



GREAT RIVERS VIEWS



Monsanto Fund Boosts Piasa Creek Watershed Project

By Alley Ringhausen, Executive Director

Last Spring, Deborah Patterson, President of the Monsanto Fund visited Great Rivers Land Trust eager to learn about the projects managed by the land trust. The land trust, of course, was eager to learn how Monsanto could partner with us in support of our work.

I introduced our projects, one by one, and showed her an assortment of maps, surveys and other relevant materials. At one point, I offered her a copy of our geomorphical inventory assessment completed prior to the implementation of the Piasa Creek Watershed Project. While this assessment is a comprehensive overview of the watershed and a useful technical tool, to the layman it is not the most interesting reading material. Ms. Patterson, an intelligent woman understanding the nature of the report politely declined and said, "You can keep it."

So, we reached a good stopping point of talking about what we do and were anxious to show her what we do. We drove through open spaces we protect such as LaVista Park; we walked the Boy Scout Camp and described our renovation of the lake and wetland area; we showed the progress of a reforestation project at Principia College; we traveled along the

Continued on Page 3

Inside this issue:

Ecology of the Palisades - 2
Sarah Perkins, Ph.D.

Newsletter Sponsors 2
Welcome

Grand Victoria Awards 3
Great Rivers Land Trust

Capital Campaign - 3
Kim Pope

Board & Staff 4

Conservation Easements Offer Scenic Legacies

By Dick Snyder, Board President

Do you own a piece of property that is special to you and that you would like to have preserved for future generations to enjoy as you have? Perhaps your property is part of a spectacular view such as the property of James and Jane Cerbie. Maybe your property contains unique environmental features like that of Dr. John Chick.

If so, you might want to consider doing what they have done and talk with the land trust regarding either a scenic easement, as in the case of the Cerbies, or a conservation easement as Dr. Chick has done. In either case the land trust staff would be glad to explain how your properties' unique features can be preserved while you retain your rights

to use it for your personal enjoyment.

People commonly ask, "What must I give up when I work with the land trust on a potential easement on my property?" First, keep in mind that the relationship here is not an adversarial one. The land trust is attempting to help you meet your goals for protecting your property. There is flexibility in how your goals might be met through either a scenic or conservation easement. The restrictions come into play in deciding how best to protect what you have. For example, a perpetual legal agreement would be developed specifying how harmful uses of your property and further development of the property would be restricted in the future. The nature and extent of those restrictions would be

"If future generations are to remember us with gratitude rather than contempt, we must leave them something more than the miracles of technology. We must leave them a glimpse of the world as it was in the beginning, not just after we got through with it."

~ President
Lyndon B. Johnson

Continued on Page 3

Ecology of the Palisades

By Sarah Perkins, Ph.D., Board Member

In November 1992, Illinois State Representatives McPike and Ryder; Illinois State Senators Demuzio and Vadalabene, along with U.S. Representatives Costello and Durbin submitted the Land Management Plan for the Alton Lake Heritage Parkway to the Illinois General Assembly for their review. Recognizing the regional and national significance of this area, the Assembly endorsed the plan. Since that time, through the efforts of the Great Rivers Land Trust, private landowners, local and state governments, and organizations such as The Nature Institute, significant progress has been made to preserve the “viewshed” and to conserve the underlying ecological integrity of this corridor.

With the purchase of 429 acres of upland forests and bluff prairie at the Palisades, a significant piece of the corridor will be conserved for future generations to enjoy. This site will also allow the National Great Rivers Research and Education Center to conduct research that will contribute to our understanding of these complex forest and prairie systems.

The fifteen mile stretch between Alton and Grafton is the only section of the Mississippi River where the Great River Road runs adjacent to both the river and the 150 foot limestone bluffs. This landscape is rich in cultural, historical, and wildlife resources. The exposed geology in this area dates back more than 250 million years. Humans have inhabited this area for over 10,000 years leaving a story of their presence in the landscape. The diverse ecosystem supports migrating birds, rare plants and animals, and a diverse array of native flora and fauna.

The Mississippi Valley is one of the most important migratory flyways in the United States. An estimated 50 percent of North American ducks, geese, swans, and eagles use the river as their flyway, as well as hundreds of warblers and other birds. Over 260 bird species have been seen in our area.

The Palisades landscape is an important piece in conservation efforts to create a contiguous corridor of a forest and prairie mosaic connecting the Olin Nature Preserve west of Alton to Pere Marquette

State Park. Habitat fragmentation, loss of natural areas and the growing urban/wildlife interface is taking a toll on native flora and fauna. Wildlife corridors are becoming more critical for long term survival of these species.

Every piece of land along this remarkable corridor that is conserved through some form of stewardship program helps fulfill the vision the Illinois General Assembly supported in 1992, to “preserve or enhance the quality” of this area for generations to come. The Palisades ecosystem is a significant part of this vision.

The Bald Eagle was removed from the Federal list of endangered species on June 28, 2007. However, it remains listed as threatened in Illinois and most other states. This bird was photographed on property protected by GRLT near Clifton Terrace. Photo courtesy of John Walters.

Photographs & Sponsors Welcome

Preservation of natural resources brings many scenic rewards. We are continuously reminded of the fruits of our labor through the changing colors ushering in the fall season, flocks of migratory birds communing in our wetlands, seasonal Bald eagles gathering captive audiences along the river corridor and much more. If you would like to be a contributor to Great Rivers Views, please submit a photograph for consideration.

