



THE KINNICKINNIC RIVER LAND TRUST

WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY TO PROTECT THE NATURAL RESOURCES & SCENIC BEAUTY OF THE KINNICKINNIC RIVER WATERSHED

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TOM JOHNSON FAMILY FARM PERMANENTLY PROTECTED

As part of its *Protect the Kinni Campaign*, the KINNICKINNIC RIVER LAND TRUST (KRLT) announced that Tom Johnson and his family have decided to permanently protect 127-acres of their family farm through the sale of the land's development rights to the KRLT through a conservation easement. The Johnsons retain ownership of the farm and will continue to farm the agricultural land as their family has for decades. The family sold the rights to ever develop the land and will retain all other rights of private property ownership including the right to control access across their land.

The KRLT has been working with the Johnson family for many years to find the best method to achieve long term river protection and farmland preservation. "I protected my land with KRLT because my family and I wanted to keep our farmland and the Kinni River just as I remembered it all my life. By protecting our land, my kids and grandkids can know it just as I did," said Tom Johnson.

The KRLT received a major private lead grant to its *Protect the Kinni Campaign* from The Conservation Fund, in partnership with the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, and a major grant from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund to pay for the acquisition of the conservation easement.

"Protecting the Johnson farm is a very important conservation project in the history of the KRLT," said Nelson T. French, Executive Director. "In addition to helping the Johnson's continue farming the land as they have for generations, the community has gained the guaranty of long term protection of a portion of the lower Kinnickinnic River that is filled with valuable natural resources. This is a win-win project where the landowners get to keep their land and manage it as a family farm and the citizens of

Wisconsin have an amazing river that they will always be able to enjoy in its natural state.”

Karen Blodget, Community Service Specialist of the West Central Region for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, noted, “This outstanding project recently ranked number one in Wisconsin for the Knowles-Nelson Fund Acquisition of Development Rights Program. Limiting development and ensuring best management practices on the agricultural land will forever protect the natural resources and water quality of this great river. The easement also provides for public access along the river and will ensure that the scenic views the public enjoy while recreating on the river will always remain wild.”

“We praise the Kinnickinnic River Land Trust’s vision to preserve the river’s many resources in a way that benefits private landowners and the community,” said The Conservation Fund’s Upper Midwest Director, Tom Duffus. “We hope the protection of the Johnson family farm inspires others to get involved in the effort.”

The Kinnickinnic River flows through the southern part of the farm as does Mann Valley Creek. In addition to the waterways, this project protects many other natural resources including prime agricultural soils, river bluffs, coulees, rare and threatened plant species, and diverse plant and animal habitats. The farm is owned by the Dwayne W. and Lois K. Johnson Family Trust, located in the Town of River Falls, Pierce County, Wisconsin, and is within the Kinnickinnic River Gorge Conservation Opportunity Area which was identified as a conservation priority in the recently completed Wisconsin State Wildlife Action Plan. This project shows how local landowner decisions can help achieve statewide conservation priorities.

The Kinnickinnic River Land Trust is a non-profit membership organization founded in 1993. The mission of the KRLT is to work with the community to protect the natural resources and scenic beauty of the Kinnickinnic River Watershed. KRLT has permanently protected over 2,000 acres of land through donated conservation easements and land acquisitions and, through its *Protect the Kinni Campaign*, is seeking raise the resources to protect an additional 1,000 acres.

To find out how you can help the *Protect the Kinni Campaign*, or for more information

about the Kinnickinnic River Land Trust, please contact the staff at 715.425.5738 or visit the KRLT web site at www.kinniriver.org.

The Conservation Fund is dedicated to advancing America's land and water legacy. With our partners, we conserve land, train leaders and invest in conservation at home. Since 1985, we have helped protect more than 6 million acres, sustaining wild havens, working lands and vibrant communities. The Conservation Fund is a top-ranked conservation organization, effective and efficient. <http://www.conservationfund.org>



Figure 1 Tom Johnson family celebrates the KRLT conservation easement which will protect their land forever.



**Kinnickinnic
River Land Trust**

Conservation
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