

**Kickapoo Reserve Management Board
Meeting Minutes for December 19, 2024**
Kickapoo Valley Reserve Visitor Center

Board members present: Travis Downing (Chair), Julie Hoel (via Zoom), Barb Sarnowski (via Zoom), Reggie Nelson (via Zoom), Scott Lind (via Zoom), Dave Maxwell (via Zoom), Joel Charles (via Zoom)

Board members absent: Bill Quackenbush, Luke Zahm, Kjetil Garvin, AJ Mann

Staff members present: Jason Leis, Jackie Yocum, Amy Dvorak (via Zoom), Amber Burch (via Zoom)

Others in attendance: Margaret Tingley Farley, Lonnie Muller (Episcope), Dan Catherman (via Zoom)

Chair Downing read the Land Acknowledgement Statement.

Downing called the meeting to order at 5:59 PM.

Maxwell made a motion to approve the agenda. Sarnowski seconded the motion, and the motion carried with all ayes.

Leis confirmed the agenda was properly posted.

Public input: None.

Consent agenda:

The minutes from the November 21, 2024 meeting were provided. Maxwell questioned a paragraph regarding Hoel's comments on the management plan and requested it be changed to clarify what she said. Sarnowski motioned to accept the minutes with the proposed change. The motion was seconded by Nelson, and the motion passed with all ayes.

Friends of the KVR Update:

Margaret Tingley Farley arrived 15 minutes late and shared the update after the discussion of management plan review timeline.

Tingley Farley said Holiday Happening was great this year. The Friends are starting the planning process for Winter Festival.

Tingley Farley asked how much information she should share regarding the finances. Downing said if we want information, we will request it. Leis said it is sometimes discussed during the Finance Committee meeting. She said finances were discussed for a majority of the last Friends meeting.

Tingley Farley said the Friends will look at their management plan.

Hoel asked if the Friends will write a grant for the Driftless Dialogue program. Tingley Farley said she spoke with Leis about it, and she shared the information with the Friends. The Friends may cover any gaps in funding for the program. Leis said we missed the deadline for the Ralph Nuzum grant that funds the Driftless Dialogue program. However, he spoke with some of the people that administer the grant. There was some money left over at the end of the grant cycle that we didn't use, and they are allowing us to use the unspent funds through June 30, 2025. Leis said we are trying to figure out how to pay for the program after that.

Hoel asked if any Driftless Dialogue programs are scheduled. Leis said yes. There will be one at Winter Festival with River Valley Raptors. The next one is Leave No Trace in April.

Committee appointments:

Downing shared a list of Kickapoo Reserve Management Board Committees 2025 indicating which board members and members of the public are on each of the three committees (Finance, Land Management & Cultural Resources, and Tourism & Education).

For the Finance Committee, Luke Zahm is the Chair. Scott Lind is also on the committee. Marcia Bader and David Jablonowski are public members.

For the Land Management & Cultural Resources Committee, Travis Downing is the Chair. Other board members on the committee include A.J. Mann, Bill Quackenbush, Kjetil Garvin, and Joel Charles. Public members include Sandra Larsen, Doug Weed, Bill Collins, Dan Catherman, and David Jablonowski. Dan is a new appointee. Downing welcomed him. Jackie Yocum is also on the committee.

Dave Maxwell is the Chair of the Tourism & Education Committee. Barb Sarnowski, Julie Hoel, Luke Zahm, and Reggie Nelson are the other board members on the committee. Public members include Joan Peterson, Pam Saunders, Samantha Laskowski, Chuck Hatfield, and Nicholas Wazeegale.

Hoel requested to add Heather van Zyl, who is a homeschool parent working with the homeschool groups at the Reserve as a part-time instructor. She said van Zyl would like to be on the committee. Hoel also requested to add Heidi Krattiger, who is a Montessori teacher and was on the Friends board. Krattiger has brought multiple school groups from the Viroqua Montessori School to the Reserve. Hoel requested to add Shel Hyatt, who is a teacher at Brookwood Elementary and who has brought multiple school groups to the Reserve.

Lind requested to be on Land Management again.

Hoel asked if a board member could attend a committee meeting if they are not on the committee. Downing said yes, but they wouldn't be a voting member. Lind said we'd have to be careful about having a quorum at the meeting and would need to indicate there would be no board action taken if there was a quorum.

Maxwell mentioned talking about records of who is on each committee. He asked if non-board members can vote at the committee meetings. Maxwell said he looked into it. He said he couldn't find anything indicating if they can vote or not, but he read something that said there had to be at least one board member at the committee meetings. Downing said if the person is appointed by the chair of the board, then the non-board member is a voting member of the committee. Lind said the other rule is the chair of the committee has to be a board member.

Hoel clarified the chair has to be a board member and all committee members can vote. Downing confirmed. Hoel asked if other members can be added later. Lind said it is up to the chair's discretion. Downing said he would appoint someone at a later time if needed.

