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## ***News Release***

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### **RIVERLAND CONSERVANCY SELLS 112-ACRE PARCEL TO NATURAL LAND INSTITUTE (NLI)**

#### **NLI will donate land to Winnebago County, Ill. Forest Preserve District for public use**

MADISON, Wis. – October 11, 2004 – Riverland Conservancy announced today that a 112-acre parcel near Rockton, Ill. has been sold to the Natural Land Institute (NLI), whose mission is to protect, manage and restore prairies, forests and wetlands throughout Illinois and southern Wisconsin.

The property, which includes more than one mile of frontage on the Rock River, will be donated to the Winnebago County, Ill. Forest Preserve District, which was the wish of J. Norman Jensen, a Rockford, Ill. resident who passed away in 2002. Mr. Jensen left money from his estate to NLI to purchase the land. The forest preserve will be named in his honor.

“It was extremely important to Riverland Conservancy to identify a buyer who was committed to preserving the land for native plants and animals,” said Joe Shefchek, executive director and vice president of Riverland Conservancy. “We’re pleased that this land will be protected so that the public can one day enjoy its natural beauty.”

One of the most unique assets of the property is a 10-acre dry mesic prairie remnant on a gravel bluff above the Rock River. Approximately half of the 112 acres supports floodplain forests that harbor many species of migratory birds, ducks and other waterfowl and provide roosting areas for bald eagles and ospreys that fish along the river. Hawks, owls, and great blue herons have all been seen on the property.

This is the second divestiture of land by Riverland Conservancy, which will invest the proceeds from the sale to cover future operating expenses. “The sale not only means that this land will remain in good hands, it means that Riverland Conservancy can continue its efforts to protect

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the water, air and wildlife resources on the acreage we manage in Wisconsin and Iowa,” said Shefchek.

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*The Riverland Conservancy is a non-profit land trust founded in 1997 by Alliant Energy to protect the water, air, and wildlife resources on its undeveloped acreage. Through partnerships with conservation and recreation groups and local, state and national government agencies, the Riverland Conservancy restores native ecosystems and provides opportunities for environmental education and recreation. Its current land holdings include approximately 2,000 acres of wetlands, prairie, oak savanna and river bluffs in Wisconsin and Iowa.*

*The Natural Land Institute is the oldest land trust in Illinois. The mission of the Natural Land Institute is to preserve natural land for native plants and animals in northern Illinois. Since 1958, the Natural Land Institute has protected, managed and restored thousands of acres of prairies, forests and wetlands throughout Illinois and southern Wisconsin.*

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