

# Public Engagement Examples



The following are examples of ways in which Illinois organizations have used acquisitions to pursue broader organizational goals and/or build support for conservation in the local community:

## **Build Membership and Support**

*The Land Conservancy of McHenry County* is planning a members barbeque at its recently acquired site, the West Woodstock Prairie natural area. *Ducks Unlimited*, which cooperated in the project, is also planning a members event there. The idea is to introduce members to the site and build enthusiasm by demonstrating success. The Land Conservancy is also planning a reception for local community leaders in Woodstock to announce the project, attract attention to their work, build relationships, and earn goodwill for future projects.

When a *Ducks Unlimited* land protection project was designated as a waypoint on the Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway, the group began planning a parking lot and interpretive signage to assist future visitors and is working to get coverage in the local newspaper. The story will be shared with the local Economic Development Council and Byway Board of Directors, each of which is made up of community and corporate leaders from the local area. Leaders will be asked to assist in securing financial support for future conservation projects.

## **Facilitate Other Deals**

*The Liberty Prairie Conservancy* packages the stories and testimonials of landowners who have worked out conservation deals, including two families involved in recent deals who wish to remain anonymous, and uses them to communicate with other landowners about conservation options. The Conservancy presented the material at workshops which attracted over fifty attendees and other expressions of interest, and posted the stories on its website, [www.libertyprairie.org](http://www.libertyprairie.org).

*The Natural Land Institute* used the announcement of a recent conservation easement in an area north of Mississippi Palisades Park to communicate to landowners in surrounding Carroll County about the financial advantages of such conservation deals. As a direct result, the Institute has accepted two donated conservation easements to date and has been contacted by other landowners also interested in donating easements.

### **Raise Money**

*The Great Rivers Land Trust* put together a video and a booklet about its recent acquisition of the Palisades Preserve and is using it to raise money for another parcel in the area.

### **Advance Other Conservation Agendas**

*The Natural Land Institute* timed announcement of its acquisition of a portion of Milan Bottoms to coincide with the Upper Mississippi River Conference in Moline in August 2008. The Institute hired a wildlife photographer to document the natural richness of the area for a display at the conference, met with state legislators and city planning staff to inform them about the acquisition, and secured major coverage in the *Quad City Times*. The media attention, they hope, will ensure that local officials pay more attention to the impact of future development on the wildlife refuge. They also hope that introducing legislators to their efforts to preserve this area will help build support for sorely-needed conservation funding in the future.

A workshop hosted by *Ducks Unlimited* and partners at a historic duck club briefed outdoor writers about the **Illinois Wildlife Action Plan (IWAP)**, and the writers were taken on a tour of two land acquisition projects tied to the plan. The conservation groups shared resulting newspaper articles with members of the Illinois Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus and met with the Caucus to highlight IWAP funding concerns and necessary actions. Legislation was introduced to restore funds critical to IWAP.

### **GRAND VICTORIA FOUNDATION**

230 W. Monroe St., Ste 2530

Chicago, IL 60606

(312) 609-0200

(312) 658-0738 FAX

[www.grandvictoriafdn.org](http://www.grandvictoriafdn.org)