

Kickapoo Reserve Management Board

Meeting Minutes for June 26, 2025

Kickapoo Valley Reserve Visitor Center

Board members present: Travis Downing (Chair), Scott Lind, Luke Zahm, Barb Sarnowski, Reggie Nelson, Joel Charles

Board members absent: Kjetil Garvin, Bill Quackenbush

Staff members present: Jason Leis, Amy Dvorak, Jackie Yocum, Jesse Haney, Amber Burch

Others in attendance: Lonnie Muller (Episcopo), Steve Carrow, Bill Collins, Margaret Farley, Anne-Marie Fryer (via Zoom), Keith Ashley-Wright (via Zoom), Jen (via Zoom), Jay Scott (via Zoom), 608-521-0248 (via Zoom)

Chair Downing called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Downing read the Land Acknowledgement Statement.

Lind made a motion to approve the agenda. Zahm seconded the motion.

Charles asked about the posting of the agenda. He asked Leis if item number 4, discussion of answers from attorney regarding questions asked by KRMB at the last meeting involving Prairie Springs 1 & 2, was in alignment with the lawyer's advice about how to adequately post if we were going to take action on a potential transfer. Downing said we are not taking action. He said next month, it will be an action item. A discussion ensued regarding the proper posting requirements including adequately describing the item for discussion. Charles disagreed with how the agenda item was worded and felt the Board would not be able to discuss the item based on Wis. Stat. 19.83(1). Zahm, Downing, and Leis felt the item was described adequately. Lind agreed if no action would be taken, the attorney's answers could be emailed to the Board rather than listed as an agenda item.

Lind made a motion to change item number 4 from discussing the answers to reading of the answers from the attorney. Charles seconded the motion, and it passed with all ayes.

Leis confirmed the agenda was properly posted.

Charles motioned to approve the minutes from the May 2025 meeting, and Zahm seconded. The motion passed with all ayes.

Public input: None.

Friends of KVR Update:

Margaret Farley said the Friends of KVR are moving ahead with the Garden Tour. The volunteer appreciation event held last Friday went well. The Friends will host their annual Fourth of July event at the Visitor Center. The finances are good. They are working on the new website with the

web designer. There was mention of a five-year plan, but nothing has been decided. They will likely hold special meetings to discuss the plan.

Discussion of answers from attorney regarding questions asked by KRMB at the last meeting involving Prairie Springs 1 & 2 (discussion item):

Leis said he talked on the phone with Attorney Nathan Judnic. He read the questions and answers.

1. *Knowing the intentions of the buildings were supposed to be for the Kickapoo Valley Forest School, does that change the opinion of the attorney or the State Building Commission (SBC) on future requests?*

Judnic said once the buildings become property of the state, they have to go through the proper process to be sold. There is no transferring ownership or giving the buildings to someone. It has to be a sale, and it has to be open and transparent. Judnic said he didn't think it made much difference. If we're going to request to build another thing in the future, everything that has come before the State Building Commission will be taken into account before they say yes or no on the next project. If we sell buildings then a couple of years later request to build something, they will likely say no. Judnic said it doesn't matter that the applications for the Prairie Springs buildings had errors in them; the SBC looks at what was submitted.

Charles asked what the sale process is. Leis said we would submit a request to the SBC that we would like to sell one or both of the Prairie Springs buildings. The SBC reviews the request. Charles asked clarifying questions. Zahm cautioned him on discussing the item based on the previous motion. Leis said the SBC decides how the building is sold.

2. *Has the State ever transferred something or sold it at a reduced cost to a municipality?*

Judnic said buildings have been sold at a reduced cost as things rarely sell for its worth. He said you cannot sell it to one place. It has to be an open and transparent process. Leis said Wis. Stat. 13.48(14)(b) describes the SBC sale process: "...the building commission shall sell on the basis of either public bids, with the building commission reserving the right to reject any or all bids in the best interest of the state, or on the basis of negotiated prices as determined through a competitive or transparent process."

Education and Tourism Committee:

Burch said at the time of the last Education and Tourism Committee meeting, three of the summer camps were happening. She said some camps still have open spots. Weather has been good during camp.

Sarnowski said at the meeting, school program fees were discussed. It is currently \$4 per student. If the student is there for a three-session day, it would be \$12 per student. There are about 25 students per class, so we received \$280, which just recoups the costs for instructors and supplies. We may need to consider increasing the cost. Since the inception of school programming, Norwalk-Ontario-Wilton and La Farge Area Schools have been exempt from fees. The committee discussed whether we should look at this again and decide if they should be charged like the other schools. The topic may be brought before the Board. Schools can receive a free stewardship session where they remove invasive species.

The committee discussed the fees to rent spaces at the Visitor Center. For education groups, the meeting room is \$25, and the Prairie Springs classrooms are \$25.

If schools come, we would like them to notify us. Some schools bring a bus load of kids and do their own activities. It could and sometimes does conflict with our scheduled activities and groups.

The next Education and Tourism Committee meeting is scheduled for August 14, 2025, at 5:30 PM at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve Visitor Center.

Finance Committee:

Leis said the Finance Committee met last month. The end of June is the end of the fiscal year. Our current budget status was reviewed. The 12400 account, which is the law enforcement account, has a lot of money left over. If the money isn't spent, it is sent back to the state. Money has been allocated to the roof project. We have a healthy balance after that. The full-time position and truck lease were denied by the Joint Finance Committee.

Leis met with the DOA finance department about our budget. The 12100 account is a rollover account. The 16100 account is our operating budget, and it must be spent. Some expenses put in 12100 are transferred into 16100 to get it down to zero. We'll have over \$200,000 rolling over into the next fiscal year.

The next Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for August 4, 2025, at 9:00 AM at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve Visitor Center.

Land Management Committee:

No update. Meetings are tentatively scheduled for the second Tuesday of every other month.

The next Land Management Committee meeting is scheduled for July 8, 2025, at 5:30 PM at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve Visitor Center.

Other issues:

Charles asked to discuss the Prairie Springs buildings at the next meeting. Specifically, he would like the item to indicate the potential sale of Prairie Springs 1 and 2 with the option to vote on it.

Field Trip on the Property:

The field trip started at 6:59 PM. All in-person attendees participated except Steve Carrow.

The group visited the milkweed plantings behind the Visitor Center. Yocum explained there are three species planted there: common, butterfly, and whorled. We have swamp milkweed, which will be planted in a more appropriate habitat. The rusty-patched bumble bee was found in this area last summer.

The group drove to Campsite D – Willow Camp to view how the four previous sites were split into eight new sites. We recently received approval of the new sites. Yocum will work on getting

everything set up in RMS, the online campsite reservation system, before people can start booking the new sites.

The next stop was Campsite V, which was relocated. It was previously on top of a large rock structure, making it difficult for some people to access it. It is now down the road a short way. It is a river and vehicle accessible site.

We visited the Ho-Chunk Nation land along Hay Valley Road where they are converting agricultural land into native prairie. We are assisting them with the seeding.

The group stopped at Campsite OO. A volunteer removed many invasives including honeysuckle, which was burned. The field crew planted high bush cranberry and red osier dogwood in the area.

The last stop was Campsite H where we took a group photo.

Adjournment:

Lind made a motion and Zahm seconded to adjourn the meeting. It passed with all ayes. The meeting adjourned at 8:39 PM.

The next meeting is scheduled for July 17, 2025, at 6:00 PM at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve Visitor Center.



Minutes transcribed by Amy Dvorak, Executive Assistant