

KVR Plans 2020

Overview

The Kickapoo Reserve Management Board (KRMB) adopted an ecosystem management approach upon inception in 1999. Ecosystem management encompasses the natural environment, society, and regional economy—the entire system. This vision is based on the awareness that the resources protected within the Reserve are not isolated from the surrounding communities and environment but are inextricably linked to them. The primary goals of ecosystem management are to conserve, restore, and maintain the ecological integrity, productivity, and biological diversity of these public lands. Any upcoming strategies that the KRMB embarks upon to preserve and protect the property will work towards providing a balance between human impact and long-term environmental protection.

Planning Process

The Management Plans are reviewed and updated every five years. Working through the KRMB, subcommittees and staff provides a refresher on policies that have been adopted and allows input on goals and objectives for the next five years. It is also an opportunity to review accomplishments in the three main program areas of Land Management, Education and Tourism.



LAND MANAGEMENT

Active land management will ensure protection of the soil, water, flora, and fauna that comprise the Reserve through sound management techniques and consideration of the human influence.

Policies

Invasive species: Eradication of invasive species can involve manual or chemical methods. Monitoring of forest pests and diseases and control of invasive species will be determined on a case-by-case basis. This will ensure that each problem species is addressed with the most effective prescriptions rather than adopt a “one size fits all” policy. Preventing spread of invasives is primarily through early detection and rapid response, information, education, and frequent equipment cleaning by Reserve staff, and contract loggers.

Natural areas: In most cases, the best management practice of Natural Areas is to simply do nothing, using a “hands off” approach unless the area is threatened by invasives. Trail use, camping in designated sites, hunting, and other recreational activities are permitted in the Natural Areas of the Reserve; however, intensive public use will not be encouraged. Any public use that damages vegetation or otherwise impairs natural conditions is discouraged and will be controlled. Trails may be rerouted where use is heavy or to protect sensitive vegetation and erosion-prone areas.

Forest: Sustainable harvests will continue to be conducted based on the forest inventory and recommendations from resource experts. Revenues generated from harvests support ongoing forest inventory, improvement, education and maintenance projects.

Agricultural land: In 2010 & 2015, the KRMB adopted a policy to gather soil survey information through contract with a professional agronomist. Soil survey data was used in conjunction with the 2016 agriculture lease bids and the need for updated conservation plans. The KRMB will contract for soil survey data collection in five- to six-year increments to verify leased acres are being properly maintained and managed. The KRMB will cost share the soil samples up to \$7.50 per sample. Conservation plans are required for all agriculture lands. Revenues from agriculture leases are used to fund fencing on borders as needed, education programming, soil sampling and other property management projects.

Hazard Site: Monitor and maintain heavy natural cover crop on the fields where concrete/asbestos board was found per 2010 DNR agreement. Do not disturb policy is best for this impacted site.

Trails: Construction of new or re-routing of damaged trails requires a survey for potential impacts to archeological sites and/or environmental sensitivity prior to any construction. New trails will only be considered after addressing the maintenance workload of existing trails per available staff and available funding. All trail construction will be built to multi-use recreation standards for hike, bike, and equestrian. Property rules re-iterate the commitment to protecting the Reserve by instituting formal trail closure during and/or after wet weather conditions, options to establish protected areas, and guidelines for primitive camping. Prioritizing projects will be determined through the

committee structure which encourages public input, and final approval resides with the KRMB. For more information on trails see page 13.

Review of 2010-2016 Land Management Action Items:

