

Kickapoo Valley Reserve

# WINTER UPDATE

2023-2024

*Photo by Dave Delap*



### INSIDER TOPICS

**4 & 5 - TREE SPONSORSHIP**

**6 & 7 - WINTER FESTIVAL**

**8 & 9 - YEAR OF THE NIGHT SKY**

### WHAT'S HAPPENING AT KVR

**DEC. 14 | 5:30PM** - KRMB Education & Tourism Committee Mtg

**DEC. 21 | 6 PM** - KRMB Meeting

**DEC. 24 - JAN. 1** - Antlerless-Only Holiday Hunt

**JAN. 2 - MAR. 24** - Creative Communities Canvas Project & Auction

**JAN. 5 - FEB. 23 | 8:30-11:30 AM** - Winter Forest Fridays

**JAN. 8 | 9 AM** - Finance Committee Mtg

**JAN. 9 | 5:30 PM** - Land Management Committee Mtg

**JAN. 10 - FEB. 28 | 8:30-11:30 AM** - Winter Homeschool Workshop

**JAN. 13 | 9AM - 10PM** - Winter Festival

**JAN. 20 | 1-3 PM** - Body Ecology Class

### VISITOR CENTER HOLIDAY HOURS

**CLOSED** Monday, Dec. 25 - Christmas Day

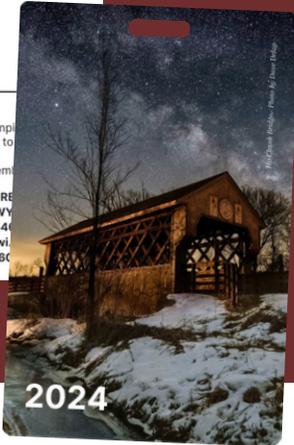
**CLOSED** Monday, Jan. 1 - New Years Day

2024 ANNUAL PERMITS

IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR ANNUAL PERMIT!



To purchase or renew your annual KVR permit, stop by the Visitor Center or visit our website: <http://kvr.state.wi.us>



# Learn more about the Kickapoo Valley Reserve

**Permits** - <http://kvr.state.wi.us/Home>

**Camping** - <http://kvr.state.wi.us/Recreation/Camping>

**Trail & River Status** - <http://kvr.state.wi.us/Home>

**Reach the Staff** - <http://kvr.state.wi.us/About-Us/Contact-Information/>

**Visitor Center Hours** - <http://kvr.state.wi.us/About-Us/Visitor-Center>

**Hunting Information** - <http://kvr.state.wi.us/Recreation/Hunt-Fish-Trap>

**Maps** - <http://kvr.state.wi.us/Recreation/Maps>

**History** - <http://kvr.state.wi.us/About-Us/History>

**Archeology** - <http://kvr.state.wi.us/About-Us/History/Archeology/>

**Geology** - <http://kvr.state.wi.us/Natural-Features/Geology>

**Plants and Animals** - <http://kvr.state.wi.us/Natural-Features/Plants-Animals>

**Education Programs** - <http://kvr.state.wi.us/Education>

**Volunteering** - <http://kvr.state.wi.us/Get-Involved/Volunteer>

**Friends of KVR** - <https://kickapooofriends.org/>

## Looking for the perfect gift this holiday season?

### Give the gift to explore in 2024

Purchase a KVR annual permit gift certificate for your loved one. Available and redeemable at the Visitor Center.



## CREATIVE COMMUNITIES CANVAS PROJECT

*Calling all Artists*

### 2024 Theme - NOCTURNAL

Canvases for 2024 Creative Communities will be available on January 2, 2024!

