

# Owning Rural Lands

A Guide for the Kickapoo River Watershed  
2nd Edition



Valley Stewardship Network

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Cover Photograph Courtesy of Jerry Quebe

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## Valley Stewardship Network

This guide is produced and distributed by the Valley Stewardship Network, a non-governmental, non-partisan, grassroots 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to issues of the Kickapoo River watershed. The goals of the Valley Stewardship Network are to:

- Encourage pro-active stewardship in the watershed;
- Promote community pride, positive land use patterns, and compatible development; and
- Support communication and coordination among various groups in the watershed.

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*Promoting Stewardship, Connecting Communities*

## Statement of Purpose

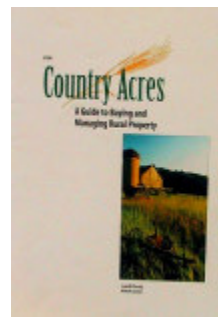
The Valley Stewardship Network (VSN) has prepared this information guide for use by individuals who choose to live in the southwest region of Wisconsin called the Kickapoo Valley. The watershed, or drainage basin, of the Kickapoo begins in Monroe County, travels through Vernon County, includes a few townships in Richland County and concludes in Crawford County as the Kickapoo empties into the Wisconsin River near Wauzeka (see map at center). VSN welcomes members from all who live, work, or play in the Kickapoo watershed.

The Kickapoo River is the common thread that connects numerous small towns and nearby rural areas. The unglaciated or *driftless* terrain, with its forested hills and spring-fed streams, contributes to the area's unique beauty and high-quality recreational resources. This same geology and uniqueness also creates land management issues—floodplain areas not suitable for construction, karst formations (sinkholes) that call for greater care in protecting groundwater, steep slopes that when disturbed contribute to erosion and sedimentation of streams, springheads that require protection from pollutants, and more. These are issues that urban dwellers seldom need to think about.

Much of the reason for this guide is to make it easier for landowners to get the information, guidance, or assistance they need in order to make the best choices for utilizing their land and enjoying the natural beauty of country living.

Wisconsin has perhaps the best University Extension system in the nation. UW-Extension offers many very useful publications that speak to the common issues of rural living, horticulture, flora, and fauna. We do not

intend to duplicate their excellent efforts and will recommend several of their publications here, including *Country Acres, A Guide to Buying and Managing Rural Property* by Lowell Klesseg and Mike Kroenke, UW-Extension Publication #G3309. You may order this publication online at <http://learningstore.uwex.edu/>



We also recommend reading *A Thousand Pieces of Paradise*, written by Lynn Heasley and published by the University of Wisconsin Press in 2005.

This book is “an ecological history of property and cultural history” focused on three contiguous townships in the Kickapoo Valley. Hailed as a “penetrating analysis of the complex forces that shape the landscape,” it is an interesting read for residents of this special place.

We encourage those who are considering the purchase of land, as well as those who have already done so but may not be living here yet, to look over some of the FAQs we have gathered from various county agency staff, VSN members, and others. Each of us is unique, but there is a lot of sameness to the activity of moving to a rural area and being responsible for what may well be the largest piece of land you will ever own. Whether your goals are to produce income, preserve resources, or enjoy the scenery, we hope that Valley Stewardship Network can be of assistance as you learn about the possibilities before you.

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## Rural Property Checklist

*The intent of this checklist is to inform, not to advise. Your decisions or legal actions should be based on the advice of an expert or an attorney familiar with the specific aspects or facts relating to your property. Suggested sources for referrals and services are listed below in parentheses. For specific phone contacts by subject of interest, see Reference Guide pages 21 – 25.*

*County Clerks can provide informative directories that list elected officials, agencies, and services. We suggest this as a good basic reference. These may be picked up at the courthouse or requested by phone.*

*Crawford: 608-326-0213 Monroe: 608-269-8705 Richland: 608-647-2197 Vernon: 608-637-5380*

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### Preparing for a Purchase

1. Have I consulted an attorney familiar with the area and with Wisconsin real estate law?
  - No (*Bank, Yellow Pages*)
  - Yes
  
2. Do I have a legal description or legally acceptable survey of the property?
  - Description based on township interval grid, plat book (*Realtor, Title Company*)
  - Previous land survey (*Seller, Register of Deeds, Registered Land Surveyor*)
  
3. Are there any property or fence line disputes?
  - No
  - Yes, according to adjacent neighbors (*Consult surveyor*)
  
4. Are there any easements crossing the property?
  - Utilities / Telecommunications
  - “Appurtenant,” to provide access to another property
  - Conservation / DNR
  - Mineral Rights  
(*For all - Realtor, Attorney, Title Company through a title search*)
  
5. Are there any deed restrictions on the use of the property?
  - Private covenants / Trusts (*Seller, Attorney, Realtor, Title Company*)
  - Government programs (*Seller, Realtor, Title Company, FSA, NRCS*)
  
6. Do I know the property taxes for the parcel and how new ownership may affect them?
  - Agricultural Use Value specially assessed lands (*Local Assessor*)
  - Other changes to basis for assessment (*County Treasurer, Property Lister*)
  
7. Are there waste disposal sites, manure storage, or buried fuel tanks on the property?

## Rural Property Checklist

- No
  - Yes (*Discuss mitigation and removal with Seller and DNR*)
8. Is there an old well or cistern on the property? Is the well active?
- Well water test (*Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene*)
  - Well or cistern abandonment (*DNR*)
9. Is the property enrolled in any special government program that provides tax relief but restricts use?
- Farmland Preservation Law (*County Conservationist*)
  - Managed Forest Law / Forest Crop Law (*DNR*)
  - Conservation Reserve Program (*NRCS, FSA*)
  - Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (*LWCD, FSA*)
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_ (*Seller, Title Company, County, NRCS/FSA, LWCD or LCD*)
10. Does your offer to purchase include language prohibiting change to existing resources?
- Forest resources, regarding timber sale
  - Soil resources, regarding topsoil sale
11. Have I arranged for the soil percolation test required to design and install a new septic system?  
Have I made a conventional septic system a condition of the sale?  
Has the existing septic system been properly installed and maintained?
- Inspection (*County Sanitarian*)
  - Testing (*Certified Soils Tester recommended by County Sanitarian*)
  - Permitting (*County Sanitarian / Zoning*)
12. Are there land use regulations / zoning ordinances that restrict site development?
- Town Clerk
  - County Zoning Administrator
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Understanding the Property

