

# Driftless Area Initiative

*A multi-state partnership developing a unified voice for natural resource issues in the Driftless Area of Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Illinois*

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*on behalf of: The Driftless Area Initiative Council*

*[www.driftlessareainitiative.org](http://www.driftlessareainitiative.org)*

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# Driftless Area Initiative

- Background
- Defining the Driftless Area
- The Initiative
- Mission/Goal
- Outreach
- Structure
- Projects

# Driftless Area Initiative

When: 2002

Who: 48 private, county, state,  
and federal organizations

Leadership: 6 Resource  
Conservation & Development  
Councils – DAI Council

- Northeast Iowa
- Southwest Badger
- River Country
- Hiawatha Valley
- Blackhawk Hills
- Limestone Bluffs

# Defining the “Driftless Area”

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## Challenges

- Dairy and beef herd decline
- Decline in hay and pasture
  - (20% - 1982-1997)
- Increase in soybean acres
  - (60% - 1982-1997)
- Increasing bluffland development
- Hundreds of thousands of CRP acres expiring
- Federal farm incentives support shift in production
- Native habitat, ground and surface water quality degradation
- Local food and energy systems deteriorated and under continued pressure
- Economic decline
- *Limited multi-state data*
- *Political fragmentation*

# Defining the “Driftless Area”

## Characteristics

- Unique geology, topography and ecosystems
- Priority rivers and high quality *cold* water trout streams
- Diverse land use including beef, dairy and other local food production
- Small farms and small towns with local systems
- Strong recreation and tourism
- Strong identity and pride

# The DAI's "Driftless Area"

- Unique Region – Bypassed by last glacier
- Watershed based
- Data is available
  - Greater than 78% in NRCS MLRA 105
- Over 15,000,000 Acres
- Over 24,000 Square Miles
- All or portions of 57 Counties in four states





# Driftless Area Initiative

- Develop Unified Voice Across State Lines
- Address Contribution to Hypoxia Zone
- Encourage Collaboration and Cooperation to Solve Area Issue for National Consequences
- Address Water Quality and Regional Environmental Issues
- Advocate, Plan, & Support on the Ground Projects

# Driftless Area Initiative

## Goal

*Bring national attention,  
funding and technical  
assistance to the Driftless Area*

## Mission

*To unite organizations and  
individuals within the Driftless  
Area for collaborative action to  
enhance and restore this region's  
ecology, economy and cultural  
resources in a balanced,  
integrated fashion.*

