

# the gem

KICKAPOO VALLEY RESERVE NEWSLETTER  
SINCE 2000

SUMMER NEWSSETTER - JUNE 2026  
VOL. 31 ISSUE 2 • SUMMER 2026

## Summer Camp Snapshots



Teen Fly Fishing Camp



Trail Trekkers Camp



Four Elements Camp



Trail Trekkers Camp



Nature Nuts Camp



Waterways Camp



Camp Inspire



Art Sprouts Camp

Register  
Here

**WELCOME  
SUMMER IN THE  
KICKAPOO VALLEY**

*"Summertime is always the best  
of what might be."  
— Charles Bowden*



## WHAT'S HAPPENING

June 22-25 | Leadership Trail Camp, 9am-3pm  
June 22-25 | Kinder Camp, 9-11:30am  
July 4 | Old Highway 131 Trail Vehicle Tour 12-4pm  
July 4 | Friends of KVR Old Hwy 131 Tour reception at the Visitor Center - 12-4pm  
July 6-9 | Kinder Camp, 9-11:30am  
July 6-10 | Art Sprouts Camp, 9am-2:30pm  
July 6-10 | Trail Trekkers Camp, 9am-2pm  
July 6 | Finance Committee Meeting, 9am  
July 7 | Land Management Committee Meeting, 5:30pm  
July 12 | Friends of KVR Garden Tour  
July 13-17 | Black Ghost Fly Fishing Camp, 9am-3pm  
July 13-17 | Nature Nuts Camp, 9am-2:30pm  
July 13-17 | Trail Trekkers Camp, 9am-2pm  
July 16 | KRMB meeting, 6pm  
July 20-24 | Wilderness Adventure Camp, 9am-3pm  
July 20-24 | Four Elements Camp, 9am-2:30pm  
July 20-24 | Plant Curiosities Camp, 9am-2pm  
July 27-30 | Waterways Camp, 9am-3pm  
July 27-31 | Camp Inspire, 9am-3pm  
July 27-31 | Where the Wild Things Are Camp, 9am-2:30pm  
Aug 20 | KRMB meeting, 6pm  
Sept 23 | Nature Bound starts, 9am  
Oct 2 | Friends of KVR Pasta Supper, 5pm  
Oct 3 | Dam Challenge Triathlon  
Dec 5 | Friends of KVR Holiday Happening, 1pm  
Jan 9, 2027 | Winter Festival

## Directors Discourse

BY JASON LEIS - KVR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Most of the graduation parties are over and summer is settling in. It has been a challenging spring trying to get the Kickapoo River open to float, but with the help of our great staff and contracted logger with a skidder, it is finally open. There may still be some tight spots here and there, and it could be plugged again tomorrow, but for now, it's open! Camping season is in full swing as well, with cool nights and not too hot days, perfect for camping, and the bugs aren't even bad yet this year. Enjoy it while it lasts...



Wild Pentunia - Photo by Danae Gardner

KVR Summer Camps are in full swing with 3 to 4 camps happening every week from now through July. It's great to see the young kids enjoying their time in the outdoors. We have some openings left if you still want to sign your kids up.

I want to send a thank you to our neighbor, collaborator and KVR fixer from the Town of Stark, Arnie Hatfield. Arnie is retiring from the Town of Stark Patrolman position he has held for the past 46 years! Just think of how many tons of patch mix he's shoveled!! Congratulations on your retirement and thank you for a job well done, you will be missed. Now enjoy your time off! Get out and enjoy what this area has to offer and spend some time outdoors. Be sure to leave it a little better than you found it.

*Jason*

Make a  
Donation

### *Kickapoo Valley Reserve Mission*

*The land in the Kickapoo Valley Reserve shall be protected, preserved, and enhanced so that its unique environmental, scenic, and cultural features provide opportunities for the use and enjoyment of visitors to the Reserve. The Reserve will be promoted as a unique example of the Driftless Area Ecoregion and as a destination for low-impact tourism and education.*





Weister Creek – Kickapoo Valley Reserve  
Photo by KVR

## Kickapoo Valley Reserve Annual Passes

DIANE GLOEDE - GUEST SERVICES ASSOCIATE

Your annual INDIVIDUAL or FAMILY PASS allows unlimited access to exploring and relaxing at the reserve and can be purchased [online](#) or at the Visitor Center.