1. Do I have a copy of informative documents about the land?
- Soils survey (*NRCS or County Conservation Department*)
  - Topographic map (*Purchase or see <http://www.topozone.com/> or <http://www.terraserver.com/>*)
  - Plat book, showing parcel ownership (*Purchase through County Extension Office*)
  - Soil conservation plan, if cropland is present (*NRCS*)
  - Other maps (*County Land Information Offices*)
2. Do I understand the typical fluctuations of both surface and ground waters?
- Consultation (*County Zoning or County Conservationist*)
  - Wetland delineation (*NRCS, DNR, Private Consultant*)

## Rural Property Checklist

3. Are there any large livestock operations near the property?
  - Has an odor waiver been granted by the previous property owner?
4. Are there solar access considerations?
  - Clear solar access at home site (How many hours during which months?)
  - Sun on driveway location (How many hours during which months?)
  - Risk of obstruction from adjacent property or development
5. Do I understand the location and use limitations for road rights-of-way?
  - Yes \_\_\_\_\_ number of feet from centerline
  - No (*Property Survey, Town Clerk or Register of Deeds Office*)
6. Is there access to a public road?
  - Yes
  - No (*Driveway Ordinances, Excavators*)
  - Cost of private driveway \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## Obtaining Services

1. How do I get a fire number / 911 / rural address?
  - Established by county (*See Reference Guide page 22*)
2. Is electricity available?
  - Provider \_\_\_\_\_ (*Neighbors, Energy Co-Op, or Electric Company*)
  - Cost to bring to site \$ \_\_\_\_\_
3. Are heating fuels available (natural gas, fuel oil, propane)?
  - Provider \_\_\_\_\_ (*Neighbors, Utility Company*)
  - Cost to bring to site \$ \_\_\_\_\_
4. Is telecommunications / Internet access available? (*Neighbors, Yellow Pages*)
  - Telephone Provider \_\_\_\_\_
  - TV / Cable Provider \_\_\_\_\_
  - DSL Provider \_\_\_\_\_
  - Cost to bring to site \$ \_\_\_\_\_
5. What do I know about the water table prior to drilling a well?
  - Typical depth (*Well Drillers, Neighbors, Well Records from [www.uwex.edu/wgnhs/](http://www.uwex.edu/wgnhs/)*)
  - Water quality (*Well Drillers, Neighbors, Well Records from [www.uwex.edu/wgnhs/](http://www.uwex.edu/wgnhs/)*)
  - Reliability (*Well Drillers, Neighbors, Well Records from [www.uwex.edu/wgnhs/](http://www.uwex.edu/wgnhs/)*)
6. Whom do I contact to install a well?
  - Well drilling service (*Realtor, Neighbor, Building Contractor*)
  - Plumbing contractor

7. What is required for a septic system?
  - Soil testing to determine percolation rate (*Certified Soils Tester*)
  - Professionally designed system submitted for county permit (*Licensed Plumbers*)
  - Permit and inspection (*County Sanitarian*)
8. How do I dispose of or recycle household, agricultural, or other trash?
  - Township collection center and clean-up days (*Town Clerk*)
  - Regulations for disposal and recycling (*See Reference Guide page 22*)
  - Burning regulations (*Town Clerk*)
  - Private trash hauler \_\_\_\_\_ (*Neighbors, Yellow Pages*)
  - Cost of private services \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## Construction

1. Do any local or State of Wisconsin codes apply?
  - Any construction involving one or more acres? DNR site permit required. (*See page 22*)
  - Are there any local permits or inspections required? (*Town Clerk*)
  - Are there any county permits or inspections required? (*County Zoning Administrator*)
  - Uniform Dwelling Code effective statewide December 2003 (*WI Department of Commerce*)
  - Land Division Regulations (*County Zoning Administrator, Town Clerk*)
2. Under the Uniform Dwelling Code, what is the building process?
  - Verify requirements with enforcing agency (*County, Village, Town*)
  - Submit the required number of drawings and erosion control plan
  - Submit the Building Permit fee
  - Permit issued upon review for code compliance
  - Inspector visits site periodically and completes nine inspections during construction
3. Who conducts these inspections? (Varies by location)
  - Municipality (*Village or Town Clerk*)
  - County (*County Clerk*)
  - Wisconsin Department of Commerce - Safety & Buildings through a contracted inspection agency ([www.commerce.state.wi.us/sb/](http://www.commerce.state.wi.us/sb/))
4. What other state ordinances may affect the site?
  - All four counties administer state-mandated Floodplain, Shoreland, and Wetland Zoning which applies to rural areas with or without local zoning (*County Zoning Administrator*)
5. Whom do I contact to find out about any required permits?
  - Driveway Permit (*Village or Town Clerk*)
  - New or Renovation Building Permit (*Town Clerk for permit and requirements of Uniform Dwelling Code*)

## Rural Property Checklist

- Septic System Permit (*County Sanitarian / Zoning*)
  - Stream Crossing and Bridge Permit (*Wisconsin DNR*)
6. A stream or river crosses my land. Do regulations affect where I can put a road or building?
- Is it “navigable?” That is, does it have a distinguishable bed and banks, and enough water to support navigation by a small boat at least once a year even if it is only during flood conditions? If so, within 300 feet of that stream, Wetland, Shoreland, and Floodplain zoning apply. These ordinances apply to rural areas with or without county zoning. (*DNR*)
  - Building (including roads) and septic systems setback requirements apply (*County Zoning Administrator*)
  - Erosion control measures during construction (*County Zoning Administrator, DNR*)
7. How do I dispose of construction debris?
- Trash service provider \_\_\_\_\_ (*Vendor, Building Contractor, Landfill Managers*)
  - Cost of services \$ \_\_\_\_\_
8. Can we burn construction trash?
- Yes – Clean wood
  - No – Painted, treated and other unclean wood, asphalt, plastics of any kind, oily substances, rubber products, wet rubbish, and other materials
9. Do we need a burning permit for construction wood scraps or brush piles?
- Burning permits required when? \_\_\_\_\_ (*Town Clerk, Fire Warden*)
  - Permit (*Town Clerk, Fire Warden*)

