



# Kickapoo Visions

People of the Kickapoo Valley working together to promote good stewardship of the watershed

## Landowner Outreach / Mapping Program

By Liz Quebe

VSN has embarked on a new program that combines landowner outreach with data gathering and mapping of the natural assets of the Kickapoo River Watershed. The program is a natural--and ambitious--progression from earlier (and on-going) VSN efforts. It is intended to strengthen the conservation ethic among landowners, as does our water monitoring, and to provide valuable information on Watershed characteristics, to aid in the comprehensive planning efforts that were the focus of Kickapoo Conversations.

The initial step of the program is the just-published booklet called *Owning Rural Lands, A Guide for the Kickapoo River Watershed*. The 22-page guide makes it easier for landowners to get the information they need in order to make the best choices for their land while safeguarding its natural assets. It contains a checklist with helpful information on purchasing land; understanding the property; obtaining services; building a structure; and conserving the land. It lists resources and contacts for common questions relating to the required permits and available programs of local government units and agencies. In addition the guide provides an intriguing peek at our unique geology, forests, prairies, wetlands, river and streams, plants and wildflowers, and wildlife, along with names of publications, websites, and organizations specific to each. The publication is earning rave reviews from county conservationists, the DNR, UW-Extension personnel, and watershed citizens. It will be distributed through area realtors, banks, building supply stores, county agencies, and, of course, by VSN.

The next step is to initiate the mapping of the Kickapoo River Watershed in GIS format. GIS stands for Geographical Information Systems. It is a system

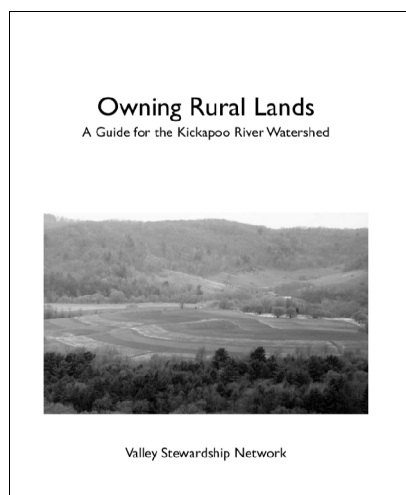
of hardware and software used for mapping and analysis of data that is used widely by state and federal agencies to gather and present information for scientific purposes. When funds for staff are secured, we will begin incorporating existing data from sources such as the DNR, with the aim of mapping environmental corridors--steep slopes, water features, forested lands, prairie remnants, priority farmlands, and wildlife habitat. This type of mapping has never been provided for the entire Watershed and is a valuable tool for both planning and conservation.

Future (and as yet unfunded) steps include land walks over large and small parcels within the Watershed, with the intent of learning from landowners about their land, raising owner awareness of their own responsibility for stewardship and obtaining ground-proofed data for detailed mapping of Watershed lands.

### Thanks to Program Contributors

The Landowner Outreach / Mapping Program, realized in full, is estimated to cost over \$50,000. We are grateful to the

See *Thanks*, page 4



## Planning -- Watershed Communities "Diving In"

By Kathy Fairchild

A recent VSN survey of what some of the Watershed communities are doing to address comprehensive planning yielded a variety of responses. As is usually the case, the plates of those serving in local government are mighty full. Planning is just one of many topics they are wrestling with. To their credit, many government members and citizens are joining together to begin the work of creating their comprehensive plans.

The 12 Vernon County government units that joined together to hire Mead & Hunt of La Crosse as their planning consultant have been meeting in large and small groups, and it seems are beginning to get headed in the direction of progress. It is important that anyone who wants to get their "two cents" in on how these plans take shape do so now. The process is one that builds on each step taken earlier, and while backtracking and revision are part of the process to some extent, maintaining forward motion is key. The two-and three-community small groups, or "clusters", have done surveys, reviewed census data and growth projections and are considering issues related to transportation, housing, agriculture and natural resources.

Other townships and villages seem to be working well on their own. Clayton Township in Crawford County has had a planning group for some time that writes a newsletter and has been instrumental in helping the town deal with current issues by ordinance, while they continue to

See *Planning*, page 4

## Water Quality Monitoring Corner

By Gary Thompson

Greetings to all those concerned about the future health of our great and precious resources. It's vital that we continue to expend energy to educate people about the importance of clean water. Our water resources continue to be threatened on many fronts. The Kickapoo Citizen Water Monitors (KCWM) will continue to be a key group in our back yard to monitor the health of our beloved Watershed. We continue to ask for your support and involvement.