The fee for an individual pass is \$25, and \$40 for a family pass. Fees go to support the work done to keep the Kickapoo River clean and passable and the trails and campsites clear and unencumbered. Continuous work is also being done eradicating invasives and putting in native plants to support butterflies and pollinators.

We encourage you to continue to explore the beauty and natural riches these 8,600 acres offer – they are true jewels of the Kickapoo Valley.

Many thanks for your continued support!



Nodding Beggarticks

## Seasonal Field Notes

### Visitor Center Summer Hours

Monday-Saturday 8:00am – 4:30pm  
Sunday and Holidays 10am - 4pm  
The Visitor Center is open seven days a week until November 15.



Click me, I'm a link.

## Become a Friend of Kickapoo Valley Reserve

JANA MUEHLENKAMP - GUEST SERVICES ASSOCIATE

A great way to support the KVR is by becoming a Friend of KVR. With an extra \$15 contribution when you purchase your annual pass, your benefits will include an annual pass to the Kickapoo Valley Reserve, subscription to the Friends of KVR Newsletter, exclusive gift shop sales for members only.

Being a part of Friends of KVR also gives you an opportunity to participate in hands-on work, events, outreach and fundraising for the KVR by volunteering.

The best benefit of being a Friend of KVR is that you will be an important part of helping the Kickapoo Reserve Management Board manage and protect this unique and diverse property for future generations.

Please consider becoming a Friend of Kickapoo Valley Reserve.



Canada Anemone  
Photo by Amy Dvorak





Leadership Trail Camp

# Education Corner

## SUMMER ADVENTURE CAMPS

**Additional camps have  
been added! Check it out!**

LEARN MORE ABOUT  
SUMMER ADVENTURE  
CAMP



The Kickapoo Valley Reserve Education Program is busier than ever with 20 youth summer camps happening this year. We offer camps for youth ages 2 through 17 on a variety of topics, such as canoeing, fly fishing, cycling, and plants. It's a joy to watch a child learn something new, perfect a skill, and make new friends.



Teen Fly Fishing Camp  
KVR Photo

*"In the end we will conserve only  
what we love, we will love only what  
we understand, and we will  
understand only what we are  
taught." -Baba Dioum-*

## Hurray for Summer Adventure Camp!

Summer Camp registration is still open! There are available spots in these upcoming camps: Black Ghost Fly Fishing, Camp Inspire, Kinder Camp, Four Elements, and Waterways Camp. Register your kiddo today for tons of outdoor learning and summer fun!



- Ages 4-5: Kinder Camp
- Ages 6-7: Trail Trekkers, Plant Curiosities
- Ages 8-10: Art Sprouts, Nature Nuts, Four Elements, Where the Wild Things Are
- Ages 11-14: Wilderness Adventure Camp, Camp Inspire
- Ages 13-17: Black Ghost Fly Fishing, Waterways Camp

## Sponsoring Summer Adventure Camp

2026 KVR Summer Camps are generously sponsored by Friends of Kickapoo Valley Reserve, GoMacro, Cabela's, Echo, and Organic Valley. Summer learning and fun is made possible by contributors like YOU. Thank You!



Kinder Camp





Wonder Wanderers Camp

## Spring Nature Bound

BY MARY SZEPI - NATURE BOUND SPRIGS INSTRUCTOR

The Spring Nature Bound sessions explored the various habitats of the KVR for special evolving signs of Spring through looking, listening, smelling, and sometimes even tasting. We learned what makes a bird a bird by reading and talking about beaks, feet, and feathers. We observed frozen birds inside to get a closer look, and outside to watch birds at the feeder and all around. Comparing birds' nests and thinking about how they make them with a beak and feet. Could we do that? Using various utensils such as tongs, tweezers, pliers, skewers, and nutcrackers, we tried to pick up, carry, and crack several kinds of seeds. It's amazing what birds and other creatures can do that would be difficult or impossible for us. Hiking and exploring the trails, deer trails included, visiting the pond to find water critters, using binoculars at the bird blind to watch geese, swans, ducks, and sandhill cranes brought more signs of Spring to our attention.

Seeing the first wildflowers, spotting signs of green, buds, new growth, and smelling soil/dirt/earth, moss, fungi, pine, skunk cabbage, ramps, and mint was exciting as it added to our discoveries.

