

Kickapoo Valley Reserve

SUMMER UPDATE

2024

EXPLORE

FUN

Summer

ADVENTURE CAMPS

DESTINATION: NATURE

WATER

NEW FRIENDS

SUN

INSIDER TOPICS

4 & 5 - EDUCATION CORNER

10 & 11 - PROTECTING THE NIGHT SKY

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT KVR

JUNE 21 | 8pm - Night Life & Star Series

JUNE 21-23 | Backcountry Basics Workshop

JUNE 24-27 | 9am-11:30am - Kinder Camp

JUNE 24-28 | 8:30-11:30am - Wonder Wanderers Camp

JUNE 24-28 | 12:30-3:30pm - Wonder Wanderers Camp

JUNE 24-28 | 9am-2:30pm - Where the Wild Things Are Camp

JUNE 27 | 6pm KRMB Meeting (Annual Field Trip)

JULY 4 | 12-4pm - Old Hwy 131 Trail Vehicle Tour

JULY 5 | 8pm - Night Life & Star Series

JULY 8-12 | 9am-2:30pm - Four Elements Camp

JULY 8-12 | 10am-3pm - Love Bugs Camp

JULY 14 | Friends of KVR Annual Garden Tour

JULY 15-19 | 9am-3pm - Wilderness Adventure Camp

JULY 15-19 | 9am-2:30pm - Wild World of Plants Camp

JULY 18 | 6pm - KRMB Meeting

JULY 22-26 | 9am-3pm - Incredible Insects Camp

JULY 22-26 | 9am-2:30pm - Nature Nuts Camp

JULY 29-30 | 9am-4pm - Camp Kickapedal

JULY 29-AUG 1 | 9am-3pm - Leadership Trail Camp

JULY 29-AUG 2 | 9am-3pm - Black Ghost Fly

Fishing Camp

AUG 5 | 9am KRMB Finance Committee

AUG 5-8 | 9am-3pm - Waterways Camp

AUG 8 | 5:30 - KRMB Education & Tourism Committee Meeting

AUG 15 | 6pm - KRMB Meeting

DIRECTOR'S DISCOURSE

PRESERVING AND PROTECTING

Our dark skies

Jason Leis - Executive Director



I had the opportunity to attend the Friends of Kickapoo Valley Reserve Volunteer Appreciation Gathering last week. I especially appreciated all the great potluck dishes, which were delicious as always. It was a great chance to re-connect with a group of people who really care about and support the mission of the Reserve. Friends members were very generous this year, and extra funds have been made

available for use on projects, one of which will be to update the outdoor lighting at the Visitor Center. In a joint conservation effort with our Dark Sky partners, the KVR has been working to have over 13,000 acres designated as a dark sky park. Unfortunately, light pollution is getting worse every year, which has put this goal out of reach until community wide changes are made. At the Visitor Center, twenty-year-old fixtures were initially retrofitted in an attempt to create dark sky compliant lighting, but we can do better. With financial backing from Friends of KVR, we will be installing new dark sky compliant fixtures and lighting at the Visitor Center. The goal is to use the Visitor Center lighting as a good example and to provide education about the use of effective, efficient dark sky lighting. Protecting our night skies aligns with the mission of the Reserve, and it would be great if we could all evaluate the lighting we have and find ways to make it better. Bring on the stars! I hope you have been able to stay cool and still enjoy the outdoors. The Kickapoo River is a great place to cool off but be sure to bring some sunscreen and bug repellent!

Thank You to these Tree Sponsors



- David and Karen Theis
- Tim and Laurie Ott
- Don and Carol Nelson
- Diane Retzlaff
- Maureen and Robert Fox
- Terry Nilles
- Phyllis Hytnen
- Art Syth
- Chris & Sue Baudhuin

KVR ANNUAL PERMITS ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE!

GET YOURS HERE



WI State Park passes do not apply on the KVR



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

WE  VOLUNTEERS!

Lending a hand

Name: Tom F.

How long have you been a volunteer at KVR?