[Visit our website for more information!](#)

# EDUCATION CORNER

## Outdoor Winter Fun

by Maggie Schultz, KVR Education Coordinator

Getting outside is good for your physical and mental health. Even in winter, it's important to get outdoors to gain the benefits of the sights, sounds, and smells of nature. Although it can be more difficult to get outside (because of the dark, having to bundle up, or just the brutal weather), it is worth the effort! There are lots of ways to enjoy the outside on and off the reserve, and here are some ideas:

- Sledding
- Snowshoeing
- Skiing
- Snowball fights
- Building snow people
- Take pictures (seriously, it's beautiful outside! Have a family photo shoot)
- Make snow angels
- Catch snowflakes on your tongue
- Build a snow cave
- Hike to see the ice formations
- Collect pine cones (for crafts, decorating, and more!)
- Look for animal tracks
- Help a neighbor shovel snow

There's lots of options, so choose one and get outside! You don't have to come to the KVR, but if you can (maybe not on a snow day), we are open all winter, and we have lots of places to explore. Everything looks so different this time of year, it's fun to come visit your favorite summer spots when they're quiet and snow-covered.



## Youth Ski Club

NOW OPEN

Join our ski club! Equipment rental for the entire season is only \$55, and for a membership fee of \$25/family, you also get a skills class and several guided skis on the Reserve's groomed trails.

The KVR has a collection of youth cross-country ski equipment for children under 12.

[MORE INFO HERE](#)



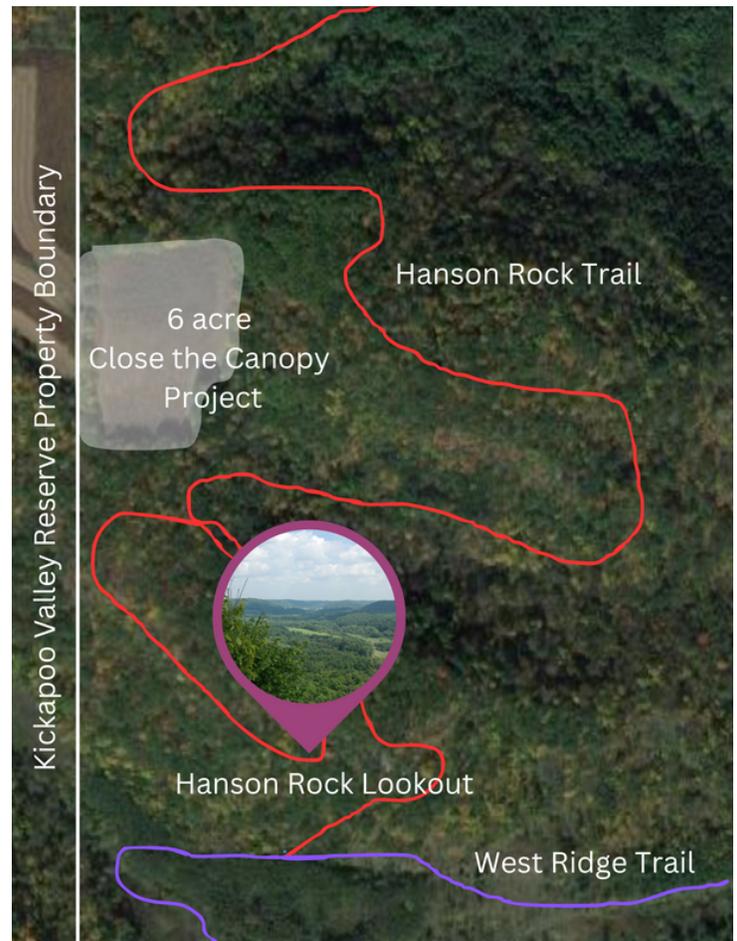
ON 8600 ACRES

SPONSOR A TREE ON THE KVR

## Closing the Canopy

by Jason Leis - KVR Property Manager

The KVR has about 670 acres of agricultural land that is leased out to local farmers. A 6 acre, land locked field, adjacent to Hanson Rock trail was recently taken out of production and slated for reforestation in an attempt to “close the canopy” on the scenic ridgetop. After consultation with the Ho-Chunk Nation Forester and others, it was determined that the best way to do this was to plant older trees that would have a better chance of survival. The plan is to plant, care for, and protect, 90 equally spaced oak trees on the 6 acres. The oak trees will be a variety of White Oak, Burr Oak and Red Oak and they will be a minimum of 6 feet tall. The trees will be protected with fencing to keep deer from damaging the trees. Through the newly established “Sponsor a Tree” program you can help close the canopy. Anyone can sponsor a tree and be a part of growing a living legacy on the KVR. The first round of trees are set to be planted in the spring of 2024.



