

Kickapoo Valley Reserve

UPDATE

A quarterly publication highlighting education, property management & events on the KVR.

Fall 2023



Eastern Tiger Swallowtail butterfly on a Spear Thistle.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT KVR

Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2023 – KVR [Trail Challenge](#)

Sept. 16 – Archery & Small Game Hunting Opens

Sept. 16 – Turkey Season Opens

Sept. 16 – Driftless Dialogue: [Not Another Dam Talk!](#) 10am

Sept. 21 – KRMB Meeting 7pm

Sept. 22 – Forest Fridays 8:30–11:30am **FULL**
(Sept. 22, 29, Oct. 6, 13, 20, 27)

Sept. 27 – Fall Homeschool Workshops
Wednesdays 8:30–11:30am
(Sept. 27, Oct. 4, 11, 18, 23, Nov. 1)

Sept. 27 – NEW! Parent & Child Class 9–11am
Wednesday 9–11am
(Sept. 27, Oct. 4, 11, 18, 23, Nov. 1)

Oct. 6 – Friends of KVR [Pasta Supper](#)/Early Dam
Challenge Racer Check-in 5–8pm

Oct. 7 – Dam Challenge Triathlon 9am start

RESILIENCE

KRMB Chair, Scott Lind



A term we hear a lot these days – especially regarding climate change and the impacts on communities and creatures of all types. Here at the Reserve, the staff has shown what resilience means in a completely different context.

As the process for selecting a new Executive Director continues to move forward, I've had the opportunity to get to know much better the people that keep KVR functioning every day. They are, to a person, sincere in their dedication to preserving, protecting and upholding the multi-faceted mission of this place.

Every individual that benefits in any way from their efforts owes them a great deal as they have continued their work through challenging times. I'll say here how much I appreciate them and hope you will do the same when the opportunity presents itself!



Blanding's Turtle – spotted on Pond Trail behind KVR Visitor Center

RARE SPECIES

The Blanding's Turtle is a semi-aquatic, medium-sized species with an elongated & highly-domed shell. The adult sports a brilliant yellow chin, unlike any other Wisconsin turtle. According to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) of WI, The Blanding's turtle is a rare species, carrying the state status of "Special Concern," meaning that they are a protected wild animal.

DAM CHALLENGE TRIATHLON

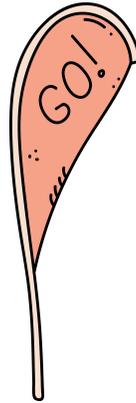
OCTOBER 7, 2023

The Kickapoo Reserve Dam Challenge Triathlon challenges participants to compete among the rugged hills of scenic southwestern Wisconsin's rural countryside and the Kickapoo Valley Reserve. Proceeds from this event benefit the Kickapoo Valley Reserve education program.



PADDLE PEDAL RUN

LIVE MUSIC,
VENDORS,
FOOD &
BEVERAGE,
EVERYONE
WELCOME!



REGISTER

VOLUNTEER

SPONSOR

YOU'RE INVITED! ALL ARE WELCOME

PASTA SUPPER

KICKAPOO VALLEY RESERVE VISITOR CENTER
S3661 STATE HIGHWAY 131, LA FARGE

OCTOBER 6, 5-8 PM

Meat, gluten-free & vegetarian options.
Fresh bread & garden salad sides.

HOMEMADE SPECIALTIES

Sponsored by **FRIENDS OF KVR**

Adults
one trip: \$12.00
two trips: \$14.00

Children
under age 12: \$7.00



SIGN-UP
TO LEND
A HAND
AT THE
ANNUAL
FRIENDS
OF KVR
PASTA
SUPPER

CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS!



