

update

KICKAPOO VALLEY RESERVE NEWSLETTER

Photo by KVR

Dam Challenge Triathlon & Pasta Supper

Pasta Supper - October 3rd, 2025, 5pm-8pm

Dam Challenge Triathlon October 4th, 2025.

Race Start Time 9am!

[Learn more here!](#)



Special thanks to
our sponsors:
Ho Chunk Nation
Friends of KVR
Driftless Cafe
Cowboy David's
Bakery
Go Macro
Organic Valley
continued on
page 13



Photo by Jackie Leis





WHAT'S HAPPENING

Sept 13 | Small game & archery deer opens
Sept 24 | Nature Bound Fall Semester begins
Oct 3 | Friends of KVR Pasta Supper 5pm
Oct 4 | Dam Challenge Triathlon 9am
Oct 9 | Education & Tourism Committee Mtg 5:30 pm
Oct 11 & 12 | Youth gun deer
Oct 15 | Driftless Dialogue – Bobcats 6pm
Oct 16 | KRMB Meeting 6pm
Oct 17 | Friends of KVR photo contest deadline
Oct 18 | Pheasant season opens 9am
Nov 3 | Driftless Dialogue - DNR Warden 6pm
Nov 15 | Equestrian & bike trails close for the season
Nov 20 | KRMB Meeting 6pm
Nov 22 – 30 | Gun deer season
Nov 27 | Visitor Center closed
Dec 6 | Friends of KVR Holiday Happening 1pm
Dec 10 | Driftless Dialogue, Dark Skies 6pm
Dec 11 – 14 | Antlerless gun deer season
Dec 18 | KRMB Meeting 6pm
Dec 24 – 25 | Visitor Center closed
Dec 31 – Jan 1, 2026 | Visitor Center closed
Jan 1, 2026 | 2026 Trail Challenge begins
Jan 2, 2026 | Creative Communities Canvases available
Jan 10, 2026 | Winter Festival



Directors Discourse

BY JASON LEIS KVR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

We have come to my favorite time of year. Brisk mornings, trees turning and hunting seasons make it a great time to be in the woods. Fall is a time to get prepared. We see this in the nature around us as birds are migrating, mammals are stocking up and growing their winter coats. We find ourselves doing preparations too. Mowing fire breaks, doing fall trail maintenance and stocking up on firewood. Speaking of being prepared, we are getting ready for the Dam Challenge Triathlon. I am always very humbled and appreciative of all the volunteers that show up year after year to help us put this event on. If you are looking to help out, we still have spots to fill. Our staff will be focusing on the race route for a while now and hoping we don't have more windstorms.



Photo by KVR!

The bow deer and small game seasons are underway as well as some waterfowl seasons. About mid-October pheasant season opens, and this brings another large influx of hunters. It stays pretty busy up through the Gun Deer Season which opens on November 22, 2025. Users on the trails should wear bright colors, such as blaze orange, to be seen while you are recreating. There is a 1000 ft no hunting zone around the Visitor Center if you would rather recreate in an area closed to hunting. Get out and enjoy this wonderful fall weather and remember to always leave it better than when you found it.

Jason



Bridge 18 in fall - KVR

State Natural Area Inventory Work

AMY DVORAK - KVR ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT & PLANT BIOLOGIST

The Kickapoo Valley Reserve is home to two of Wisconsin's 681 State Natural Areas (SNAs). These areas protect supreme examples of Wisconsin's natural landscape of native plant communities, geological formations, and archeological sites. At the request of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, I got to work with our intern, Danae, to survey around 800 acres of specific element occurrences, or high-quality examples of natural communities, within the SNAs this summer. Our goal is to determine if the areas still comprise exceptional examples of the plant communities.