First project was in May 2022 (planting oak saplings)

How far do you travel to volunteer at KVR?

Our family's cabin, also in Vernon County, is about a half hour away.

How did you get started volunteering at KVR?

I reviewed the volunteer information on KVR's website. Soon after completing the application, in Spring 2022, I noticed the oak sapling project. I signed up for a Saturday in May, and stopped by.

What is your favorite way to volunteer on the Reserve?

I enjoy helping where and when I can. Most of my activity has involved pulling garlic mustard.

What advice would you give someone who is thinking about volunteering?

Understand that any volunteering you can do makes a difference. Your efforts help KVR staff maintain a top-notch nature preserve.

What is your favorite spot on the KVR?

Don't have a favorite spot, but I've enjoyed several hikes on the Little Canada and Ice Cave trails. The KVR is a beautiful piece of property and nice place to escape to for a day - or longer!

Thanks Tom for your time and efforts in helping preserve and protect the KVR!



Volunteer Opportunities

- Events
- Invasive Species Control
- Adopt A Trail
- Visitor Center Pollinator Paragon
- Education Program
- Trail work
- Tree tending
- Citizen Scientist Programs
- Friends of KVR Gardening Club



EDUCATION CORNER

WHAT'S NEW

Keeping Cool

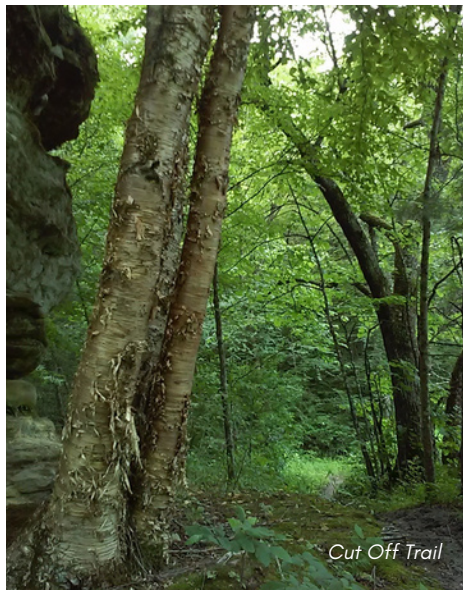
by Maggie Schultz, KVR Education Coordinator

Have you ever walked into the forest on a hot day and breathed a sigh of relief from the heat? That's not just shade you're feeling!

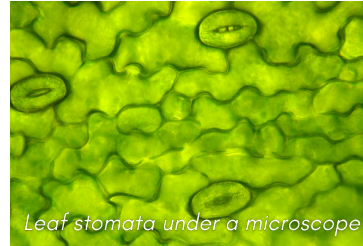
Trees do provide shade, and that does keep us cool. Yet, there is another process that trees are doing that is helping cool the air.

Transpiration is the process where water in the leaves or branches of a tree is evaporated into the air. As the water evaporates, heat is removed from the tree and transferred to the air, rising away from it.

This can be a bad thing. If the tree transpires too much, it will lose too much water and it will dehydrate. However, on a hot day, transpiration can cool a tree much like we cool our bodies with sweat. Transpiration is so effective that a single tree can cool itself much like an air conditioner cools an entire house. When the tree is cool enough, it will close little holes in the leaves called stomata, and that reduces the transpiration. That way the tree can keep the water it needs for photosynthesis.



The benefits of this process are felt by the entire forest ecosystem. The habitat under the canopy is significantly cooler all summer long, helping the animals maintain a healthy body temperature as well. Most animals have ways of cooling themselves, but without the cooling effect of the trees, they would still struggle on those really hot days.



This photo shows leaf stomata under a microscope.

To see them in person, look at the underside of a spinach leaf very closely.

Welcome Summer Intern

Hello everyone! My name is Danae Gardner, and I am working at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve this summer as the Environmental Education Intern. I'll be doing a little bit of everything around here, from helping with summer camps to organizing educational materials.