1. Forest Lands:
 - a. Selective harvest of Hardwoods: Approximately 70 acres of hardwoods were selectively harvested in the West Ridge Area. Access roads were repaired and protection of regenerating oaks was initiated in the summer of 2016. The KVR forest inventory is nearly completed and the completed inventory has been entered into WisFirs (DNR system) and management recommendations are being prioritized for the next five years.
 - b. Research and education opportunities: A UW Stevens Point Intern proposed a plan to regenerate oaks in the area harvested on the West Ridge Trail. The UW Madison Forestry Department brought students to the Reserve three of the five years for a Capstone Course planning project.
 - c. Add 15 acres of Prairie: Twenty-one acres of native prairie grasses have been added: north of Visitor Center (6 ac), north of Harris Road (6 ac), around the Visitor Center (3 ac), and along Weister Creek near 24 Valley Road (6 ac).
 - d. Monitor and control Invasives: Stepped up efforts to monitor and control invasive species; known invasive species locations mapped via GIS points. Japanese Hedge Parsley was found on the Reserve in 2015; in 2016, we surveyed trails, identifying 18 locations, and began control efforts.
 - e. Keep open areas open: prescribed burning and mowing operations, along with tree removal in mostly open areas. Each year we conduct prescribed burns on nearly 50 acres, weather permitting.
2. Wildlife:
 - a. Protect rare and endangered: Overall protection of the property provides habitat for rare and endangered species of wildlife.
 - b. Public hunting: The Reserve remains open to public hunting and we strive to inform all user groups of safety issues through education and signage. We have improved the enforcement presence to enforce administrative rules and State laws.
 - c. Monitoring and inventory programs: Continue monitoring bird populations through volunteers of the KVR bird club. Volunteers also participate in WI Frog and Toad Survey, Annual Midwest Crane Count, Dragonfly Surveys, Rare Plant Monitoring, Invasive Plant Monitoring, WI Breeding Bird Atlas II, Great Backyard Bird Count, WI Bat Monitoring, and Turtle Conservation Program. These activities occur both on the Reserve and surrounding areas. In 2013, a database of the flora and fauna in the KVR was created, compiling data from various sources and previous surveys (“data mining”). Some flora/fauna groups have been well documented (i.e. birds, plants), but other groups are not as well known (i.e. dragonflies, invertebrates). Since the initial KVR Inventory,

species have been reconfirmed and several species added (and a few removed); the information is increasing. This is an ongoing project and will continue to develop. In conjunction with the KVR Inventory and the Forestry Inventory, the land cover of the KVR is being updated; delineating several habitat types not previously noted in past landcover data. As of 2017, approximately 70% of the Reserve land cover has been reclassified and mapped.

- d. Education and research opportunities: We have installed two snake hibernacula and a turtle hibernaculum on the Reserve in the Weister Creek Area.
3. Water quality improvement projects:
 - a. In 2014, the Weister Creek Project was initiated. Phases 1 and 2 (of 5) are complete. Work included streambank stabilization, lunker structures, snake hibernaculum, planting of native prairie plants, and a trail was established to enhance the area for recreationists.
 - b. KVR and Ho-Chunk Nation staff also monitor the water quality on the KVR and measured flow rates of the artesian wells on the property.
 4. Agriculture Lands:
 - a. The Reserve continues to lease up to 620 acres of farmland and require farming methods that minimize erosion and runoff. Soil surveys were conducted on all leased lands in fall of 2015. Farmers are encouraged to conduct soil testing at the halfway mark of the lease (3yrs) through cost-sharing approved through the KRMB. Grass waterways have been established in fields prone to erosion. Many buffer zones around fields have been expanded, especially in the Weister Creek area. The Ho-Chunk Nation Lands Division initiated conversion of fields in the Highway F and Hay Valley Road quadrants to organic methods in cooperation with staff from Organic Valley Cooperative.

Goals and Objectives:

Land Cover Goals and Objectives

Goal: Complete the forest reconnaissance and inventory of the Reserve resources as funding allows. Inventory project started in 2012, and is expected to be completed by 2018. Continue selective harvests on the Reserve based on forest inventory recommendations.

Objective:

- Work with consultant foresters to get the forest resources inventoried and entered into the WisFirs database to follow a timeline that achieves future forest management objectives.
- Proposed areas for harvests by 2020 include; Hardwood thinning in Jug Creek and Indian Creek compartments, remaining pine plantation thinning. See attached maps

Goal: Re-establish red and white oak dominance in the west ridge hardwood thinning site.

Objective:

- Encourage the natural regeneration of oaks in the stand by removing invasives and competing species around selected seedlings that were identified and protected with tree shelters in the summer of 2016.