Our March meeting was well attended as we shifted into gear for another season of monitoring. Cindy Koperski, a DNR Water Biologist from La Crosse, provided us with an informative presentation of data collected within the Watershed from temperature loggers located on several tributaries as well as the main branch of the Kickapoo River. We were interested in comparing previous year temperatures to the 2003 drought conditions. Some of

this data was collected by KCWM members, making the presentation of greater interest to their particular effort. In the discussion that followed, we agreed that we are blessed to have an abundance of ground water discharge from springs and seeps within the Watershed, which had significant neutralizing effects on last year's extreme air temperatures and lack of rainfall.

An equipment check was provided to members for updating their "buckets" for the remainder of the monitoring season. Some members expanded their protocol to include nitrite and nitrate testing. There was also discussion on equipment upgrading and expanding the monitoring protocol to include coliform bacteria testing on selected sites of the main branch of the Kickapoo River.

The KCWM is pleased to see the creation of two new water monitoring groups, one to the north on the Black River and also a

new group in Crawford County headed up by Russ Hagen, the County Conservationist. We look forward to working with both groups.

If you have an interest in water quality or in monitoring within the Kickapoo Watershed, join us at one of our upcoming events. KCWM will be hosting the following two-hour bio-indexing and water monitoring workshops:

- Tuesday, May 18<sup>th</sup> at 10 AM along Reads Creek at Crooked River Resort just south of Readstown on Highway 61.
- Sunday, June 6<sup>th</sup> at 3 PM along Halls Branch Creek south of Gays Mills.

The UW-Extension service will be offering a complete training course for water monitors.

- Saturday, May 8<sup>th</sup> from 9 to 3 at Sugar Creek Bible Camp in Crawford County.

These events are free and open to the public and they offer a great opportunity to learn about area streams and to meet other stream enthusiasts.

## Gypsy Moth Spray Scheduled

Kathryn Nelson, DNR Forester, advises that there will soon be a spray plane treating a pocket of the dreaded gypsy moth larvae found in eastern Crawford and Vernon Counties. These distinctive moths feed on Oaks, Crab Apple, Birch and 250 other species of trees and can strip them of leaves overnight. Mid-May through early June is the best time to catch them feeding, and thus to spray. The "Slow-the-Spread" program is run by the Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection (DATCP).

According to the DATCP, the agent

used to eradicate the caterpillars, *bacillus thuringiensis var. kurstaki* or Btk, is a protein toxin that reacts ONLY in the gut of caterpillars and is harmless to people, animals and insects other than caterpillars. Btk will not be sprayed where there are known populations of Karner blue butterflies or other threatened or endangered species of moths and butterflies.

Those wanting to know more about the gypsy moth and such measures, as well as what individuals can do themselves to discourage the spread of gypsy moth colonies, can go to the web at <http://gypsymoth.wi.gov/> or call 1-800-542-MOTH.

## DNR provides online mapping of public lands

This new feature on the DNR website allows the public to find and map DNR managed lands. On your map you can choose to include many features including: rivers and streams, digital air photos, digital topographical maps, counties, townships, municipalities, sections, QQ sections, open water, local, county or state roads.

Find out more online at:  
<http://maps.dnr.state.wi.us/lands/>

### VSN Board:

**Kathy Neidert**, Co-chair, 624-3281, kninwi@yahoo.com  
**Gary Thompson**, Co-chair, 637-3650, gatwwtc@hotmail.com  
**Liz Quebe**, Treasurer, 624-3600, jlquebe@mwt.net  
**Betty Bland**, Secretary, 634-3725, langebland@yahoo.com

### Staff:

**Kathy Fairchild**, Program Manager  
**Jeremy Lopez**, Projects Coordinator



### Advisory Board:

**Gary Eldred**, Prairie Enthusiasts  
**Dr. Rob Horwich**, Community Conservation  
**Jack Knight**, Kickapoo Woods Cooperative  
**Ben Logan**, Author  
**Joe Rising**, Attorney  
**Dr. Paul Stoelting**, UW-La Crosse

## Prairie, Trees and Trout A Field Day for Rural Landowners

Come see and learn what good stewardship in the Kickapoo Valley looks like on August 14<sup>th</sup> at "Prairie, Trees and Trout: A Field Day for Rural Landowners" presented by the Valley Stewardship Network. This informative field day will feature an example of stream bank restoration with trout fish habitat, water quality monitoring techniques, a guided walk through a forest sustainably managed for economic and conservation benefits, and a prairie restoration project. Representatives from

agencies and organizations will be available to assist landowners in understanding and managing the quality of their land and water.