Danae with Matt Zine, the DNR field ecologist surveying State Natural Areas on the KVR

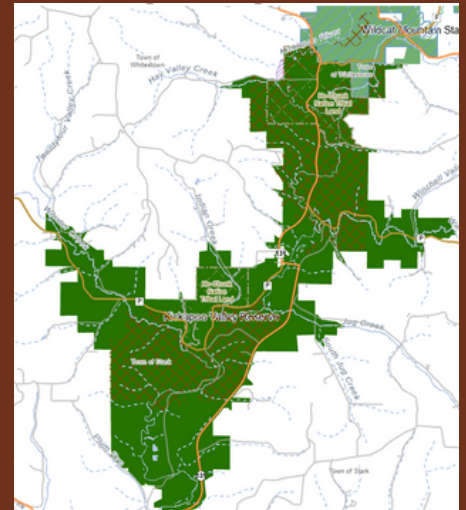
Over the course of two weeks, Danae and I surveyed nine of the 22 element occurrences. It is quite the time intensive process. At the end of each day, we were exhausted, having hiked uneven and steep terrain for six or more hours, but boy was it worth it. We saw some beautiful and mind-blowing things like a white birch growing thick trunk-like roots down a cliff. We even found a Wisconsin Endangered grass called obovate beak grain (*Diarrhena obovata*)!

The survey season is coming to an end, and we will pick up where we left off next spring when we get to survey the moist cliff habitat areas while canoeing down the Kickapoo River. I can't wait to see, and share, what we find next!



Diarrhena obovata - endangered grass

Seasonal Field Notes



Of the 8600 acres that comprise the KVR, 3600 acres are designated State Natural Areas.



Education Corner

NATURE BOUND FALL SESSION

Registration is open!

Fall Semester
Sept. 24 - Nov. 12

LEARN MORE ABOUT
NATURE BOUND PROGRAMS



Wild World of Plants

Summer Adventure Camps

AMBER BURCH - KVR EDUCATION COORDINATOR

Another year of summer camps in the books, and boy was it a fantastic time with lots of great memories made! Even the weather cooperated, with most days' storms coming after camps had wrapped for the day. And the overall above average rains for the season just added to the experience, with kids playing slippery tag or just dancing in the drops!



Trail Trekkers Camp

Each camp had its own set of highlights (see camp story), but some had pretty special overlaps. We had a few camps that found four-leaf and even five-leaf clovers! Even more rare than that were the two camps that found blue-spotted salamanders, one so small it didn't have its spots yet!

One highlight for each of the camps was making the camp flag, which was signed and decorated for each unique group of students. Some drew things they enjoyed outside while others drew something to represent favorite moments in the camp. Some of the overnight groups were even able to hang their flags in their campsites! And now what was their highlight will get to be a highlight for all of us moving forward as these flags are hung in the Visitor Center next summer to usher in another new camp season!



Kindercamp



Our Great Adventure - A Summer Camp Story

BY DANAE GARDNER KVR EDUCATION INTERN/NATURALIST

The sound of whipping wind and rocks crunching under thin, rubber tires hit my ears as Miss Jackie, five geared up and mighty campers, and I pedaled down the pavement on Old Highway 131 Trail. It was the week of KVR trail-themed summer camp, Trail Trekkers for 6-and 7-year olds, and we were beginning our last day of camp with a grand bike trip. Our campers had given the outing the title of "Our Great Adventure", and the mission was to bike the four miles, some with training wheels and all, out to Little Canada Trail and back.

Earlier in the week, while relaxing in our hammocks, we read a sweet book called, "The Salamander Room", a story about a boy who finds a salamander and imagines all the ways he could transform his bedroom into the perfect place for the salamander to live. Immediately enraptured by the topic of the amphibian, and even more thrilled to learn we have salamanders here on the KVR, we collectively decided to head out to Little Canada Trail and search for the blue-spotted salamander on our last day!

With determination morphing the spools of our bike tires into a total blur, we pedaled on Old Highway 131 Trail as an unstoppable group towards the coniferous trail, the excitement palpable as every second brought us closer to our search. Once we were off our bikes and on Little Canada Trail, with mosquito nets on and plenty of "bug stuff" applied, the hunt for the blue-spotted salamander began. Every rock and piece of coarse woody debris near the trail was soon flipped. Excited eyes danced across the orange pine needles, hoping for a glimpse of the small, blue-black salamander beneath. Just when we figured this might be a vigorous, and possibly unsuccessful, search for the amphibian, we were quickly proven wrong when we heard one of the boys shout, "I found a salamander!"

