

# Kickapoo Valley Reserve UPDATE

Spring 2020

A quarterly publication highlighting education, property management & events on the KVR

## COVID-19 and the Kickapoo Valley Reserve **DO YOUR PART - STOP THE SPREAD**



In light of the Safer At Home directive, the Kickapoo Valley Reserve campsites and self-registration stations/Iron Rangers, and Visitor Center are CLOSED until further notice.

Permit requirements are on the honor system and annual passes are available via the [KVR website](#), but tags won't be mailed/issued until this directive is lifted. Your receipt is your proof of purchase. Enforcement of trail permits will cease, however, campsite closures will be enforced in light of public safety concerns.

Trails will remain open for hiking only This is for the sake of local residents to have outdoor space in these stressful times. It is not to encourage out of area visitors. Hopefully the many fans of the KVR from further away will utilize trails in their own neighborhood to reduce the potential of spreading the virus.

Thank you for your cooperation. We look forward to the day we can welcome you ALL back to this magnificent property!



## "Thanks Boss!"

By Marcy West, Executive Director

Ron Johnson has served as the one and only Chairman of the Kickapoo Reserve Management Board (KRMB) since its creation in 1995. Yes, you read that right; Ron has been the Chairman for twenty-five years. He recently notified Governor Evers that he will not seek reappointment for his term ending in May.

Of course, his work began earlier than 1995 when a grassroots group of citizens worked with elected officials to figure out what to do with "the government land." The 8,569 acres of land that Ron considered his backyard was owned by the US Army Corps of Engineers and had been idle since the La Farge Lake and Dam project was halted in 1975.

As a professional silversmith artist, he was the first to admit he didn't have much experience in politics other than serving on the La Farge School Board. He quickly learned about federal and state legislative procedures, budgets, rule-making and policy implementation. The unique management agreement with the Ho-Chunk Nation was just one of many major accomplishments in the early years that he participated in.



## What's Happening!

**NOTE: Social gathering events and programs are postponed or cancelled through April 10th. Future events will be updated as the situation improves.**

Jan.1 - Dec.31 - 2020 KVR Trail Challenge

Mar. 25 - *Driftless Dialogue: Changing Climate on Wisconsin Waters* - 6:30-8PM (POSTPONED)

Tuesday evenings from March 24-July 14: Frog Walk Tuesday (POSTPONED)

Apr. 11 - 12 Youth Turkey Hunt

Apr. 14 - Land Management Committee Mtg. (virtual) - 5:30 pm

Apr. 18 - ICF Upper Midwest Crane Count (Email [ben.johnston@wisconsin.gov](mailto:ben.johnston@wisconsin.gov))

Apr. 22 - Happy 50th Earth Day!

Apr. 25 - KVR Friends Spring Fling Benefit & Stargaze - 3-9PM (CANCELLED)

Apr. 29 - *Driftless Dialogue: International Crane Foundation: Whooping Crane* - 6:30-8PM (POSTPONED)

May 1 - KVR Equestrian & Bike Trails Open (weather & virus permitting)

May 1 - Trout Catch & Release Season Closes

May 3 - Trout Season Opens

May 7 - Education & Tourism Mtg. (virtual)- 5:30pm

May 9 - Tromp & Chomp Trail Run - 9am (TBD)

May 16 - Plant Identification Hike - 9am (TBD)

May 21 - KRMB Mtg. - 7PM

May 27 - *Driftless Dialogue: Wisconsin Wetlands* - 6:30-8PM (POSTPONED)

June 20 - Plant Identification Hike - 9am TBD

Looking for more details?

<http://kvr.state.wi.us/>

"ADOPT THE PACE  
OF NATURE:  
HER SECRET IS  
PATIENCE."

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

See the back page of this newsletter for information on how to stay connected to nature during this time of social distancing.

More info to come on our website.

[www.kickapovalley.wi.gov](http://www.kickapovalley.wi.gov)

Continued from Page 1 "Thanks Boss"...

I wish I would have kept track of the number of hours in meetings over the years. In addition to the monthly KRMB meetings, we hosted listening sessions, subcommittee meetings and frequent one-to-one conversations about everything from education programming to holding the COE accountable for cleanup. His commitment to protecting the Reserve tended to come bubbling through in public meetings when one user group or another would imply the rules were too restrictive. "Quality over Quantity" became the refrain but sometimes other words exploded out of his mouth in the heated debates.

Don't let his short stature fool you, the man could show a bit of temper! I'd be remiss if I fail to mention his writing talent. Many of us believe Spell-Check was invented just for Ron. The phonetic spellings in some of the emails are legendary and kept in a keepsake file that I will forever cherish.