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## Conserving the Land

1. What do I know about past agricultural practices on the land?
  - Cropping History (*Farm Management Plan from Farm Services Agency / NRCS*)
  - Soil Residues (*Certified Soils Tester*)
2. I intend to raise livestock. Are there land use regulations that affect me?
  - Manure Storage, Animal Siting, or other ordinances (*County Conservationist*)
3. How do I dispose of major debris on my property?
  - Tires (*Clean-Up Days – Town Clerk*)
  - Appliances / Debris (*Clean-Up Days – Town Clerk*)
  - Automobiles, scrap metal (*Private Service*)
4. How do I control noxious weeds such as Canada thistle, leafy spurge, or field bindweed on my property?
  - Identification and Removal (*DNR, Invasive Plants Association of Wisconsin*)
5. How do I identify and control invasive plants such as garlic mustard, buckthorn, multiflora rose, or honeysuckle on my property?
  - Identification and Removal (*DNR, Invasive Plants Association of Wisconsin*)
6. How do I care for the woodlands on my property?
  - Assessment (*County Forester, Private Forestry Consultant*)
  - Programs (*Managed Forest Law – DNR*)
  - Advocacy groups (*Kickapoo Woods Cooperative, Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association*)
7. How do I care for the stream that runs through my property?
  - Erosion control measures (*Soil & Water Conservation Programs – NRCS, LWCD*)
  - Habitat protection (*Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program – NRCS, FSA, LWCD*)
  - Water quality monitoring (*Valley Stewardship Network, DNR*)
8. How do I identify or restore native plants on my property?
  - Habitat restoration (*Conservation Reserve Program – NRCS, FSA*)
  - Advocacy groups (*The Prairie Enthusiasts, Wild Ones*)
  - Native plant nurseries and restoration consultants (*See Prairies page 10*)
9. How do I investigate creating or modifying a pond or spring on my property?
  - Pond Permits (*DNR*)

## Introduction

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The enjoyment of rural lands might include a Sunday drive to admire the roadside blooms, appreciation of the natural quiet and beautiful views of your own place, or the enjoyment of fishing and hunting. No matter the level to which you are immersed in nature, it becomes clear that the Kickapoo River watershed has unique offerings that benefit each of us.

Early settlers in the watershed took their toll on natural resources—hills were clear-cut and farming practices contributed to soil erosion; both in turn caused a high level of sediment to be deposited in the tributaries and main channel of the Kickapoo. Today we see the recovery of water quality achieved through careful management and enjoy the many benefits of that recovery. The Kickapoo basin, or watershed, now contains over 200 miles of Class I and Class II trout streams capable of supporting natural reproduction of the species. This is important even if you are not a trout angler. Water quality is relatively high here, and we hope that we can all work to keep it that way for us and for our children's children.

In the section of our *Owning Rural Lands* publication called “Nature in the Kickapoo Valley,” you will find some interesting information about seven of the natural communities to be found here. Each area also includes an “ALERT” that tells a little more about items of concern or in need of special attention from landowners. Sources of additional information and related organizations are listed for each natural community.

In the section called “Landowner Action,” we suggest ways that you can take direct action on key issues affecting the land in the Kickapoo River watershed. The formatting of these action topics is similar, providing facts, special alerts, and sources of information, plus we have added a list of three things you can do as a landowner.

It is our hope that you will find these sections both informative and helpful in your land stewardship efforts.

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## Geology

### **Did you know?**

- The Kickapoo Valley is part of the Driftless Area, so designated because it lacks glacial deposits known as drift. Because glaciers didn't level southwestern Wisconsin, erosion has produced a steep topography of hills and valleys carved into the bedrock of mostly sandstones and dolomites with smaller amounts of shale and limestone.
- The Kickapoo River area contains the largest undisturbed concentration of exposed seeping sandstone in the state. The shaded cliffs of the Driftless Area have a high incidence of endemic and specialized species, such as birds-eye primrose, muskroot, and cliff cudweed.
- Many caves in the Kickapoo Valley contain important ancient archeological records. Most are located on private property; please respect the landowner's property rights and the artifacts within the caves.

**Alert:** The dolomite and limestone of the Kickapoo Valley bedrock are more soluble than common rock, so water moving through them enlarges cracks and fractures and forms caves. The roofs of some caves collapse, causing sinkholes. Regions characterized by such features are called karst regions. This bedrock formation greatly increases the potential for ground water contamination from surface contaminates.

### **Publications and Websites**

*Erosion Control for Home Builders* by Carolyn Johnson, University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension  
Publishing in cooperation with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

*Wisconsin's Natural Communities* by Randy Hoffman, The University of Wisconsin Press, 2002

Geology of Wisconsin: <http://www.uwgb.edu/dutchs/geolwisc/geowisc.htm>

Mineralogy of Wisconsin: <http://www.uwrf.edu/~wc01/WiscMin.html>

U.S. Geological Survey, Wisconsin Water Science Center, Wisconsin District:  
<http://wi.water.usgs.gov/>

Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey: <http://www.uwex.edu/wgnhs/>

University of Wisconsin-Madison Geology Museum: <http://www.geology.wisc.edu/~museum/>

### **Organizations**

Association of American State Geologists (offers listing of all state geological surveys):  
<http://www.stategeologists.org>

### Forests

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#### *Did you know?*

- Nearly half of the Kickapoo Valley is covered by one of four ecologically distinctive forest types: Southern Oak, Mixed Southern/Red Oak, Sugar Maple/Basswood or Floodplain Ash Swamp.
- Early 20th century clear-cutting and poor farming practices took a heavy toll on soils and water quality. The forested hillsides and clear water we enjoy today are the result of innovative soil conservation practices developed by the Soil Conservation Service in the 1930's.
- There's a little bit of northern Wisconsin in the Kickapoo Valley. The cool microclimate of the deep valleys allows trees such as hemlock and yellow birch to flourish and nurture "northern" birds like the winter wren and red-breasted nuthatch.
- Our forests play a vital role in purifying and maintaining clean surface and ground waters.

**Alert:** Sediment is the primary pollutant associated with construction in forests and woodlands, especially at stream crossings.