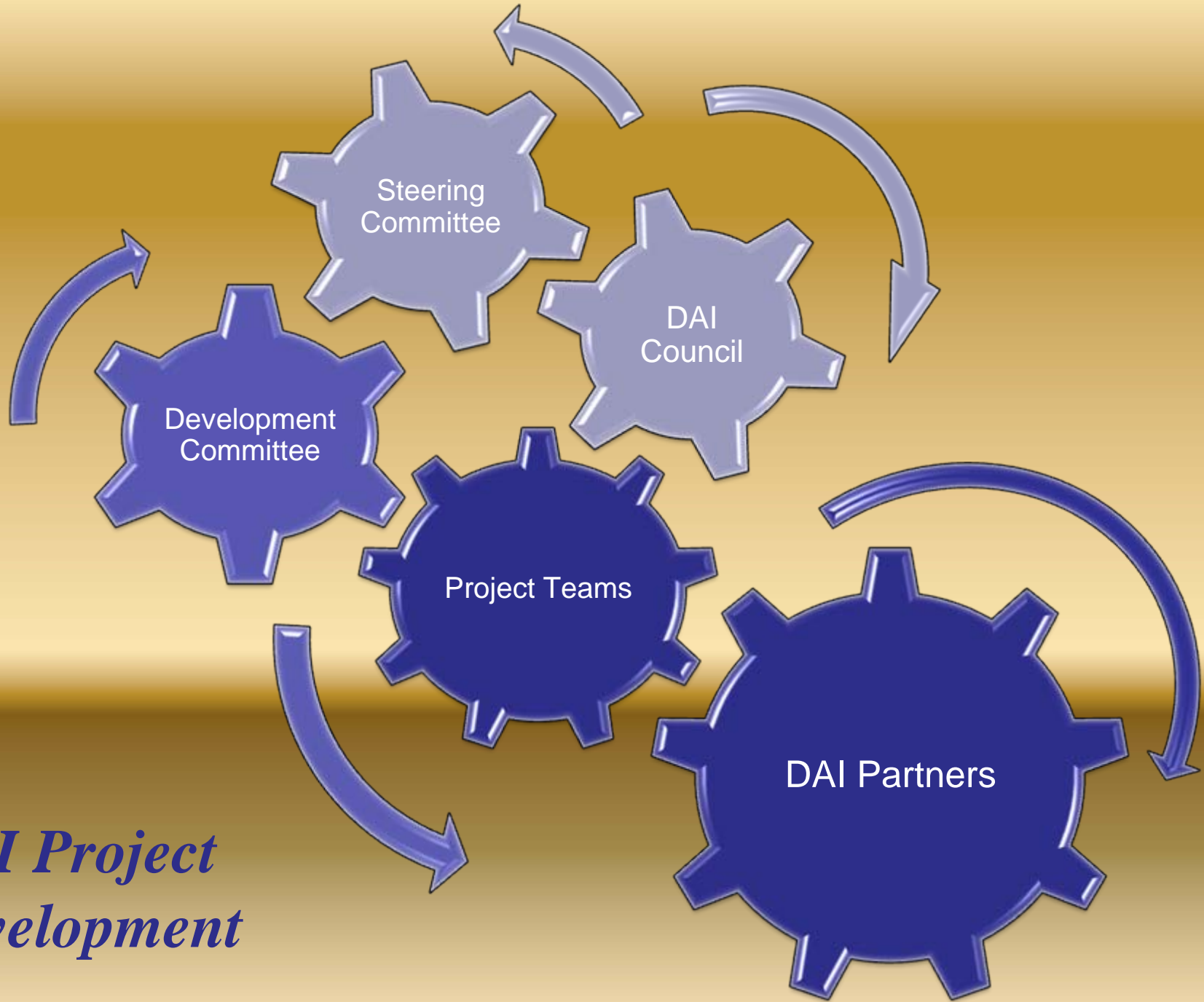
# Driftless Area Initiative

Outreach

# Driftless Area Initiative

## Structure

- Project Partners – 48+ organizations
- DAI Council – Representative from each of the RC&D's – assisted by a DAI Coordinator
- Project Teams – Develop project based on need
- Development Committee – Federal, State, Non-profit and at-large representation. Review projects
- Steering Committee – Provides technical assistance to the development committee



*DAI Project  
Development*

# Driftless Area Initiative

## Projects

- Switchgrass Research to Determine Best Management Practices for Maximizing Yield
- Military Ridge Prairie Heritage Area
- Pecatonica Watershed Project
- Neotropical Migratory Bird Project
- Lake Pepin Grazing Management
- SE MN Grazing School
- Southeast Minnesota Rain Barrel Program
- TUDARE

# Driftless Area Initiative

## Projects Continued

- **Driftless Area Biomass Project**
  - A Series of Conferences and Workshops including the 2010 Midwest Biomass Conference
  - Outreach and Education Projects & Field Days
  - Switchgrass Production Trials in Cooperation with Alliant Energy and University of Wisconsin
  - Assess Biomass Production Potential
  - Several Research and Development projects providing assistance to private and public partners throughout the Driftless Area

*Midwest*  
**Biomass Conference**

Nov. 16-18, 2010    Dubuque, Iowa

# Driftless Area Initiative

## Conferences and Workshops Sponsored:

- Annual Partnership Workshop/Conferences
- UMACS Conference at Luther College
- Light on the Land Forestry Field-day
- Bird Friendly Forestry Days
- Annual Earth Day Events
- Light on the Land Forestry Field-day
- MN Earth Day Event
- Fillmore County Energy Fair
- Midwest Value Added Agriculture Conference
- Rushford Well Sealing Demonstration
- Aerial Seeding of Winter cover crop Demonstration
- Winona County Environmental Education workshop



# Driftless Area Initiative

## Technical Assistance

- DAI Coordinator
- Website Development
- Biomass Specialist - WI
- Stewardship Forestry
- Prairie Ecology
- Extensive GIS Mapping of the Driftless Area
- Education and Outreach to State and Federal Legislators
- Biomass Outreach Specialist - IA
- Forest Invasive Species Specialist
- Several Multi-State Advisory Committees
- Watershed Coordination & Water Quality Monitoring

*The DAI Committee invites you to ignore political boundaries, coordinate your activities, and work together across the Mississippi River & across county, state, and private boundaries in the Driftless Area.*

*Thank You*