Last year I graduated from Hillsboro High School, and now I am home for the summer after recently completing my first year of college at UW-Stevens Point. This is where I am majoring in Wildlife Ecology and Management. It is extremely refreshing to be back in the beautiful hills and valleys of the Driftless Region after living in flat, windy land for the school year. A few things you can often find me doing are baking, reading, swimming, fishing with friends, and spending time outside and around animals. I am so grateful to have this intern opportunity, not only to allow me to further my education and teach others of all things environmental, but because I get to learn the incredibly rich history of the area from an inside perspective I otherwise wouldn't have. I am excited to soak up every aspect of the natural world that the KVR can give, and I am looking forward to sharing that plentiful knowledge with all the young and bright minds around me.



EDUCATION CORNER

SUMMER CAMP

Summer Camp is Underway but there's still time to join!



Forest Friends Camp - KVR

Our summer camps are already well underway, but there are still spots left in camps that are happening in July and August. Camps for children ages 6-17 are still happening, so sign up your child for a fun outdoor adventure today!

For more information, visit our website:

kickapoovalley.wi.gov/education/summer-camp



Summer Camp - KVR



Adult Programs - KVR

NEW! Backcountry Basics

Adult summer camp to build up outdoor skills and confidence for adults

JUNE 21-23

We are excited to offer a new program this summer, called 'Backcountry Basics'. This three-day, two-night adventure for adults only focuses on wilderness skills, safe outdoor recreation, as well as map reading and navigation. This program is designed for people who want to be more comfortable in the outdoors, especially on their own. There will be lessons on 'Leave No Trace', pack animals, campfire basics, planning a trip, getting the right gear, and more!

Spots still available! Register Here



Art Sprouts Camp - KVR

ON 8600 ACRES

LAND MANAGEMENT

Trail Talk

by Jackie Yocum – KVR Natural Resources Technician

Featured Trail: *Wintergreen Bluff Trail*
Trail Adopted by: Available for adoption!

Parking: Parking for Wintergreen Bluff Trail is at the Visitor Center.

Trailhead: East of the Visitor Center garage

Length: 0.93

Uses: Hiking only



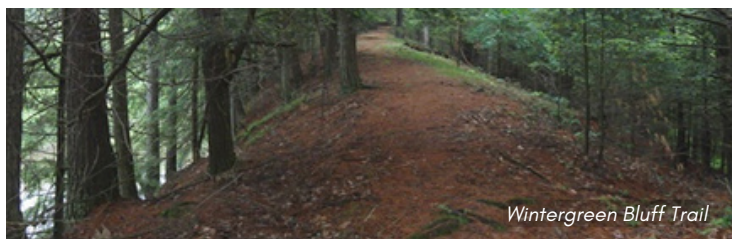
Pack the
bug
spray!

Surface: Wintergreen Bluff Trail is a natural surface trail with armored rock areas and bedrock shelves.

Interesting features: Wintergreen Bluff Trail overlooks the Kickapoo River and provides access to a rock shelter and ancient hemlock stands.

Plant communities: Wintergreen Bluff Trail traverses a mixed hardwood forest over sandstone cliffs along the river. hemlocks, lichens, wild ginger, wintergreen and more!

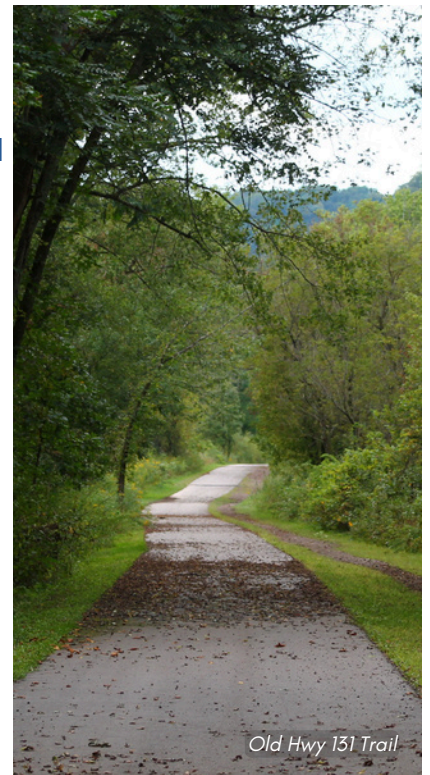
What not to miss: Along the trail are the remnants of what would have been the “east side” of the earthen dam. In this area, the soil and trees were removed during the dam construction over 50 years ago, exposing layers of bedrock. This is where the dam would have connected on the east side of the project. It is amazing to see how nature heals.