#### **Publications and Websites**

*Forest Management Guidelines*, Wisconsin DNR Division of Forestry, October 2003

*The Managed Forest Law Property Tax Program* by Carol Nielson and Stefan A. Bergmann, Forestry Facts No. 50, University of Wisconsin Extension, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, June 2001, Rev. October 2004

*Trees of Wisconsin Field Guide* by Stan Tekiela, Adventure Publications, 2002

*Woodland Visions: Appreciating and Managing Forests for Scenic Beauty* by Lowell Klessig, University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension Publishing, 2002

University of Wisconsin Forestry Facts Series: <http://forest.wisc.edu/extension/forfact.htm>

Wisconsin DNR Division of Forestry: <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/forestry/>

#### **Organizations**

Kickapoo Woods Cooperative: <http://www.sustainablewoods.net/NetworkGroup.aspx?GroupID=8>

Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association: <http://www.wisconsinwoodlands.org/>

Wisconsin Family Forests: <http://www.wisconsinfamilyforests.com/>

The Woodland School (Aldo Leopold Foundation): <http://www.thewoodlandschool.org/>

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## Prairies

### ***Did you know?***

- In the early 1800's, there were 2.1 million acres of prairie in Wisconsin, and most were in the southwestern part of the state. Only 2,000 acres of high-quality prairie remain today.
- Dry limestone prairies, the best preserved of the prairie types in Wisconsin, are called “goat prairies” when they occur on the steep slopes.
- The Hogback Prairie in Crawford County, a Nature Conservancy site, sits on a ridge 300 feet above the Citron Valley, a former oxbow of the Kickapoo River. Its unusual mix of plants includes the threatened Hill's thistle and rare species such as purple milkweed.
- Settlers' control of natural fires fostered the decline of the ancient oak savanna prairie type and accompanying species. Few remnants remain within the watershed.

**Alert:** Limestone prairies develop on very thin soils over bedrock; controlled burns on steep slopes may create erosion risks. Consider erosion control measures and consult burning professionals.

### **Publications and Websites**

*Prairie Primer* by Stan Nichols, Lynn Entine, and Evelyn Howell, University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension Publishing, 1996

*Tallgrass Prairie of the Upper Midwest* by Walter Mirk, The Prairie Enthusiasts, 1997

*Tallgrass Prairie Wildflowers: A Field Guide* by Doug Ladd, Falcon Publishing, 1995

*Wisconsin's Natural Communities* by Randy Hoffman, The University of Wisconsin Press, 2002

Atlas of the Wisconsin Prairie and Savannah Flora: <http://www.botany.wisc.edu/wisflora/PSAtlas.asp>

Native Plant Nurseries and Restoration Consultants in Wisconsin:  
<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/er/invasive/info/nurseries.htm>

Robert W. Freckmann Herbarium, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point—Vascular Plants  
<http://wisplants.uwsp.edu/vascularplants.html>

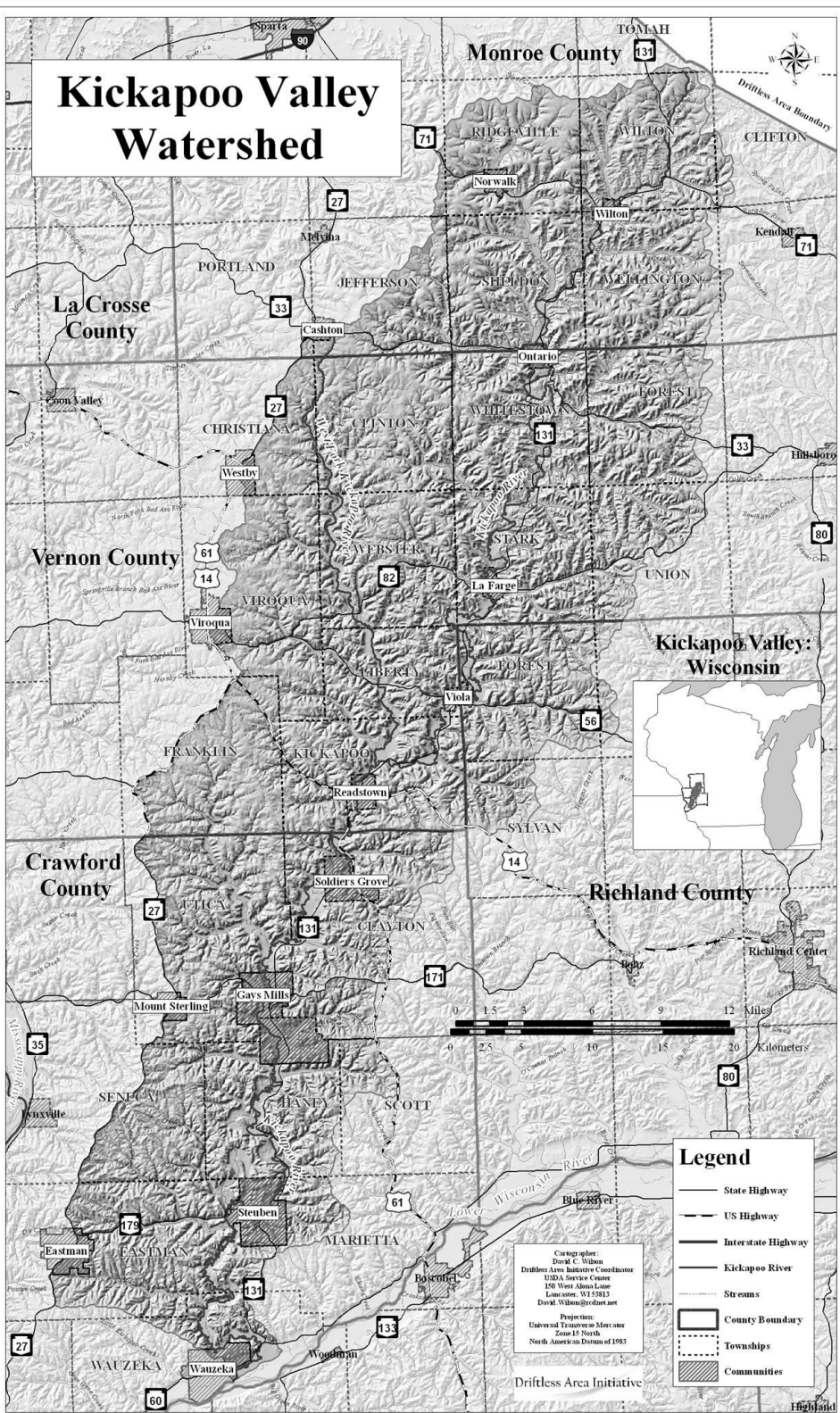
Wisconsin Vascular Plant Species: <http://www.botany.wisc.edu/wisflora/>

### **Organizations**

The Prairie Enthusiasts: <http://www.theprairieenthusiasts.org/>

Wild Ones: <http://for-wild.org/>

# Kickapoo Valley Watershed



### Legend

- State Highway
- US Highway
- Inter-state Highway
- Kickapoo River
- Streams
- County Boundary
- Townships
- Communities

