

# Kickapoo Visions

~ Promoting Stewardship, Connecting Communities since 2000~

www.kickapoovsn.org

Spring 2008 Volume VIII, Issue I

## “Karst, What Does it Mean?”

By Gary Thompson

In recent weeks VSN and Crawford Stewardship Network (CSP) co-hosted public presentations on possible threats and challenges posed to communities living within karst geology regions. Presenters included co-directors of the Wisconsin Discovery Farms program, UW Madison soils scientist Fred Madison, and livestock specialist Dennis Frame. Maureen Muldoon, a recognized hydro geologist, and associate professor of geology from UW Oshkosh, addressed the movement of surface waters through this type of geological system.

Their presentations included data collected during a multiple year NE Wisconsin karst study, which focused on historical aquifer contamination. Since the release of this study, there has been much discussion about what it means for those of us living in karst regions in Wisconsin. Conclusions drawn from this research stated that even when dairy operations follow certified manure application plans; there is a higher risk for ground water contamination. It was clear that underlying fractured bedrock common with karst geology was the most significant factor influencing this threat. Recommendations from Discovery Farm scientists included a system of rating the risk for contamination based on overlays of soil depth and composition and the underlying karst bedrock. It is likely that without identifying areas of risk and making adequate adjustments to surface applied wastes, ground and surface water contamination is probable. The lack of water quality data presently available (both well and surface waters) in our region, com-

bined with minimal historical data, presents a challenge to scientists in establishing the extent of influence of these geological systems for our community. Regional topography represented by steep hills and deep valleys, also presents a greater threat to surface waters due to rapid drainage after rain events.

These gatherings were well attended by community members representing a variety of interests. Following these presentations there was great dialogue addressing many related land use practices. These discussions demonstrated that this is a complex issue needing careful consideration from all persons living in the Driftless region. Government officials representing area residents, and businesses permitted to apply waste products on the landscape, have a greater responsibility. As stewards of the valuable natural resources entrusted to us, it is important that we hold our neighbors, regulatory agencies, and government representatives accountable for protecting our health and environment.

Although the data and conclusions of the study are not directly transferable to SW Wisconsin, we can be assured with good scientific research, very similar recommendations would be the result. Few would argue that precautionary measures in land management are vital for protecting our precious ground and surface waters. A separate study will need to be conducted to establish a clear picture of SW Wisconsin geological conditions. Goals for supporting a regional karst study would be to create scientifically defensible regulations while keeping in mind the need to address varied interests of stakeholders living in the region. VSN and CSP are committed to being involved in this process, for the future protection of our natural resources.

## Be A Local Hero

By Jessica Luhnig

“All voices to the table”  
*Future of Farming Mantra*

Gone are the days when vegetable peddlers with their horse drawn carts brimmed with fresh farm produce would travel up and down county roads delivering to country diners, neighborhood cooks and city dwellers. Urban and rural seamlessly connected by the earth’s bounty within one local food system. Today, as avid and aware eaters, we are consistently reminded about the challenges of eating within one’s local food system.

It is said that food found in conventional grocery markets travels on average 1,500-2,500 miles from farm to table. In addition, vegetables shipped through the Chicago Terminal Market travel between 381 and 2,143 miles in the U.S. Keep in mind that these numbers do not include our favorite food items that originate from countries outside of the U.S. and travel distances that I am sure would be astounding like avocados, coffee, and strawberries, tomatoes and asparagus in the middle of winter. Did you know that one head of broccoli travels roughly 2,095 miles from farm to fork?

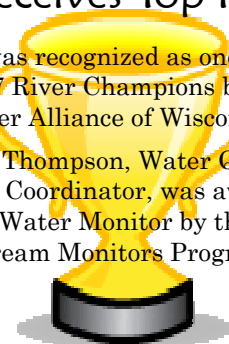
What do these numbers mean? Well, for one thing, the average eater in Wisconsin is supporting agriculture economies in places way outside the Midwest. The Ag. industry in California is reaping huge benefits from Wisconsin eaters. In addition, we are

*(Continued on page 2)*

## VSN Receives Top Honors!

VSN was recognized as one of four  
2007 River Champions by the  
River Alliance of Wisconsin.

Gary Thompson, Water Quality  
Monitoring Coordinator, was awarded 2008  
Best Adult Water Monitor by the Wisconsin  
Stream Monitors Program.





contributing to the massive consumption of fossil fuels, air pollution from carbon and sulfur dioxide and global climate change. A recent study by the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture found that “growing and transporting just 10 percent more food within Iowa would result in an annual fuel savings ranging from 294,000 to 348,000 gallons and yearly emissions reductions ranging from 7 million to 7.9 million pounds” (*Food, Fuel and Freeways*, May 2003).

The farther we ship food, the more vulnerable our local food system becomes. Farmers and small food businesses become marginalized. Local ecosystems are ruined as rural economies decline and contaminating agribusiness monopolies move in due to policies that favor factory farms, giant supermarkets, long-distance trade, and cheap, subsidized fossil fuels.