Playing games, using nature objects such as rocks, sticks, and pinecones, and also knowing the characteristics of local animals and birds for another active game is always fun. Scavenger hunts, treasure hunts, and nature bingo are a part of activities in every season, as are experiments and nature art.



*"If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in,"*

*-Rachel Carson-*

## Education Corner

### FALL NATURE BOUND



Nature Bound is a program that combines nature and literacy for youth aged 18 mo. to 17 years old. Youth are immersed in the changing of seasons, nature's rhythms and exploring outdoors while incorporating reading, writing and ecological science.

**2 sessions of 4 classes each**

**Session 1: Sept. 23, 30 & Oct. 7, 14**

**Session 2: Oct. 21, 28 & Nov. 4, 11**

**[Visit our website to register](#)**

Nature Bound programs are focused on literacy and nature. Seasonal nature stories, natural science and learning are incorporated into lessons as we explore phenology and immerse ourselves in the natural world around us. Each student goes home with a book about nature. Books are donated by folks like you! If you have gently used children's nature books or would like to donate books to the program, please reach out to us.

[kickapoo.reserve@krm.state.wi.us](mailto:kickapoo.reserve@krm.state.wi.us)



# On 8600 Acres

## Summer River Safety

One of the main draws to the Kickapoo Valley during the summer is recreation on the river, but safety should always come first.

Wisconsin law requires that every canoe, kayak, and paddlecraft have a properly sized wearable personal flotation device (PFD) readily available for each person on board. Children under 13 should wear their life jacket at all times. Even strong swimmers can get into trouble in rapid water, underwater hazards, or unexpected currents, so wearing your PFD is strongly encouraged for everyone.

Summer weather in Wisconsin can change quickly. Thunderstorms, heavy rain, and rising water levels can turn a calm float into a dangerous situation in a short amount of time. Always check the weather forecast before heading out, and keep an eye on the sky while on the river.

Before your trip, let someone know where you are going, who is with you, and when you expect to return. Bring drinking water, sunscreen, and a charged phone in a waterproof container. Be responsible while paddling, and never paddle beyond your skill level or river conditions. Remember: no glass on the river, it's everyone's job to keep the river safe and clean for all.

## Adopt A Trail on the KVR!



**Kickapoo Valley Reserve**  
**ADOPT A TRAIL**

By adopting a trail on the Kickapoo Valley Reserve, you can support efforts to preserve and protect this truly unique and amazing place.

Learn More - Get Involved  
kvr.state.wi.us

*Ready to adopt a trail or would like more information? Contact the Kickapoo Valley Reserve Visitor Center.*

*Choose your trail. Commit a few hours. Make a lasting impact.*

## Summer Recreation Reminders

BY JESSE HANEY - KVR POLICE OFFICER/PROPERTY MANAGER

Summer is one of the busiest times on the Kickapoo Valley Reserve, with visitors enjoying camping, paddling, hiking, fishing, horseback riding, and many other outdoor activities. To help ensure everyone has a safe and enjoyable experience, visitors are reminded to follow KVR rules and policies while recreating on the property.

Why do we have rules? Rules exist to protect the land and natural resources, protect people and property, and ensure that the KVR can be shared responsibly by all visitors. KVR rules are established through Wisconsin state law and policies adopted by the Kickapoo Reserve Management Board (KRMB).

Here are a few reminders related to summer recreation on the KVR:

- Wisconsin state law requires that all boats, including canoes and kayaks, have a properly sized personal flotation device (PFD) readily accessible for every passenger on board.
- The KRMB has established a policy prohibiting all climbing activity on Kickapoo Valley Reserve lands. This includes:
  - Ascending, descending, or bouldering on rock walls, ice walls, or artificial structures, with or without specialized climbing equipment such as ropes, webbing, or carabiners.
  - Practicing the use of specialized climbing equipment near the ground.
- All dogs must be leashed during bird nesting season from April 15 through July 31 to help protect wildlife and nesting birds.
- Campsite reservations begin at 3:00 p.m. Campers should not occupy their reserved campsite prior to that time. KVR staff schedule maintenance and cleaning activities around the 3:00 p.m. check-in time, and early occupation of campsites can create conflicts and delays for staff preparing sites for incoming campers.
- Please do not burn trash in campfire rings. All garbage should be packed out of campsites and disposed of in the appropriate receptacles at the KVR Visitor Center. Burning materials such as plastic creates toxic smoke harmful to people and can contaminate fire areas used later by campers for cooking. When burned trash is left behind, KVR field staff must spend additional time thoroughly cleaning fire rings before the next campers arrive, using valuable time and resources.
- E-bikes are prohibited on KVR lands under current KRMB policy. Visitors with mobility impairments may apply for a mobility impaired permit through the KVR.