## Sponsor a Tree on Hanson Rock

If you would like to learn more about sponsoring a tree for the Close the Canopy Project on Hanson Rock, reach out to us. Any dollar amount is accepted and your name will be added to the data for a tree planted. Give a little, give a lot, everyone is encouraged to support this project! Volunteers will be needed to help plant these trees in the spring of 2024! Volunteer!



ON 8600 ACRES

SPONSOR A TREE ON THE KVR

## A lasting legacy, one tree at a time

On the Kickapoo Valley Reserve, you can sponsor the planting of native trees in select locations on 8600 acres. Trees in the program will be protected, maintained, cared for and monitored by the staff and volunteers of the KVR. Each tree sponsored will receive an ID number and its location will be recorded with GPS. A database that includes the following information will be kept available and archived at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve.

- 1) Name of Sponsor/Memory/Honor
- 2) GPS Location of the tree
- 3) Species of the tree
- 4) Date planted

Learn more here [Sponsor a Tree](#).

## Preserved and Protected

### Personal statements from the Bader family on what a memorial tree on the KVR means to them.

*"Planting a tree in the KVR as a memorial is a wonderful way to honor and remember a loved one. My family had one planted for my late husband several years ago. We visit it often and enjoy the peaceful surroundings. It continues to grow and thrive with the loving care of the KVR staff."*

- Marcia Bader

*"My family planted a tree for my grandpa at the KVR after he passed. My memories of my grandpa include his love of the outdoors and hiking on his land where he and my grandma planted many trees. Having a place to go and connect with him at the KVR means a lot to me."*

- Jorgia Peterson



*"Many of my favorite and most cherished memories of my dad are his love of nature and especially the woods. Being able to visit his memorial tree planted at the KVR brings me closer to him and reminds me of his great passion for our environment."*

- Emma Bader

*"With his background in forestry, planting a memorial oak seemed like the best way to honor our father after his passing. The KVR offered a place where we could easily hike in to memorialize him. What a cherished way of celebrating his love of nature."*

- Mona Bader

## Memorial trees planted on the Kickapoo Valley Reserve

- A red oak on Old Hwy 131 Trail near Bridge 18 - *In memory of Jack Robinson - 2011*
- A red oak on Old Hwy 131 Trail near Bridge 18 - *In memory of George Nettum - 2008*
- A white oak near Star Valley Memorial - *In memory of Paul Bader- 2015*
- A burr oak along Old Hwy 131 Trail - *In memory of Jennifer Brunner - 2018*
- A burr oak along Old Hwy 131 Trail - *In memory of Chuck Reynolds - 2016*
- A swamp white oak near Campsite C along Old Hwy 131 Trail - *In memory of Ricky Herken - 2023*
- A burr oak along Old Hwy 131 Trail - *Sponsored by Joan and Kurt Peterson - 2023*
- A red oak along Old Hwy 131 Trail - *In honor of Dr. James DeLine - 2023*
- A red oak along Old Hwy 131 Trail - *In honor of Tamsen Morgan - 2023*
- A burr oak along Old Hwy 131 Trail - *In memory of Galen and Jayne Eiben - 2023*



**Kickapoo Valley Reserve Winter Festival is on January 13th!** Celebrate winter with a full day of activities that can include sledding, skiing, snow sculpture, guided hikes, fireside talks, face painting, horse-drawn bobsled rides, winter sports demos, sled dogs & more.