Fear not (or maybe not as much) people, both urban and rural, are coming to the table. According to the Worldwatch Institute, an “emerging nationwide local food movement is challenging both the wisdom and practice of long-distance food shipping and attempts to rebuild local food economies is the first genuine profit-making opportunity in farm country in years” (*Homegrown: The Case for Local Food in a Global Market*, November 2002).

A local food movement is taking place right here in SW Wisconsin. VSN has developed a new program called the Food & Farm Initiative. With a \$10,000 start-up grant from Organic Valley, Food & Farm Initiative volunteers are working on a number of projects to help build awareness and support for our local food system. Projects include a Community Food Assessment, Local Food & Farm Directory and a Finding Food in Farm Country economic analysis with Ken Meter of the Crossroads Resource Center in Minneapolis. In addition, VSN will be partnering with the Viroqua Food Coop and several statewide organizations on a September 2008 Eat Local Challenge and Harvest Dinner.

Don't wait until September to be a local hero. The growing season is quickly approaching and before we know it local fields and farms will be spilling over with fresh produce, meats and fruits grown just for you and your family. Don't hesitate to contact us for details about getting involved with the Food & Farm Initiative or information about where you can find fresh, local foods.

## Kickapoo Valley: Gem of Wisconsin

VSN and the Friends of the Kickapoo Reserve are working together to bring the “Gem of Wisconsin” to libraries throughout the Kickapoo Valley Region.

Gwen Hatfield, Brad Steinmetz and Chuck Hatfield will provide a presentation with information about the authors and readings from the book that connect to the town and library where the presentation is given. The program is free and the public is cordially invited. The audience will learn many fascinating historical facts about the Kickapoo River valley and its residents. Contact VSN for more information at 637-3615.

## Kickapoo River Birding Event - Sign-up Today!

By Maggie Jones



The Kickapoo Initiative and the Valley Stewardship Network are sponsoring an opportunity to learn how bird surveys are done, how to learn bird song and an opportunity to find and identify birds with 2 of the best ornithologists in Wisconsin.

Learning bird song enables you to identify birds in the many situations where you can hear them but not see them.

Bring a lunch, and water, dress for the weather and hiking. Maps will be sent to participants before the event, which will be at the southern end of the Kickapoo River in Crawford County.

The birding event is scheduled for Saturday, May 17th from 8:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. Space is limited to 30 participants. Please contact Maggie Jones at (608) 872-2297 or mhjones@countyspeed.com to register.

## Natural Step in the Kickapoo Valley

By Jessica Luhnig

Natural Step study circles are currently being organized for citizens and community leaders wishing to better understand what sustainability means and how it can be applied in the Greater Kickapoo Valley Region. The Natural Step is a framework for creating environmentally, socially and economically sustainable communities and businesses.

A study circle is a voluntary, adult education group of 5-20 people who meet to explore critical social issues with guidance from The Natural Step book. Study circles have been formed in a number of communities all around Wisconsin and other parts of the nation.

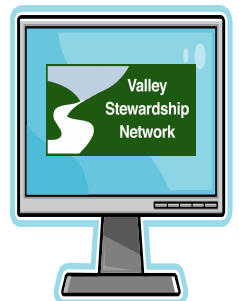
Imagine your community 20 years from now, how about 100 years. Will it be vibrant and healthy? Let's work together towards sustainability. If you are interested in joining a local study circle contact VSN volunteer Juliee Wendland at 625-6010 or jdwendland@viterbo.edu

The Wait is Over...

**New VSN Website**  
www.kickapoovsn.org

**New VSN General Email**  
info@kickapoovsn.org

**Launching on Earth Day**  
**(April 22nd, 2008)**





## Dreaded Garlic Mustard

By Gary Thompson



Courtesy of Elizabeth J. Czarapata

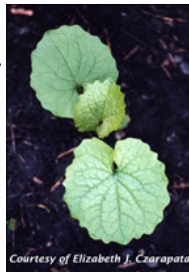
Garlic mustard is a biennial non-native plant brought to America and grown as a condiment commonly used to flavor salads, soups, sauces and other dishes. Like several other non-native "invasives", it is now reeking havoc on our

native plant species due to its' aggressive nature.

This plant is an early emerging species known for quickly crowding and smothering out surrounding flora. A single second year plant often reaches to a height of three feet, and has the ability to produce hundreds of seeds in its' elongated seed pods located perpendicular along its' upper stem. Garlic mustard has been recognized as the single most threatening woodland non-native invasive plant in Wisconsin. Your help is needed in the battle of removing this species where ever identified.

## New Non-toxic Recipe!

VSN has been involved in assisting with a local eradication effort in past years, and was recently been made aware of a non-toxic treatment. An environmentally friendly alternative has been sought after by our members concerned with the use of harmful commercial herbicides. A vinegar treatment has been shown to have good results on plants in their cotyledon or early, first-year stage.



