



News Release

For Immediate Release

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Volunteers Roll Up Their Sleeves and Chip In to Restore and Preserve Pine Bend Bluffs

*25th annual community restoration event sustains tradition
of caring for critical natural habitat along the Mississippi River*

Rosemount, Minn. – More than 100 people spent their Saturday morning working hard in one of the most serene settings in the state during a yearly event at the Pine Bend Bluffs to care for habitat that attracts native and endangered species. Side-by-side with long-time partners from the Friends of the Mississippi River and Great River Greening, Flint Hills Resources Pine Bend refinery employees past and present and members of local communities enthusiastically tackled conservation tasks while also enjoying a unique natural setting perched high above the Mississippi River.

“The Pine Bend Bluffs is a vitally important piece of Minnesota’s natural landscape, providing habitat for many native species, including resident and migratory birds of all varieties,” said Alex Roth, conservation director at Friends of the Mississippi River. “With the help of over a thousand volunteers who have put in thousands of volunteer hours over the past 25 years, hundreds of acres of habitat have been restored, which sets the foundation for a healthy ecosystem that can support a diverse array of plants and animals, and that will remain resilient now and into the future.”

Adjacent to the Pine Bend refinery, the Pine Bend Bluffs natural area sprawls over hundreds of acres of prairie, oak savanna and oak forest along the Mississippi River. At this year’s restoration event, volunteers removed invasive shrubs and trees encroaching into a remnant prairie, which creates space for native grasses and wildflowers to thrive. Volunteers hauled this brush to open areas where contractors will be able to chip it and remove the material

from the site, helping to stretch restoration dollars and engaging more of the community in this important work.

While each of these annual restoration events has contributed meaningfully to maintaining habitat at the Pine Bend Bluffs, this year's was special because it also marked 25 years since the inaugural effort in 2000.

"For decades, our conservation efforts at the Pine Bend Bluffs have been driven by dedicated Flint Hills employees, retirees, community members and our community advisory council. We're grateful to everyone who has volunteered over the past 25 years to restore and maintain the Pine Bend Bluffs. We're also thankful for the invaluable support of long-standing community partners like Friends of the Mississippi River and Great River Greening, who share our commitment to keeping this natural area vibrant for many years to come," said Heather Rein, community affairs director for Flint Hills.

Over the past 25 years, protection and enhancement of native prairie plants through planned burns and invasive plant removal have helped the area return to pre-settlement conditions and serve as a critical habitat for residential and migratory animals. Its position along the Mississippi River makes it particularly integral for millions of migrating songbirds each year, along with about 40% of North America's waterfowl and shorebirds. It's also an important pollinator habitat, home to at least 35 different species of bees, butterflies and other pollinators, including the federally endangered rusty patched bumble bee.

Flint Hills Resources has partnered with Friends of the Mississippi River and Great River Greening since 2000 on restoration efforts covering more than 200 acres of the Pine Bend Bluffs. By the end of the year, Friends of the Mississippi River will complete a management plan guiding the restoration of even more acres of habitat at the site. It's through this sustained work that Flint Hills has earned gold certification from the Wildlife Habitat Council for the Pine Bend Bluffs, making it the only currently gold certified site in Minnesota and the first-ever in the Twin Cities metro area.

For more information about the Pine Bend Bluffs natural area and Flint Hills Resources' conservation stewardship efforts, [visit the Pine Bend refinery website](#).

About Flint Hills Resources Pine Bend refinery

The [Flint Hills Resources](#) Pine Bend refinery produces transportation fuels used throughout the Midwest, including most of Minnesota's gasoline, diesel fuel, jet fuel, as well as other products people rely on such as propane and asphalt. Located 17 miles southeast of Minneapolis, Pine Bend has a refining capacity of 375,000 barrels per day and is among the most efficient oil refineries in the country. Flint Hills Resources directly and indirectly supports more than 4,000 Minnesota jobs and has invested nearly \$1.7 billion in upgrades and improvements to its Minnesota facilities since 2010. With more than 1,000 full-time employees, the Flint Hills Resources Pine Bend refinery is one of the largest employers in

Dakota County. More information about the Pine Bend refinery is available at PineBendRefinery.com.

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