We also welcome sponsors of our publications. A \$100 donation designated for newsletter sponsorship helps us offset the cost of bringing you the good news about our organization. John Walters is our sponsor for this issue of Great Rivers Views. John teaches biology and chemistry at Marquette Catholic High School. He enjoys outdoor photography and donates much of his work to charity. Thanks John!

Monsanto Fund (continued)

River Road until we reached Grafton and discussed the regional success of preserving the Palisades in addition to hundreds of acres connecting Alton and Grafton along the *Meeting of the Great Rivers National Scenic Byway*. I was feeling that the visit was quite a success as we talked about the importance of preservation and collaboration when Ms. Patterson said, "These are all great projects, but we want to focus on the agricultural community." I quickly turned my vehicle back towards Piasa Creek and said, "Oh, we do that too!"

We turned our focus to the many conservation techniques used in the Piasa Creek Watershed Project to reduce the amount of soil loss for farmers which increases row crop production and yield. Suddenly, we were on common ground and a partnership began to form.

The Illinois Pollution Control Board recently affirmed the Piasa Creek Watershed Project following a five-year review. The joint project which has exceeded its goals will continue for the next three years.

Capital Campaign

By Kim Pope, Board Member

Over the last 15 years, Great Rivers Land trust has been generously supported by private foundations, small government grant programs and a select group of individuals.

Protecting our environment benefits all of us - including our business community. Conserved open space enhances quality of life and community character that contributes to economic well-being. In an effort to engage the business community in our efforts, we are conducting a special appeal as part of our three-year capital campaign. *We Saw the Forest Through the Trees* will recognize business contributors. In addition, the land trust will match every \$100 donation from a business with a tree planting. Businesses donating \$1,000 or more will receive a placard to be placed in the River Forest Farm.

Today, the Monsanto Fund is making it possible for us to construct numerous filter ponds on agricultural land throughout the watershed. Filter ponds are two-tiered pond systems designed to filter chemicals, trap sediment and serve as stormwater retention structures. The upper cells of the ponds are lined with plants that are highly absorbent and tolerant of pollutants, and serve primarily as the filter and sediment traps. Both cells serve as the stormwater retention structure. We have had an enthusiastic response from the agricultural community and four structures have been completed. Other potential sites are being evaluated to determine soil savings relative to the project cost.

We are grateful to the Monsanto Fund for helping us implement this valuable project. We are also pleased to report that representatives from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service rated the filter ponds innovative and effective, and are interested in partnering with Great Rivers and the Monsanto Fund to sustain the project.

Easements (continued)

worked out between you and the land trust staff in such a way as to meet the goals for your property that we hold in common with you. The land trust would be responsible, in perpetuity, for seeing that your wishes are carried out.

In addition to the satisfaction of knowing that your unique property is being preserved for future generations to enjoy, you can receive financial benefits as well. These benefits may be realized in a number of different ways and it would be best to speak with the land trust staff directly for specific examples.

Great Rivers Land Trust now owns or protects approximately 2,500 acres of land for the use and enjoyment of future generations. Each month, landowners are contacting us to discuss how we might assist them in preserving their property. Why don't you join them and consider it as well? Give us a call at 618-467-2265 to get things started..

The Chicago-based Grand Victoria Foundation awarded GRLT a grant in support of the Palisades Project. Grand Victoria Foundation provides strategic funding to Illinois organizations working for long-lasting economic, educational and environmental change. The foundation, established in 1996 by the Grand Victoria Casino, supports five elements of great communities: good jobs, a healthy environment, great places for kids, capable organizations and homegrown philanthropy. Thank you Grand Victoria Foundation!

A publication of Great Rivers Land Trust
Dedicated to the responsible use of our
lands and waters

P.O. Box 821
Alton, IL 62002

Phone: 618-467-2265
Fax: 618-466-6167
E-mail: grlt@hughes.net

Non-Profit Org.
PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 162
Alton, Illinois

Visit GRLT at www.greatriverslandtrust.com



Thank You For Your Support

Your good stewardship helps us steward the land entrusted to Great Rivers Land Trust. Thank you for your commitment to protecting our natural resources! Please continue to support our work.

- \$25 or less - Friend of Great Rivers
- \$50 - Habitat Helper
- \$100 - Illinois River Donor
- \$250 - Missouri River Donor
- \$500 - Mississippi River Donor
- \$750 - Prairie Donor
- \$1,000 - Forest Donor
- \$5,000 and above - Bluff Top Donor

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Return to: Great Rivers Land Trust

P.O. Box 821, Alton, Illinois 62002

Board of Directors & Staff

Board of Directors

Richard Snyder, *President*
John Williams, *1st Vice-President*
Jim Hoefert, *Treasurer*
Robert Hurley, M.D., *Secretary*
Edmund Gray
Annie Hoagland
John Hooker, M.D.
Chrissy McAllister
Sarah Perkins, Ph.D.
Kim Pope
Michael Taylor, M.D.
Diane White
Rick Zipprick

Staff

Alley Ringhausen, *Executive Director*
Patrick Goetten, *Project Manager*
Karen Walters, *Development Director*
Pam Cunningham, *Office Manager*
Jacob Botterbush, *Land Steward*

Volunteer Opportunities

- Advisory Board
- Capital Campaign
- Publicity
- Events