Kickapoo Valley Reserve Visitor Center entrance sign

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE KVR

continued

Oct. 7-8 - Youth Deer Hunt

Oct. 9 - KRMB Finance Committee Meeting 9am

Oct. 12 - Education & Tourism Committee Meeting 5:30pm

Oct. 13 - Friends of KVR Photo Contest Entries due 5pm

Oct. 14 - Mindfulness in Nature Meditation 1-4pm

Oct. 19 - KRMB Meeting 7pm

Nov. 15 - KVR Equestrian & Mountain Bike Trails CLOSED for season

Nov. 16 - KRMB Meeting 7pm

Nov. 18 - Driftless Dialogue: Protecting Our Night Skies 10am

Nov. 19-27 - Gun Deer Season

Dec. 2 - Friends of KVR Holiday Happening Event

Dec. 9-12 - Antlerless Deer Season

Dec. 11 - Finance Committee Meeting 9am

Dec. 14 - Education & Tourism Committee Meeting 5:30pm

Dec. 21 - KRMB Meeting 7pm



Witch Hazel - Hamamelis



Rough Blazing Star - Liatris aspera

EDUCATION CORNER

Fall Programs Abound!

This fall, we have a selection of programs for parents to choose from, with offerings for children ages 18 months to 12 years. On Wednesdays, we have Parent-Child Classes for 18 month up to 4 year old's and their caregivers. We also have our Homeschool workshops on Wednesdays, with two different programs, for 5-7 year old's and 8-12 year old's. Finally, we have the return of our Forest Fridays program for Pre-K kids ages 3-6!



Looking back at summer

Another summer of day camps has come and gone, leaving nothing but the memories. Summer 2023 saw the most camp offerings the KVR has ever had, with 21 camps. Over 200 kids ages 2-17 attended camps this year, participating in activities including canoeing, fly fishing, fort building and more!

Insects of the Night

A new program was introduced this year, in honor of International Moth Week. 'Insects of the Night', on July 25th, invited the public to help identify the moths and other insects that occupy the Reserve at night. A short lecture by local entomologist Willow Lovecky was followed by observations using the "Moth Cube", a glowing cube that attracts all kinds of insects. Using the iNaturalist app, 19 different species of moth were identified and recorded! We hope to host more of these evening observations next year, and to learn more about the nocturnal insect populations.



PHENOLOGY: A SEASONAL TOPIC

By Maggie Schultz, KVR Education Coordinator

Phenology: the study of cyclic and seasonal natural phenomena, especially in relation to climate and plant and animal life.

This area of science is fascinating, and ancient. People have been using the seasonal changes of plants and animals to tell time for centuries. Now, our knowledge has reached a point that we are starting to see shifts in phenological changes like bird migrations, fruit ripening, and even leaf color changes.

We often think of easily noticeable things like leaves changing color and birds migrating when we think of seasonal changes, but phenology includes everything from the first sprout of a stalk of a plant, the opening of the first flower, to the last fruit dropping from a tree. The more detailed the observation, the more information it can give us.

Although scientists can use this data to track changes and even tell us something about the health of an ecosystem, phenology can be personal, too. Think of the plants and animals that live in your yard, or a local park. If you start keeping a journal, you can track their seasonal changes, too! Do you grow fruits or vegetables? Keep track of when you pick them each year and find out when they are the most ripe. Are there birds nesting in your trees? See if the eggs hatch in the same week. There are so many ways to study phenology, and so many ways to use that knowledge. Get outside and start noticing all the phenological changes around you!



American Toad - *Anaxyrus americanus*



Pokeweed Berries



Blackhawk Rock Trail

TRAILS OF FALL

By Jackie Yocum, KVR Natural Resource & Recreation Technician

The change of seasons is part of the reason many love this place. Around every seasonal corner there is something new and exciting, ripe for experiencing. Trails take us places. Sometimes it is past a wild apple tree that we just can't resist, or to the top of Hanson Rock to watch the turkey vultures circle, a few more times, before taking flight back to their winter homes. Trails are the pathway to peaceful places. How can you protect the trails and natural spaces you enjoy? Volunteer with the Adopt a Trail program, be a trail etiquette ambassador, donate your time or resources to trail maintenance and improvement efforts, volunteer to help control invasive species, and/or join in on Citizen Scientist activities. Visit the [KVR website](#) or [reach out to learn more](#).

SPONSOR A TREE



This program is intended to introduce native trees back to the landscape of the Kickapoo Valley Reserve, while honoring people who care about preserving and protecting this amazing place. Trees in this program will be protected, maintained, cared for, and monitored by staff and volunteers of Kickapoo Valley Reserve.