Cartographer:  
 David C. Wilson  
 Driftless Area Initiative Coordinator  
 USDA Soils & Conservation  
 158 West Adams Lane  
 Lancaster, WI 53183  
 David.Wilson@prodnet.net

Projection:  
 Universal Transverse Mercator  
 Zone 15 North  
 North American Datum of 1983

Driftless Area Initiative

### Wetlands

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#### *Did you know?*

- In the hilly, well-drained landscape of the Kickapoo Valley, wetlands are found mainly within the floodplains of the river and streams. Springs create some unique wetlands on hillsides.
- There are many types of wetlands including fens, bogs, sedge meadows, and swamps, each distinguished by their soil type, plant communities, and rate of water percolation.
- Trout streams and other high quality waterways often depend on adjacent wetlands to filter runoff and protect their characteristically clear, cold waters.
- Wetlands located in the mid or lower reaches of the watershed contribute most substantially to flood control as they lie in the path of more water than their upstream counterparts.
- Herons, muskrats, tiger salamanders, sandhill cranes, waterfowl, and fish are among the 75% of Wisconsin wildlife species that rely upon wetlands during some stage of their life.

**Alert:** Wisconsin once had nearly 10 million acres of diverse wetlands. Over the past century we have lost over half of that. Nearly half of our endangered and threatened species rely on these wetland areas.

#### **Publications and Websites**

*This Tender Place: The Story of a Wetland Year*, by Laurie Lawlor, University of Wisconsin Press, 2005

*Reversing the Loss: A Strategy for Protecting and Restoring Wetlands in Wisconsin*, developed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Wetland Team, 2000

*Wetland Plants and Plant Communities of Minnesota and Wisconsin (2nd Edition)* by Steve D. Eggers and Donald M. Reed, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, 1997.

*Wetland Restoration Handbook (2nd Edition)* by Charles S. Luthin & Alice L. Thompson, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, 2004

*Wetlands, Wonderlands*, by M. K. Judd and M. E. Vollbrecht, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources/Wisconsin Coastal Management Program, 1990

Wisconsin Wetlands: <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/water/fhp/wetlands/>

National Wetlands Inventory: <http://www.nwi.fws.gov/>

#### **Organizations**

Wisconsin Wetlands Association: <http://www.wiscwetlands.org/>

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## Rivers and Streams

### ***Did you know?***

- The word Kickapoo is from the Native American Algonquian language meaning "he who goes here, then there." It certainly lives up to its name, meandering its way along a 125-mile course that covers only 65 miles as the crow flies.
- The Kickapoo is the longest river contained within the four-state Driftless Area. Because glaciers did not change its natural course, some geologists cite it as one of the oldest river systems in the world.
- Natural springs charge the upper reaches of most Kickapoo Valley trout streams, offering cold, high quality water and abundant macroinvertebrates, both important factors in stable trout populations.
- The cool waters of the Kickapoo and its tributaries offer over 75 miles of Class I Blue Ribbon trout fishing opportunities plus other sport fishing and recreational canoeing.

**Alert:** Surface runoff, non-point pollution, and mismanaged stream banks are the greatest threats to water quality in the watershed. Vegetative buffer strips along waterways filter runoff, stabilize banks, and lessen the threats to water quality from pollutants, soil erosion, and hard surface runoff.

### **Publications and Web Sites**

*The Benefits of Well-Managed Stream Corridors* by Scott Craven, Gary Jackson, William Swenson, and Bruce Webendorfer, University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension Publishing, 1996

*Grazing Streamside Pastures* by Dan Undersander and Brian Pillsbury, University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension Publishing, 1999

*Protecting and Restoring Shoreland*, No. 2 in the Shoreland Stewardship Series, by Carmen Wagner, John Haack, and Robert Korth, University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension Publishing, 2003

Wisconsin DNR Division of Water: <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/environmentprotect/water.html>

### **Organizations**

Clean Wisconsin: <http://www.cleanwisconsin.org/>

River Alliance of Wisconsin: <http://wisconsinrivers.org/>

Wisconsin Council of Trout Unlimited: <http://www.wisconsintu.org/>

### Plants and Wildflowers

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#### *Did you know?*

- Over 300 species of rare plants and old favorites provide a constant display of color from early spring through late fall along the Kickapoo River.
- The sheer sandstone cliffs of the Kickapoo Valley harbor the endangered lapland rosebay, a relative of the rhododendron that is only found here, in the Dells, and in the Arctic region.
- The Kickapoo Valley Reserve has one of the state's largest populations of the very rare northern monkshood. The plant can grow as high as three feet.

**Alert:** Invasive species are threatening our native plants on all levels, from garlic mustard in our woods to purple loosestrife in our wetlands to wild parsnip in our fields and roadsides. Learn what you can do under “Landowner Action—Invasive Species,” page 17.

#### **Publications and Web Sites**

*Landscape Plants that Attract Birds* by Scott Craven and Robert Ellarson, University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension Publishing

*Prairie Primer* by Stan Nichols, Lynn Entine, and Evelyn Howell, University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension Publishing, 1996

*Wild Ones: Landscaping with Native Plants (4th Edition)*, 2004

*Wildflowers of Wisconsin Field Guide* by Stan Tekiela, Adventure Publications, 2000

Plants of Wisconsin: <http://wisplants.uwsp.edu/>

Robert W. Freckmann Herbarium, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point—Vascular Plants  
<http://wisplants.uwsp.edu/VascularPlants.html>

Wisconsin Vascular Plant Species: <http://www.botany.wisc.edu/wisflora/>

#### **Organizations**

Botanical Club of Wisconsin (Wisconsin's Native Plant Society):  
<http://wisplants.uwsp.edu/BCW/index.html>

The Prairie Enthusiasts: <http://www.theprairieenthusiasts.org/>

Wild Ones: <http://for-wild.org/>

***Did you know?***

- Sandhill cranes "paint" themselves by preening mud into their feathers prior to the breeding season. Painting acts as camouflage, helping the cranes hide amid the brown vegetation of an early spring marsh.
- A bird survey conducted along the upper Kickapoo found that there are over 100 species of breeding birds that call the area home.
- Herps are reptiles and amphibians. Many flourish in the valley including the ecologically sensitive Pickerel frog, rattlesnakes (the only poisonous snake), and the threatened Blanding's turtle.
- Mammals often seen along the Kickapoo River include muskrats, beaver, white-tailed deer, raccoons, woodchucks, mink, otters, fox, skunks, and possums.

