and your new natural walking stick from Nature Nooks for an early hike to discover the feathered inhabitants of the Conservancy's Plum Creek Conservation Area (PCCA) in Crawford County. The property includes over five and a half miles of frontage along the west bank of the Kickapoo River and over two miles along both banks of Plum Creek. Along with adjacent conserved lands, PCCA supports one of the highest concentrations of rare forest-interior breeding birds in southern Wisconsin, including many considered high conservation priorities in eastern North America. Since his teaching career at UW-La Crosse, Rob has been active in many sustainability-related projects in the La Crosse community and continues to monitor bird populations at Conservancy's New Amsterdam Prairie grasslands.

19 Driftless Sweetness Basket

When the cold weather settles in, you'll stay warm and cozy while you delight in local sweetness made by Jon and Ann Rigden. This artistically arranged basket containing home harvest syrup (4 pints and 4 quarts), full-color maple syrup recipe book, tea towels, seasonal oven mitts and maple bourbon butter toffee nuts will keep you busy in the kitchen creating delicious recipes to share over cups of robust Cosimo coffee (17oz bag of beans).

20 New Belgium Fat Tire Bike

The legendary New Belgium Fat Tire cruiser is an icon of both brewing and biking culture. The namesake of New Belgium's flagship ale, this 2012 Felt Fat Tire bike will make you the envy of your biking friends as you take it for a cruise to the store, to the river, or to the nearest brew pub. Fred and Lou Anne Koerschner have also generously thrown in a six pack of Fat Tire Ale to wet your whistle after a long ride.

21 Private Tour of Kickapoo Caverns

Bring your group of 8 to a guided tour of the recently acquired and now protected Kickapoo Caverns – seasonal home of four rare bat species, oak savannah, and many wild-flowers. Conservancy experts will guide your tour and provide light refreshments. Tours scheduled June 15- August 15, 2025 and subject to other scheduled tours.

22 Dessert of the Month

Save room for dessert! Or just skip dinner altogether! With your delectable dessert of the month. A homemade sweet treat will be delivered to the Conservancy office each month (for 12 months) for you to pick up. Board and Committee member Sue Dillenbeck, is the pastry chef lending her talents to this delight! Enjoy your first dessert tonight with this Apple Sour Cream Pie that Sue has prepared for our special event.

23 “Expanding Star” Quilt by Susan Carpenter

Wrap your loved ones in comfort this holiday season with this exquisite Expanding Star quilt. Pieced together by long-standing supporter and landowner Susan Carpenter, this 96” x 96” quilt features a stunning contrast between navy and white, quilted with a subtle plant design. Quilt top and backing are 100% cotton, the batting is an 80/20 cotton/poly blend, and the quilting was done by Katie Luyk of Third Coast Quilting.

24 Willow Creek Ranch 30# Beef Bundle

At Willow Creek Ranch, care of the land and animals is the top priority. They rotationally graze their cattle so they are able to grow as nature intended without chemically enhanced grain or feed. Raised in a nutrient rich natural environment on the ranch, the beef are treated humanely and with respect. Your 30# grass-fed beef bundle is at the auction ready for you to take home tonight.

25 Fund the Future*

When you give, you are supporting healthy communities by protecting climate and clean water. You are helping a long list of families who are conserving their land for all of us. And more who are lining up for our services. This all takes resources, time, and money. At this year's auction, you can bolster the resilience of the beautiful bluffs, farms, prairies, wetlands, and streams so they'll be here in the future for all living things, including our children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren.

Bids for Fund the Future may be paid with Donor Advised Funds, retirement accounts, and gifts of Appreciated Stock. Just let Carol know your intention at check out! Thank you!