La Farge Lions will host their annual Chili and Bread Contest!

Bring your child and your dog and try out the Fun Mutt Run. Conquer the snow mountain & snow tunnel. Test your skills at the Traditional Snow Snake Competition or Smoosh Races.

Night winter activities can include star gazing and candlelight snowshoe hike.

**Everyone is welcome!** Winter Festival is free and open to the public.

let it snow!





**Check out ways you can join in at Winter Festival. Registration is open for the following activities!**

- Smooch Race - Gather your team and get ready for the fun | 12pm
- 5K Resolution Run/Walk - Celebrate your health in 2024 | Check-in 8:45am, Starts 9am
- Snowtrekker Winter Encampment - Tour or Camp
- La Farge Lions Chili and Bread Contest - Contest tasting will be held January 13th at Winter Festival.



## CELEBRATING THE NIGHT SKY

### KICKAPOO VALLEY DARK SKY INITIATIVE



## Dark Skies Await

by John Heasley - KVR Instructor & founder of Driftless Stargazing LLC

KVR conserves and shares some of the darkest skies between Chicago and the Twin Cities. We have been working hard to make it easy for you to stargaze safely and to experience all of the twilight and night world. And because we have no closing time, you can be awed by them whenever they call to you.

Our Dark Sky webpage [kvr.state.wi.us/Natural-Features/Dark-Sky](http://kvr.state.wi.us/Natural-Features/Dark-Sky) lets you know simple steps you can take to make lighting smarter and safer, how to be a stargazer, why starry skies matter, and where you can see them for yourself. The dam tower, Visitor Center, Landing 14, and north field at 131 and F are convenient and accessible places to enjoy the stars. Take a night hike along the Visitor Center Trail or Old Hwy 131 Trail and be wowed by owls, frogs, bats, fireflies, and all the sights, sounds and smells of KVR after dark. In just an hour you can walk north on the paved 131 Trail from the CTH P trailhead to the Ho-Chunk Covered Bridge crossing Indian Creek and back again. If you want to sleep under the stars, we have identified campsites with especially great views.