We all scrambled over to see if it was true, quickly circling around the gently cupped hands of a 6-year-old. There in the palm of his hand lay a blue-spotted salamander, young enough to have not even gained his signature bright blue spots yet. With lots of reminders to be gentle from us camp leaders, "no ways" and "woaaahs" from the campers, and the shutter of my camera as I attempted to photograph the little salamander in the curious trail dirt marked hands, our search for the blue-spotted salamander had been a success!

It was so incredible to see a twinkle in the children's eyes for the rest of the day. Grown-ups were bombarded with the exciting news as soon as they were picked up at end of camp. Summer camps here at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve are the perfect place for your child to not only be educated and immersed in everything outdoors and nature, but they get to leave with fun and unique memories that last them a lifetime. For me, watching that happen firsthand might just be cooler than finding any salamander.

Education Corner



On 8600 Acres

GOOD TO KNOW

Recreation Reminders

- Leave No Trace
- Camp in designated spots only
- All users should wear bright colors
- Equestrian & bike trails are subject to closure in wet conditions
- Day or Annual Passes are required
- E-bikes are not allowed without special permit
- Parking passes at river landings are required
- State Park or Trail Passes do not apply on the KVR
- Trails close to Equestrian and bike use on November 15th



West Ridge Trail after the storm

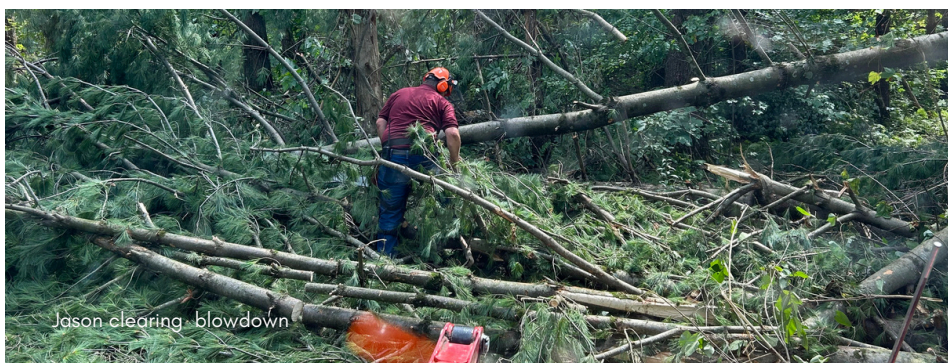
Trail Talk - When Storms Blow Through

BY JACKIE LEIS - KVR NATURAL RESOURCES & RECREATION SPECIALIST

Storms blow over the 8600 acres that make up the Kickapoo Valley Reserve, that is nothing new. The property isn't a stranger to the effects of weather. Stretching over 10 miles long, it is no wonder that even scattered weather events will have some impact. In August, on a seemingly pleasant Saturday, a quick little storm burst popped up. Without much warning or looming skies, a narrow wall of rain and wind slapped its way down the Weister Creek valley and up over the Little Canada hills headed toward Jug Creek. As the skies settled, we immediately began getting reports of campers trapped in their campsites by fallen trees. Thankfully no one was injured in the campsites and members of the KVR crew were available to react quickly to get the down trees cut from campsites.

Trails closed due to wet conditions after that storm burst, and we knew there had to be trees down on trails. We could never imagine the extent of the damage to isolated areas on the property. With over 50 miles of trails, user reports are very helpful when making a game plan to clean up after wind events. We had an idea there would be work to do along West Ridge Trail simply because of the storm track that did damage in campsites. We split up into 2 separate saw crews to cover more ground.

As we turned the corner at the bottom of the West Ridge Trail hill in from Potts Corners, we got a glimpse of what we were in for. The first tree was mild compared to what was ahead. As we worked up the hill and could see the pine grove to the north and east, we realized the extent of the destruction and the trail was smack dab in the middle of it all. Two stands of red pine and surrounding white pines saw nearly 100% canopy loss, with almost every tree affected. Habitat improvement projects often include harvesting timber, often times pine plantations. It looks like this area just got moved up the list for some quality habitat improvement! Hike out and take a look, the destruction albeit sad to see, is quite impressive.