Courtesy of Elizabeth J. Czarapata

**Recipe:** Common household distilled vinegar at full strength to 5% diluted, applied with a hand-held sprayer.

Precautionary measures needed with this method include wearing gloves and eye protection. For a full list of effective eradication measures and photos for positively identifying this plant, you may access the information at the following links.

<http://www.ipm.msu.edu/garlic.about.htm>,  
<http://www.ipaw.org/>,  
<http://mipn.org/>,  
<http://dnr.wi.gov/invasives/plant.asp>

## Watershed Clean-ups It's Up to You & Me

By Kathy Fairchild

The Annual VSN Kickapoo River Clean-up will not be happening this year as in times past. VSN will be working with a trained crew from Workforce Connections over a period of months to remove large items and debris from Readstown to Bell Center. We are looking for adult volunteers to help supervise work crews. VSN is coordinating crews to work weekdays April 1st - June 6th. Daily work hours are flexible and are limited to 25hrs. per week. If you would like to help us out please contact Gary at the VSN office 637-3615.

Consider coordinating your own clean-up event. The roadsides, creeks, riverbank and hillsides in your neighborhood could all certainly benefit from a spring sweep. Call a couple of neighbors, talk to them about a date and time. It's amazing what you can accomplish with a few garbage bags and some companionship. Send us reports so we can share with the rest of the membership. Thanks!

## WQM Corner

By Gary Thompson

Spring has arrived! With longer days and warming sunshine come thoughts of getting back outdoors. The Kickapoo Citizen Water Monitors (KCWM) will begin their eleventh season of collecting water quality data in the greater Kickapoo River watershed. If you have ever contemplated involvement with a fun volunteer activity, VSN invites you to be a part of our citizen water monitors group.

An entry level training workshop will be held Saturday, April 19<sup>th</sup>, at Round River Institute, S4061 Newton Rd., Genoa, WI., from 1:00 – 5:30 pm (see map at [www.round-river2000.com](http://www.round-river2000.com)). Those interested in attending or receiving more information on monitoring may contact the VSN office, 637-3615 or email Gary at [gary@kickapoovsn.org](mailto:gary@kickapoovsn.org).

The KCWM offers opportunities to be involved at three different program levels. New members begin with our baseline Level I program. As experience increases, so do opportunities for moving up to Level II and III programs.



Monitoring data is entered into a VSN, WAV and WDNR database and is available to resource management personnel involved in protecting our valuable natural resources. VSN is the only watershed organization that is consistently monitoring water quality in the Kickapoo River Watershed. Citizen monitoring is important data

gathering, so give us a call if you think you can help.

In addition to the KCWM, VSN continues to collaborate with DNR Western Rivers Basin personnel and Monroe County Conservation staff to monitor water quality at three Agricultural Best Management Practice (BMP) project sites in the Upper Kickapoo Watershed. Continuing to collect water quality data above and below these BMPs will help in establishing the effectiveness of these efforts.

In response to increased interest from area landowners who depend on ground water aquifers to supply clean drinking water, VSN has developed a well water testing collaboration project. The VSN Board of Directors is looking at expanding this community service in the coming months. A fee schedule is currently being developed with staff input. Watch for program details at [www.kickapoovsn.org](http://www.kickapoovsn.org).



Valley Stewardship Network  
124 1/2 S. Main Street  
Viroqua, Wisconsin 54665

## Join VSN Today!

- Valley Steward      \$20
- Watershed Sustainer      \$50
- Watershed Patron      \$100
- Watershed Guardian      \$250
- Visionary      \$500
- Other      \$
- Business Membership      \$75

Make checks payable to: VSN  
All contributions are tax deductible.

*Thank You*



## Want Your VSN News Tree-Free?

Send an email to [info@kickapoovsn.org](mailto:info@kickapoovsn.org) with your name, address and email and you will receive you next VSN newsletter by email.

Help us save on postage and save a tree too!



Printed on 100% post-consumer recycled and totally chlorine free paper .



## Thank You Members and Donors

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

### Memberships & Special Support:

Crawford Stewardship Project, Trillium Bed & Breakfast, Viroqua Food Coop, WWTC, Paragon Associates, Organic Valley, Leuther Labs, Kickapoo Valley Reserve.

Angie Scotland, Bill and Barbara Motlong, Chuck Hatfield, Dail Murray, Dale Klemme, Dana Van Hoesen, Dani Lind, Daniel Badtke, David Toeppen, David and Lynn Chakoian, Donald Stirling, Edward and Barbara, Martinez, Ellen Brooks, George Wilbur, Glenn Donovan, Glenn Lepley, Hank Deutsch, Harry Peterson, Ian Collins, Jack Lee, Jamie and Dan Johnson, Jerry and Liz Quebe, John Niebauer, John Kenny, Jonel Kiesau, Joseph Bieble, Jud Anderson, Kathy Crittenden and Kelvin Rodolfo, Kathy and Paul Fairchild, Larry Forkash, Laura Fisher, Laura

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