

World premiere of new Driftless documentary Sept. 23 at Viterbo

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Building on the regional Emmy Award-winning success of “Decoding the Driftless,” Sustainable Driftless, Inc. will premiere its new documentary, “Spirit of the Driftless: Preserving Our Legacy,” on Tuesday at the Viterbo University Fine Arts Center.



A production still taken while filming “Spirit of the Driftless”

Created by two-time regional Emmy Award winners Tim Jacobson and the late George Howe of Sustainable Driftless, Inc., together with fellow Emmy winners Jonas Stenstrom and Rob Nelson of Untamed Science, Inc., this new film captures the breathtaking beauty and essence of the Driftless Region’s natural wonders and archaeological heritage.

The film takes audiences on an extraordinary journey — soaring with raptors, hiking rugged bluffs, paddling quiet waters, exploring archaeological features, and venturing into hidden caves. It truly embodies the Spirit of the Driftless.

The movie is dedicated to George Howe, a founder of Sustainable Driftless, Inc., who led the filming expeditions but passed away in February 2024 before the editing was complete.

“It is a fitting tribute to George to finalize the film project he was so passionate about,” said Tim Jacobson, president of Sustainable Driftless. “His spirit lives on through this film and the causes he championed.”

Spirit of the Driftless offers a fresh perspective on the landscape, with a different feel and flavor from its predecessor. Decoding the Driftless earned a regional Emmy, more than 20 film festival awards (including some internationally), and continues to air widely on PBS. It has been broadcast nearly 900 times in 42 states and Canada, reaching a potential audience of more than 100 million viewers.

“Our goal was to provide a new lens on the Driftless landscape,” said Jonas Stenstrom, director of Spirit of the Driftless. “I hope viewers everywhere will come away with a much deeper appreciation for this one-of-a-kind region.”

Guests can also take a selfie with a real Emmy statuette and purchase the film on DVD. Admission is free and open to the public. General admission seating—come early!

IF YOU GO

What: World Premiere Event

When: Tuesday, Sept. 23

- 6:15 p.m. – Cash bar opens
- 6:40 p.m. – Live music
- 7 p.m. – Film screening
- 7:45 p.m. – Post-screening reception with free hors d’oeuvres and beverages (cash bar available)