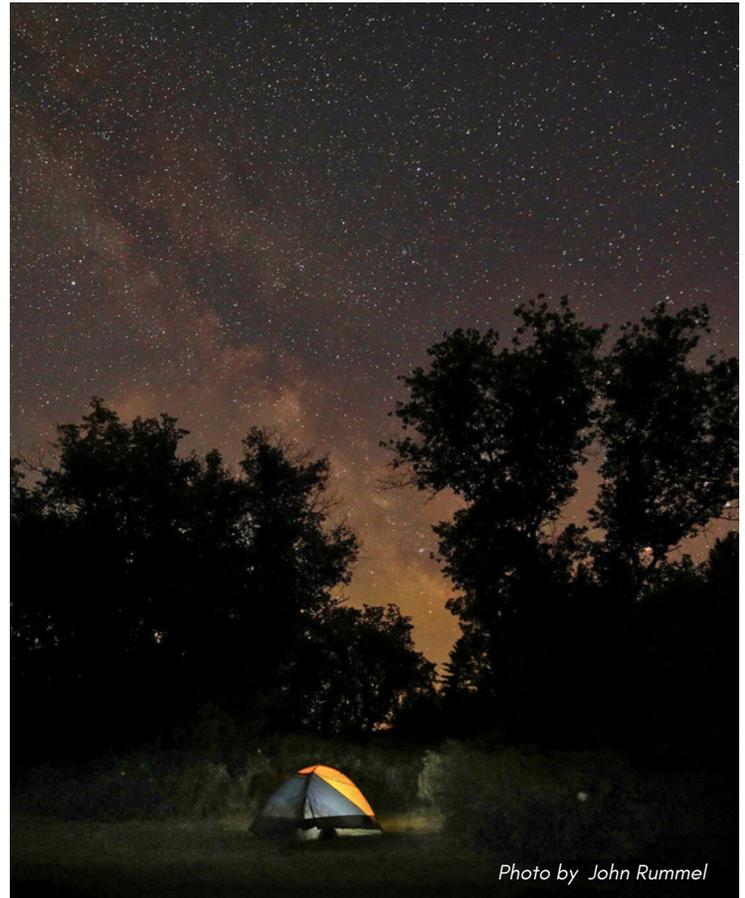


Photo by John Rummel

KVR is excited to be cooperating with Wildcat Mountain State Park and Mississippi Valley Conservancy at Tunnelville Cliffs to have our combined 13,300 acres of public land along the Kickapoo River designated as Wisconsin's next International Dark Sky Park. We have received 50 letters of support from local municipalities, elected officials, area residents, businesses, organizations, environmental advocates, tourism promoters, stargazers, and astronomy clubs. We know from our parents and grandparents that "there once was a sky full of stars". We want future generations to know and enjoy that same night world.

"Starry skies await you where the Kickapoo River flows below and the Milky Way streams above."

— John Heasley

## CELEBRATING THE NIGHT SKY

### NIGHT TIME, WINTER MIGRATION

## How do they do it?

by Cathy Chybowski - KVR Instructor

As winter approaches and the availability of food drops, billions of birds begin migrating south. According to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 350 species or 75% of the birds in North America will leave their nesting grounds and move to a new habitat that will provide enough food to survive the winter. What triggers this epic fall migration?

Most animal species have a biological clock which predicts seasonal change and prepares the animal to deal with it. Migration, hibernation, or staying active are ways that animals deal with the cold. The biological clock is located in the brain and produces circadian rhythms which regulate activities like foraging, sleeping and avoiding predators. These rhythms are called circadian meaning "about a day" because they usually occur every 24-hours. The biological clock and circadian rhythms are both largely influenced by light and temperature.

### **In the winter world where it is best to be big and white, how does the world's smallest perching bird survive a frigid night?**

After many birds have migrated south, the temperature plunges to -40 degrees, the cold winds blow, and food is scarce this little feather-ball is toughing it out-- searching for food and avoiding predators. Watch for the Golden-crowned Kinglet's frenetic flitting and hovering among the spruce branches and listen for its high thin "tsees" notes. How can any animal exist under these harsh conditions? *Regulus satrapa*, or "little king," named for the yellow and orange feathers crowning its head, scarcely bigger than a hummingbird relies on a number of ingenious strategies to survive.



*Golden-crowned Kinglet - Photo by Jack Bartholmai*

The kinglet is neither big nor white. A small animal loses heat more rapidly than a large one. Strike one against the kinglet! In addition to the camouflage advantage of being white in winter, white fur and feathers contain more air than pigment therefore providing better insulation than fur or feathers with color. Strike two and three! So it is that a kinglet seemingly against all odds, must do many small things just right, over and over again to survive the bone-chilling 16-hour nights of winter.

To conserve heat, a kinglet can fluff its feathers, increasing the layer of air around it. In addition, it can huddle with others, tuck its head and feet under its wings and feathers, and it can shiver. Each nostril is covered by one small feather. A kinglet has a tiny, thin bill for snatching insects off of twigs while hovering. At a time when insects are not plentiful, it must consume three times its own body weight in food each day to survive.

The kinglet, like other small birds can lower its body temperature as the sun sets, undergoing a nocturnal hypothermia in order to conserve energy. By morning, the fat has been depleted so the bird wakes early to begin its nonstop feeding, once again building up fat reserves during the day. These steps are repeated every 24 hours according to the bird's circadian rhythms.

According to Bernd Heinrich it was the Golden-crowned Kinglet and its "adaptability under adverse conditions" that inspired him to write the book, "Winter World, The Ingenuity of Animal Survival." This was an important resource for me in writing this article.