Jason clearing blowdown



KVR & HCN crews working together on large scale pollinator project

Advancing Habitat Improvement

BY JESSE HANEY - KVR PROPERTY MANAGER/POLICE OFFICER

This past summer has been an important season for habitat improvement across the Kickapoo Valley Reserve. As part of our mission to preserve and protect this unique landscape, we have worked closely with our partners and volunteers to enhance the health of the land, restore native ecosystems, and ensure that the Reserve continues to thrive for generations to come.

One of the largest projects was a joint effort between the Kickapoo Valley Reserve and the Ho-Chunk Nation to establish prairie and pollinator habitat. Approximately 130 acres near County Highway F and Hay Valley Road were dedicated to this project. By creating diverse grassland habitat, we not only provide food and shelter for pollinators like bees and butterflies, but also improve soil health, support wildlife, and strengthen the ecological resilience of the Reserve.

We also focused on planting native species throughout the property. Native shrubs were introduced at several sites to help combat the spread of invasive species such as honeysuckle. At the top of the Jug Creek hiking trail, in another joint Ho-Chunk and Kickapoo Valley Reserve project, 40 native oak trees were planted in a previously harvested pine plantation, restoring an area to its natural woodland character and providing long-term benefits for both wildlife and visitors.

Equally important was the work of removing and controlling invasive plants that threaten the Reserve's biodiversity. Species such as wild parsnip, garlic mustard, and honeysuckle can quickly overtake natural areas, outcompeting native plants and reducing habitat quality. Through targeted removal and management, we are able to give native species a chance to reestablish and thrive. Habitat work like this is not always immediately visible to visitors, but it is critical to the long-term health of the Reserve. Every acre of restored prairie, every native tree planted, and every invasive species removed contributes to a stronger, more diverse ecosystem. I am proud of the work accomplished this summer and grateful to all who have supported these efforts. Together, we are ensuring that the Kickapoo Valley Reserve remains a place of beauty, biodiversity, and cultural significance for years to come.



On 8600 Acres



KVR & HCN crews worked together preparing and planting trees on top of Jug Creek Trail



KVR & HCN crews working together to plant over 100 acres to pollinator habitat!



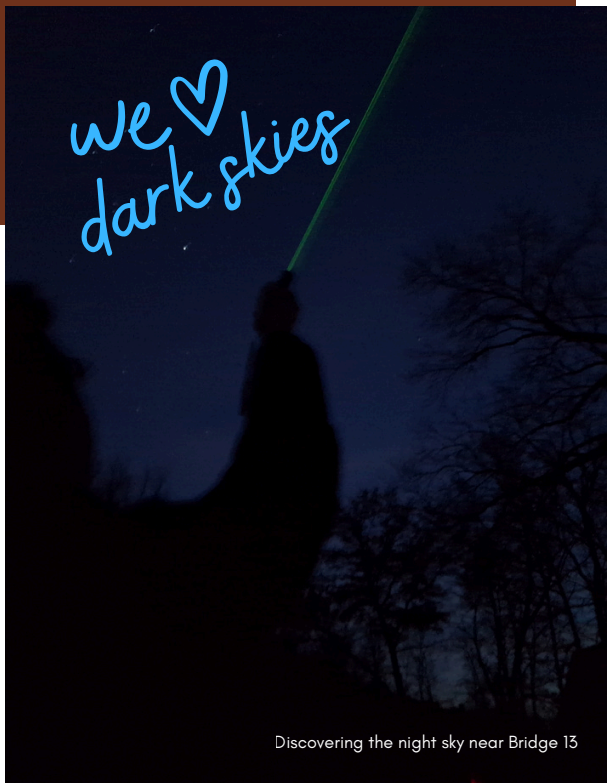
Bridge 18 under the stars

After Dark Activities

GOOD TO KNOW

Half the park is after dark!

[LEARN MORE](#)



Discovering the night sky near Bridge 13



Kickapoo Valley Dark Sky Initiative is a conservation initiative focused on providing education and resources for individuals, businesses, and communities to prevent light pollution and protect dark skies in the Kickapoo Valley and beyond. Learn more about Dark Sky Conservation. [Click here.](#)

Local Dark Sky Conservation

BY SUSAN CUSHING - MASTER NATURALIST & DARK SKIES ADVOCATE

The Kickapoo Valley Reserve Management Plan's 'primary purpose of ecosystem management is to conserve, restore, and maintain the ecological integrity, productivity, and biological diversity of these public lands. The KVR and the Ho-Chunk Nation share an awareness that the resources protected within the Reserve are not isolated from the surrounding communities but are inextricably linked to them.