**Alert:** Habitat losses through fragmentation of large woodland parcels and open fields make it impossible for some species to thrive. Threatened songbirds such as the Kentucky warbler and the Acadian flycatcher, which breed here, need large contiguous tracts of forestland.

**Publications and Web Sites**

*Birds of Wisconsin Field Guide* by Stan Tekiela, Adventure Publications, 1999

*Reptiles and Amphibians of Wisconsin Field Guide* by Stan Tekiela, Adventure Publications, 2004

*Wild Wisconsin Notebook* by James Bucholz, Prairie Oak Press, 2001

*Living with Wildlife* by Marilyn and Ron Leys, Krause Publications, 2000

Wildlife and Your Land Series, Wisconsin DNR

<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/wildlife/pub/wildland.htm>

Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas: <http://www.uwgb.edu/birds/wbba/speciesmaps1.htm>

Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative: <http://www.wisconsinbirds.org/>

**Organizations**

Wisconsin Council of Trout Unlimited: <http://www.wisconsintu.org/>

Wisconsin Society for Ornithology: <http://www.uwgb.edu/birds/wso>

Wisconsin Waterfowl Association: <http://www.wisducks.org/>

# Invasive Species

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### *Did you know?*

- Invasive plants are often non-indigenous species that become established in natural plant communities, replacing natural vegetation. Neighbors may not control invasives, making control on a single parcel more difficult.
- Wisconsin's worst include Japanese stilt grass, purple loosestrife, reed canary grass, black locust, garlic mustard, common buckthorn, honeysuckle, and multiflora rose.
- Garlic mustard, an escapee from settler gardens, is displacing woodland wildflowers in Wisconsin at an alarming rate. It dominates the forest floor and can displace most native herbaceous species within ten years.
- The invasive plant purple loosestrife can overtake native wetlands. Purple loosestrife-eating beetles have been shown to be effective in the control of this pretty but destructive plant.
- Feral pigs, now found near the Kickapoo River in Crawford County, are destructive to crops, livestock, and native deer, quail, and turkey populations. They pose a significant threat to the environment and to agriculture and are a threat to human safety.

**Alert:** Firewood can harbor many different kinds of invasive pests and diseases, including the gypsy moth, emerald ash borer, and oak wilt. Don't bring in firewood from outside the state!

### **Publications and Websites**

*Invasive Plants of the Upper Midwest: An Illustrated Guide to the Identification and Control* by Elizabeth J. Czarapata, The University of Wisconsin Press, 2005

*Invasive Plants of the Future*, Wisconsin Invasive Plants Reporting and Prevention Project:  
<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/invasives/futureplants>

The Nature Conservancy's Global Invasive Species Initiative: <http://www.tncweeds.ucdavis.edu>

Wisconsin DNR—Invasive Species, including species list, photo gallery, and control methods  
<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/invasives>

### **Organizations**

Invasive Plants Association of Wisconsin: <http://www.ipaw.org>

Wisconsin Weed Watchers: <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/invasives/futureplants/weedwatcher.htm>

### **Three Things You Can Do**

1. Be aware! Learn to identify the invaders and educate your neighbors.
2. Be careful! Don't bring any in on your shoes, tires, or animals. Don't plant them—go native!
3. Be active! Eradicate them on your own land and help with work parties on public lands.

**Did you know?**

- Trout require cool waters. Our native brook trout thrive in waters that are 55-65°F. A trout will use five times more oxygen at 80°F than at 40°F.
- Aquatic plants and animals both need dissolved oxygen. Aquatic plants produce oxygen by photosynthesis during the daylight hours. They use oxygen at night and on heavily overcast days.
- Dissolved oxygen levels are reduced by excessive amounts of organic matter, such as sewage, manure, or even leaves, which need oxygen to decompose. Lack of oxygen can kill aquatic plants and animals.
- The presence or absence of macroinvertebrates, or “bugs,” can reflect a stream’s general condition. Because they are relatively immobile, they can’t escape pollution. Finding a stonefly larva in your creek, an organism very sensitive to pollution, is good news.

**Alert:** The Kickapoo River contains E.coli and other bacteria, mainly due to pollution from cow manure. Care should be taken not to ingest river water while swimming or canoeing, particularly after a rain event.

**Publications and Websites**

*Guide to Aquatic Invertebrates of the Upper Midwest: Identification Manual for Students, Citizen Monitors, and Aquatic Resource Professionals*, by R. W. Bouchard, Jr., University of Minnesota, 2004

*Through the Looking Glass: A Field Guide to Aquatic Plants* by Susan Borman, Robert Korth, and Jo Temte, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, 1997

*Wonderful, Wacky Water Critters* by Suzanne Wade, University of Wisconsin Extension Publishing 2004

**Organizations**

Wisconsin Council of Trout Unlimited: <http://www.wisconsintu.org/>

Valley Stewardship Network—Kickapoo Citizen Water Monitors (KCWM):  
<http://www.kickapooovsn.org>

Wisconsin Water Action Volunteers: <http://clean-water.uwec.edu/wav/index.html>

**Three Things You Can Do**

1. Become a Water Action Volunteer. Get training through VSN or the DNR.
2. If your property has a stream and you have animals, utilize responsible management practices.
3. Rehabilitate your stream bank. Control erosion, pollution, and runoff, and improve habitat.

## Land Use Resources and Community Planning

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### *Did you know?*

- Each year, 17,000 to 20,000 acres of Wisconsin farmland is lost to development.
- It is estimated that Wisconsin will add 400,000 new households between 1995-2015.
- 99% of the people in the US live in light-polluted areas; barely half can see even a few stars. Light pollution wastes energy and disturbs the habits of nocturnal animals.
- The State of Wisconsin has enacted legislation that ensures that by 2010, every city, village, county, and most townships will be guided by a comprehensive plan.
- As of 1998, only 29% of all Wisconsin communities had any kind of land use plan in place.

**Alert:** All local governments must allow and encourage citizens to help create a comprehensive plan for their communities. You are empowered to guide how land will be used in your own community.

