



**News Release — For Immediate Release  
February, 12, 2019**

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**Driftless Area Land Conservancy, Friends of the Lower Wisconsin Riverway, and Arcadia Books Bring “Decoding The Driftless” Film to Spring Green with Special Guest Film Producer George Howe.**

Spring Green, WI – Go on a wild ride of adventure above, on, and below the amazing Driftless Region through a new film of exploration. Soar over ancient, rugged bluffs, skim the surface of primordial rivers, venture deep underground to secret worlds, marvel at sacred archeological treasures, hang perilously over massive rock cliffs, and travel across time itself to explore and decipher ancient clues of the unglaciated Driftless Region landscape, with its captivating scenic beauty.

Local Emmy Award-winning filmmakers George Howe and Tim Jacobson of Sustainable Driftless teamed up again with national TV series host Rob Nelson of Untamed Science to produce a feature-length film about the amazing origins and diverse natural and archaeological resources of the Driftless Region. This time, the creative team added Swedish filmmaker Jonas Stenstrom of Untamed Science, and six-time Emmy-winning wildlife cinematographer Neil Rettig. The team delivers extremely rare footage of natural phenomena and scenic beauty in the Driftless in a way never seen before!

Arcadia Books and two local environmental organizations—Driftless Area Land Conservancy and Friends of the Lower Wisconsin Riverway—worked to bring the film to The Gard Theater in downtown Spring Green. One of the film’s producers, George Howe, will be speaking before the film. “It’s such an impressive undertaking. Documenting the singularly unique attributes of the Driftless Area at this time is so important given that it is now under threat by the proposed construction of a massive high-voltage transmission line” said Katie McGrath of Arcadia Books. “Seeing this stunning film reinforces how unique and important the Driftless Area is culturally and ecologically and how we must be thoughtful stewards of it.”

Emily Benz of the Driftless Area Land Conservancy worked to engage area schools and has arranged for 130 high school students from the River Valley, Ithaca, Iowa-Grant, and Reedsburg districts to attend an afternoon screening of the film as part of DALC's educational programming which is a critical component to the organization's mission.

"I believe the real and personal stories, fascinating natural phenomena, and surprising natural history presented in this film, are going to profoundly touch the lives of many, many people, and inspire them to connect with nature," said George Howe, one of the producers and writers for the film and a co-founder of Sustainable Driftless. "When people connect with and enjoy nature, many good things happen. We are truly part of the natural world, and it's important for people to know about the land where they live, and develop a good sense of place."

Tim Jacobson, president of Sustainable Driftless, Inc., and one of the producers, cameramen, and writers for the film, said, "The Driftless Area of the Upper Mississippi is most amazing to me, not solely for its attribute as the only 'island' driftless region in the world, but because of the sheer number of truly remarkable characteristics in its geological and archaeological history as well as its modern biological and cultural significance. It's the center of the only place on Earth with a concentration of ancient effigy burial mounds. It's one of the largest migratory flyways for birds in the world. With Lake Pepin, it contains the widest naturally occurring part of the Mississippi River, which became the birthplace of waterskiing. It's the birthplace of the modern soil and water conservation movement, too. It has the nation's largest organic farming cooperative. The region contains the Earth's highest concentration of coldwater streams, which makes it a world-class trout-fishing destination. And as a landscape photographer, I know that it's breathtakingly beautiful." Jacobson added.

The documentary film was a huge undertaking that required the founding of a new nonprofit organization, Sustainable Driftless, Inc., with board members drawn from all four states of the Driftless Region. The group had to ramp up its efforts quickly to raise six figures of funding to cover the production budget. The director, Jonas Stenstrom, was flown in repeatedly from Sweden, and one of the producers, Rob Nelson, made multiple trips from his home in North Carolina. Local cameramen Tim Jacobson, Neil Rettig, and Jordan Kjome captured video footage while tromping through and flying over the rugged landscape throughout the seasons. The crew endured various mishaps and setbacks, including one of the editing computers crashing, also having to switch editing software mid-project, and contending with unpredictable weather during narrow windows of filming time. Producers Tim Jacobson and George Howe put much of their professional lives on hold to focus major parts of their time on the project over several years.

"Working to create this film has been a labor of love for me," said Howe. "It's a way I can give back to this amazing region that has fascinated and inspired me for decades. I feel very blessed to have grown up in the Driftless Region, study and enjoy it for decades, and work to conserve and restore rare resources here. I have always had a passion for sharing with others what I've learned and felt, so creating and sharing a film like this is a dream come true."

"The goal of both the Sustainable Driftless organization and the film is to inspire resource conservation, vibrant local communities, and sustainable growth in the region," Jacobson explained. "We want the film to serve as a tireless cheerleader for this amazing land, both locally and abroad. We

see the Driftless Region as a remarkable international geo-tourism destination with huge untapped potential.”

The film includes a diverse cast of scientists, conservationists, and guides: Eric Carson, Ph.D. (UW-Extension); Colin Belby, Ph.D. (UW-La Crosse); Dylan Blumentrit, Ph.D. (Winona State University); William Gartner, Ph.D. (UW-Madison); Mark Cupp (Lower Wisconsin State Riverway), Kendra Pednault (USFWS), John Howe, Dave Kester and Amy Ries (Raptor Resource Project); Tom Presby (UW-Green Bay); Kaitlyn O’Connor (Prairie Moon Nursery); Scott Leddy (The Prairie Enthusiasts); Jordan Kjome (Driftless enthusiast and photographer); Steve Barg (Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation); Duke Welter (Trout Unlimited); Buzz Bocher (retired from UW-La Crosse); Mike Van Sicklen (Driftless Area Land Conservancy); Jonas Stenstrom and Rob Nelson (Untamed Science); George Howe and Tim Jacobson (Sustainable Driftless); Mike a/k/a PleaseStandBy (YouTube celebrity), and Jeff Thurlow (private geologist).

In addition to the lead production and science roles of Sustainable Driftless and Untamed Science, a number of organizations and businesses are supporting this film and educational project, including PMG Foundation, Dairyland Power Cooperative, Applied Ecological Services, Paul E. Stry Foundation, Dr. Kirk Jacobson, Prairie Moon Nursery, D.B. Reinhart Institute for Ethics and Leadership, Raptor Resource Project, MarketSharp, Trout Unlimited Driftless Area Restoration Effort, Driftless Environmental Education Project, Grant County Economic Development Corp., Dublin Square, Honda Motorwerks, Justin Trails Resort, North Ridge Guesthouse, Nature Nooks Retreat, 3M, and Innovative Graphics, LLC.

## **FILM SCREENING DETAILS:**

**Friday, March 1, 2019 at 7:00pm**

**The Gard Theater**

**111 E. Jefferson Street**

**Spring Green, WI 53588**

**Tickets are \$5.00**

**Purchase at Arcadia Books, 102 E. Jefferson St., Spring Green, WI 53588**

**Purchase online at [www.readinutopia.com](http://www.readinutopia.com)**

**Driftless Area Land Conservancy**, based in Dodgeville, Wisconsin is an accredited land trust organization working to maintain and enhance the health, diversity and beauty of Southwest Wisconsin’s natural and agricultural landscape through permanent land protection and restoration and education.

**Friends of the Lower Wisconsin Riverway**, based in Spring Green, Wisconsin is a non-profit citizen’s organization working to protect and preserve the wilderness type experience of the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway.

**Arcadia Books** is an independent bookstore and café located in Spring Green, Wisconsin.