Moonrise over pond - photo by Susan Cushing

The plants and animals we think of in our conservation work all depend on Earth's systems of weather, water circulation, climate, and the influence of daytime sunlight and night darkness to survive. And in turn, we depend on all of these systems for our survival.

Humans have now interfered with the greatest of Nature's forces, that of daylight and darkness and the effects are profound. From insects to humans, sleep, health, reproduction, navigation and communication are disrupted by our lights. The KVR has some of the last dark skies and, not incidentally, a diverse, beautiful and rare landscape but it too is being affected by changes in the natural darkness of night. You can learn more on our website.





Playing La Crosse at the KVR during HCN Summer Solstice Gathering

A Dugout Canoe on Ancestral Lands

BY JACKIE LEIS - KVR NATURAL RESOURCE & RECREATION SPECIALIST

On a beautiful August evening, with the sun sinking over West Ridge, a few curious onlookers watched as a modern -day dugout canoe rolled into the Visitor Center parking lot. This particular canoe, expertly lashed to a modified pontoon trailer, has traveled many miles by highway and by water, making it's own place in history while revisiting stories of many generations before. To witness a dugout canoe on the KVR was a hard experience to describe. It was a feeling of being small, of being in the presence of something so much grander than our everyday lives. There was a profound reverence in the air as visitors stepped up and touched the carved out 20 ft long cottonwood log. A Ho-Chunk nation flag, mounted securely on the bow. Kickapoo Reserve Management Board member and Tribal Historic Preservation Officer and Cultural Resources Division Manager, Na\`a\`wa\`cekg`ize (Knocks Down Fence) Mr. Bill Quackenbush, presented cultural information and shared stories about the dugout canoe and the cultural significance of using it to navigate waters once used by Indigenous peoples. To view a recording of Bill's talk and other lectures, visit the [KVR Driftless Dialogue](#) website.



Bill Quackenbush and Jason Leis with Dugout Canoe

Honoring Cultural Preservation & Perpetuation

Calling Volunteers!

We need you!
Click below to
volunteer!

Pasta Supper Volunteer
Friday, Oct 3

Dam Challenge
Volunteer
Saturday, Oct 4



Friends of Kickapoo Valley Reserve



New T-Shirts in the Gift Shop!





Sandhill Cranes over Kickapoo Valley Reserve photo by KVR

Naturalist Notes

GOOD TO KNOW

“Driftless Area plays a critical role in a migratory spectacle...”

[LEARN MORE HERE](#)



Scarlet Tanager Photo by Diane Freriks



A public and private partnership to increase awareness, improve habitat, and engage landowners in conservation practices for birds and other wildlife within the Kickapoo-Wildcat Important Bird Area.

Places of Refuge

BY BARBARA DUERKSEN - MASTER NATURALIST & NATIVE BIRD EXPERT

The Driftless Area of Southwest Wisconsin is known to the Ho-Chunk Nation as the place of refuge that sheltered people during the time of glaciers. It is also a place of refuge for many species, including migrating birds. Craig Thompson says it so well: “As the largest block of deciduous forests between the Ozarks and Canada’s boreal forest, the Driftless Area plays a critical role in a migratory spectacle that has played out over eons. Every spring and fall millions of birds representing hundreds of species stop in the Driftless Area to reset and refuel as they migrate to and from their winter homes in Latin America.

Preserving habitat, which is critical to reversing the decline in bird numbers, is a mission of the KVR and is one of the issues addressed as they update their master plan. 3600 acres within the reserve are designated as State Natural Areas, which are managed for their ecological significance. The KVR and Wildcat Mountain State Park have been designated as an Important Bird Area (IBA), as it contains the most intact non-floodplain forestland in the driftless region.



Black Throated Green Warbler Photo by S Reed

The Kickapoo Bird Habitat Initiative, a conservation partnership coordinated by the Valley Stewardship Network, is working to advance bird conservation on public and private lands in the IBA watershed. Priority species include both rare and common forest interior birds, including Kentucky Warbler, Acadian Flycatcher, Louisiana Waterthrush, Wood Thrush, Scarlet Tanager, and more. This summer KBHI members conducted bird surveys in the KVR and Wildcat Mountain, with more surveys planned for next summer.

