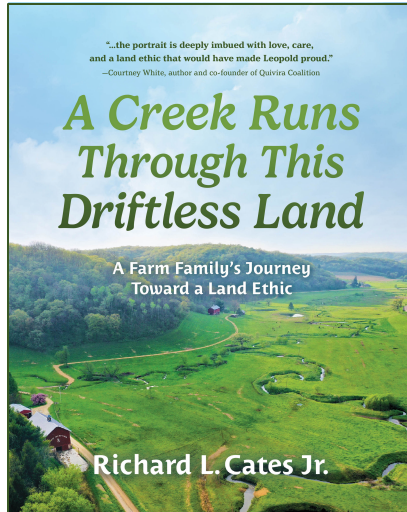




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Farm History Shares Family Tale of Growing a Generational Land Ethic

SPRING GREEN, Wis. — For four generations, the Cates Family farmers in Wisconsin's famed Driftless Area have been on generational journey, transitioning themselves from "owners" of their farm into caretakers of the farm, land and water where they live and work. This fall, Little Creek Press shares the family's inspirational story in its newest farm memoir, "**A Creek Runs Through This Driftless Land: A Farm Family's Journey toward a Land Ethic**". Written by Richard (Dick) Cates Jr., who, along with his wife, Kim, purchased the farm from his parents—and who passed its stewardship to their son, and his wife, Kiley, in recent years—the memoir details the Cates's efforts to evolve farm operations into

restorative, regenerative, and perennialized agriculture and to develop a more harmonious relationship to the land and all that lives there with them, past and present.

Cates begins with a prehistory of the area, including its Indigenous Peoples' history, and then moves through the farm's history and its present use. Along the way, he shares stories from the furrows and fields. Funny, heartwarming, and challenging Cates tells the truth about the hard work and hard listening that it takes to transition a farm, a family, the land, and sometimes even the stubborn animals—people included!—that inhabit it.

As retired *Spring Green Home News* editor Don Greenwood writes in his foreword to the book, the Cates Family story "illustrates the movement away from industrialized, chemically dependent, minimally diversified farming to one that more closely mimics nature's wisdom ... and it can "serve as a paradigm" for those interested in a journey toward a land ethic and a more ethical relationship with "place".

EARLY REVIEWS

"...the portrait is deeply imbued with love, care, and a land ethic that would have made Leopold proud."

Courtney White, author and co-founder of Quivira Coalition

"**This book is a joy to read.** Dick Cates is an excellent storyteller. He describes his book this way: 'This is a book of stories of the land and the people, stories of my family, and my own story. They are true, and they are full of joy, pain, and reverence for this land, as well as love.' He makes an excellent point in this book—the land has inherent value, and we must all work toward creating a lasting land ethic."

—Jerry Apps, author of Farms and Rural Communities: An Agricultural Ethic for the Future

"For four generations (and counting), Dick Cates and his family have cared for their piece of Wisconsin land with—literally—an abiding love. This story inspires us to know and honor our own connections with the land and with one another."

— Curt Meine, senior fellow of the Aldo Leopold Foundation and Center for Humans and Nature;

author of Aldo Leopold: His Life and Work and The Driftless Reader."

"Dick Cates writes with a generous and curious heart rooted in science and wonder. He gives voice to generations of water and rock, persons and plants that became his beloved farm. This story is as much about our planet as it is about one extraordinary place in Wisconsin's Driftless region. It was also here where I forged a life in food. Working with the Cates family taught me that 'local' is a dimension as much as it is a distance. Dick dives deep into the layered complexities of his life in family farming and food and hears a chorus. If you're curious about how smallholder farming holds solutions not only for soil but for society, read this book."

-Odessa Piper, founder of L'Etoile, Madison, Wisconsin's first farm-to-table restaurant;
founder of LLC OrganicArts for community-focused cooking

"From the natural forces that shaped it to the First Peoples who cherished it to the Cates family that continues to steward it, *A Creek Flows Through This Driftless Land* is an intimate story about a farm family and their loving relationship to the land. I highly recommended reading."

-Dr. Patty Loew, citizen of Mashkiziibii (River Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe); author of *Indian Nations of Wisconsin: Histories of Endurance and Renewal*

"The generosity and spirit of the Cates family providing a public easement on their farm for public access to Lowery Creek, a Class 1 trout stream, is one more example of how the family is a role model to the rest of us for so many good causes."

-Kathleen Falk, Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame 2022 inductee

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Richard L. (Dick) Cates Jr. and his wife, Kim, co-own the Cates Family Farm LLC near Spring Green, Wis., with son Eric and wife Kiley, and with daughter Shannon and husband Dan. A life-long farmer, Dick grew up working on his family's beef cow-calf farm, a neighbor's dairy farm, Montana ranches, and large-scale dairy forage and grain crop productions overseas. He studied soil science and agronomy and earned an MS (1979) in soils from Montana State University and a PhD (1983) in soils and plant health from the University of Wisconsin-Madison College of Agricultural and Life Sciences while serving a Leopold Fellowship. He began taking over the family farm management in 1987 and then, along with Kim, purchased portions of the land over the years as they built their own farming business. For eight years, he helped part-time to lead the development and oversight of the Wisconsin Sustainable Agriculture Program and later worked part-time to develop and direct the Wisconsin School for Beginning Dairy and Livestock Farmers at UW-Madison. He also taught courses within the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences until his retirement in 2018. The Cates family are members of the Iowa County Uplands Farmer-Led Watershed Project and the Lowery Creek Watershed Initiative, and have been recognized for their soil and water conservation, including receiving the 2013 Sand County Foundation Wisconsin Leopold Conservation Award as well as such honors as becoming the first beef farm in the U.S. to receive certification by the Animal Welfare Institute in 2006 and receiving the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation Distinguished Service to WI Agriculture Award in 2020, among many others. Dick also authored *Voices from the Heart of the Land: Rural Stories That Inspire Community* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2008) and a children's book, *An Adventure on Sterna's Hill* (2019). Today, Dick and Kim enjoy walking on the farm and in wild country anywhere, canoeing, skiing, and dancing together. They have four grandchildren who are the love and joy of their lives.

ABOUT THE BOOK: "A Creek Runs Through This Driftless Land" (Paperback: \$36, 978-1955656771) is available for wholesalers through Ingram Content Group and is available through bookstores and libraries everywhere and online retailers, including www.littlecreekpress.com. It is one of many books about Wisconsin published by Little Creek Press, Mineral Point, Wis.

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