

## EDUCATION MANAGEMENT PLAN



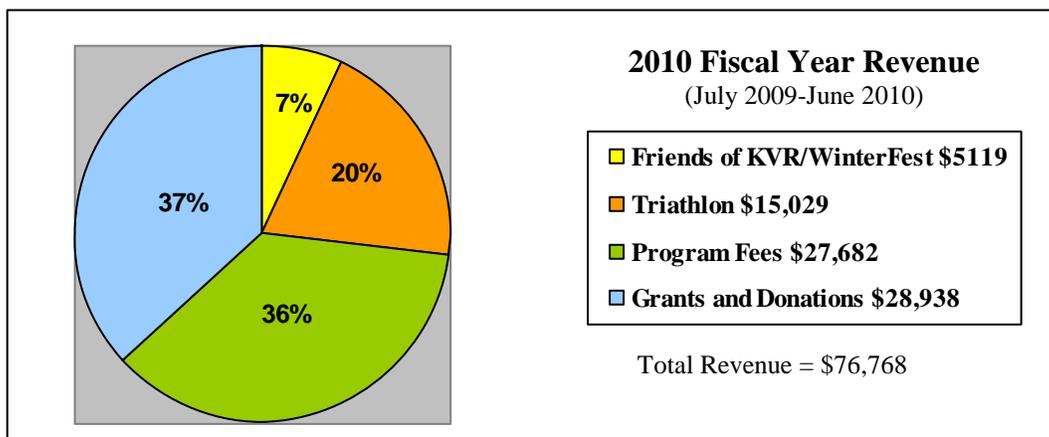
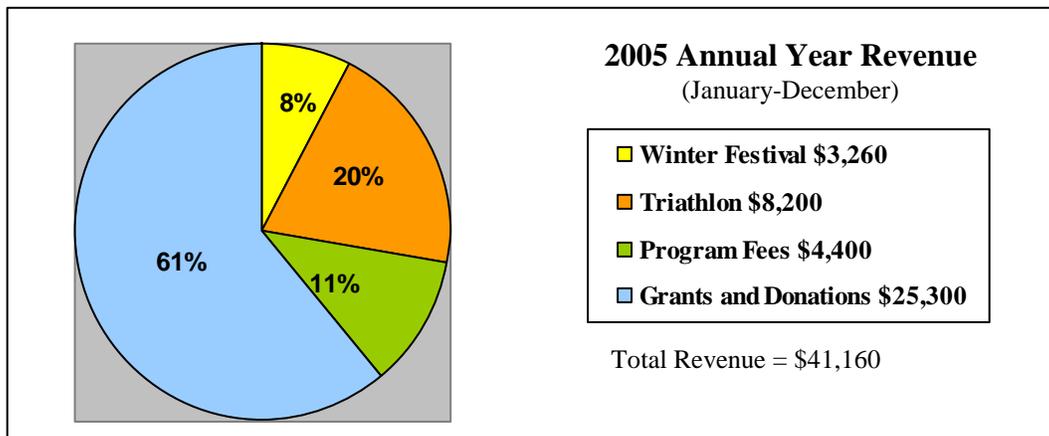
### Overview

The Kickapoo Valley Reserve (KVR) is an ideal setting for hosting a variety of learning experiences. It is an 8,569-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 50 different schools and groups for instructor-led, hands-on programming per year. This translates to over 2,500 students participating in day-use programs each year.
- Six weeks of summer day camps for ages two through thirteen. Summer camps are led by experienced Reserve instructors that lead hands-on activities to help foster a positive connection to nature.
- Monthly community programs for all ages. These programs offer a chance to learn more about the natural world or practice new skills.
- Graduate credit and professional development opportunities for teachers.

- Monthly informal lecture series (Driftless Dialogue) offering the community an opportunity to join experts and other community members in engaging conversations about topics of interest to the Kickapoo Valley and Wisconsin.
- Bi-monthly art workshops which offer an encouraging and non-competitive atmosphere in which to explore an interest in art.
- Annual special events such as the Dam Challenge Triathlon and the family-fun Winter Festival.

In total, the Education and Events Program served 5,197 students of all ages in fiscal year 2010. Funding for the Education Program has also evolved. (See comparison revenue graphs 2005 and 2010 below.) As the number of programs and events has expanded, the revenue from these programs has also grown (up \$23,000 since 2005). Funding generated through Education Program revenue now directly supports a permanent Education Coordinator, instructor/speaker fees and supplies and equipment. Sustaining funding has come from the State via the segregated Conservation Fund – Forestry Account which supports the facility and administrative functions. Program revenue also continues to grow through the support of Friends of the Kickapoo Valley Reserve (Friends of KVR) and the Dam Challenge Triathlon.