The majority of the land in the Driftless Area is privately held. Individual actions can have large-scale consequences, both positive and negative. Cornell Laboratory for Ornithology offers some good recommendations at [Seven simple actions to help birds](#).



The Patient Nodding Pogonia

BY DANA E GARDNER - KVR EDUCATION INTERN/NATURALIST

While it isn't uncommon for Amy and me to see all sorts of cool plants while updating NCEO's within State Natural Areas across the Kickapoo Valley Reserve, there is certainly one rare plant that has the others beat. Nodding pogonia, or *Triphora trianthophoros*, is an incredibly rare herbaceous perennial in the orchid, or Orchidaceae, family. While nodding pogonia is extremely rare in Wisconsin due to being in the northwestern corner of its range, the best place to find the flower is in shaded upland, hardwood forests with rich, moist soil and lots of leaf litter and rotting logs.

So, why is it so difficult to find? Not only is it because nodding pogonia is little, but it doesn't appear above ground every year! Populations vary due to this orchid remaining dormant underground, possibly for many years, until the right conditions occur before sending up a shoot. This is possible due to the relationship nodding pogonia has with mycorrhizae underground. Because of its shaded environment and limited time above ground, nodding pogonia relies heavily on mycorrhizae to get its nutrients! Nodding pogonia also doesn't tend to stick around for very long, appearing only from mid-August to mid-September. Even the flowering time is short-lived, with each flower blooming for only one day!

Although it may seem like the odds are stacked against it, the nodding pogonia has a few tricks up its sleeve. Because its flowers are in bloom only for a day, a population of nodding pogonias tend to synchronize their bloom. But not only do they do that in one area, but their synchronicity can span across counties, and even states! In 1990,



Nodding pogonia on the Kickapoo Valley Reserve photo by Amy Dvorak

nodding pogonia was recorded flowering in New Hampshire, Maine, and Massachusetts all on the exact same day! This phenomenon is thought to be cued by different weather patterns, flowers often blooming after a drop in temperature two nights before (something Amy and I found true after finding our own flowered nodding pogonia). Nodding pogonia also doesn't have any nectar, which pollinators tend to avoid. To get around this, the synchronized blooming and short-term flowering, combined with ultraviolet markings to guide bees right to it, are the perfect tools to ensure a higher chance of successful pollination before pollinators learn to stay away from it. When it comes to establishing new populations, nodding pogonia relies on releasing thousands of dust-like seeds that are dispersed via wind!

Now that we know it's here, how do we protect the mysterious nodding pogonia? By keeping invasive species far, far away! Both non-native plants, such as Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*) and garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*), and invertebrates like earthworms can heavily impact the delicate nutrients, structure, chemistry, and mycorrhizal processes within soil that nodding pogonia relies on to establish and reproduce. By identifying and managing these threats, we can continue to preserve and protect Wisconsin's only *Triphora* orchid, the nodding pogonia, for many years to come!

Naturalist Notes

GOOD TO KNOW

Learn more about rare and endangered plants

[LEARN MORE HERE](#)



Nodding pogonia on the Kickapoo Valley Reserve photo by Amy Dvorak



Volunteer Spotlight

Adopt A Trail Program

BY JESSE HANEY - KVR PROPERTY MANAGER/POLICE OFFICER

Since beginning my role as Police Officer/Property Manager at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve in April, I have come to appreciate the incredible effort it takes to keep the trails open, safe, and enjoyable for all who visit. That effort is only possible because of the dedication of field staff and our Adopt-A-Trail volunteers.

The Adopt-A-Trail Program is a partnership between KVR and community members who care deeply about this special place. Volunteers “adopt” a section of trail and take responsibility for monitoring its condition, reporting issues, and performing light maintenance. Tasks might include clearing brush, pruning branches, removing litter, or checking for hazards. KVR staff provide training, resources, and support. Even a few hours a year makes a lasting difference.

Maintaining trails is about more than just keeping paths clear. It’s about protecting the environment, preserving cultural and natural resources, and ensuring that every visitor has a safe and positive experience. By adopting a trail, volunteers take pride in being stewards of the land, contributing directly to the protection and preservation of the Reserve for future generations.