Thank you for helping protect the Kickapoo Valley Reserve and ensuring it remains a safe and enjoyable place for everyone.





Wild Bergamot and Black Swallowtail - Danae Gardner Photo

## Spring Habitat Work Highlights

BY JESSE HANEY - KVR POLICE OFFICER/PROPERTY MANAGER

Spring is one of the busiest seasons for habitat improvement on the Kickapoo Valley Reserve, and this year was no exception.

Thanks to a grant that provided native milkweed plants, KVR staff and volunteers worked together to establish new pollinator habitat throughout the Reserve. Common milkweed, swamp milkweed, and butterfly milkweed were planted in selected areas and watered throughout the establishment period. These native plants provide important food sources for monarch butterflies and many other pollinators.

Invasive plant species control remained a major focus this spring. Staff, volunteers, and partner groups spent countless hours removing invasive plants that threaten native habitats. These efforts help protect biodiversity and create space for native plants to thrive.

Tree planting was another important project. White oak, black walnut, shagbark hickory, and sugar maple seedlings were planted in areas where invasive species had previously been removed. These native trees will help restore forest health, improve wildlife habitat, and contribute to the long-term resilience of the Reserve's ecosystems.

The success of these projects depends on the dedication of volunteers, partner organizations, and staff who contribute their time and effort to caring for the land. Every milkweed planted, invasive species removed, and tree established helps ensure that the Kickapoo Valley Reserve remains a healthy and diverse landscape for future generations.



## On 8600 Acres

### Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can I hunt on Ho-Chunk property?

A: Yes. Follow WI DNR seasons and regulations.

Q: Do I need a day pass if I'm camping?

A: Camping covers parking at your campsite and parking at any of the canoe landings within the Reserve. If you plan to hike, bike, horseback ride, or otherwise recreate on the property, you need a day pass

Q: What are the best campsites for hammock camping?

A: Campsite F, H, I, S and W are good sites for hammock camping. There are great trees where you will be able to set up your hammock and sleep under the stars.

Q: Do I need a parking pass to hunt, fish or trap on the reserve?

A: If you are actively hunting, fishing or trapping on the Reserve, you do not need a day or annual pass to park. However, you do need to display a KVR pass to park at the KVR river landings 5, 7, 10, 12, 14 and 18. You can purchase those through our website, or at the Visitor Center during our regular business hours.

Q: Are e-bikes allowed on the KVR?

A: No. The Kickapoo Reserve Management Board has established a policy prohibiting the use of e-bikes on KVR property. Individuals with mobility impairments may apply for a mobility-impaired permit, which, if approved, allows the use of an e-bike on designated trails.





Yellow-rumped warbler nest - Amy Dvorak Photo

# Naturalist Notes

## GOOD TO KNOW

### Recommended Birding Resources:

- Cornell Laboratory for Ornithology's Project Feeder Watch has advice on feeders, where to put them, keeping them clean, what to feed birds, and much more. "[Project Feeder Watch Feeding Birds](#)".
- [allaboutbirds.org](http://allaboutbirds.org) is a good site for identification help, i.e. distinguishing Purple Finches from House Finches.
- Avian Flu is an ongoing concern. See <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/avian-influenza-outbreak-should-you-take-down-your-bird-feeders/>



Veery - Jack Bartholmai Photo



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](#).

## Nesting Birds of the KVR

BY BARBARA DUERKSEN - MASTER NATURALIST & NATIVE BIRD EXPERT

The months of June and July are the peak of the nesting season. The three official breeding bird surveys in the Kickapoo Reserve, done approximately every 10 years beginning in 1997, have documented 114 species. A few species like the Northern Bobwhite and Whip-poor-will were only found in the earliest survey.