Downing asked for a motion on the committee appointments. Hoel made a motion. Lind interrupted and said the board should not have a motion based on procedures. Hoel withdrew her motion.

Discussion of Management Plan review timeline:

The timeline for the Kickapoo Valley Reserve 5 Year Management Plan Review was shared. Downing reviewed the timeline. He said committee meetings can happen every month if needed rather than every other month, which would be up to each committee. Leis concurred. He asked board members to reference this throughout the review process. He said the new plan needs to be reviewed during at least two board meetings before the end of the year. Hoel said it looks like a good schedule.

Education and Tourism Committee:

Maxwell said the committee is planning to meet monthly in order to review the management plan.

Burch said the Nature Bound Program was previously Forest Fridays and the Homeschool Group. It takes place on Wednesday. There was a five-week fall semester with three separate groups: 3- to 5-year-olds, 6- to 9-year-olds, 10- to 12-year-olds. The winter semester is scheduled and will begin January 8, 2025. It is eight weeks long. There will be a fourth group for 18 months to 35 months. All groups have a goal of book reading time, an activity, and a hike. Burch said we're hoping to recruit some high school juniors and seniors whose career path is education or nature-based, so they can assist with the Nature Bound Program.

Burch reviewed the Youth Ski Club. There will be a new instructor. Youth can get experience with cross-country skiing. Maxwell asked if there would be a groomed trail this weekend. Leis said the snow is currently fluffy so probably not.

Four school groups from three different schools have scheduled programs at the Reserve at the end of January and beginning of February. The ages are second grade, third grade, and middle school.

Summer camp is still on schedule for registration to open February 1, 2025. Many of the camps are confirmed with instructors. Burch said the details are still being worked out.

Burch said there was some changeover in the instructors on our list. We are actively working on recruiting more instructors. The goal is to grow the programs currently offered and add Saturday programs. There is a description of the instructor position on the employment page on our website. Burch said the instructors need to commit to teaching at least four different activities throughout the year. Lind said a source of past instructors would be the signed contracts. Burch thanked him for the information.

Yocum discussed Winter Festival, which is coming up January 11, 2025. Things are progressing nicely. The talks are confirmed. Yocum thanked everyone on staff for pitching in. River Valley Raptors will be at Winter Festival with their live raptors. Horse drawn sleighs and fat tire bikes will be here. The Lions Club will be holding their chili contest again. Snow is being stockpiled so it will hopefully stay around long enough.

Downing said he went to the ice caves last weekend. There is decent ice compared to last year. Some of it has reached to the ground. Downing said it may be possible to do an ice cave hike at Winter Festival this year.

Maxwell asked if the cross-country skis donated by Dregne's in Westby would be available for use at Winter Festival. Yocum said Dregne's donated about 40 pairs of skis, some of which are brand new. She said there will be some skis available at Winter Festival. The new skis will not be available and will be saved for rentals. Hoel said she had a frustrating experience last year trying to find skis for her granddaughter at Winter Festival. She said Winter Festival is a good place to provide good skis. Yocum said some of the donated skis were used but in great condition, and those will be available.

Yocum provided an update on the 25th anniversary celebration. We've been compiling a list of people to invite. Yocum asked everyone to send her or Dvorak names of anyone who should be invited. A save the date will be sent out in early January 2025. Hoel asked who is on the list. Yocum said former staff, former board members, former Friends board members, and government officials are on the list. Dvorak said she would welcome any suggestions for guests. Hoel asked if Dvorak could share the list, and Dvorak said she would.

Yocum thanked the Friends for everything they do.

The next Education and Tourism Committee meeting is scheduled for January 13, 2025, at 5:30 PM at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve Visitor Center.

Finance Committee:

Leis said no board members attended the last meeting. There wasn't a lot of change since the last meeting. We will have a surplus in the 12400 account, which is the law enforcement account. Most of it is due to Leis not doing as much enforcement as he did previously. We will need to spend about \$15,000. There was a discussion at the committee meeting about purchasing portable radios for the field crew and enforcement. If we get a property manager/law enforcement officer, there will be start-up costs for equipment for the new employee.

The next Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for February 10, 2025, at 9:00 AM at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve Visitor Center.

Land Management Committee:

Downing said there was no land management committee meeting since the November 2024 board meeting.

The next Land Management Committee meeting is scheduled for January 14, 2025, at 5:30 PM at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve Visitor Center.

Other issues:

Downing asked if we should have the employee and board member gathering after the next meeting as the one planned for after this meeting was canceled due to the snow. Lind said that would be a good idea. Hoel agreed.

Hoel said she would like to discuss the following at the next meeting: a report about the Kickapoo Valley Forest School, the signage for the land acknowledgment statement, and information on the holdup with the property manager position.

Adjournment:

Lind made a motion and Nelson seconded to adjourn the meeting. It passed with all ayes. The meeting adjourned at 6:46 PM.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 16, 2025, at 6:00 PM at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve Visitor Center.



Minutes transcribed by Amy Dvorak, 1/3/2025