Wintergreen Bluff Trail

Electric bikes and the KVR

The use of electric bicycles is not permitted on the KVR. This is a policy of the KRMB (Kickapoo Reserve Management Board). The KVR understands E-bikes have become popular, and they provide access to the trails and to exercise options for those who need it. Mobility Impaired Permits are available for those in need. Contact the [Executive Director](#) for more information.



Old Hwy 131 Trail



Kickapoo River above Bridge 9

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.

ON 8600 ACRES

SUMMER PHENOLOGY

What species are blooming & roaming about?

Phenology is ‘the study of appearance’ or the timing of seasonal events in nature.

by Joan Peterson – KVR Master Naturalist

Summer Phenology is one of growth, like flowers blooming, birds raising young, and animals tending their broods. Here are some summer happenings to look for when you visit the KVR and fun facts about them.

PLANTS

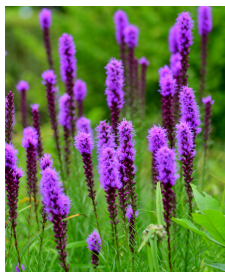


TALL MEADOW RUE

(*Thalictrum dasycarpum*)

Where to find: prefers moist or wet soil like by the ponds on Old Hwy 131 & the Kickapoo River in June and July.

Fun fact: Meadow Rue can grow up to 5 feet tall.



BLAZING STAR

(*Liatris*)

Where to find: West Ridge Upper Prairie July – October.

Fun fact: Liatris is also known as ‘colic root’ because it was used to treat digestive problems.



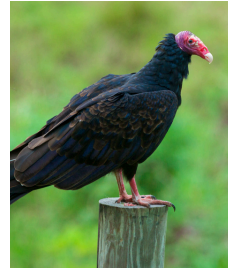
GOLDENROD

(*Solidago*)

Where to find: prairies along West Ridge Trail and Old Highway 131 in August.

Fun fact: There are 12 species of bees that can only reproduce on the pollen of goldenrod.

BIRDS



TURKEY VULTURE

(*Cathartes aura*)

Where to find: Look up! TVs soar high in the sky, often in groups of 3–4. Nest along Hanson Rock Trail

Fun fact: TVs are known as Nature’s janitor. They eat dead animals that would otherwise decompose and smell.



BALTIMORE ORIOLE

(*Icterus galbula*)

Where to find: Usually high in the tree tops, unless you put out grape jelly and orange halves, some of their favorite foods.

Fun Fact: Oriole nests are hanging teardrop-shaped sacs about the size of a baseball attached to a tree branch, made of bark strips, milkweed silk, twigs, and even bits of string that are woven together by the female.



CLIFF SWALLOW

(*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*)

Where to find: Under the bridge supports over the Kickapoo River (best viewed by canoe or kayak).

Fun fact: Cliff swallows build mud nests in colonies along the bridge supports, close to lots of bugs to feed their babies.

ANIMALS

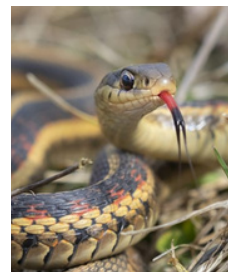


LIGHTNING BUG/FIREFLY

(*Lampyridae*)

Where to find: In the woods and meadows, try the Bailout Trail near Bridge 9. At night!

Fun fact: Male fireflies use their bioluminescence (ability to flash light) to attract a mate.

