

DRIFTLESS AREA CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP



Bobolink

Ryan Sanderson/Macaulay Library



Eastern Meadowlark

Shelley Rutkin/Macaulay Library



Upland Sandpiper

Gavin McKinnon/Macaulay Library

**Many ground-nesting birds
are still found in grasslands
of the Driftless Area.**

Grasslands and Oak Savannas for Water and Wildlife

Overview

The Driftless Area lies in the heart of the Upper Mississippi River Basin. Unlike its surroundings, this region was bypassed by the last continental glaciation, so it lacks “drift”—the sedimentary deposits of prior glaciers. It is an ancient landscape with steep hills and deep valleys, containing some of the Midwest’s highest quality remnants of oak savanna, bluff prairies, and grasslands. It is also part of a vital migration corridor for more than half of North America’s bird species.

However, this resource is at risk as land ownership continues to fragment, fire no longer renews grasslands, and invasive species overtake remaining habitat. Steep topography makes cropland highly vulnerable to soil erosion and rapid runoff. A changing climate is contributing to record-breaking flood events, imposing great costs on communities.



**Perennial vegetation
protects steep slopes of
the Driftless Area.**



Through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), Sand County Foundation is working with partners and the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service to reverse these trends. Our new \$1.5 million RCPP project will transform more than 2,000 acres of highly erodible croplands, overgrazed pasture, and low-quality prairie and savanna remnants to thriving and productive perennial cover. The project provides Driftless Area landowners with conservation planning services and direct financial support for:

- Prescribed grazing, including pasture seeding, fencing, lanes, and water lines.
- Oak savanna restoration, including brush management, invasive species control, and prescribed burning.
- Agroforestry, including alley cropping and silvopasture.
- Prairie buffers and borders, both in-field and edge-of-field.

How to participate:

Owners and managers of agricultural or non-industrial forest land in Wisconsin's Driftless Area can contact project partners or their local NRCS office. Applications are invited on a continuous basis and are ranked and awarded one to two times per year.

Contact: Craig Ficenec, 608-395-8402, cficenec@sandcountyfoundation.org

Visit: sandcountyfoundation.org/driftless



Prescribed Grazing



Savanna Restoration



Prairie Buffers

PROJECT PARTNERS



Natural Resources Conservation Service

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.



Sand County Foundation inspires and empowers a growing number of private landowners to ethically manage natural resources in their care, so future generations have clean and abundant water, healthy soil to support agriculture and forestry, plentiful habitat for wildlife and opportunities for outdoor recreation. www.sandcountyfoundation.org