To learn more & request to sponsor, visit: <http://kickapoovalley.wi.gov/Get-Involved>



HUNTING SEASONS OPEN

on the Kickapoo Valley Reserve

By Jason Leis, KVR Property Manager and Law Enforcement

The Kickapoo Valley Reserve is open to public hunting. Some seasons are already open, such as mourning dove, teal and early goose seasons which opened on September 1st. Many of the other seasons, such as small game, archery deer and turkey open on Saturday, September 16th. Hunters should be mindful that horse and bike trails are open until November 15, but hiking and camping are allowed year-round. Please take note of what [hunting season](#) is going on when planning a trip to the Reserve.

It is advised to wear bright colors, such as blaze orange, when venturing out. As always, please practice "pack it in – pack it out," leave no trace principles.

We will again have a self-serve kiosk, provided by the DNR, for submitting deer heads for Chronic Wasting Disease testing, just north of the Rockton Bridge on Cut-Off Rd. As it gets closer to the gun deer season in November, we will have a deer carcass dumpster in the same location. If you need deer carcass disposal before that dumpster arrives, you can dispose of the carcass at the Vernon County Solid Waste and Recycling Center located at S3705 County Road LF, Viroqua, WI 54665. You may want to call to find out hours of operation 608-634-2900.

Remember the 4 rules of firearm safety:

- Treat every gun as if it were loaded
- Always point the muzzle in a safe direction
- Be sure of your target and what is beyond it
- Keep your finger off the trigger until you are ready to shoot

Stay safe!

[Pheasant Release Zone Map](#)



Grass-Leaved Goldenrod - *Euthamia graminifolia*

NEW SPECIES, NEW NAME

We are excited to welcome some new species to our records within the Reserve this year. One such species, *Euthamia graminifolia*, goes by many names: Flat-top Goldentop, Flat-topped Goldenrod, Bushy Goldenrod, and Grass-leaved Goldenrod. Most Goldenrods are classified under the genus *Solidago*, but the “grass-leaved” species were separated and placed in their own genus. All *Euthamia* are native to North America, but there is still debate over how many species should comprise the “Goldentops” genus. Taxonomic revisions are often controversial among researchers, and the new classifications tend to become universally accepted very gradually, if at all.

Many species have taxonomic “synonyms,” alternative Latin names that remain after reclassification. Even if a new name is agreed upon, historic data and reports will contain the outdated information.

Synonyms for *E. graminifolia*:

- *Solidago graminifolia*
- *Solidago lanceolata*
- *Chrysocoma graminifolia*



KRMB LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT STATEMENT

The Kickapoo Reserve Management Board acknowledges that the state and federal lands that comprise the Reserve fall within the ancestral homelands of First Nations people including the Hooçak Nation. We recognize the sovereignty of the Hooçak and other First Nations and will work towards a shared future by continuing to create collaborative opportunities to protect and preserve these lands.

GOLDENROD

Solidago

By Shelby Wolfe, KVR Office Assistant & Community Herbalist



Solidago, the botanical genus for Goldenrod, means 'to heal' or 'to make whole.' Fitting, as this rhizomatous plant often takes root in fallow ground, sprawling and mending its way through the soil, replenishing and aiding the land in deciding what to become next.

With about 20 different species native to this bioregion, Goldenrod is an herbaceous perennial belonging to the *Asteraceae* (Aster) family, adorning densely clustered, bright yellow flowers, which bloom around the beginning of August through September. This plant's peak signals the golden hour of Summer, and the seasonal transition into Autumn.

According to *The Farmer's Almanac*, a common misperception is that goldenrod (*Solidago* species), a perennial flowering herb, is the cause of hay fever—it's actually wind-pollinated plants that are the source! The major culprit, ragweed (*Ambrosia* species), happens to look similar and also shares the same flowering period as goldenrod, plus both flowers appear in open fields and backyard gardens, so goldenrod is often labeled guilty by association.

An important source of nectar for so many pollinators—such as butterflies and native bees—goldenrod is especially crucial to the winter survival of many honeybees. Its pollen adds considerable amounts of protein, fats, and minerals to the late-season diet of the bees. Goldenrod also hosts a huge variety of insect herbivores, such as beneficial spiders and insect predators like praying mantids, lacewings, assassin bugs, and ambush bugs..