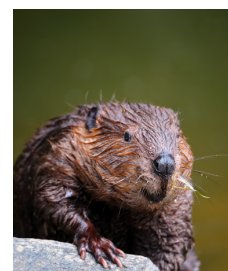


GARTER SNAKE

(*Cathartes aura*)

Where to find: On sunny rocks in Weister Creek

Fun fact: Garter snakes have a dual-colored tongue



BEAVER

(*Cathartes aura*)

Where to find: Along Indian Creek Trail and ponds near Bridge 18.

Fun fact: Beavers’ teeth contain iron, which is why their teeth don’t break when they chew on trees.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

FEATURED EVENTS

Old Hwy 131 Vehicle Tour July 4, 2024 - Noon to 4pm



JULY 4TH

OLD HWY 131 TRAIL VEHICLE TOUR

On Thursday, July 4, 2024 Old Hwy 131 Trail will be open for a vehicle tour. Normally closed to motorized vehicle traffic, July 4th marks the annual driving tour within the Kickapoo Valley Reserve. Signs marking old homesteads will be placed along the route. Interpretive guides are available online or at the gate.

There is no fee for this tour. Donations of non-perishable food or personal hygiene items will be accepted at the gate and at the Visitor Center. Proceeds from this food drive will be given to local food pantries.

[View the interpretive guide here](#)

Sunday
DRIVE the DRIFTLESS
Garden Tour

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

July 14, 2024
11am - 5pm

**Friends of KVR host Sunday
Drive Garden Tour**

On July 14, Friends of Kickapoo Valley Reserve will host their annual garden tour. This year's tour will feature gardens in and around the Kickapoo Valley Reserve. For more information and to purchase tickets visit Friends of Kickapoo Valley Reserve website kickapoofriends.org

Friends of KVR



Seeking Volunteers at
host gardens for the
2024 Garden Tour
[Click here to Volunteer!](#)

Friends Garden at the KVR Visitor Center

WHAT'S HAPPENING

SUPPORT THE KICKAPOO
VALLEY RESERVE

Join Friends of KVR

Mission Statement

The Friends of Kickapoo Valley Reserve is an organization of people dedicated to assist the Kickapoo Reserve Management Board in its mission to preserve and protect the lands entrusted to the Reserve by raising funds and public awareness, and by providing volunteers for needed projects.

One of the first federal properties turned back to a state, the Kickapoo Valley Reserve (KVR) today is protected and enriched by the members, donors, and volunteers of Friends of the KVR organization. The best benefit of a KVR Friends membership is the satisfaction of helping to preserve the Reserve for current and future generations. In addition, all members receive the following benefits: KVR Annual Pass, Bi-Annual Friends Newsletter, and gift shop discount in December each year when you purchase or renew your membership.

www.kickapoofriends.org

Dam Challenge
Triathlon

Pasta Supper: October 4, 2024
Race Day: October 5, 2024

Dam Challenge 2024 - REGISTRATION OPEN!
The Kickapoo Valley Reserve Dam Challenge invites participants to paddle 7 river miles, pedal 14 country road miles, and run 3.5 trail miles through the beautiful Driftless region of Southwest Wisconsin. A race and party not to be missed. This event offers a pre-race pasta supper, put on by Friends of KVR, scenic and challenging race route, high and "dry" transition, ample parking, cool swag, live music, food & beverage, local flavor, awesome volunteers, and more. Let's just say we put the Dam into the Dam Challenge! Join in and help celebrate 22 years of this Dam great KVR fundraiser, the Dam Challenge Triathlon.

**Sponsor Dam
Challenge!**

Race!

Volunteer to help!



PROTECTING THE NIGHT SKY

AFTER DARK IN THE KVR

KVR Nights

by Susan Cushing – KVR Master Naturalist & Astro- educator

Once a year the stars seem to fall from the sky into the meadows of the KVR. If you walk out through the woods to the marshes and fields along Old 131 trail at sunset, you may walk through fields of floating stars. This is the annual dance of the fireflies. Rising from the grass in vast numbers as the real stars pull the curtain of night over our heads, countless adult Lampyridae beetles embroider designs on the darkness in a dizzying display of swirls and dashes of yellow or green light.

