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Press Release

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## **Conservancy Gives Milwaukee County Parks \$14,000 for Ecological Restoration in the Root River Watershed**

The Milwaukee County Parks under the leadership of Director Sue Black, will be the recipient of \$14,000 for restoration at the county-owned Franklin Savanna State Natural Area and Rainbow Airport Prairie in the City of Franklin. The event will take place at noon on Thursday, Oct. 29 at the Stahl Conrad Homestead, 9824 W. Forest Home Avenue in Hales Corners.

The Milwaukee Area Land Conservancy (MALC) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization promoting the conservation of important natural habitats by helping landowners protect their property using conservation methods such as easements, land donations, and fee simple purchase. MALC President, Delene Hanson said, "The Franklin Savanna was selected to receive funding because of its location within the Root River watershed where MALC has agreed to assist with the distribution of funds from a third-party settlement"

Brian Russart, the County's Natural Areas Coordinator, created a comprehensive wetland mitigation and restoration plan through careful research of each site's history. "Wetland restoration at the Franklin Savanna site will filter sediment from adjacent agricultural fields and prevent it from entering Ryan Creek, a Root River tributary. The Rainbow Airport Prairie restoration will enhance the wetland habitat for rare species found in this remnant prairie. "Partnerships such as these restoration projects are truly important for the long-term management and preservation of the County's rich natural heritage," Russart stated.

Being an all-volunteer organization since its inception in 2002, MALC has purchased or has under conservation easement nearly 60 acres, including Fitzsimmons Woods and the Charity Prairie. Recently, a private donation enabled the organization to hire Kristen Wilhelm as Executive Director. Wilhelm previously worked for the Root-Pike Watershed Initiative Network (WIN). Root-Pike WIN earlier awarded restoration funds to the County-owned Savanna. Root-Pike WIN and MALC see the land trust and watershed partnership as the most efficient way to address the health of the Root River. For more information contact the Milwaukee County Parks Administrative Office at (414) 257-PARK. Information on MALC and Root-Pike WIN can be found at [www.mkeconservancy.org](http://www.mkeconservancy.org).

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