Most inspiring to me is the variety of people who participate. Individuals, families, youth groups, and community organizations all play a role. Some adopters treat it as a way to spend time outdoors, others as an opportunity to teach young people about stewardship and responsibility. All share a common goal: keeping the Reserve accessible and thriving.

Looking ahead, we are working on updating Adopt-A-Trail signage to better recognize the volunteers who give their time and energy to this program. Recognition is a small way of saying thank you, but the real reward comes from knowing you are making a meaningful contribution to a unique and irreplaceable landscape. If you are interested in joining the Adopt-A-Trail Program or want to learn more, I encourage you to reach out to the Kickapoo Valley Reserve Visitor Center. Together, we can ensure these trails remain open, safe, and beautiful for all who come to enjoy them.





sponsors

dam challenge triathlon

DAM CHALLENGE TRIATHLON
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4

Join hundreds of athletes at the best Dam triathlon around!

KICKAPOO VALLEY RESERVE
S3661 STATE ROAD 131
LA FARGE, WI 54639

You can do this Dam Thing!

OPEN TO BEGINNERS, SEASONED PROS, AND RELAY TEAMS!

For more information & registration:
WWW.KICKAPOOVALLEY.WI.GOV



What's Happening

FRIENDS OF KICKAPOO VALLEY RESERVE

PASTA SUPPER

All are welcome!

Kickapoo Valley Reserve Visitor Center

\$15 ADULTS ALL YOU CAN EAT
\$5 12 and under

FRIDAY
OCTOBER 3, 2025
5PM - 8PM

Friends of KVR Annual Pasta Supper Fundraiser

Friday, Oct. 3, 2025
5-8pm
KVR Visitor Center

Driftless Dialogue Lecture Series

Bobcats - Return to the Driftless

Learn about the resurgence of bobcats in the Driftless.

Presenter: Al Cornell

Date: October 15, 2025

Time: 6pm

Location: KVR Visitor Center





Fall trail on the KVR - Jackie Leis

PLANTS

BUR CUCUMBER (SICYOS ANGULARTUS)



Where to find: This plant is found in many locations in KVR. They prefer moist soil, so look for them along the Old 131 trail near the ponds and Kickapoo River.

Fun Fact: This sprawling vine is a member of the gourd family (like watermelons!) and can spread across an area 20 feet in diameter, covering the ground and nearby shrubs and small trees. Unlike garden cucumbers though, bur cucumbers are short and prickly so they aren't eaten by most humans. [Bur Cucumber](#) | [Missouri Department of Conservation](#)

JEWELWEED (IMPATIENS CAPENSIS)



Where to Find: Jewelweed is common throughout the KVR, especially near the Kickapoo River and near ponds and other moist areas. Several patches can be found along Star Valley trail.

Fun Fact: In addition to the fun people have popping the exploding seed pods on jewelweed, many people use jewelweed sap to relieve bug bites and skin rashes, including poison ivy. [7 Uses for Jewelweed](#)

CRITTERS

GREAT CRANE FLY (TIPULA ABDOMINALIS)



Where to Find: As larva, Great Crane flies typically burrow in the soil, especially grass lawns. So, you might find them on the wall of the KVR Visitor Center or other buildings.

Fun Fact: Great Crane Flies can be over 4" long – that's a big bug. While adult crane flies mostly

don't eat anything, lots of critters like to eat them! They are food for some animals and insects like skunks, birds, bats, ground beetles, and fungi. Crane Flies: What They Are

FALL WEBWORM MOTH (HYPHANTRIA CUNEA)



Where to Find: This fall there is a spectacular Fall Webworm Moth tent on a large bush on the Star Valley Trail near the intersection with the Old 131 trail. Come and take a look!

Fun Fact: Despite the big silken tent they form on trees

to shield themselves, the larva are tasty treats for birds, bats, other insects and small animals. They have interesting methods to defend themselves. When threatened, the caterpillars typically shake or jerk their bodies all at once, and look like they're dancing. They also secrete an obnoxious scent to drive predators away. Those that survive become beautiful white moths with black dots. Female turtles will travel up to a mile away to find the perfect spot to lay eggs! The turtle pictured had climbed lots of rocks and ground in KVR to reach her nesting spot.