Their aerial light show is the last part of a life lived underground for a year or two as one inch long larvae. After munching on slugs and worms, the larvae change into adult form with wings, and for a few warm, humid evenings in early summer become one of nature's greatest displays of beauty.

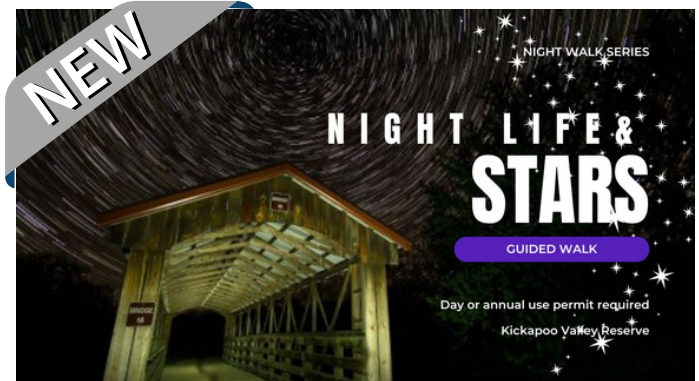
While we enjoy the spectacle, the female firefly clings to grass stems in the dark, watching the males float above them blinking their silent love songs. Later the females will lay eggs in moss or other damp places to prepare for next year's flight to the stars. Firefly larvae are an important part of healthy soil biology, and adult fireflies have brought a special beauty to summer nights for over 100 million years. Take a walk after dark and enjoy their show.



Learn more about how you can help protect the night sky

Night Life and Stars

Guided Night Walk Series



The KVR is one of the best places in the Midwest to explore the outdoors at night. Night is where the action is for most animals and insects, as well as reptiles and amphibians. In June, fireflies put on an unforgettable show below summer stars or the full moon. All summer long bats, owls and other birds, bugs, plants, frogs and many animals may be seen or heard at night. What are they all doing while we sleep?

There's plenty going on at ground level, but there's more! The KVR is well known for our starry skies and astronomy events. Learn about how dark skies affect all life on Earth, and enjoy the best star gazing in the Midwest. We'll look for space stations (yes there is more than one), watch meteor showers and get a close-up look at the rising moon as well as locate constellations and important stars.

Join Master Naturalist Susan Cushing to explore the other half of our world, the world of Night, on the first and third Friday evenings of each month. Each night walk will be different as the seasons progress and the weather changes.

Bring your curiosity, a flashlight with a red filter, and binoculars if you have them. We will supply binoculars and red filters if you don't have them. Dress for the weather. Walks will begin at the south end of Old 131 Trail road, in the parking lot. We will walk 1-2 miles on the paved trail.

Friday June 7th | 8:30pm – Clear skies!

Friday June 21st | 8:30pm

Friday July 5th | 9pm

Friday July 19th | 8:45pm

Friday August 2nd | 8:45pm

Friday August 16 | 8:15pm

Walks will be cancelled in case of lightning or active storms. [Learn more about listening to the night.](#)

