

Kickapoo Reserve Management Board

February 15, 2024

Kickapoo Valley Reserve Visitor Center

In Person Attendance: Adali Mann, Travis Downing, Scott Lind, Julie Hoel, Reggie Nelson, Barb Sarnowski

On Zoom Attendance: Dave Maxwell

Staff in Person: Jason Leis, Maggie Schultz, Jackie Yocum

Staff on zoom: Jana Muehlenkamp

Audience: 2 total in person, 0 on zoom

I. Open Session – Call to Order 6:01pm

**Approval of Agenda – Motion to approve agenda by Downing, 2nd by Mann
All in favor - Motion carries.**

Land Acknowledgement Statement – read by Lind

Public Posting Compliance – Yes, Leis

Public Input: None

II. Consent Agenda

November 2024 minutes

1. Lind: I reviewed both sets of minutes and they were essentially identical; Erica's minutes contained more detail. I recommend that we approve Erica's minutes with the extra detail.

Motion to approve November minutes as submitted by Hoel, 2nd Sarnowski

All in favor – Motion carries.

January 2024 minute amendments

1. Hoel – is the ad hoc report available to the public? Lind – It's a matter of public record because the committee is a public committee, but this was an update not an official report. Hoel – not sure the wording indicated that. Leis – we can include it with the minutes. Leis – this was not a recommendation, but it is available to the public. Leis – it's available through a public records request. Hoel – are minutes posted? Yocum – after the board approves them, they are posted to the website.

Motion to approve January minutes as submitted by Downing, 2nd Lind

All in favor – Motion carries.

III. Decision Items

1. Transfer of the property from Mississippi Valley Conservancy (MVC)
Discussion: Leis – We have Abby Church here from MVC, this is her work putting this together. The conservation easement is what we should look over. (conservation easement on screen) This easement states that there are things we can and cannot do, meaning this piece of property would have slightly different rules than the rest of the

reserve. On page 6, the Rights and Remedies we can see some of these things. Lind – I did read through it, and I didn't see anything to be concerned about. I understand it does create a different subset of rules for that piece of property, but I personally was ok with them. Hoel – can you summarize a few things that are different about usage of this property? Leis – it gives MVC the right to come in and do things on that piece. There's also things about signage, they would like to put up different signage about usage. Downing: Where would you put the signs? Leis – somewhere right around bridge 6. The property is to the east of the river, so that is the logical spot. Mann: Right around that driveway would be a good spot, water doesn't get that far. Lind: It says five signs, each roughly 9x12. Leis: yes under provision 4.6. Church (from audience): Our signs are 8.5 x 11 or 8x12. The signs provision is negotiable, so if this signage would be confusing, we are comfortable with not putting up signs. This is the same approach we use with private land owners. Downing: when we redo the maps, would this section be shaded differently? To indicate the rules are different on that section? Leis: I wouldn't say the rules are different for the public, they are the same. Hoel: if it doesn't change how people use it, I don't think we need signs. Putting it on the map gives credit to the partnership. We just discussed at the last meeting about minimizing signage. Lind: Ideally, we wouldn't add more signs. Church: There's two requirements that are not negotiable, since the bulk of the funding came from Wisconsin Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund, you'll see a sign on Hay Valley, and that's one requirement. If there is a public access trail that goes through there, we post allowed and prohibited activities, so that the public knows what is allowed. That can be at the nearest kiosk. Hoel: those behaviors will be consistent with what is already allowed? Church: Horseback riding would not be. Downing: There has to be a marked trail for horseback riding. Lind: I think that's already covered in one of the documents. Leis: The one question was about using a different color on the map, and I think the rules for the general public will be the same, so it should be shaded the same as the rest of the map. Lind: The land transfer will go to the state of Wisconsin. I read the rest of the document, and we share the same ideology, so it seems that we will take the same approach, do what we always do Leis: That was my thought, we feel that we're protecting the property, and that is what you're doing with these easements, so it seems unnecessary to double up, but the way you get your funding may dictate what you have to do. It's good to check that this is something we're all ok with. Lind: Any other concerns? Hoel: Who pays for the rest of the \$35,000? There was a list of the cost, and only part of it was covered. Church: Trout Unlimited Watershed Access Fund, Coulee chapter chipped funding in, I can get you the list of funders. This is the culmination of 5 years of work and \$79,000, and we're really excited that we're on the final stretch of transferring it to you for long term management. The last remaining costs are just under \$2,000, and that's things like recording fees for the deed, the reserve is exempt from transfer tax, title insurance and property tax are the final costs. Lind: we voted to cover those costs in an earlier meeting. Church: the amount approve was \$1893, and the costs are considerably lower than that amount. Lind: Let me say on behalf of the board that we are grateful for the work that you've done for this project. Church: We are grateful for this partnership. The MVC prioritized large continuous blocks of land, and our first step when this land went on the market was to