### **Publications and Websites**

*A Citizen's Guide to Land Use in Wisconsin, 3rd Edition* by 1,000 Friends of Wisconsin, 2002

*Planning for Natural Resources: A Guide to Including Natural Resources in Local Comprehensive Planning*, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Wisconsin Extension-Madison and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, 2002

Comprehensive Plan Element Guidebooks

[http://www.doa.state.wi.us/pagesubtext\\_detail.asp?linksubcatid=369](http://www.doa.state.wi.us/pagesubtext_detail.asp?linksubcatid=369)

Comprehensive Planning Statutes and Fact Sheet

[http://www.doa.state.wi.us/pagesubtext\\_detail.asp?linksubcatid=366](http://www.doa.state.wi.us/pagesubtext_detail.asp?linksubcatid=366)

*Natural Resources and Their Place within Comprehensive Planning* by Patrick Robinson

<http://clean-water.uwex.edu/pubs/pdf/add.nrcompplan.pdf>

### **Organizations**

1,000 Friends of Wisconsin: <http://www.1kfriends.org>

American Planning Association—Wisconsin Chapter: <http://www.wisconsinplanners.org>

International Dark Sky Association: <http://www.darksky.org>

### **Three Things You Can Do**

1. Get educated! Learn what land use guidelines and restrictions you have in your community.
2. Think ahead! Envision how you would like to see your community and the area grow.
3. Get involved! Participate in community planning and help shape your future.

## Land Trusts and Conservation Easements

### **Did you know?**

- Land trusts are organizations dedicated to conserving valuable lands. There are over 50 active land trusts in Wisconsin, protecting over 135,000 acres of land.
- Land can be put in a trust through a donation, a bequest, or a sale (often below market value).
- A conservation easement is a restriction placed on a piece of property to protect its associated resources. It is a voluntary and permanent legal agreement.
- Conservation easements—private, county, or state—are designed to reflect a landowner’s individual needs and wishes for their land. Landowners retain the right to own and sell eased property, but the restrictions remain with the property, attached through the title.

**Alert:** Across Wisconsin, forestland is being sold and farmland is being subdivided and developed. Land trusts and conservation easements allow land to remain as undisturbed habitat or working forests or farms. Communities are also working to stem this trend, developing tools such as transfers and purchases of development rights.

### **Publications and Websites**

*The Conservation Easement Handbook, 2nd Edition* by Michelle Byers and Karin Marchetti Ponte, The Land Trust Alliance and The Trust for Public Land, 2005

*Conservation Options: A Landowner’s Guide*, Land Trust Alliance, 2003

*Conservancy: The Land Trust Movement in America* by Richard Brewer, University Press of New England, 2003

*In Their Own Words: Stories of Protecting Land in Wisconsin*, Gathering Waters Conservancy

*Preserving Family Lands, Books 1, 2 and 3* by Steven J. Small, Gathering Waters Conservancy

### **Organizations**

Gathering Waters Conservancy: <http://gatheringwaters.org>

Mississippi Valley Conservancy: <http://mississippivalleyconservancy.org>

The Nature Conservancy: <http://www.nature.org>

### **Three Things You Can Do**

1. Know the assets of your land—archeological sites, contiguous forests, prairie remnants.
2. Investigate the ways you can protect and preserve these assets.
3. Participate in events and workdays that help conserve lands in trust.

## Reference Guide

A glossary is provided on page 26 to assist you with the acronyms that are used. All phone numbers listed are in the 608 area code unless otherwise noted.

County Clerks can provide informative directories that list elected officials, agencies, and services. We suggest this as a good basic reference. These may be picked up at the courthouse or requested by phone listed below.

County websites are another excellent source of information:

Crawford County: [www.crawfordcountywi.org](http://www.crawfordcountywi.org)

Monroe County: [www.co.monroe.wi.us](http://www.co.monroe.wi.us)

Richland County: [www.co.richland.wi.us](http://www.co.richland.wi.us)

Vernon County: [www.vernoncounty.org](http://www.vernoncounty.org)

Private consultants are available by contract to help landowners with such things as control of invasive species, establishment of prairies, and management of woodlands and wetlands. Please see the VSN website for a list of experts that work in the Driftless Area.

<http://www.kickapoovsn.org>

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Crawford County</b>	<b>Monroe County</b>	<b>Richland County</b>	<b>Vernon County</b>
County Clerk	326-0200	269-8705	647-2197	637-5380

## Land Information and Records

Plat Books	UW-Extension 326-0223	UW-Extension 269-8722	UW-Extension 647-6148	UW-Extension 637-5276
Aerial Photos / Maps	USDA-NRCS 326-7179	Land Conservation 269-8973	USDA-FSA 647-8874	LWCD 637-5480
Property Taxes	County Treasurer 326-0203	County Treasurer 269-8710	Property Lister 647-3334	County Treasurer 637-5367
Soil Information	Conservationist 326-0270	Land Conservation 269-8973	Conservationist 647-2100	USDA-NRCS 637-2381
Deeds and Legal Descriptions	Register of Deeds 326-0219	Register of Deeds 269-8716	Register of Deeds 647-3011	Register of Deeds 637-5371
Land Surveying Services	————— Consult the Yellow Pages —————			

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Crawford County</b>	<b>Monroe County</b>	<b>Richland County</b>	<b>Vernon County</b>
<b>Land Development and Occupancy</b>				
Fire Number Address	911 Coordinator 326-1110	Emergency Mgmt. 269-8711	Zoning 647-2447	Town Clerk
Solid Waste / Recycling	Town Clerk	Solid Waste 269-8783	UW-Ext Ag Agent 647-6148	Solid Waste 634-2900
Building Permits	_____ Contact Town Clerk for Permit Procedures _____			
DNR Site Permit	DNR 785-9472	DNR 715-359-4522	DNR 275-3266	DNR 785-9472
Digging Trenches, Holes or Wells	_____ Diggers Hotline 1-800-242-8511 _____ Call three days prior to digging			
Driveway Permits (County Roads)	Co. Hwy. Dept. 734-9500	Co. Hwy. Dept. 269-8740	Co. Hwy. Dept. 647-4707	Co. Hwy. Dept. 637-5452
Driveway Permits (Town Roads)	_____ Contact Town Clerk for Information _____			
Floodplain Zoning	County Zoning 326-0294	County Zoning 269-8736	County Zoning 647-2447	County Zoning 637-5271
Pond Creation	DNR 785-9000	DNR 785-9000	DNR 935-1936	DNR 785-9000
Prairies	USDA-NRCS 326-7179	NRCS / LCD 269-8973	USDA-NRCS 647-8874	LWCD 637-5480
Sanitary Permits	Sanitation, Zoning 326-0294	Sanitation, Zoning 269-8736	Sanitation, Zoning 647-2447	Sanitation, Zoning 637-5271
Septic Systems, Percolation Tests	Sanitation, Zoning 326-0294	Sanitation, Zoning 269-8736	Sanitation, Zoning 647-2447	Sanitation, Zoning 637-5271
Shoreland Zoning	County Zoning 326-0294	County Zoning 269-8736	County Zoning 647-2447	County Zoning 637-5271
Subdivisions	County Zoning 326-0294	County Zoning 269-8736	County Zoning 647-2447	LWCD 637-5480
Wetlands	County Zoning 326-0294	USDA / NRCS 269-8136	County Zoning 647-2447	DNR 785-9000