Goal: Monitor and control forest pests and diseases such as the emerald ash borer and oak wilt.

Objectives:

- Actively monitor areas where oak wilt was present and do not conduct any cutting/trimming of oaks between April and October.
- Continue to work with the DNR and other agencies to look for the presence of the emerald ash borer and enforce firewood transport laws.

Goal: Control and eradicate invasive species:

Objectives:

- Continue to use mechanical and chemical treatments to contain the invasives.
- Monitor, record, and treat any new populations found.
- Minimize the impact of non-target species during chemical application and mechanical control.

Goal: Maintain aesthetic views and enhance ecological diversity.

Objectives:

- Add approximately 10 acres of prairie restoration and/or oak savanna over the next five years. Priority sites include: West of Mule Camp; East of STH 131, across from Star Valley Road; Mule Camp area; County P fields by Rogers Road and the Weister Creek Stream corridor.
- Continue the use of prescribed fire to maintain open areas and set back the encroachment of woody species.
- Consider purchasing or accepting donations of additional lands that are contiguous to the Reserve on a case by case basis in compliance with Wi Stat 41.41(7)(e).

Goal: Encourage research and education programs.

Objectives:

- Work with UW–Madison to continue the long-term oak regeneration study in the Highway P East area.
- Collaborate with the UW, DNR, and other professional organizations on research projects that benefit the Reserve.
- Consider sponsorship of research projects on the property.
- Continue in-kind support of Kickapoo Reforestation (Nuzum) Fund grant projects that work with forestry professionals and private landowners.

Goal: Monitor visitor impact on the natural features of the Reserve and use gathered information to determine appropriate management.

Objectives:

- Dedicate staff to preventative maintenance on trails; berm management, erosion control, user short-cuts. Close trails during wet weather and educate users on the financial and environmental benefits protecting trails during poor conditions.
- Continue to identify areas of trail that need re-routes and construct them in a sustainable fashion.
- Monitor campsites for visitor impact; enforce administrative rules.

Water Management Goals and Objectives

Goal: Work with agency and organization professionals to maintain and improve water quality.

Objectives:

- Weister Creek Project - continue working through the four phases (Phase I completed in 2015; Phase II completed in 2016). Concentrating on stream bank stabilization, flood mitigation and practices that benefit both game and non-game species.
- Continue to support water quality monitoring efforts in the Kickapoo Valley.
- Work with Vernon County Land and Water, the Ho-Chunk Nation and DNR professionals to identify areas where additional stream corridor habitat improvement work would be most beneficial and affordable.
- Gauge flow rates of the eleven flowing wells to meet State reporting requirements and to monitor over the long-term.
- Co-sponsor the USGS gauging station on the Kickapoo River at La Farge to enhance public information and support the historical integrity of the River data.
- Release log jams and keep the Kickapoo River “passable” for river users.
- Continue the “Paddlers Pick-up” initiative to help keep the river free of litter.

Goal: Reduce the potential for polluted runoff.

Objectives:

- Enforce adherence to agricultural conservation plans in cooperation with the Vernon County Land & Water Conservation Department.
- Maintain grass waterways and buffer zones between agricultural fields and waterways.
- Identify the need for more grass waterways in fields prone to erosion.
- Monitor lease holders compliance to the agreements.

Goal: Enhance wetland areas.

Objectives:

- Monitor for purple loosestrife and other invasives and remove them when found.
- Regulate the Schroeder pond water levels to enhance the area for many different species and to provide a place for educational activities.

Wildlife Goals and Objectives

Goal: Protect rare and endangered species and their habitat.

Objective:

- Many of the rare and endangered species of wildlife found on the Reserve are birds that thrive in areas with large tracts of forest. Therefore, the KVR will protect areas such as Bridge 8 Woods; West Ridge and Blackhawk Rock quadrants from fragmentation.
- Oversee appropriate use and timing of pesticides or herbicides by other agencies or entities i.e. Dairyland Power Cooperative for brush control, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture for gypsy moth. Continue awareness of pollinator protection measures and opportunities to improve their habitat needs such as County and Town mowing operations.