come to you, because we don't want to fragment the land management. We didn't expect it to take 5 years, but we're grateful for Jason's help every step of the way, and our board is thrilled. If you don't mind we'd like to do a press release, because this is how conservation should be done. Leis: When do you think this will be finalized, if we approve this tonight, when will it be finished? Church: The next steps are to send it to the DNR, to approve and draft an assignment of grant contract. Lind: For us the governor has to approve acceptance. Church: Is that a lengthy process? (laughter) Hoel: Five minutes to do it, three years to set up. Leis: I don't think it took too long, but you have to talk to the right person. Sarnowski: It would help to approve the easement. Lind: It would help to keep this moving along.

Motion to approve the easement; Motion by Sarnowski, 2nd by Downing

All in favor – motion carries

2. Review of Police Policies Leis: We don't need to go over all of them, but if you have any questions we can answer them. In the past, the board has never approved the police policies; I would like to run these by the board going forward. Many of these have been the same for many years. Downing: If they haven't changed, there's no reason to not approve them. Hoel I would just like to say this is a massive effort. Malanka (from audience) I can't take credit, we contract with a firm that writes policies, and then we modify them to fit our organization. (gives example of how aviation policy could be used to set up a helipad for emergency situation). Hoel: I have general questions about law enforcement, how do you keep daily records? Leis: Police Program Log – each officer keeps a daily record of who they talk to, where they stop, such as campsites, any traffic stops, etc. In addition, any communication over radio is recorded, by us and the Vernon County Sheriff's Department. Hoel: Is that electronically? Leis: Yes. Hoel: There's several mentions of if you are called to be a first responder, for example a domestic issue, how often has that happen? Malanka: If there's a call and we're the closest, we will respond. We will first keep the peace and second act as an observer. This is my third season here, and in that time I've been called to assist at accidents, I've been called to two domestic disturbances in La Farge, and a few suspects have been headed through and we've been asked to post look out. Hoel: Do you have training with these policies? Malanka: When we update the policies, we send them out to the officers. They must acknowledge that they have received them. If they do not acknowledge them, Jason calls them and lets them know that they must acknowledge. There is an expectation that the mandatory and critical policies are read and understood, officers are expected to know and follow these. Maxwell: My question is regarding if there's any presence of the Ho-Chunk Police on the reserve, and do they have jurisdiction? Leis: The Ho-Chunk police do have jurisdiction on the Ho-Chunk portion of the KVR property. Maxwell: Have they ever patrolled? Leis: To my knowledge, they have never patrolled, but they have been on the property. Maxwell: Would their police be following these policies? Leis: No, they have their own, because they are a separate nation. I would guess that theirs are very similar, but I have not seen them.

Motion to approve police policies.

Motion by Downing, 2nd by Mann

All in favor – Motion carries.

IV. Friends of KVR update

No Friends present; no update.

V. Education and Tourism Committee Update – met February 8, 2024, 5:30pm - Schultz

- Summer camp registration up and running, four camps already full. New registration form is working well, dealing with some issues with payment site. Working with state to resolve them.
- Spring registration open for Forest Fridays and Homeschool workshops. Both winter sessions going well.
- Instructor training on Feb. 19, to update instructors on new additions and changes, and get feedback. Hopefully get ideas to help recruit more new instructors.
- Winter ‘ice’ hikes downgraded to winter hikes. Travis led one on Feb. 10. Downing – it went well, had four people show up and took them to some places other than the ice caves due to lack of ice. Everyone enjoyed the hike, it went very well. Schultz – next hike will be February 24th, night of the full moon. Will include potential stargazing (if weather cooperates) as well as ecology, led by Cathy Chybowski.
- Access Ability Wisconsin – Yocum: a new program we are looking into. They own a fleet of off-road wheelchairs (electric chairs with tracks, meant for any terrain). They develop partnerships with organizations to ‘host’ one of their chairs, and people apply through them to rent it for free. Was brought up at the meeting, asked to speak to other organizations who have participated. Still working on getting more information before applying. Will update at next meeting.
- Creative Communities: Canvases are out and already starting to come back. More libraries participated this year than ever, theme is ‘nocturnal’. Canvases due back next week, gallery opening event will be March 2 at the visitor center. Auction will be open from March 2-24 at 5pm. Student Art experience, to thank the students for donating their art, will be March 8. We have several artists signed up already and will welcome up to 70 students from 5 different schools that day to work with and learn from the local artists. It’s a great event, haven’t been able to have it fully since 2020, so we are excited to have this event again.
- Wisconsin Master Naturalist – Schultz: Continuing to plan for our master naturalist training, we have 9 people registered so far, and only need 10 to run the program. Haven’t done any promotion yet, but we plan to. Beginning to schedule guest speakers. Instructor training will be March 5 & 6, Maggie and Joan will be attending. We will continue to meet with the planning team and develop our curriculum.

