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## **PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Living Lands & Waters Launches Massive, Two-Year I-80 Gateway Restoration Project**

Living Lands & Waters (LL&W) announced the launch of a 28-acre land restoration project, with kick-off beginning this Friday, February 24<sup>th</sup>, at 12:00 pm. One of the state's largest land restoration initiatives in recent history, the project stretches along the I-80 gateway in the State of Illinois, and will encompass a complete restoration of two tracks of land back to a native prairie, with the help of hundreds of volunteers from across the region.

The project is the vision of LL&W's President & Founder Chad Pregracke, who saw the land ravaged by a tornado back in March of 2016, uprooting hundreds of trees and causing extensive aesthetic damage. Situated where Interstate 80 crosses the Mississippi River, the land is overlooked by the Illinois Welcome Center and is passed by more than 40,000 motorists daily.

To accommodate the restoration efforts, the Illinois Department of Transportation granted LL&W permission to work on the state right of way along I-80. The department's shared goal with LL&W is to create an inviting area that showcases the natural beauty of our state to visitors of the Illinois Welcome Center and all travelers entering Illinois from the West.

At Friday's kickoff event, 25 certified local arborists will meet on the site at noon to begin the major restoration efforts. The project will also utilize hundreds of local volunteers over the course of two years to fully restore the area back to its native landscape. "I couldn't be more appreciative of the arborists, sponsors and IDOT who are coming together and volunteering their time to help restore this land," says LL&W's Chad Pregracke.

LL&W is seeking businesses and groups to help financially sponsor the two-year endeavor, providing workday teambuilding events for those organizations involved. Sponsor groups will engage in removing invasive species, planting native trees, shrubs, grasses, and wildflowers.

"We hope this effort will provide local visitors and tourists the opportunity to enjoy the Mississippi River, and leave a positive impression of the State of Illinois," said Pregracke. If your business is interested in learning more about sponsorship and volunteer opportunities, please contact Chad Pregracke at 309-496-9848.

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