Goal: Provide quality public hunting and trapping opportunities that balance hunter and recreationist's safety with sustained management of the wildlife resource.

Objectives:

- Continue to limit vehicle access to the interior.
- Continue to enforce KVR administrative rules and State laws.
- Continue to work with local professionals to monitor wildlife populations.
- Provide education through brochures, posters, signage and social media to increase awareness of hunting seasons to notify non-hunters of the activity.
- Beaver habitat will generally be left alone unless they are impacting trails or use areas, then selective removal may be necessary.
- Cooperate with DNR on Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) monitoring and efforts to reduce the spread.
- The Reserve will continue to be a pheasant release site through the DNR program.

Land Management Action Items for Review in 2020:

1. Monitor forest pests and diseases such as emerald ash borer and oak wilt.
2. Add/convert about 10 acres of prairie and/or oak savanna over the next five years.
3. Continue with the forest reconnaissance and inventory of the Reserve resources as funding and staff allow. Follow through on recommendations for harvest and Timber Stand Improvement work, such as the invasive control and seedling protection at the former logging site on the West Ridge Trail.
4. Plan to conduct prescribed burns on approximately 50 acres every year, weather permitting. The Ho-Chunk Nation through the BIA also conducts prescribed burns on approximately 50 acres in fields on the north and Blackhawk Rock quadrants.
5. Continue to address invasive species with mechanical and chemical control.
6. Continue with Phases 3 through 5 of the Weister Creek restoration work
7. Incorporate *Young Forest Initiative* practices on edges of open areas; which include removal of trees and other woody growth on the edges of certain fields to encourage new growth.

8. Repaving of Old 131 Trail south of Bridge 13 and North of Indian Creek; simultaneously, the Ho-Chunk Nation will repave the section from Bridge 13 north to Indian Creek
9. Restoration of Bridge 13 through the Ho-Chunk Nation and Bureau of Indian Affairs and installation of Historic Bridge Information sign.
10. Working with the Ho-Chunk Nation on the construction of a bridge or box culvert on the Old 131 Trail over Indian Creek.
11. Continue to upgrade and maintain the recreation trails to sustainable design standards. Trails to be upgraded include: West Ridge, Hoot Owl, Weister Creek, Cut-Off, Pond, Dutch Hollow Trail and Big Valley Trails.

Education Program Plan

The Kickapoo Valley Reserve (KVR) is an ideal setting for hosting a variety of learning experiences. It is an 8,600-acre outdoor classroom where students of all ages can attend a variety of learning experiences, including those offered for academic pursuits and others designed for personal enjoyment and enrichment. Since the start of the first education program in the summer of 1999, when a one-week class was held for middle school students, the Reserve's programs have expanded to include hosting over 5,000 students of all ages in year-round programs and special events.

Policies:

- Commitment to non-discrimination – all schools and organizations private, public, and independent are welcome. Fee structure reviewed annually by citizen committees and the Kickapoo Reserve Management Board (KRMB)
- La Farge and Norwalk-Ontario-Wilton (NOW) public schools programming is exempt from fees in recognition of the historical impact the La Farge Dam project had on their budgets and administration from 1975-1999.
- Efforts are made to integrate education opportunities into administrative functions in the Reserve; prairie restoration, forestry, research projects, and surveys offer opportunities for job shadowing, school-to-work, internships and hands-on education.
- The Visitor Center plays an important role for the public. Administratively, fellow government entities are not charged a fee; and non-profits pay a minimal rental fee.

Review of 2010 Education Action Items:

1. Expand current learning opportunities; added afterschool programming for La Farge, Norwalk-Ontario-Wilton and Desoto; added Forest 4k. Developed natural play areas,
2. Secured summer interns annually.
3. Developed educational brochures and maps for use in specialized areas. Example: Master Naturalist program created Lichen Brochure & guided hike on the Wintergreen Bluff trail.
4. Developed additional educational walking trails that leave from the Visitor Center: Wintergreen Bluff Trail, handicap accessible Visitor Center Loop, Harris Road.
5. Created outdoor classroom spaces; Ciiporke in 2011, deck, benches & picnic tables along Visitor Center loop have been adapted for a variety of uses.
6. Built a permanent bird blind at SW pond (west of campsite A) in 2012; fully utilized.