VI. Finance Committee- Met on February 12, 2024 at 9am - Lind

- Friends have \$30,000 ‘extra’ funds that we can spend; the committee agreed that it is not the finance committee who decides how to spend money outside of projects that keep the place functioning (i.e., the roof). The other committees will be discussing how they want to spend that money and making recommendations to the board. At Wildcat, large sums of money like this can be used to leverage grant funds that require matching. We can apply for grants to double this money to complete more projects. The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship grant, for example,

would be a great opportunity because it is not competitive (they often have more money than they do applicants, so most applications get funded). Leis: we have had a knowles-nelson grant before, quite a few years ago. Hoel – what did the money get used for then? Leis – trail work, invasive species control Hoel – not programs then. Lind: also keep in mind that because this is the Friends' money, their board must approve whatever we decide to spend the money on. Hoel – the last time we had that kind of money sitting around was to start the exhibit renovation (6 years ago). The Friends don't need to have more than \$18,000 (two years worth of budget) sitting around. Lind: they do not want to keep the money, they would just like guidance as to where it needs to go. Hoel: Could they create an account for the KVR? Leis: It is the friends' money; they can do whatever they want with it. Hoel: could we have access to it as needed for emergencies and projects? Lind: It is more beneficial for the friends to spend it on what is needed and donate it, than purchasing it through the state. Leis: for example, hiring someone to design a new website. Hoel: that would be a great use for the funds. Leis: everyone will have a chance to weigh in. Lind: using it to get a grant is a good idea. Other things from finance? Leis: There is some extra money in our budget from salaries that hasn't been spent, about \$50,000 that needs to be spent this fiscal year, so we need to figure out our priorities. Lind: I think we asked the finance people at the state several times, if they can move money to the carryover account, or move expenses so that money won't be lost. Hoel – it may be too late, but have all employees been paid for their overtime? Leis: yes, it has been reimbursed as overtime or comp time as it was recorded.

VII. Law Enforcement Update -Leis

- Slow time of year. The weather makes this year unusual, but not a lot of enforcement activity; just working on trainings and policy updates.
- There are some funds in the enforcement budget that will disappear if not spent by the end of the fiscal year; last year about \$10,000 was lost. We don't want that to happen again so we are discussing what is needed; new cameras are being considered.

VIII. Other Issues/Future Agenda Items

- Hoel: What happened to the rock with the plaque of the land acknowledgement statement? Leis: the rock is being donated; we can pick it up whenever. Plaque was ordered, paid for, but never received. Believed to be a false company; Lynn ordered it. Lind: Erica was looking into it, but she was unable to find out anything; need to order from another company and try to get our money back from that place. Hoel: I thought there was something about adding a Ho-Chunk sign or adding something about the Ho-Chunk to the Visitor Center sign. Leis: Yes, that was to the signage at the canoe landings. Hoel: Yes, I remember discussing that and deciding against it. But there was money available about the time we were working on the land acknowledgement statement, and it should be discussed if it's still worthwhile.

Lind: That discussion should wait until the Ho-Chunk member seat on the board is filled.

- Hoel: What about board training: Lind: I am not opposed, not sure how to make it happen. Also the email sent out to the rest of the board did not get a response, and I do not want to subject everyone to training if they are not interested in it. Hoel: now that we are re-stabilizing, we should discuss it again. Lind: we still have things we haven't finished or addressed from the retreat 2 years ago, and I'm not going to force something on the board that the board doesn't want to do. I agree that it is something we should do, and it will be a missed opportunity if we don't.
- Hoel: Did you talk to anyone about the amish paper I mentioned to you? Lind: I don't remember talking about that. Hoel: It would be a good place to put a reminder about our 'no buggies' policy, everyone in the community reads it. Lind: I like that approach. Leis: Would that be more effective than talking to the bishops? Hoel: I believe so, everyone does read it. Downing: Then it should be pretty effective. Yocum: How do we get something into their paper? Hoel: Just give it to me and I'll give it to my neighbor, Curtis Miller, and he will get it to the right people. Yocum: typed? Hoel: yes, typed.

Motion to adjourn by Mann 2nd by Downing

All in favor, motion carries. 7:01pm

Minutes recorded by M. Schultz 2/23/24