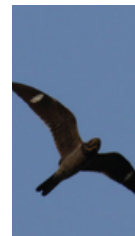
Fall Phenology

Phenology means 'the study of appearance' or the timing of seasonal events in nature.

BY JOAN PETERSON -
MASTER NATURALIST & KVR VOLUNTEER

BIRDS

COMMON NIGHTHAWK (CHORDEILES MINOR)



Where to Find: In September or early October, go at dusk to an open area, especially near outside lights, like the Visitor Center lawn. Look up around the lights and you might be lucky to see some swooping and diving in the air catching insects on the wing.

Fun Fact: Common Nighthawks, which have one of the longest migration routes of all North American birds, sometimes show up far out of range. They have been recorded in Iceland, Greenland, the Azores, the Faroe Islands, and the British Isles. place to find bugs to eat! You might find them near Bridge 13 on the Old 131 trail.

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH (SPINUS TRISTIS)



Where to Find: Goldfinches are common throughout the KVR, especially in open woods or forest edges, or areas with patches of thistle plants. You can frequently find them along the Old 131 trail near Bridge 13.

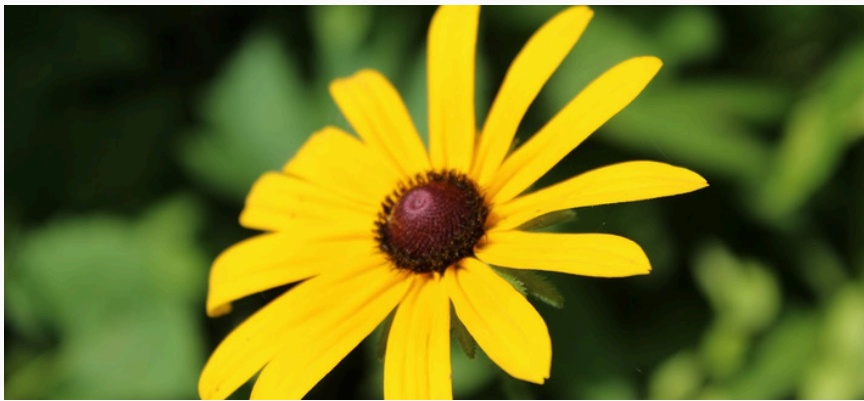
Fun Fact: While lots of Goldfinches migrate, some of them also remain in Wisconsin throughout the year. [American Goldfinch — Southern Wisconsin Bird Alliance](#) Some American Goldfinches will have 2 clutches of babies in a single summer, with 2-7 eggs in each nest. [American Goldfinch - ID, Facts, Diet, Habit & More](#) | [Birdzilla](#)



Pond lily on Schroeders Pond



Bumblebee in Friends Community Garden

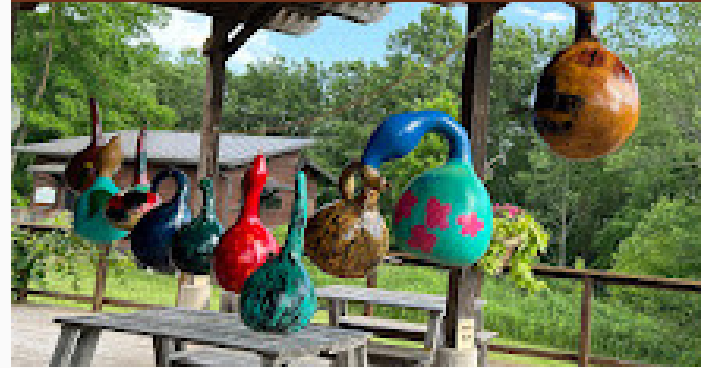


Black-eyed Susan



KVR staff enjoying a relaxing staff paddle together after work.

Farewell Summer



Summer Camp was colorful and fun!



Monarch on swamp milkweed



Summer 2025 brought us rain.



Sunrise over Blackhawk Rock



St John's Wort



Downy rattlesnake plantain



Even tattered wings can fly!

until next
time...



Ghost Pipe fungus



Up close and photogenic! Grey tree frog



Violet coral mushroom - Wintergreen Bluff Trail