During these strange days of confinement, please feel free to write messages for Ron to the KRM email [Kickapoo.Reserve@krm.state.wi.us](mailto:Kickapoo.Reserve@krm.state.wi.us) or mail to KVR, S.3661 State Highway 131, La Farge, 54639 and we'll be sure to share them with him. His final meeting as Chairman is scheduled for May 21<sup>st</sup>. Through the roller coaster ride of ups and downs over the years, I could always get him to chuckle when I called him "Boss." So...Thanks Boss! You've done a great job!

## Apply for "Local Seat" vacant on KRMB

Interested nominees residing locally should contact their nominating officials (usually the Chair of the Village-Ontario or LaFarge, Town-Stark/Whitestown/Forest, School Board-Brookwood/La Farge/Hillsboro or County Board-Vernon) to let them know they're interested in being nominated. All will request submission of a resume'. It is up to the nominating body on whether the nominees need to appear before their board. Personal appearance for nomination is not a requirement of the State Statute.

The nominating board should take action in April or May to approve or deny the nomination during a formal public meeting.

## Education Program Corner:

By Robin Hosemann, Education Program Assistant

We submitted a completed grant application in February to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction for the Kickapoo Valley Forest School, a collaboration between the KVR and the La Farge School District. The school is being planned to open in August 2021. We look forward to sharing updates as they are available.

Please stay tuned to our website and Facebook page for environmental education outreach and ideas for children and families during these challenging times. Our education program staff here at the KVR looks forward to supporting efforts to keep youth engaged with learning about the natural world.







# Visiting the KVR in 2020 and beyond

Highlighting Camping and the Kickapoo River

Effective January 2020, changes to the KVR Visitor Guide map and Upper Kickapoo River guide and map reflect relocation of KVR campsites out of the flood plain. Read on to learn more.

Campsites that have been relocated out of the flood plain:

- Campsite H
- Campsite I
- Campsite M
- Campsite X
- Campsite S
- Campsite W
- Campsite V
- Campsite T

Campsites that are closed and will not be relocated:

- Campsite G\*
- Campsite R\*
- Campsite Y\*

\*Day use allowed in any location along the river.

## 2020 Relocated Campsite Information

- ◆ **Campsite H:** Campsite H is a vehicle accessible campsite located on the south side of County Road P west of State Hwy 131. This campsite does not have trail or river access. Landing 14 is 1/2 mile away and Old 131 Trail is 1/4 mile away.
- ◆ **Campsite I:** Campsite I is located at the intersection of Old 131 Trail and County Road P west on the north side of County P near the double gates. This site is reservable for groups via special permit. While it has immediate trail access, river access is 1/4 mile away.
- ◆ **Campsite M:** Campsite M is located roughly 75 yards downstream of the “Old Camp M” at the first rock outcropping on river left. Paddlers will exit the river on the east side and follow signs on a short hike to an upland campsite. The campsite overlooks the river.
- ◆ **Campsite X:** Campsite X is located just up the hill from the former Camp X. Campers should follow the signs on a short hike uphill to the designated site. Great views of the river and Rockton Slough.
- ◆ **Campsite S:** Campsite S is located on river left in a horseshoe bend just upriver from the former Camp S. Campers will exit the east side of the river and hike up away from the river bank, following signs to the campsite. This campsite is located just off of the 9-10 trail and is an easy one to hike gear into to secure your site.
- ◆ **Campsite W:** Campsite W is in nearly the same spot as before. Campers should follow the signs on a short uphill hike to a shaded campsite that overlooks the river below.
- ◆ **Campsite V:** Campsite V is located just below Bridge 8 on the west side of the river. Campers will exit the river and follow the signs to an upland campsite that overlooks the river.
- ◆ **Campsite T:** Campsite T is located off of State Hwy 131 across from Winchel Valley Road. This campsite is vehicle accessible. There is no immediate trail or river access. Both are approximately 1/2 mile away. This a great site for setting up prior to floating and hiking to your campsite. Use Landing 7 or Bridge 8 as your river access points.



## A note from KVR Law Enforcement

**Currently, under COVID-19 restrictions, camping is not allowed on the KVR. Once the COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, the 2020 campsites changes listed in this newsletter will take affect.**

As you know, our weather has been quite unpredictable and the Kickapoo Valley has had some of the worst flooding it has ever had in the past 10 years. In order to keep our visitors safe and to comply with State and County regulations, we have closed our campsites within the flood zone. We were able to re-locate some outside of the flood plain. What that means is they are on higher ground, so it will require a bit of a hike to get to them after exiting the river. We have new larger metal reflective signs to alert you to the exit from the river for each campsite. There will be additional signs to get you to the campsite and we will try our best to keep the trails to those sites cleared of weeds and brush.