## **Education Mission**

The Kickapoo Reserve Management Board (KRMB) recognizes that education is an essential component of the many functions of the Reserve. Life-long learning opportunities in conjunction with public use not only attract tourists and students of all ages but also provide knowledge that is key to the preservation and protection of natural resources.

## **Policies**

- Commitment to non-discrimination – all schools and organizations private, public, and independent are welcome. Fee structure reviewed annually by citizen committees and KRMB.
- La Farge and Norwalk-Ontario-Wilton (NOW) public schools programming fee exempt in recognition of the historical impact the La Farge Dam project had on their budgets and administration from 1975-1999.
- 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.
- Recognize 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.

## **Goals and Objectives:**

Goal: Offer new and current educational opportunities to diverse user groups in a manner that enhances the appreciation and respect for the Kickapoo Reserve and the natural environment.

Objectives:

- Offer day-use programming for schools and groups.
- Offer evening and weekend programs for the public.
- Offer continuing education opportunities for teachers.
- Offer summer camps for youth.
- Create new curriculum and new program content to provide continued interest.
- Continue to monitor program evaluations and feedback.

Goal: Find new ways to expand the scope of the Education Program while continuing to sustain manageable growth.

Objectives:

- Investigate ways to offer expanded learning experiences to students. For example: connect with a high school science class that could come regularly to participate in ongoing research or other environmental-themed learning; provide weekend or overnight programming for youth; consider providing longer learning periods during day-use programs.
- Secure a summer education program intern to help with expanding summer camp responsibilities and general education program needs.
- Pursue a partnership with an individual or organization that might begin on-going scientific research on the Reserve which the public and students could take-part in, i.e., bird banding, bat monitoring, species inventory.

Goal: Foster local economic benefit.

Objectives:

- Host educational programs and events which may 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.

Goal: Create educational resources that will enhance the quality of Kickapoo Reserve users' experience.

Objectives:

- Develop educational brochures and maps that could be used on designated hikes throughout the Reserve.
- 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.
- Work to enhance and develop the "trailhead" concept by developing proper signage and brochures. Signs could be posted at major trail entry points and would educate about proper trail usage.
- Create a proposal for the creation of a rustic outdoor classroom space.
- Increase visibility of Education Program through use of media, i.e., includes instructor bios, photos, and perhaps the addition of a KVR blog on website.
- Build a permanent bird blind (perhaps on the pond behind Campsite A).
- Provide a circle of benches (perhaps Leopold benches) near the building as a good weather gathering place for student groups.
- Develop additional walking trails that leave from the Visitor Center to expand areas where students can participate in hands-on learning.
- Consider developing additional challenge course elements of increased difficulty.

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 host major fundraising events, i.e., Dam Challenge and Winter Festival.
- Develop relationships with other professional organizations as a way to increase use of education programs, i.e., Elderhostel, universities, businesses.

Action Items for 2010-2015:

1. Expand current learning opportunities, perhaps to include more for high school students and by offering science monitoring programs for students.
2. Secure an Education Program summer intern.
3. Develop educational brochures and maps for use in specialized areas.
4. Develop additional educational walking trails that leave from the Visitor Center.
5. Create an "outdoor classroom" space.
6. Build a permanent bird blind and a circle of Leopold benches.
7. Add additional elements to the Challenge Course.



Review of 2005-2010 Education Management Plan	
Evaluation Markers Proposed in 2005	Proof of Accomplishment
Perform on-going self-evaluation using survey results from students, teachers, and community links, as well as ongoing dialogues.	See Attachment 4.
Increase in Education Program revenue.	2005 (calendar year) Revenue = \$41, 171 2010 (fiscal year) Revenue = \$76,768
Formal agreements with school districts; ongoing records of the number of attendees at classes, events, or special activities.	Formal agreements found to be unnecessary. Tracking of total Visitor Center, class, and event attendance now maintained annually.
Completion and placement of interpretive signs.	Informational sign provided at Prairie Enthusiasts restoration site. Re-evaluating interpretive signs given various mediums that information is gathered (website addition of bird calls, for example).
Overall success in securing ongoing funding for education activities.	Demonstrated in monthly and year end fiscal reports as well as Education Program budget.
Increase education and events staffing.	Permanent Education Coordinator position secured in 2009. Added contract part-time Events Coordinator in 2008. Pool of instructors used for programming is currently 22.