## Reference Guide

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Crawford County</b>	<b>Monroe County</b>	<b>Richland County</b>	<b>Vernon County</b>
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### Land Resource Management

Animal Waste / Barnyards	UW-Ext Ag Agent 326-0223	LCD / NRCS 269-8973	UW-Ext Ag Agent 647-6148	LWCD 637-5480
Burning Permits	Town Clerk or Fire Warden			
Conservation Plans	Conservationist 326-0270	USDA-NRCS 269-8136	Conservationist 647-2100	USDA-NRCS 637-2183
Contour Strips	Conservationist 326-0270	LCD / NRCS 269-8973	USDA-NRCS 647-8874	USDA-NRCS 637-2183
Gully Erosion	Conservationist 326-0270	LCD 269-8973	Conservationist 647-2100	USDA-NRCS 637-2183
Line Fence Rules	UW-Ext Ag Agent 326-0223	UW-Ext Ag Agent 269-8722	UW-Ext Ag Agent 647-6148	UW-Ext Ag Agent 637-5276
Organic Farming (Gov. Contact)	UW-Ext Ag Agent 326-0223	UW-Ext Ag Agent 269-8722	USDA-NRCS 647-8874	USDA-NRCS 637-2183
Organic Farming (Private)	Gr. River Graziers 875-5200	MOSA 637-2526	MOSA 637-2526	MOSA 637-2526
Streambank Erosion	Conservationist 326-0270	LCD 269-8973	Conservationist 647-2100	LWCD 637-5480
Timber Harvesting	DNR Forester 735-4672	DNR Forester 269-6901	DNR Forester 647-4566	DNR Forester 637-3784
Tree planting	Conservationist 326-0270	LCD 269-8973	DNR Forester 647-4566	LWCD 637-5476
Wildlife	DNR Agent 637-3938	DNR Agent 785-9992	Wildlife Biologist 375-4123	DNR Agent 637-3938
Wildlife Nuisance/Damage	APHIS 1-800-433-0663	APHIS 1-800-433-0663	APHIS 1-800-433-0663	APHIS 1-800-433-0663

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Crawford County</b>	<b>Monroe County</b>	<b>Richland County</b>	<b>Vernon County</b>
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## Water Resource Management

Altering Streams, Springs, or Shoreland	DNR 785-9000	DNR 785-9000	DNR 935-1936	DNR 785-9000
Creating Ponds	DNR 785-9000	DNR 785-9000	DNR 935-1936	DNR 785-9000
Stream Crossings	DNR 785-9000	DNR 785-9000	DNR 935-1936	DNR 785-9000
Kickapoo Citizen Water Quality Monitors	VSN 637-3615	VSN 637-3615	VSN 637-3615	VSN 637-3615
Fish Habitat	DNR 785-9000	DNR 785-9000	DNR 935-1936	DNR 785-9000
Wells / Water Testing	UW - Extension 326-0223	UW - Extension 269-8722	UW - Extension 647-6148	UW - Extension 637-5276

## Reference Guide

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Crawford County</b>	<b>Monroe County</b>	<b>Richland County</b>	<b>Vernon County</b>
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### Government Conservation Programs

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)	LCD: 326-0270 or NRCS: 326-7179	USDA-NRCS 269-8136	USDA-NRCS 647-8874	USDA-NRCS 637-2183
Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)	LCD: 326-0270 or NRCS: 326-7179	USDA-NRCS 269-8136	USDA-NRCS 647-8874	LWCD 637-5477
Conservation Security Program (CSP)	LCD: 326-0270 or NRCS: 326-7179	USDA-NRCS 269-8136	USDA-NRCS 647-8874	USDA-NRCS 637-2183
Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)	USDA-NRCS 326-7179	USDA-NRCS 269-8136	USDA-NRCS 647-8874	USDA-NRCS 637-2183
Farmland Preservation Program	LCD 326-0270	LCD 269-8973	LCD 647-2100	LWCD 637-5477
Managed Forest Law (MFL) / Forest Crop Law (FCL)	DNR Forester 735-4672	DNR Forester 269-6901	DNR Forester 647-4566	DNR Forester 637-3784
Wetland Reserve Program (WRP)	USDA-NRCS 326-7179	USDA-NRCS 269-8136	USDA-NRCS 647-8874	USDA-NRCS 637-2183
Wildlife Habitat Incentive (WHIP)	USDA-NRCS 326-7179	USDA-NRCS 269-8136	USDA-NRCS 647-8874	USDA-NRCS 637-2183

**Programs for Private Landowners**

CREP	Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program. Contact: FSA, NRCS, LCD or LWCD
CRP	Conservation Reserve Program. Contact: FSA, NRCS, LCD or LWCD
CSP	Conservation Security Program. Contact: NRCS
EQIP	Environmental Quality Incentives Program. Contact: NRCS, FSA, LCD or LCWD
FCL	Forest Crop Law. Contact: DNR Forestry
FPP	Farmland Preservation Program
MFL	Managed Forest Law. Contact: DNR Forestry
WHIP	Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program. Contact: NRCS
WRP	Wetland Reserve Program

**Agencies and Organizations**

APHIS	Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services
DNR	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
FSA	USDA Farm Service Agency
LCD	Land Conservation Department
LWCD	Land and Water Conservation Department
MOSA	Midwest Organic Services Agency
NRCS	USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
UW-Ext.	University of Wisconsin-Cooperative Extension System
VSN	Valley Stewardship Network



Valley Stewardship Network  
124½ South Main Street  
Viroqua, WI 54665

608.637.3615  
vsn@frontiernet.net  
www.kickapooovsn.org

*Promoting Stewardship,  
Connecting Communities*

*Put a  
Stamp  
on  
Stewardship*