

**Kickapoo Reserve Management Board
Meeting Minutes for June 18, 2026**
Kickapoo Valley Reserve Visitor Center

Board members present: Travis Downing (Chair), Dan Catherman (via Zoom), Kjetil Garvin, Reggie Nelson, Bill Quackenbush, Kelly Rueckheim, Barb Sarnowski, Damian Thundercloud, Lyndsey Winchel, Luke Zahm

Board members absent: Scott Lind

Staff members present: Jason Leis, Amy Dvorak, Jackie Leis, Jesse Haney, Danae Gardner

Others in attendance: Christian Malanka, Danielle Schmidt-Larios

Chair Downing called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Downing read the Land Acknowledgement Statement.

Zahm made a motion to approve the agenda, and Rueckheim seconded. The motion passed with all ayes.

Leis confirmed the agenda was properly posted.

Rueckheim motioned to approve the minutes from the May 2026 regular meeting. Sarnowski seconded the motion, and it passed with all ayes.

Chairperson and/or Executive Director report:

Leis said the log jams were removed on the Kickapoo River.

Budget Report:

The KRMB Appropriation Summary as of June 1, 2026 was shared on the screen. We are nearing the end of Fiscal Year 2026. The DOA BFM accountants will start moving money to spend the balance in the 16100 appropriation.

The KRMB Revenue and Expense Summary as of May 31, 2026 was shared on the screen. Leis explained the balances and answered questions.

Leis is currently working with the DOA BFM accountants on the Fiscal Year 2027 budget.

Friends of KVR Update:

No representative was in attendance.

Public appearances:

None.

Election of Officers:

Rueckheim nominated Downing as Chair, and Quackenbush seconded the nomination. Downing was voted as Chair with all ayes.

Sarnowski said she does not want to be Vice-Chair any longer due to other commitments. Downing nominated Zahm as Vice-Chair. Zahm nominated Thundercloud, and Quackenbush seconded the nomination for Thundercloud. Thundercloud was voted as Vice-Chair with all ayes. Thundercloud is the first Ho-Chunk Nation board member to hold an executive officer position on the board.

Zahm nominated Winchel as Secretary. Sarnowski seconded the nomination, and Winchel was voted as Secretary with all ayes.

Hiring update:

We are in the process of hiring the education coordinator. During the first round, interviews were held. An offer was made, and the applicant turned it down. The application is open again for three more weeks.

Education and Tourism Committee:

Sarnowski report at the time of the last meeting, summer camp was in its first week with two camps happening. Summer camp goes until the end of July with 20 camps, 10 of which are full.

Since January, 13 schools have participated in school group visits with about 440 students. There are still more schools coming this summer.

The Wisconsin Master Naturalist program at the KVR has 18 participants. Two of the four sessions are completed. Thanks to Quackenbush and Lind for presenting at the program.

Camping is busy. Some campsites are closed for short periods of time throughout the summer to allow a break.

Dam Challenge is on October 3, 2026. Registration is open.

The KVR media output process was discussed. At the next meeting, we will discuss social media.

The next Education and Tourism Committee meeting is scheduled for August 6, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve Visitor Center.

Finance Committee:

There was no update.

The next Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for August 3, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve Visitor Center.

Land Management Committee:

There was no update.

The next Land Management Committee meeting is scheduled for July 7, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve Visitor Center.

Board Member Matters:

Sarnowski said the Friends of KVR gardeners club that takes care of the Star Valley Memorial garden and the Visitor Center garden are having issues with invasive plants at the Visitor Center garden. The club cannot keep up with it. Leis said Dvorak, Jackie Leis, and Jody Rader have good ideas of how to move forward with the garden.

Zahm requested to discuss the Facebook post regarding horse riders using the trails when the trails were closed due to wet weather. There was a discussion about whether the post was appropriate and professional. Some members felt the post was inappropriate while others were indifferent. Some board members received reports from the public who did not appreciate the post. Leis said the post was removed from Facebook.

Request for future agenda topics:

Sarnowski requested a list of employees and their job titles and duties as well as an updated list of the board members and their contact information.

Tour:

The tour of the Kickapoo Valley Reserve began at 6:39 p.m. The group visited the two outdoor classrooms. They visited the Jug Creek Trail and oak outplantings and the prairie planting on Ho-Chunk Land off Hay Valley Road.

Adjournment:

Upon return to the Visitor Center, Zahm made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Rueckheim seconded, and it passed unanimously with all ayes. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for July 16, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve Visitor Center.

Minutes transcribed by Amy Dvorak, Executive Assistant