

Jacobson leaving MVC for Boscobel



TIM JACOBSON

Tim Jacobson, executive director of Mississippi Valley Conservancy, will leave MVC in late June to start a national organizational consulting business, according to Pat Caffrey, MVC board president. Jacobson will assist with the transition and help start the search for a new leader of the Conservancy, Caffrey said.

David Skoloda has agreed to serve as interim executive director, a post he held during the search leading to the hiring of Jacobson, according to Caffrey. Skoloda is one of several co-founders of the Conservancy and a past president of the board of directors.

Jacobson has been at the helm of MVC for more than seven years and is the organization's longest-serving executive in the sixteen-and-a-half years of its existence. He was hired by the Conservancy in March 2006 after serving as president of the law firm O'Flaherty Heim Egan Ltd.

During Jacobson's tenure, the land trust grew rapidly and accumulated statewide and national accolades, including being named "Land Trust of the Year" and "Friend of Conservation - Outstanding Organization" for the State of Wisconsin. Jacobson also led MVC successfully through the national land trust accreditation process—a feat achieved by only about ten percent of the 1,700 land trusts around the country.

More recently, MVC was honored at the National Press Club in Washington DC for its 15th anniversary magazine. Jacobson credited a strong board of directors, able staff and extensive network of volunteers and donors for the organization's success. "This will remain the key to the organization's future success," he said.

MVC went from having 2,800 acres permanently protected before he started to 15,200 acres today. In addition,

MVC has about 2,000 acres enrolled in its Landowner Registry Program, for a total of more than 17,000 acres dedicated to conservation.

"Lots of wonderful things are happening at MVC, including the recent completion of MVC's largest-ever conservation project—the nearly 2,300-acre Kings Point Farm property on the Kickapoo River," Jacobson said. "Nevertheless, I feel it is time for me to move on to where I believe I can do the most good for the land trust and nonprofit communities," Jacobson explained. "Fifteen hundred land trusts around the country may be considering the national accreditation process, for example. I believe I can help a good number of them achieve their goals."

Pat Caffrey, MVC board president, said, "MVC has accomplished a phenomenal amount of conservation and ecological restoration work with Tim Jacobson as executive director. Our organization has more than quintupled the amount of protected land during his tenure. He's also raised the visibility of the organization tremendously. We're sorry to lose him, but we can appreciate this new opportunity for him to work with land trusts around the country on accreditation and other organizational matters."

Jacobson is engaged to be married this summer to Lisa Toyne, a kindergarten teacher in Boscobel. The couple plans to make their home in Boscobel, which is near to where Jacobson grew up and went to high school. Jacobson's new venture will be based in Boscobel.

Jacobson is often called upon to give presentations about the benefits and successes of voluntary land conservation at regional conferences and annual meetings throughout the Midwest. He firmly believes in the importance of the model of nonprofit land trusts providing legal tools and options to private landowners to voluntarily conserve their own land.

"Private land conservation is the way to go," he says. "Land trusts empower landowners to carry out Aldo Leopold's land ethic in the most permanent way they can. With two million acres of farms and forests being lost to blacktop, concrete and bulldozers each year, our country needs land trusts and conservation-minded landowners more than ever."

He has served on the board of directors of Gathering Waters Conservancy, a service organization for Wisconsin land trusts; the Land Trust Council in Wisconsin; the DNR's Stewardship Advisory Council;

and the board of Midwest Environmental Advocates. He has been an active leader in the Blufflands Alliance—a collaboration of a half-dozen land trusts in the four states of the Upper Mississippi River.

"Mississippi Valley Conservancy is a great organization with an important mission," Jacobson said. "I've been privileged to work on conserving some of the rarest and most precious places on our landscape. I'm also humbled by the deep commitment and conservation leadership of so many caring landowners MVC works with. I'll take many wonderful memories with me."