ON 8600 ACRES

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

# Many Hands

by Jackie Yocum – KVR Natural Resources Technician

Volunteer groups and individuals are a welcome and key part of successful projects and events on the KVR. Local youth and other volunteers worked to support land management efforts this fall by collecting prairie seeds, removing invasive species and brushing back trail corridors. Thank you to Wisconsin Challenge Academy cadets, La Farge High School students, and Westby Green Club members for their volunteer efforts.

Friends of Kickapoo Valley Reserve members put in countless hours behind the scenes, volunteering time, expertise, knowledge and financial support of programs, projects and events on the KVR. Anyone can volunteer and/or become a KVR Friend, it is a great way to support the KVR. You can learn more about volunteering at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve here: [Volunteer](#)



Wisconsin Challenge Academy Cadets volunteer at Dam Challenge Triathlon.

## Volunteer Opportunities

- Events
- Invasive Species Control
- Adopt A Trail
- Guide for hikes
- Education Program
- Trail work
- Prairie Seed Collection
- 30 acre Pollinator Habitat Project
- Hanson Rock Close the Canopy Project



Westby High School Green Club collecting prairie seed.



La Farge High School Students helping to control invasive species.

## WINTER RECREATION

# WINTER TRAIL ETIQUETTE

Exploring the Kickapoo Valley Reserve in the winter is a great experience. As the ground freezes, more areas become accessible and secret little treasures can be found. Areas not accessible in the warm seasons, are a special treat when it is cold. *Explorers challenge: Look for suspended air bubbles in crystal clear frozen pools underneath rock overhangs.* Winter recreation brings season specific etiquette users should follow. Here are some reminders:

- Treat all users with respect and courtesy, regardless of their sport, speed, or skill level.
- Stay on designated trails.
- Hikers and snowshoers should use the edge of designated ski trails, groomed or ungroomed.
- Terrain in the KVR varies. Some trails cross water. Ice on the river and streams is unpredictable and bodies of water are usually not safe to cross.
- Elevation on trails can change quickly. Know your limitations.



- **Share the trail!** Watch and listen for others.
- Skiers have the right of way.
- Control your speed.
- Always yield to uphill users.
- Leave wildlife wild. Do not harass, approach, or scare wildlife.
- Practice **Leave No Trace** ethics. Always, pack it in and pack it out.
- When viewing ice formations, do not damage them, **Leave the Ice Nice.**
- Take a map when recreating. Make sure someone knows your location and when you will return. Dial 911 if an emergency.
- A KVR annual or day pass is required for all users over age 16. **Annual passes for 2024 are available now.**
- Fat Tire Bike (FTB) trails are open only in the following conditions after January 1st, temps of 25 degrees or less and frozen ground. Tires must be at least 3.7 – 5 inches (10 psi or lower). FTB Trails are not groomed. Ride trails cleanly without sliding.



Ski Here

Hike Here

## Keys to enjoying winter trails

- Respect other users
- Share the trail
- Know your location
- Practice good trail etiquette



KRMB and HCN members on the annual field trip at the KVR



**State of Wisconsin & Ho-Chunk Nation  
Kickapoo Valley Reserve  
Co-Management in Action**



**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.

**Land Acknowledgement Statement**

The Kickapoo Reserve Management Board acknowledges that the state and federal lands that comprise the Reserve fall within the ancestral homelands of First Nations people including the Hooçak Nation. We recognize the sovereignty of the Hooçak and other First Nations and will work towards a shared future by continuing to create collaborative opportunities to protect and preserve these lands.



KVR & Ho-Chunk Nation Crews team up to give the Ciiporoke a facelift.

The Ciiporoke (pronounced "CHEE-poe-doe-kay"), a traditional Ho-Chunk dwelling, provides a unique outdoor classroom experience for those participating in KVR Education Programs.



HCN Snow Snake Game at Winter Festival

KVR & HCN Field Crews work on a log jam