A good place to find nesting birds is along the Old 131 trail, which goes through a variety of habitats --ponds, old fields, agricultural land, river bottom forest, and along the edge of large upland forest blocks. You'll likely see common and familiar birds, such as Canada Geese, Blue Jays, robins, orioles, Red-winged Blackbirds, cardinals, hummingbirds, and Yellow Warblers.

Many forest birds are more often heard than seen. It takes patience to get a glimpse of them. Two woodland bird species with songs or calls that are relatively easy to distinguish are the Veery and the Yellow-throated Vireo.

The Veery is named after its "veer" call. It's a member of the thrush family, related to the more common Wood Thrush. Veeries live in damp forests, often near streams or wetlands, foraging on the ground. The river bottom woods between bridges 15 and 16 is one place to listen for their beautiful, haunting, downward-spiraling song. Early morning is best. Veeries spend their winters in Brazil. Although the species as a whole is in decline, Veery numbers in the reserve have increased.

The Yellow-throated Vireo is a relatively small, slightly chunky looking songbird, a bit larger than a goldfinch and more colorful than most other vireos. They build their nests in the upper canopy. They forage in upper areas of trees, slowly hopping on the branches in search of insects. The song is a relatively slow, burry or raspy "three-eight, wuzz-er".

Both males and females incubate eggs and brood the nestlings. These birds are often found at forest edges, but require large areas of forest to breed successfully. They winter in Central America and northern South America. This species is doing well in general and at the reserve.



Yellow-throated Vireo - Thomas Schultz Photo



## Phenology - Spring into Summer

BY CATHY CHYBOWSKI - NATURALIST & INSTRUCTOR

The juncos left weeks ago for their nesting grounds farther north, the dandelions are going to seed, and Canada Geese goslings and Trumpeter Swan cygnets splish splash in the ponds. During the first week of May the Whip-poor-wills, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Hummingbirds, Orioles, and Catbirds appear. Wood thrushes sing from their habitat blanketed in Trilliums, Jack-in-the-Pulpits and other spring ephemerals. Lucky is the one who hears the spink-spink-spink of the Bobolink in the fields or watches the first brood of Bluebirds fledge from their nest box a bit later in the month. Toads sing their high musical song while fireflies dance the night away. Later in May the prairie begins to wake up when Wild Lupine, Spiderwort and Shooting Stars begin to bloom. Step lightly along the woodland path to avoid scaring off a newborn fawn while looking for Wild Columbine or Yellow Lady's Slippers. Listen for the "pee-o-wee" song of the Eastern Wood Pewee when the fragrance of the pennyroyal permeates the air. Green frogs sing their "loose banjo string" twang among the Blue Flag Irises in the wetland.

By June first, the Woodcock has quieted, no longer peenting after dark. Wild Rose, Black-eyed Susan, Butterfly Milkweed, and Wood Lily bloom in this month and Painted Turtles have laid their eggs. Young Ruffed Grouse are out of the nest, Cottonwood seeds are blowing in the wind and Cicadas begin to sing. Aldo Leopold states in his essay, *Prairie Birthday*, that there are on average, 10 wild plants coming into first bloom each week between April and September. "No man can heed all of these anniversaries; no man can ignore all of them." Yes, July is the month to walk in the prairie; the many native plants coming into bloom include Purple Coneflower, Bergamot, Rattlesnake Master, Culver's Root, the Silphiums, Blazing Stars, and the Prairie Clovers.

\*The timing of the above events are from Nina Leopold Bradley's *Phenology Record* given to me by her daughter, Trish Stevenson; and from my own Mother's notes (Petie Dexter Momper).



Rattlesnake Plantain Orchid  
Danae Gardner Photo



Lobelia KVR Photo

## Naturalist Notes

What we are seeing....



Wild Petunia - Danae Gardner Photo



Partridge Pea - Danae Gardner Photo



Columbine - Danae Gardner Photo



Black Swallowtail Caterpillar - Jackie Leis Photo



KVR Wetland - Danae Gardner Photo



Swamp Milkweed - Danae Gardner Photo



we ♥  
dark skies

Dark skies at the Visitor Center

# Conservation in Action

## Reforestation Updates

The KVR Tree Sponsorship Program continues to support reforestation and habitat restoration efforts across the Reserve.