Once at the campsite, rest assured you will not be flooded out during nasty weather. Be prepared to tie up your canoe, or pull it upland with you. If flooding occurs while you are camped, obviously, we don't want you getting back on the river. New at these sites are evacuation routes. You can follow the evacuation route signs to get to the nearest road. Use your phone to call for someone to pick you up and/or contact the Kickapoo Valley Reserve for help getting your belongings from your campsite. If it's after business hours, contact the Vernon County Sheriff's Department 608-638-5700 and they can dispatch our Officer. Of course if there is an emergency, dial 911.

Do not camp in the old sites, or anywhere else along the river bank. Camp in designated sites only. We will be citing people for camping outside of designated campsites, and the fine is \$150. Enjoy yourself and please follow the rules while you are here. They are for your safety.

*Jason Leis - KVR Property Manager/Police Officer*

## FAQ:

- Q: Campsite M was our favorite, why can't we camp there?  
 A: The old Campsite M is in the flood plain. The new improved Campsite M will be about 75 yards down river on the east side (river left) of the river, near the first rock outcropping past old Camp M. Campers will exit the river and follow the signs to an upland campsite overlooking the river.
- Q: Can we camp on our favorite sandbar along the river?  
 A: No. Camping outside of designated campsites is not allowed on the Kickapoo Valley Reserve, this includes the riverbanks of the Kickapoo River.
- Q: Why the changes in camp areas?  
 A: State and County regulations state any campsites located in the flood plain must have the ability to receive a 72 hour notice of impending flood. The Kickapoo River is susceptible to flash flooding and therefore makes it not safe for visitors or our area emergency response personnel to have designated campsites on the river.
- Q: How will these changes be enforced?  
 A: KVR Enforcement officers monitor campsites. Anyone found camping outside of a designated campsite risks a \$150 fine and will be asked to move to a designated site.
- Q: Campsite R (Bare Beach) is now closed, can we still use Bare Beach?  
 A: Bare Beach/Landing 10 is open for day use. Day use fees apply and no overnight camping is allowed.
- Q: I am planning a 2 day trip down the Kickapoo River. How can I be sure I will get a campsite? Can I reserve a site?  
 A: Campsites on the KVR are first come, first served. To secure a campsite on your two day trip, will require planning. It is advised that visitors set up camp in one of the designated sites prior to getting on the river, and make plans to hike/bike/hire a shuttle to the campsite. Or take your chances that a river site will be open when you arrive, and being prepared by having a contingency plan if all river sites are occupied. Wildcat State Park campground and Village or private campgrounds are reservable options.

**NO GLASS**



**ON RIVER**

KB1.07(2), Wis. Admin. Code. \$150 fine

**Paddler Pick Up**

Help keep the Kickapoo River clean!

- 1 Get a mesh bag from canoe livery or boat landing
- 2 Pick up trash as you paddle
- 3 Sort trash at boat landing and hang bag for reuse

<http://kvr.state.wi.us>  
 (608) 625-2960

**NO RIVER BANK CAMPING**

Due to State and County regulations, camping is not allowed in the flood zone. All KVR campsites have been moved out of the flood zone effective 1/1/2020.

Current River accessible sites are: V, W, X, S & M. All will require a hike to higher ground.

Camping is allowed at designated campsites only. \$150 Fine for camping outside of a designated site.

Kickapoo Reserve Management Board

**EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM**  
 Includes Kickapoo River severe condition alerts

**TEXT**  
 54639 La Farge TO 54651 Ontario  
**888777**

For Emergency Dial 911

Standard text messaging rates apply. Opt out at any time

Trail & River Information [kickapoovalley.wi.gov](http://kickapoovalley.wi.gov)







## TRAIL TALK

By Jackie Yocum

Spring arrived on a rainy Thursday. As it happens with every season change, the temperatures fluctuate a great deal causing not so great trail conditions. Freeze and thaw makes trails muddy under foot, meaning even one footprint has the potential to change the way a trail drains. We encourage sticking to more solid ground as this natural cycle plays out. South facing slopes are the first to recover from the effects of the season change, check them out first when planning your routes. Spring work on the trails will begin as soon as conditions allow.

The trails met winter in good repair, which makes spring work much more focused on prescribed prairie burns, fallen tree clearing, stream crossing maintenance and summer project preparations. Weather permitting, trails are scheduled to open on May 1st to Equestrian and Bicycle enthusiasts. Anyone out hiking the trails this spring is encouraged to let KVR Staff know of any trees blocking trails or other tread issues. As you venture out on the trails, here are a few trail sections that will see work before they are opened for summer shared use. The Hay Valley Trail from Hay Valley Road, south to Dutch Hollow Trail will see a short reroute to eliminate a flood damaged trail bridge. The Jug Creek Trail will be seeing logging operation rehab work prior to opening for use. Avoiding these sections of trail until the work on them is done is preferred.