Goals and Objectives 2020:

Goal: Offer new, and expand current, educational opportunities in a manner that enhances the appreciation and respect for the natural environment, while continuing to sustain manageable growth of the education programs.

Objectives:

- Offer day-use programming for schools and groups.
- Offer evening and weekend programs for the public.
- Offer continuing education opportunities for teachers and the public.
- Offer summer camps for youth.
- Create new curriculum and new program content to provide continued interest.
- Continue to monitor program evaluations and feedback.
- Explore options to invite more participation by the Ho-Chunk Nation in the KVR Education Program as a way to increase knowledge about Ho-Chunk history and culture.
- Investigate ways to offer expanded learning experiences to students. For example provide weekend or overnight programming for youth; consider ways to expand the use of Natural Play Areas, continue to work on ways to bring engaging programming to afterschool groups and homeschool groups that visit regularly.
- Research connections with colleges and universities as a bridge to allow students interested in environmental education to step into our summer internship program.
- Recruit Instructors with varied skill sets that provide high quality education experiences for all ages.

Goal: Encourage participation in ongoing citizen science projects

Objectives

- Work with KVR staff on ways to involve students and the public in on-going scientific research on the Reserve such as: frog surveys, bird banding, bat monitoring, lichen inventory and species inventory.
- Seek grants and funding to expand citizen science research projects.

Goal: Create educational resources that will enhance the quality of Kickapoo Reserve users' experience while fostering local economic benefit.

Objectives:

- Continue to develop educational brochures and maps that could be used on designated hikes throughout the Reserve; including QR code or electronic versions for ease of access and cost savings.
- Maintain general website and Facebook page with current information on public education programs as well as photographs of interest and possibly daily phenology reports.
- Further promote 'Leave No Trace' education in various ways.
- Plan Ciiporke rebuild and brainstorm ways to extend its life span (current Ciiporke in need of reconstruction after 6 years).
- Increase visibility of the Education Program through use of social media. Update instructor bios, photos, and consider the addition of a KVR blog on website.

- Provide a circle of seating (perhaps Leopold benches) near the building as a good weather gathering place for student groups.
- Consider developing additional challenge course elements of increased difficulty.
- Consider pros and cons of securing a 15 passenger van for KVR education and events programs. Work with Department of Administration for option of summer use State van.
- Continue to pursue Dark Skies Protection at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve and surrounding area.
- Continue to host educational programs and events which bring participants to the area and benefit the local economy.
- Utilize local accommodations for necessary food, lodging, advertising, etc., wherever possible when needed for Reserve programs.
- Work with Friends of KVR and other sponsors to upgrade and enhance Visitor Center exhibits to create new and added interest for visitors.
- Work with community of artists to expand art events at the Kickapoo Reserve, i.e. art exhibits, art programs, artist in residence program.
- Work with area organizations including but not limited to: Driftless Folk School(DFS), Kickapoo Woods Coop and Valley Stewardship Network in ways that can enhance all entities and the community, i.e. partner on community programs and events, discuss lodging options on DFS campus, partner for larger grant funding possibilities.

Goal: Expand invasive species education.

Objectives:

- Host workshops on invasive species.
- Host invasive species work days.
- Have printed educational materials on invasive species available for visitors.
- Have samples of invasive species for public identification.

Goal: Continue to increase revenue to Education and Events Program.

Objectives:

- Reach out to new schools and groups. Encourage use of the Reserve's education programs at "off season" times.
- Continue to work with Friends of KVR to host major fundraising events, i.e., Dam Challenge
- Develop relationships with other professional organizations as a way to increase use of education programs, i.e., Elderhostel, universities, businesses.
- Continue to apply for grant funding in areas of interest that relate to education programming.