Throughout the last year trees were planted at several locations to help restore native forest communities. At the top of the Jug Creek Hiking Trail, approximately 30 oak trees were planted as part of an ongoing effort to reforest an area following a pine harvest that occurred several years ago. Additional plantings took place in blowdown areas near the West Ridge Trail and Campsite P, as well as near Campsite OO where invasive bush honeysuckle has been removed. Several memorial trees were also planted throughout the Reserve, creating lasting tributes while contributing to the health of the landscape. Species planted included sugar maple, red oak, white oak, bur oak, swamp white oak, and shagbark hickory.

Reforestation is a long-term investment in the land. The Tree Sponsorship Program allows community members to directly

support these efforts while leaving a lasting legacy on the Reserve. Thank you to all who have participated in this program and helped grow the future forests of the KVR. For more information about the Tree Sponsorship Program reach out to us or visit our [website](#)



## Sharing the Mystery of KVR Nights

BY SUSAN CUSHING - KICKAPOO VALLEY DARK SKY INITIATIVE SEC.

Imagine that you are returning to Wisconsin after spending the winter in sunny Southern Florida.

Now imagine that you are making this trip with only your internal sense of direction, the sun, the stars and the moon to guide you. No maps. No GPS. 1500 miles. Finally, you are doing this under your own power - walking, running, hiking or biking. No airplane. No car. Does it sound difficult?

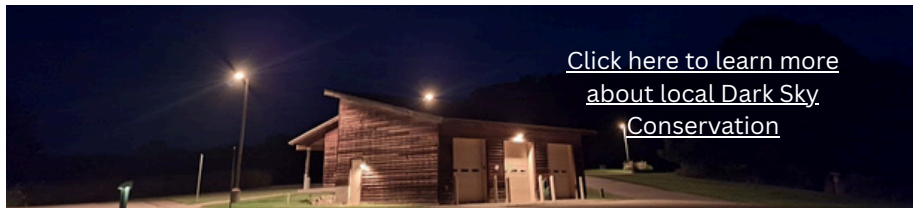
It is. Yet every spring millions of birds make this trip, returning to Wisconsin, or, in many cases, stopping briefly in Wisconsin before heading even farther north to their summer breeding grounds. It is a long and grueling flight and 80% of migrating birds in North America make this trip at night using their internal compass, instinct and the night sky to guide their path.

Since the advent of electricity, humans have been lighting up the night, and the increasing sky glow created by these artificial lights can confuse birds and pull them off course. In severe cases, light pollution can be so confusing that it becomes a light trap causing birds to continuously circle areas that are brightly lit until they become exhausted and fall to the ground like moths at a porch light. In less severe cases, it can pull them off course, but adding even 10 miles to a 1500 mile trip can be the difference between a successful migration and death.

Remember that moth mentioned above? Birds can't make a quick stop at McDonald's to refuel their bodies, they also have to find food during this journey. Many insects are also active at night and susceptible to light traps created by artificial light. You see this under streetlights, porchlights and even at your windows. Fewer insects means less food. No food = no fuel to power each wingbeat.

So, if you celebrate spring when the first flock of Canada Geese honk as they head north instead of south, the first robin appears on your lawn or the first hummingbird visits your feeder, take action. Do your part to reduce light pollution so birds can more successfully make their epic journey. Sign up for [Lights Out Wisconsin Alerts](#) to get messages reminding you to turn your outdoor lights off during peak migration. Better yet, turn off outdoor lights anytime you are not actively using them. All the insects, birds, and mammals will benefit from natural darkness and you will also be rewarded with a better night of sleep.

[Click here to learn more  
about local Dark Sky  
Conservation](#)







Kickapoo Valley Reserve  
La Farge, WI

# DAM CHALLENGE TRIATHLON

OCTOBER 3,  
2026



**Paddle 7 | Pedal 15 | Run 3.5**

**All are welcome!**

[kickapoovalley.wi.gov](http://kickapoovalley.wi.gov)

## What's Happening



OLD 131 TRAIL OPEN  
ONE WAY VEHICLE TRAFFIC  
ANNUAL HISTORIC TOUR

**JULY 4<sup>TH</sup>**

**NOON - 4PM**  
KICKAPOO VALLEY RESERVE  
608-625-2960

**4<sup>th</sup> of July**

**OLD HWY 131 VEHICLE TOUR  
RECEPTION AT THE VISITOR  
CENTER NOON TO 4PM  
JULY 4, 2026**

**FREE AND OPEN TO ALL**



ENJOY COMPLEMENTARY  
COOKIES AND LEMONADE  
COURTESY OF FRIENDS OF  
KICKAPOO VALLEY RESERVE

## Driftless Dialogue Returns

Watch for announcements about the next round of Driftless Dialogue lecture series, thanks to a generous grant from the Ralph E Nuzum Kickapoo Reforestation Fund.