Paul Hayes, a lifelong biology educator, will host the field day on his property east of Westby. Jack Knight of the Kickapoo Woods Cooperative will lead the walk among the trees and through the beginnings of a prairie. For directions, call the Valley Stewardship Network at 637-3615. A light snack and beverages will be provided.

## Artist and Artisan Directory

The Gays Mills sessions of the Kickapoo Conversations resulted in related goals from two committees. The committee on Cultural Resources envisioned a guide to the local artists and artisans in the Kickapoo River Watershed, and the committee on Economic Development saw an artisan outlet as a positive draw to the area.

A participant of the Gays Mills Conversations, Pete Knapik, later chaired a committee addressing economic development in Crawford County. He recalled the goals centered

on area artists and artisans and invited Conversation participants and VSN members Jerry and Liz Quebe to participate. Jerry took the lead in developing an on-line artist/artisan directory for the new Crawford County website [www.crawfordcountywi.com](http://www.crawfordcountywi.com) that features nearly 50 listings for the Driftless Area. Take a look, and if you know of more talented area artists that would like to be included (it's free), contact Jerry at (608) 624-3600 or [jlquebe@mwt.net](mailto:jlquebe@mwt.net)

## Thank You to Members and Donors

VSN continues to pursue multiple funding sources for 2004 and 2005 field activities. Generous support from the Paul E. Stry Foundation, Norcross Wildlife Foundation and our members has made it possible for us to publish and distribute *Owning Rural Lands: A Guide for the Kickapoo River Watershed*, to continue and expand the water monitoring activities, to develop a bio-inventorying strategy, and to develop our communications network across the Watershed.

We very much want to thank those who have contributed just since our last newsletter and look forward to hearing from them and others in the months to come.

### Memberships & Special Support:

Dan Arnold, Henry Babson, Jim Bar-

nes, Harriet Behar, Rosanne Boyett, David F. Busch, Lynn Chakoian, Pat Conway, Mary & Lloyd Croatt, Mary & Steve Christenson, Barbara Christie, Karen Dahl, Edie Ehlert and Glenn Donovan, Pauline Evans, Kathy Fairchild, Joan and Jim Grootemaat, William Hanke, William and Melissa Hendrickson, Laura Hewitt, Rob Horwich, James Ispen, Lisa Kivirist and John Ivanko, in memory of the father of Kelly Janson, Maggie Jones, Jack Knight, Cindy Koperski, Katie & Ralph Lemley, Glenn and Barbara Lepley, Ben Logan, Lillian Neidert, Bill Putze, Jerry and Liz Quebe, Re/Max Realty of Viroqua, Richard and Patricia Rubasch, Mark Taylor, Gary Thompson, David & Rachel Toeppen, Tom Weston, Tazzee's Wonder Bar & Restaurant.

## Calendar of Events

Updates and additional information and events listed at [www.kickapooovsn.org](http://www.kickapooovsn.org)

**May 8: Spring Woods and Prairie Hike.** Join naturalist Dan Hazlett tracking the spring ephemeral wildflowers at a private residence west of Viola. Open to the public. Free. Call Paul Bader, Kickapoo Woods Cooperative, for more details at 625-2515.

**May 15: Spring Migrant Bird Hike.** Join Barb Duerksen of the WI Society for Ornithology at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve during height of the spring migration. \$4/3 adult/child. Call 625-2960 for details.

**May 18: Water Quality Monitoring Workshop.** Free. See article on page 2.

**May 19: VSN Board Meeting.** WWTC, Viroqua - 7:00 PM. All are welcome.

**June 6: Water Quality Monitoring Workshop.** Free. See article on page 2.

**June 11: VSN Annual Meeting.** Location and time were unavailable at publication. Call VSN or check our web site for details.