Social distancing is an invitation to head out on a nice hike on the over 50 miles of trails of the KVR. We all could use some nature and fresh air. Take some time in the coming days to Get Outside and clear your mind, watch spring unfold, and soak up some sunshine. Stay well, friends.

As spring unfolds and the river settles, paddling enthusiasts will once again be headed down the Kickapoo River. 2020 brings changes to the camping opportunities for those who enjoying a paddle down the Kickapoo River to a campsite. Please see the insert of this newsletter for detailed information.

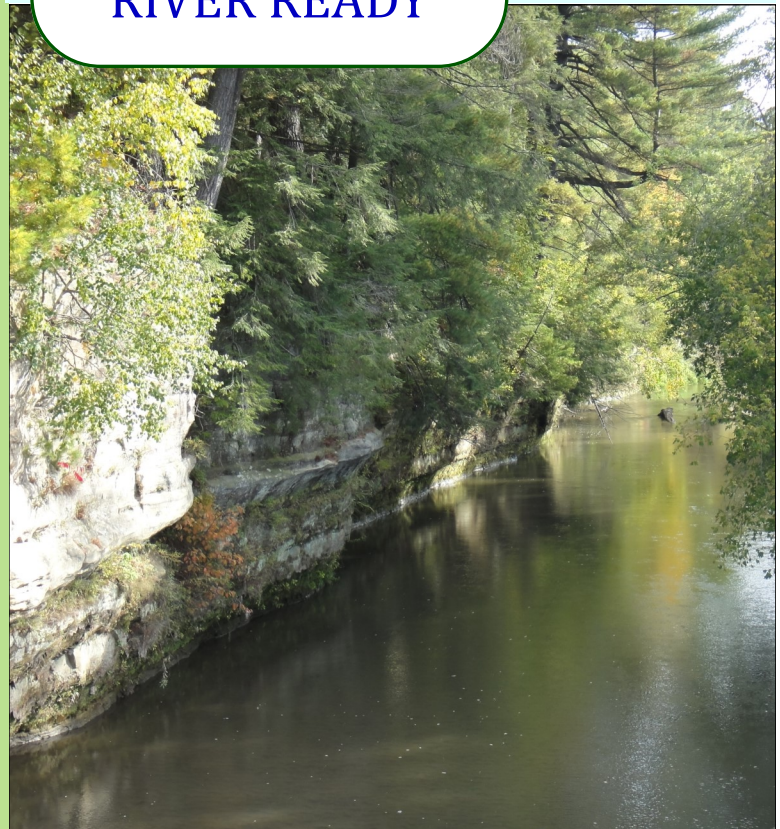
Early season paddlers are asked to report any river blockages to the Visitor Center so the crew can put them on the list and remove them as conditions allow.

River users should be aware of fluctuating water levels in the spring and at any time of the year. The Kickapoo River is a gentle meandering river flowing past diverse vegetation and alongside sandstone bluffs. Water depth typically varies from less than one foot to three or four feet, yet some deep holes create a depth of over six feet. During spring thaws and after heavy rains, the Kickapoo River is known to rapidly go above flood stage ("Flash Flood"). At times, flood waters cover road and bridge surfaces. U.S. Geological Survey water stage stations at La Farge and Ontario provide real time information of river flow conditions. Learn more about Kickapoo River Hydrology and water levels here:

[USGS Kickapoo River Gaging Station at La Farge](#)

[USGS Kickapoo River Gaging Station at Ontario](#)

## RIVER READY







# Celebrate Earth Day's 50th Anniversary

*Earth Day is April 22 of every year.*

Earth Day was a unified response to an environment in crisis — oil spills, smog, rivers so polluted they literally caught fire.

On April 22, 1970, 20 million Americans — 10% of the U.S. population at the time — took to the streets, college campuses and hundreds of cities to protest environmental ignorance and demand a new way forward for our planet.

The first Earth Day is credited with launching the modern environmental movement, and is now recognized as the planet's largest civic event.

Source: <https://www.earthday.org/earth-day-2020/>

*Kickapoo Valley Reserve - La Farge - Vernon County -  
Driftless Region - Wisconsin - United States - North America -  
Earth - Home ❤️*

**With programming cancelled in order to practice proper social distancing, here are a few ideas and ways to enjoy the outdoors.**

- Become a citizen scientist
- Volunteer to hike trails and check for down trees
- Volunteer to remove invasives
- Go for a walk or hike
- Discover Bird Watching
- Participate in the Annual Crane Count
- KVR Education Outreach for nature based learning at home. Visit our blog! <https://kvrlearningoutside.blogspot.com/>



Garlic Mustard - Invasive



For more information on these topics and how to participate, email: [kickapoo.reserve@krm.state.wi.us](mailto:kickapoo.reserve@krm.state.wi.us)



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