Education Program Action Items for Review in 2020:

1. Upgrade the Exhibits in Visitor Center.
2. Expand the pool of high quality instructors and the curriculum they offer.
3. Secure designation as a dark sky preserve via State and National system.
4. Continue to survey students and group leaders to gauge quality of programming and instructors. Adapt accordingly.
5. Track grant and fee funding to verify program is predominantly self-funded.
6. Rebuild Ciiporke and upgrade elements at the Challenge Course.

TOURISM MANAGEMENT

As stated in the statutory objective for the Kickapoo Valley Reserve (Reserve), tourism is an important aspect of the Reserve: “*The board shall manage land in the Kickapoo valley reserve to enhance its unique environmental, scenic and cultural features, to provide facilities for the use and enjoyment of visitors to the reserve and to promote the reserve as a destination for vacationing and recreation.*” ss.41.41(3)

Policies:

Recreation activities on the Reserve are low-impact and regulated through Administrative Rules KB1 (Attached) Overall, recreation will be regulated so as not to interfere with the KRMB’s mission of preserve and protect.

- Trails: most trails are listed as multi-use so Trail Etiquette is expected for the safety of users: hikers and bicyclists yield to equestrians. During wet conditions, trails are posted closed to bicyclists and equestrians to prevent damage. It is important to note that the KRMB *will not* be able to meet the satisfaction of every user group. Therefore, it is vital that each user group makes an effort to compromise when issues arise concerning use and maintenance of the Reserve. The well-being of the property should be the first and foremost consideration when issues are discussed and decisions are made. The KRMB will consider the needs of user groups; however, the KRMB will not favor the wishes of any user group over the protection of the resource. For more information on Trails see page 3.
- Camping: primitive campsites – no toilet or water – are offered as first come; first served intentionally for tourists that may not be able to reserve a site in a State Park or private campground and those who prefer the option for last-minute travel plans. As part of the Memorandum of Understanding, full-service campsites and/or a developed campground is not an option in the Reserve.
- Events: special events hosted by the Reserve are intended to attract visitors, however, meet the same criteria for protecting the property. Events hosted by other groups are also required to agree that the activities will not negatively impact the property through trail use, litter or degradation to the flora and fauna.
- Fees: the Kickapoo Reserve Management Board considers user fees annually. Revenues generated through fees are used for ongoing maintenance of the Reserve.
- Donors: Donations from outside sources, either monetary or in-kind, are an excellent resource for the Kickapoo Reserve Management Board to “Preserve and Protect” the Reserve. To keep the KVR in the most natural state possible, memorials referencing names or organizations are not allowed on the property. Man-made impacts beyond the Visitor Center area will be kept to a minimum. Native trees and prairie plants have been accepted as memorials but no signage is allowed. A completed and signed donation form is required.

Review of 2015 Tourism Management Plan Action Items:

1. Completed the handicap access loop and hiking trail from the Visitor Center; habitat restoration, prairie site and shrub establishment on going.
2. Replaced surface material of Old 131 Trail; completed south sections to P West; remainder to Rockton scheduled for 2017.
3. Continued to improve year-round events to attract new and repeat visitors. Nuzum grant survey showed interest in outdoor events and local foods resulted in hosting two Chomp & Tromp (trail run) events in May of 2015 & 16; will re-evaluate for 2018. Creative Communities grant initiated hosting the art canvas project in February and March of each year. Staff strives to improve events each year. Staff and volunteer suggestions for improvement are recorded after each event and referenced the following year.
4. Planned and hosted a special celebration for the ten year (2014) anniversary of the Visitor Center. A 10 year anniversary celebration was held on November 1, 2014; included speakers, exhibit tour and a performance of by students from La Farge High School on The People Remember Oral History Project. Board recommends 25 year celebration in 2029.
5. Connected with area tourism businesses to encourage dialogue of ideas that could enhance tourism dollars: Executive Director served on regional Driftless Wisconsin Inc., Kickapoo Valley Association and Vernon County Tourism Council; also participated in Village of Ontario Palen Park Project and Village of La Farge Economic Development initiative.