**June 13: Hogback Prairie Nature Hike.** Join Rich Henderson at this Nature Conservancy preserve featuring rare plants and prairie insects including the state threatened Hill's thistle. Located near Stueben. Hike from 1 - 4 . Call VSN for more details.

**June 16: VSN Board Meeting.** WWTC, Viroqua - 7:00 PM. All are welcome.

**July 21: VSN Board Meeting.** WWTC, Viroqua - 7:00 PM. All are welcome.

**July 31: Kickapoo Country Fair.** Come to La Farge and celebrate community and sustainability at this benefit for the Kickapoo Valley Reserve. Tour the new Reserve offices and Organic Valley. Details TBA.

**Aug. 14: Prairie, Trees and Trout: A Field Day for Rural Landowners.** Learn about stream bank restoration, sustainable forestry, water quality and prairies. See article on this page.

**Aug. 14: Public Astronomical Observing.** Enjoy our dark skies at Wildcat Mountain State Park with the Northwest Astronomy Club. Free. Call Wildcat for details 337-4775.

**Aug. 18: VSN Board Meeting.** WWTC, Viroqua - 7:00 PM. All are welcome.

ALL PHONE NUMBERS ARE IN THE (608) AREA CODE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.



Valley Stewardship Network, Inc.  
 124½ S. Main St.  
 Viroqua, WI 54665  
 608-637-3615

Non-Profit  
 U.S. Postage  
 PAID  
 Viroqua, WI  
 Permit No. 73

## Join VSN Today!

OR

### Renew your annual membership

- Valley Steward                    \$15 - \$25
- Watershed Sustainer            \$50
- Watershed Patron                \$100
- Watershed Guardian            \$200
- Visionary                         \$500
- Additional Donation            \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to:  
 VSN, 124½ S. Main St., Viroqua, WI 54665.

**All contributions are tax deductible.**

*Thank You*

Please contact us if you know of someone who would enjoy our newsletter or contact us if you prefer to be removed from our mailing list.



### *Planning* continued from page 1

work on the development of a comprehensive plan. Haney Township, also in Crawford, has a newly formed Planning Committee working through the process of getting organized, gathering information and getting started. VSN has advised all the planning groups, with or without the aid of a consultant, that the VSN *Kickapoo Conversations--Vision 2020* notebooks can be provided for all participants while supplies last. The 3-ring binder format is also good for adding information and important reference sheets as needed. Citizens of Christiana Township, Westby and others in Vernon County as well as Haney and Clayton Townships in Crawford County expressed appreciation for the useful, down-to-earth information in the reports. Anyone who needs copies should call the VSN office (637-3615).

Change comes quickly and can be a fertile bed for conflict. Ordinances are sometimes enacted in response to a particular issue or problem area but without a great deal of thought as to how they might fit together to form a "growth strategy" or some other form of policy.

However, a consistent focus on preservation of farming, health and safety issues, protection of natural resources or other themes that guide the development of individual ordinances, and thus a community, is just that--a strategy for growth.

Each community is finding out what works best for them to document their ideas and get them into the prescribed form of a comprehensive plan that can be adopted and be consistent with their ordinances and rules. VSN can be helpful to them by locating information and resources or in helping to connect folks who could benefit by working together. So give us a call and let us know how we might help all the folks who are "diving in."

## Spring Cleaning

Six families took advantage of sunny weather and worked for two hours to clean up two miles of Trout Creek Road just west of Highway 61 in Crawford County. They picked several years' worth of tossed soda and beer cans, food wrappers, car parts and debris, and decided to make similar efforts every spring and fall. Congratulations for the initiative and effort!

### *Thanks* continued from page 1

foundations and individual contributors who have made it possible to launch the effort. The Paul E. Stry Foundation of LaCrosse has invested \$10,000 in the program, underwriting the initial production and printing of *Owning Rural Lands*. Massachusetts-based Norcross Wildlife Foundation has provided \$3,000 to fund the purchase of the computer equipment necessary for GIS mapping along with digital cameras and handheld GPS units. Two generous donations totaling \$8,000 have come from VSN members. We are now seeking additional funding to support the balance of the program. Please be generous in your contributions.

## VSN Annual Meeting Save this Date

On June 11th, the members of the Valley Stewardship Network are invited to our Annual Meeting. We will review our accomplishments, consider board positions and set our priorities for the upcoming year. Watch for more details from VSN in your inbox, mailbox and local press.