Goldenrod also produces seeds that birds, including goldfinches, grosbeaks, and nuthatches love.

Other birds—especially chickadees and downy woodpeckers—like the energy-rich larvae hidden in goldenrod galls (which are also hosts to other insects, from moths to flies).

Add some goldenrod to your garden for good fall color reflecting the late-summer sun. The brilliant yellows combine well with other late-summer bloomers like white Boltonia, purple liatris, pink coneflowers, blue asters, and rosy Joe Pye weed. They also blend well with their Composite cousins, including coreopsis, gaillardia, and helenium.



Canada Goldenrod - *Solidago canadensis*



Gray Treefrog - *Dryophytes* sp.



Nodding Pogonia - *Triphora trianthophoros*

SENSITIVE SPECIES AWARENESS

By Blake Cwynar, KVR Natural Resources Specialist

If you are reading this, you are likely to be more conscious of your anthropogenic impact on the ecosystem than most people. Every organism has an “impact” on the natural community, so these effects are not always negative. Management and ecological restoration are positive examples of human influence; however such practices are only necessary to correct for the disproportionate damage our species has and continues to cause throughout the landscapes we call home.

By definition, each species has their differences. Some are hardy generalists that will thrive for decades without any special attention. Many others are specialists that have little or no tolerance for disturbance, pollution, or otherwise “less-than-perfect” conditions. An indicator species is among the least tolerant to habitat degradation. Their presence indicates that the ecosystem is in good health. Amphibians are posterchildren among indicator species. Delicate, water-permeable skin leaves amphibians vulnerable to pollution and poor water quality. They are safe to handle, but they can absorb toxins from your hands. For this reason, you should never handle an amphibian (or any other wild animal, for that matter) after coming in contact with bug repellent containing DEET.

Many of the Reserve’s sensitive species are rare or endangered plants. Orchids produce thousands of microscopic seeds that lack an endosperm – the plant equivalent of an egg yolk. In order for an orchid seed to germinate, it must form a symbiotic partnership, and many orchid species can only form this symbiosis with one species of fungus. The fungus forms a root-like mycorrhizal network that provides the seed with nutrients. This partnership persists through the life of the plant and is often vital for its survival. Only a miniscule fraction of seeds ever germinate, and fewer survive to reproductive maturity.

Digging up an orchid is almost certainly a death sentence for the plant. Likewise, it is best to leave their flowers and surroundings undisturbed. Nature is full of curiosities, and we often grab something that’s caught our eye without considering the impact that action may have. As a very tactile learner, I understand the impulse to grab a frog or to pick a pretty flower. I certainly do not advocate for a “hands-off” approach to natural areas, but it is best to leave the smallest impact possible. Observe from a respectful distance, bring a set of binoculars, and consider the organisms that may be crushed under each footstep. This may seem unnecessarily cautious, but we still have much to learn about the full scope of anthropogenic impact on our planet. I simply urge you to recognize any of your own compulsions, then remind yourself, “to touch is to change.”

WEISTER CREEK STREAM IMPROVEMENT PROJECT TOURED



The Kickapoo Valley Reserve hosted a tour of the Weister Creek Stream Improvement Project. The Wisconsin Natural Resources Board and conservation partners from Trout Unlimited, Wisconsin DNR Fisheries Division, other conservation organizations and members of the public, toured the project area, witnessed the health of the stream, shared collaborative opportunities and learned about best management practices.

DRIFTLESS DIALOGUE

The Ralph Nuzum Lecture Series, *Driftless Dialogue*, is a monthly presentation series covering a wide range of topics relating to the Kickapoo Valley people, history, or natural surroundings.

Driftless Dialogue Presents

NOT ANOTHER DAM TALK!

Learn about the history of the 1962 Corp of Engineers' La Farge Dam Project

NEW Lecture Series begins September 2023!

SATURDAY, SEPT. 16
10-11 AM
Coffee & Snacks @ 9:30 am

The Ralph Nuzum Lecture Series is free thanks to a grant by the Ralph E Nuzum Kickapoo Reforestation Fund through the UW-Madison College of Agricultural & Life Sciences, and the Friends of Kickapoo Valley Reserve, and supported by Badger Talks.