Wisconsin Master Naturalist participants planting milkweed in Ho-Chunk prairie

# Volunteers Abound!

## EDUCATION VOLUNTEER NOTES

Every fall, winter, and spring, our classrooms fill with children participating in Nature Bound, a nature-emersion education program led by our masterful instructors. The instructors are phenomenal, but what would they do without Sucheta and Reggie, who are volunteer assistants for the varied classes. These volunteers give their time because they believe in our mission and believe in the good this program does for the children. We could always use more Suchetas and Reggies! Contact us for more information if you're interested in being a volunteer for our education programs.

[kickapoo.reserve@krm.state.wi.us](mailto:kickapoo.reserve@krm.state.wi.us)



## DAM CHALLENGE VOLUNTEERS

### SAVE THE DATES!

Friday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>

Friends of KVR Pasta Supper 5 to 8pm

Saturday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Dam Challenge Triathlon



## Field Volunteer Notes

BY JESSE HANEY - POLICE OFFICER/PROPERTY MANAGER

As summer gets underway, we want to recognize some of the many volunteer efforts happening throughout the property. Here are just a few recent examples of people making a difference in the field. Friends of KVR volunteers worked hard at tackling spring roadside cleanup, helping keep the Reserve beautiful for visitors and wildlife alike. We also welcomed individual volunteers and a group from Camp Douglas Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) post 10911 for a day of service that included planting of 200 milkweed plants for pollinator habitat, garlic mustard removal, and trail brushing. We especially want to recognize the unsung heroes who pull garlic mustard and other invasives during their individual hikes and visits to the Reserve. These volunteers are not looking for recognition; they simply care about the land and want to do their part. In the battle against invasive species, it can sometimes feel like the work never ends, but every plant pulled and every bag filled truly does make a difference. Volunteer efforts like these play an important role in preserving and protecting the Reserve for future generations. To learn more about volunteer opportunities, reach out to us at 608-625-2960.



*Members of VFW planting swamp milkweed along County Road P west in the Kickapoo Valley Reserve.  
Photo by Jesse Haney*

*Members of VFW and their families pulling and bagging garlic mustard along the Big Valley Trail Kickapoo Valley Reserve.  
Photo by Jesse Haney*







# Volunteering Every Which Way

Volunteering can come in many different forms. Recent volunteer activities include:

- Planting Milkweed
- Donation of an amazing variety of native plants
- Donation of gardening help
- Assistance with sensitive area plant surveys
- Garlic Mustard pulling
- Trail checks for down trees & corridor clearing
- Project and Event Planning committees
- Helping at events
- Newsletter submissions
- Hike guides
- Summer Camp Helpers
- Bird Strike Mitigation Project on Visitor Center windows

There is a way for anyone interested and willing to combine a connection with nature and leaving the KVR a little better than they found it. Even when on the trails there are opportunities that could be easily combined with your enjoyment. We are grateful to our volunteers and the care and dedication they show in helping to preserve and protect the Kickapoo Valley Reserve. Every action makes a difference! Thank You!!



# Volunteer Opportunities

## Interested in Native Plants?

### Join the Kickapoo Valley Reserve Native Plant Club!

What does the KVR Native Plant Club do?

We plant, tend, propagate, encourage, identify, collect seed, weed, survey, hike, learn about and enjoy native plants, on the Kickapoo Valley Reserve! Sound like your kind of fun? Reach out to find out more!

No experience necessary!