Dark Sky Conservation Partners in the Kickapoo Valley

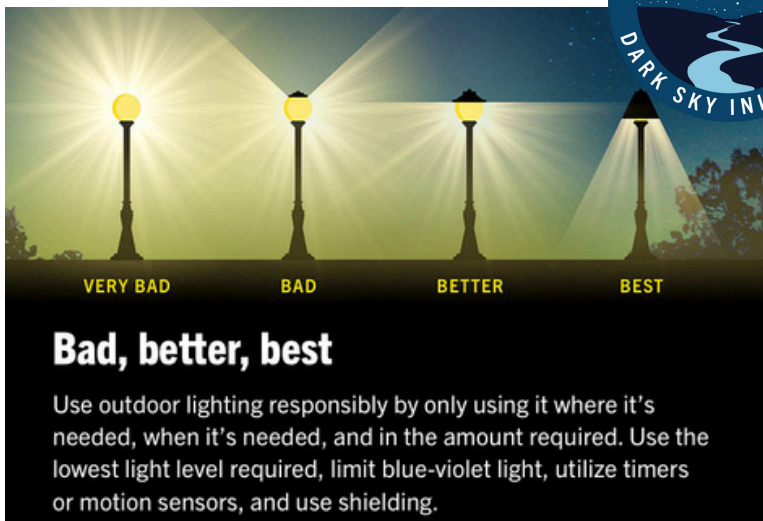


Kickapoo Valley Reserve
Wildcat Mountain State Park
Mississippi Valley Conservancy



GET INVOLVED

HOW YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Dark Sky Conservation
Protect dark skies

CALL TO ACTION

In the last 3 years alone, the amount of light pollution in the Kickapoo Valley has increased beyond admissible levels required to sustain a dark sky park. Together, we can reduce this light trespass by using appropriate outdoor lighting and encouraging our local communities and businesses to do the same. Please consider your part in this community wide conservation effort.

Learn how KVR and our conservation partners are protecting dark skies:

<http://kvr.state.wi.us/Natural-Features/Dark-Sky>

Dark Sky Conservation resources
you can use to take action:

- Watch the Driftless Dialogue: [Protecting our Dark Skies – Scott Lind](#)
- Visit this website: [Dark Sky International](#) for information and how to guides on responsible outdoor lighting.
- Like, follow & share the [Kickapoo Valley Dark Sky Initiative Facebook page](#).

Employment Opportunities

The Kickapoo Valley Reserve is taking applications for the following positions:

[Executive Assistant](#)
[Police Officer](#)
[Front Desk Office Associate](#)
[Field Crew](#)
[Naturalist/Instructors](#)



Learn more about being a part of the team that preserves and protects the Kickapoo Valley Reserve.

<http://kvr.state.wi.us/Get-Involved/Employment-Opportunities>



Pollinator Protection

Protecting our pollinators and specifically Monarchs is an important part of protecting the ecology of the Kickapoo Valley Reserve and any natural space.

A Monarch nursery at the Visitor Center provides protected space for displaced Monarch caterpillars. Caterpillars are rescued from areas along roadways and fields in threat of being mowed or damaged. Displaced caterpillars accepted. Please call ahead.

Tick collection

Vernon County Health Department in conjunction with Marshfield Clinic Research Institute has provided us with tick collection kits for distribution at Visitor Center. Calling all curious minds! Local researchers need citizen scientists just like you to collect ticks from our area. With your help, researchers can understand what types of ticks are invading Wisconsin and whether they're likely to carry diseases.

The process is simple. When you find a tick, on a person or a pet, simply complete the provided survey, place the tick in the collection kit and mail the kit and monitor your findings.

For more information:

<https://redcap.link/TICS>

Email: tics@marshfieldclinic.org

Phone: 715-389-7796





Luna moth at the Visitor Center



Hands on Nature - Kinder Camp



Forest Friends Bug Catchin'



Nature play - Kinder Camp



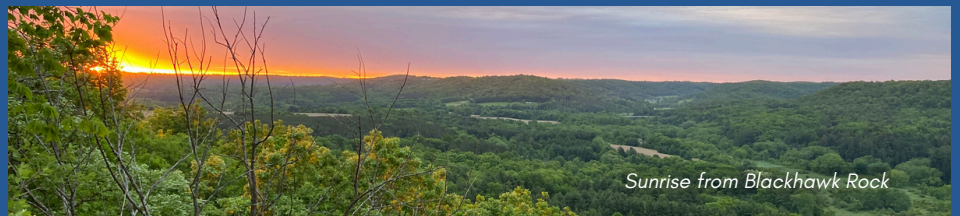
Summer Camp Teamwork!



She laid her eggs on the trail!



Kinder Camp exploring the Visitor Center Trail



Sunrise from Blackhawk Rock