



NEWS

Fall/Winter 2025

Sustainable Driftless, Inc. is dedicated to inspiring resource conservation, vibrant communities, and sustainable growth in the Driftless Region.

Photo by Tim Jacobson



Photo by Tim Jacobson



Schedule a Film Screening

Sustainable Driftless, Inc. is seeking venues for screenings of *Spirit of the Driftless* throughout the region. If you would like to see the film at your local movie theater, opera house, community event center, or school, let us know! We are interested in partnering with local organizations as sponsors. Screenings can include a question and answer session with a member of the production team following the show (for a fee).

Contact Jan Wee at sustainableoutreach@gmail.com to schedule a screening.

“Drifties Awards” Launching

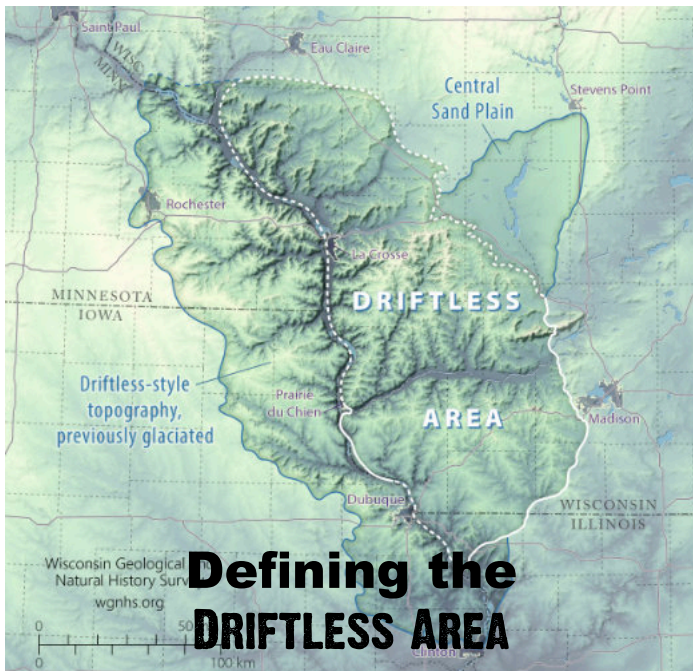
To celebrate individuals, businesses / organizations, and communities that embody the best sustainability and conservation practices of the four-state Driftless Region, Sustainable Driftless will debut an annual awards event in April 2026.

Award categories:

- George Howe Legacy Award: Outstanding Educator
- Outstanding Business
- Outstanding Nonprofit/Community
- Outstanding Land Management

SDI is seeking event sponsors and judges for the competition. Nominations for award recipients will be accepted starting in January 2026. Contact board member Nancy Breed at breednancy@gmail.com or visit sustainable-driftless.org/annual-drifty-awards-1





[Source: Wisconsin Geological & Natural History Survey]

The Driftless Area exhibits a dendritic (tree-like) pattern of rugged river valleys incised through what had been the Paleozoic Plateau.

On the map to the left, the areas outlined in white were never glaciated, whereas some areas of Driftless-style topography were glaciated, but perhaps not for a million years or more. Because of that long period of time without glaciation, the landscape remains ancient and ruggedly beautiful, just like the parts that were never glaciated. (Scientists use soil cores to search for evidence of glacial drift, and this is how the boundaries of the Driftless can be defined.)



Where continental glaciers flowed, they dragged soil and rocks with them from other regions—what geologists call “drift.” The area missed by the glaciers has no glacial drift. Hence, it is “driftless.”

Geological evidence tells us that around 2.6 million years ago, the earth became very cold, and massive continental glaciers, as much as a mile or two thick, formed and spread southward from the arctic and covered what is now Canada and a large swath of the northern United States. This is what is referred to as the Ice Age, which actually consisted of many ice ages, in which the ice ebbed and flowed as the climate changed.

The ice repeatedly surrounded the area of the Upper Mississippi River, but it never completely covered the region, leaving a large region unscathed.

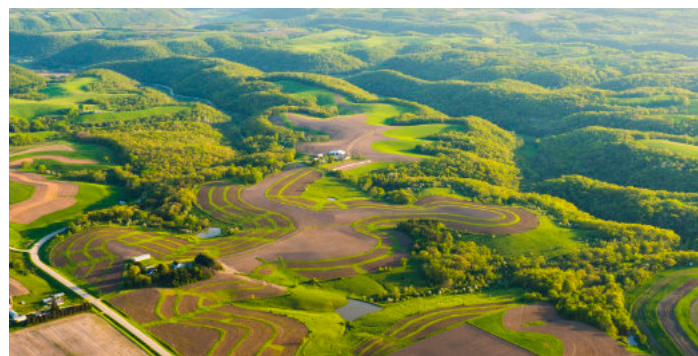


Photo by Tim Jacobson

Because the Driftless Area was not crushed, scoured and flattened by the mile-thick pack of ice, it is a beautifully rugged and ancient landscape. Algific talus slopes in the region provide a home for arctic-type species of plants and animals, such as the northern monkshood wildflower and the Pleistocene snail.