[kickapoo.reserve@krs.state.wi.us](mailto:kickapoo.reserve@krs.state.wi.us)



## Seeking Monarch Helpers!

Volunteers can help the Monarch Butterfly by surveying milkweed along roadways that are in danger of being mowed. If eggs or caterpillars are found, volunteers can relocate caterpillars and eggs to a safer place within the KVR to hatch grow and eclose. Reach out to us for more information on this conservation project. [kickapoo.reserve@krm.state.wi.us](mailto:kickapoo.reserve@krm.state.wi.us)

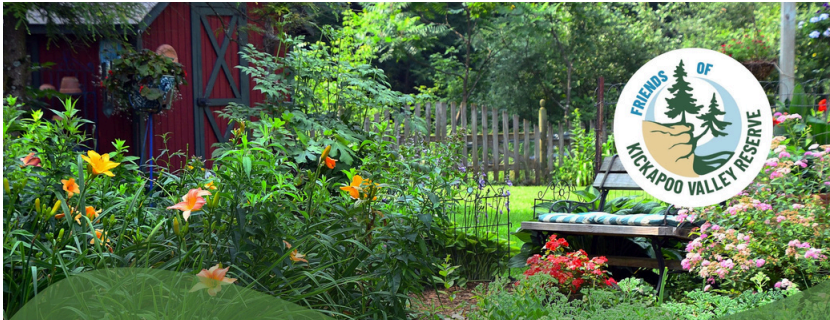






Forget-me-not - Danae Gardner Photo

## Friends of Kickapoo Valley Reserve News



# DRIFTLESS

## Garden Tour 2026



Visit awe inspiring gardens, tucked away in and around the Kickapoo Valley Reserve

 \$15 per person

Purchase tickets online at [www.kickapoofriends.org/events/](http://www.kickapoofriends.org/events/) or at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve Visitor Center 53661 State Road 131 La Farge, WI 54639

**SUNDAY, JULY 12**  
**10AM - 4PM**




More information & tickets  
[www.kickapoofriends.org](http://www.kickapoofriends.org)  
608-625-2960

This event is a fundraiser for Friends of Kickapoo Valley Reserve 53661 State Road 131 La Farge, WI 54639

## Discover What's New in the Friends Gift Shoppe located in the Visitor Center

The next time you trail-hop or stop by the visitor center in La Farge, make sure to step inside the newly updated Nature Center Gift Shoppe!

We've spent the last few weeks refreshing the space and are curating a wonderful selection of new inventory just for our Kickapoo Valley Reserve community and Friends members. From unique local artisan crafts and eco-friendly gear to educational books and exclusive KVR apparel, there is truly something for every nature lover. Best of all, every single purchase directly supports our conservation efforts and educational programming.



Come explore the new look, find a unique treasure, and take a little piece of the Valley home with you!



## Friends of Kickapoo Valley Reserve Driftless Garden Tour

**Sunday, July 12, 2026**  
**10am to 4pm**

Get tickets online at  
[kickapoofriends.org](http://kickapoofriends.org) or in person at  
the Visitor Center

**Want to volunteer at a garden as a host?**  
**Reach out to us! [info@kickapoofriends.org](mailto:info@kickapoofriends.org)**





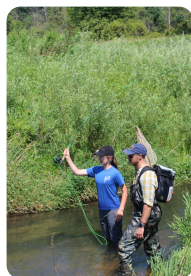
# Summer Camp is so much fun!

## Summer 2026

Youth Adventure Summer Camp at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve is a great way for children to be immersed in a nature community, to become explorers, noticers, seekers, wonderers, trekkers, leaders and friends. Each camp has a splash of creativity and science, and a whole lotta fun!



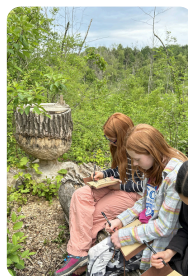
## Upcoming Featured Camps



### Black Ghost Fly Fishing

Teens will fish the cold water streams of the KVR. Gear and guidance provided

[Sign up now!](#) →



### Camp Inspire

Slow down, observe and immerse! Teens can use their creative writing and thinking skills to explore nature.

[Sign up here](#) →





# It's Dam Challenge Time!

**Community Pasta Supper  
Friday, October 2, 5-8pm**

**Dam Challenge Race Day  
Saturday, October 3, 2026**



## Deets on Dam Challenge



### Registration

Registration for Dam Challenge closes on Wednesday, September 30<sup>th</sup>! Don't miss out!

[Register to race!](#) →



### Race Manual

Everything you need to know about Dam Challenge is in the 2026 Race Manual!

[Check it out!](#) →