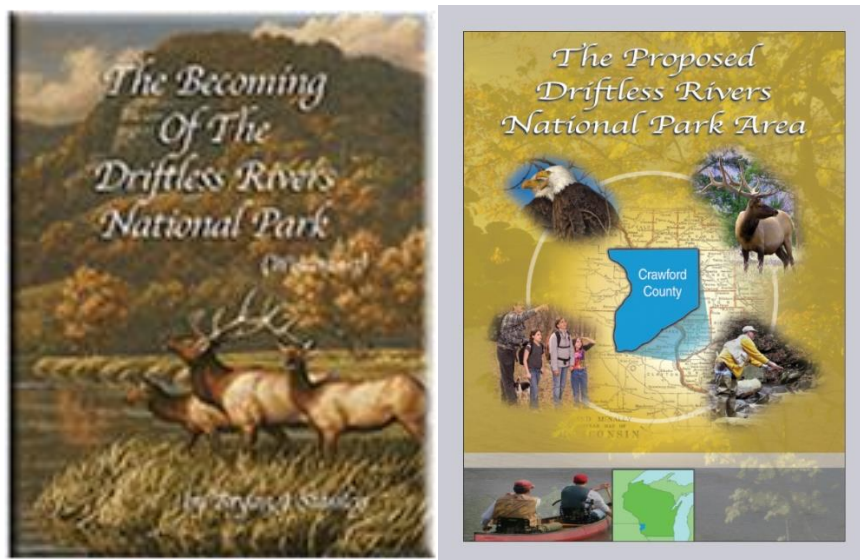


# A New National Park in Wisconsin

In a recent issue of *Country Magazine* (August/September 2018) lauding the magnificent Driftless Region of Wisconsin – *A Land Beyond Glaciers* – one development was scenically overlooked. That is: It is the target area of a new great national park. A 375'000 acre (or more) chunk of Utopia, The Driftless Rivers National Park. The article went on to point out that Crawford and Vernon counties represent the finest topography of the whole Driftless Region. That is why the park effort is centered here.

The park will derive its name from the Driftless Region where it lies and the mighty rivers that flank it and meet: The Wisconsin and Mississippi rivers and their spectacular gorges. A lesser river, lesser well know but no lesser loved is the diminutive Kickapoo. It meanders snake-like in its little valley for some 60 miles through this glorious land and finds its end in the Wisconsin.



No one who knows this land intimately can doubt its national park potential. A potential from natural beauty; long human history and culture; and its superlative educational and recreations opportunities. It meets and exceeds all of the national park criterion necessary to qualify as a great park. The answer to: What good is it?

Imagine the exquisite joy this park will be to generations and generations of American: Hiking, camping, horseback and carriage riding, world class trout fishing, sightseeing, canoeing, stargazing, birdwatching, and more. I would also support limited hunting during the off-season when park visitations are at the

minimum. Plus, many of the farmsteads could be rented out for family privacy and also maintained as Bed & Breakfasts.

Not only is the area most deserving for this special honor but it is in the heart of the Midwest where there is a paucity of great national parks. In a Place that is readily accessible to Midwestern citizens and not out of the reach like many of the great parks of the East and West or even farther away in Alaska. Available and accessible for the unique and special experience of vacationing in a great national park. It can all be ours.

We can recreate this park if we have the will. Most of the land in Crawford County and the Driftless Region is privately owned. However, no landowner will be forced to sell their land. Businesses such as dairy farms, apple orchards and organic farms could remain and enhance the park experience. Small communities that dot the land could also remain and serve park visitors. Participation will be all voluntary. If we can get a participation rate of 80% from land owners that should get us started. Land owners should be more than well compensated for their land and given pensions for how much land they have transferred to the park. Land owners can live out their lives on their land if they desire. We don't have to create this park overnight but maybe over a few decades. But, I believe the best use of the land and more sustainable and long lasting is to become a national park. We will all be gone in the not-to-distance future but this park will be our lasting legacy. What a gift it will be to our future citizens.

And undertaking of this sort is not unprecedented in the history of our national park system. Other parks that have been created in like manner are: Smoky Mountains, Shenandoah, Arcadia, Redwood and Grand Tetons national parks. Morris Udall, former Secretary of the Interior remarked once: "I have been involved in legislation creating a dozen national parks and the same pattern keeps repeating itself: At first locals want to hang you; five years later they think it is the best thing to have happened to their community; twenty years later they probably want to name a mountain after you." I also received an email from a college professor: He said, "You have put into words something that I have believed all my life. The Driftless Region should be a national park.

So, take a trip to Wisconsin's magnificent Driftless Region – especially Crawford and Vernon Counties. Patronize their shops and restaurants in communities such as Prairie du Chien, Gays Mills, Soldiers Grove, La Farge, Westby and Viroqua. Tell them you have come to their community to see where some day soon will be a new great national park.

To learn more visit our website [www.driftlessrivers.org](http://www.driftlessrivers.org). If you want to learn a lot more order our flagship book/proposal *The Becoming of The Driftless Rivers National Park* also from our website. Enjoy to your hearts content all of the Driftless Region.



Bryan Hunt