Sustainable Driftless, Inc.’s online magazine highlights organizations, individuals, companies and communities and the initiatives and policies that are making a difference in sustainability throughout the region. It covers economics, our built and wild spaces, transitions to sustainable agriculture, organics, health, creativity, environmental education, and inspiring highlights from around the Driftless Region.

Board of Directors of SDI

Sustainable Driftless, Inc. is a 501(c)3 nonprofit governed by directors from around the Driftless:

Tim Jacobson - Pres. (MN), Julia Henley - VP (WI), Nancy Breed - Secretary (IL), Kent Johnson - Treas. (WI), Brian Murphy (WI), and Jan Wee (WI).

Our Driftless Films Make Great Gifts!

Do you find yourself wondering what gift to give for Christmas, Father’s Day, Mothers Day, and birthdays? Buy one or both of our movies! You can’t go wrong—who doesn’t enjoy the films?

Spirit of the Driftless and *Decoding the Driftless* are sold at select retail locations and through our website:

www.sustainable-driftless.org/store/

Get your copy today!

Buy **both** films for people who love the Driftless landscape!



Driftless Films *ON THE ROAD*



Photo by Lisa Jacobson

Tim Jacobson being interviewed on PBS Wisconsin during a broadcast of Decoding the Driftless on Dec. 3, 2025.



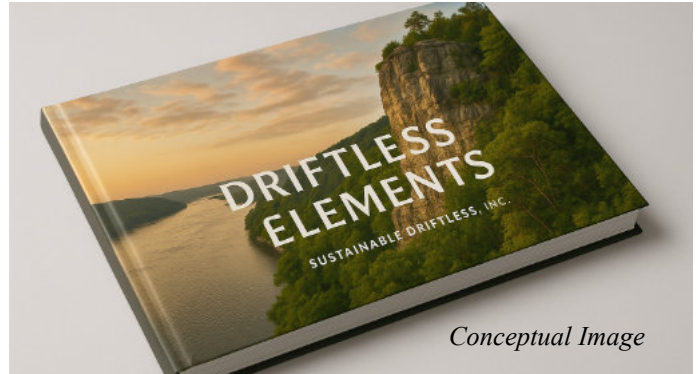
Photo by David Nemetz

Tim Jacobson on stage answering questions from Bill Webb at the Driftless Film Festival in Mineral Point, Wis., Nov. 2025.



Tim & Lisa Jacobson at the Milwaukee Independent Film Awards on Dec. 6, 2025.

Photo Book Project Underway



Conceptual Image

The ancient, natural landscape of the Driftless is a magnet for artistic photojournalists. A new 'coffee table' book, with a working title of *Driftless Elements*, will bring together stunning photos from throughout the region. This curated edition of Driftless regional and inspirational photos from exemplary local photographers will capture the magic and spirit of this unique place. We're looking for sponsors and, with your support, the book will debut in 2026.

Contact Julia Henley at jdhenley11@gmail.com or visit sustainable-driftless.org/driftless-photobook for more information or to sponsor creation of the book.

Did you know we create school lesson plans?

While our films are great for inspiring kids to get outdoors and learn about nature, we never expected the films to stand entirely on their own as educational pieces. That's why we created educational lesson plans to be used by schools in conjunction with the films for learning about the Driftless Region and the many natural treasures it holds. Each lesson is correlated to specific film segments and aligned with national educational standards.

Sustainable Driftless offers lesson plans to Driftless Area schools for free. If you have a child in school or if you know educators, please reach out and ask if they might be interested in our films and lesson plans.

For more information about Sustainable Driftless' environmental education work and to download school lesson plans, visit

www.sustainable-driftless.org/education-resources

or contact Outreach Coordinator Jan Wee

sustainabledriftless.outreach@gmail.com

Sustainable DRIFTLESS

P.O. Box 1231

La Crosse, WI 54601



sustainable-driftless.org



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The aurora borealis has made multiple, spectacular appearances over the Driftless Region the past few years. This is due to the sun being near the peak of its 11-year activity cycle, known as the solar maximum, leading to more solar eruptions and charged particles hitting Earth. We are currently in this active period (Solar Cycle 25), which started around 2019 and peaked around late 2024/early 2025.

Photo of the northern lights - La Crescent, MN, May 2024,
by Timothy S. Jacobson



Needs Your Support!

Membership Form

Yes—I want to support Sustainable Driftless, Inc.'s mission to inspire resource conservation, vibrant communities, and sustainable growth in the Driftless Region with a tax-deductible contribution!

Name(s): _____

Phone: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ ST: _____ Zip: _____

Email(s): _____

____ Driftless Sustainer \$1,000 ____ Bountiful Benefactor \$500 ____ Coulee Champion \$250

____ Family Friend \$100 ____ Amazing Advocate \$50 ____ Other \$ _____

Make check payable to Sustainable Driftless, Inc. or complete credit card information:

Name: _____ Card No. _____ Exp. _____ CVV _____

Signature: _____

There are multiple ways for you to support SDI's educational mission:

1. Mail a check payable to "Sustainable Driftless, Inc." to P.O. Box 1231, La Crosse, WI 54602-1231
2. Become a member at sustainable-driftless.org/membership
3. Buy copies of our films at sustainable-driftless.org/store/ The films make great gifts!