Tourism Goals and Objectives:

Goal: To effectively serve visitors and determine what attracted visitors to the Reserve (recreation, presentations, events, etc.)

Objectives:

- Continue to conduct annual monitoring of permits sold, event attendance estimates, follow-up surveys and number of people utilizing the Visitor Center.
- Monitor campsites and trailheads to understand recreational preference.
- Support application to the Nuzum fund for a grant to repeat the 1999 economic impact survey of canoe and trout fishing as an ongoing study specific to two user groups.

Goal: Ensure the sustainability of the Reserve relative to the potential benefits of, and potential negative impact from, tourists.

Objectives:

- Illustrate the importance of tourism to the quality of life and benefits to the economy. Share information with the local and State elected officials.
- Work with area businesses and organizations on initiatives that improve the area economy and in turn support the sustainability of the Reserve.
- Establish a greater enforcement presence at heavily used areas (e.g., campsites, canoe landings, road access) to prevent problems and to determine the number of visitors for use in examining management options.

- Work with user groups and volunteers to monitor, maintain, improve, and reroute trails that are in poor condition, contributing to erosion, or experiencing user conflicts.
- Be mindful of simple management decisions in an effort to minimize impact, i.e., energy efficient lighting, dark sky protection, event supplies, and mechanical uses should be conservation based. (“Walk the Talk”)
- Maintain that any accommodations such as benches, bridges, and hitching posts on trails/camp areas will have minimal impact.

Goal: Encourage responsible use of the Reserve while being mindful of short and long term impacts.

Objectives:

- Continue camping policies regarding capacity limits, designation of event reservation and first-come-first-served sites, sites along the river, and group sites.
- Monitor the trail system to ensure it is sustainable long term and minimizes impact to the natural environment.
- Provide ample communication options for users to understand trail and river conditions or other potential issues. Options include website, Facebook, front desk staff, signage, radio public service announcements, voicemail recording, etc.

Goal: Encourage diverse low-impact usage of the Reserve.

Objectives:

- Continue year-round promotion of special events to attract visitors to the area in multiple seasons for a variety of activities.
- Host or highlight events, displays, and exhibits that also serve the local community. The Friends of KVR annual photo contest, monthly Driftless Dialogue series, guided hikes; Creative Communities canvas display, art classes, etc. are examples that should be continued.
- Board and staff will continue to research alternative activities as they evolve; bird watching competitions, geo-caching, fat-tire winter biking and ski-joring was not even considered ten years ago. Technology and creativity will continue to introduce new low impact recreation options.

Goal: Work with organizations that support the mission of the Reserve and benefit the local communities and region.

Objectives:

- Continue the close working relationship with the Friends of the Kickapoo Valley Reserve as referenced in s. 41.41, Wis. Stats. Provide administrative support when available and as requested.
- Co-sponsor conferences, presentations, classes that match the policies and goals of the Reserve with not-for-profit groups. Previous events included work with the Kickapoo Woods Cooperative, Valley Stewardship Network, Wisconsin Humanities Council, Trout Unlimited, Wisconsin Horse Council, Vernon Trails, and Audubon Society.
- Serve as a host site or attraction for the local communities to feature or highlight for new residents and/or tourists.

Tourism Management Action Items for review in 2020:

1. Upgrade and Refresh Visitor Center exhibits. (Shared with Education goals)
2. Track social media interactions and evaluate most effective/affordable methods of promotion.
3. Continue pursuit of Dark Sky Preserve designation. (Shared with Education goals).
4. Offer year-round events to attract tourists in the off-season. Recognizing changing demographics of retiring Baby Boomers and flex-scheduled Millennial groups may share interest in outdoor recreation opportunities.
5. Provide Economic Impact Reports following big events such as Dam Challenge and Winter Fest. Communicate results to area businesses, elected officials and Board.
6. Offer use of the Visitor Center for small business development, customer service and entrepreneurial training in cooperation other entities such as Vernon Economic Development Association, Wisconsin Department of Tourism and Kickapoo Valley Association.