



# Kickapoo Visions

~ Promoting Stewardship, Connecting Communities since 2000 ~

www.kickapoovsn.org

Fall 2010

Volume X, Issue II



## GIFT ~~BUY~~ LOCAL!



### Abundance & Accomplishment!

In our last Newsletter we outlined our plan for a Spring Appeal, delivering the message that a VSN Membership is an **investment** in the future of the Driftless Region. There were three areas of focus: **Friends** (asking current members to be as generous as possible with additional contributions); **Investors** (asking potential new members to see VSN as an investment in the values they care about for their community; and **Businesses** (asking business owners to join individual citizens in supporting the work of VSN to make this area vital and sustainable).

The Spring Appeal was an unquestionable success! Along with the River Alliance Joint Membership Drive, we raised more than \$10,000, adding 43 new members (one third of whom are new Business members), and accelerating many renewals! Our goal was to double our membership. While we have not reached that goal, with the help of the Voyageur adventure and other program outreach, we have increased membership by 25%. With your help, we can reach our goal by next Spring!

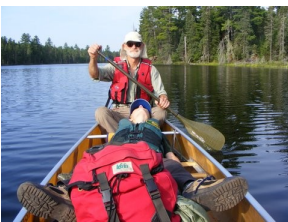


VSN IS YOUR LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL AND QUALITY OF LIFE STEWARDSHIP ORGANIZATION.

PLEASE SHARE THIS MESSAGE WITH YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY!  
CONSIDER GIFTING A VSN MEMBERSHIP.

## Meet our new Board Members

### Randy Kahn



Randy, his wife Vicky Eiben and their son Jesse, came from Washington State to settle in the Driftless Region in 2003. The move

was long in the planning. Family and friends were in Viroqua, and there was the appeal of community supported agriculture, verdant rolling hills, lots of rivers, and very fine folks.

Randy left behind a position as psychotherapist in Washington to work in that capacity for Family & Children's Center in Viroqua. His past includes a career in green homebuilding as well as forestry. As a life-long enthusiast of wilderness and healthy ecosystems, he has supported protection of natural areas for many years. Randy is excited about extending that support to the natural balance and well-being of the Kickapoo region by serving on the VSN board.

### Kathleen Crittenden



Kathy Crittenden came to Viroqua three years ago after retiring from the University of Illinois at Chicago where she was professor of sociology. She and her husband, Kelvin Rodolfo, a UIC geology professor, were seeking to join with others in building a sustainable community. They see VSN as the most effective local organization pursuing this agenda.

They built an earth-bermed, solar and wind-powered home on eight acres, called Pheasant Walk, where they are developing a permaculture estate and market garden. In 2008 they were actively involved in the grassroots effort to stop Dairyland Power from siting a coal-ash landfill in Vernon County.



### Food for Thought

By Nicole Penick

Imagine opening your door to a group of children and parents singing “Bringing in the Sheaves” and then be handed a box of delicious organic vegetables that were harvested just yesterday. This was reality for the residents of Park View Manor this October. Forty residents participated in the Kickapoo Harvest Gleaning for Healthy Communities project this year and once again the project was a resounding success.



Gleaning at Ridgeland Harvest Farm.

Our team of volunteers, including children and parents of the Kickapoo Home School Cooperative, harvested well over 3000 pounds of produce. The farms that participated this year include Keewaydin Farm and Organics, Ridgeland Harvest, Driftless Organics, Harmony Valley and the Slattery Family

Farm. The Viroqua Area School District and the Vernon County Farm to School program provided the kitchen and cooler space as well as the help of Bjorn Bergman, AmeriCorps Farm to School Member.

Our project was made possible by the generous support of the Vernon Electric Co-op’s Operation Round Up, Gundersen Lutheran Community Giving Program and the Coulee Region Cooperative Fund.

The myth of scarcity fades more and more as I visit farms, harvest a bounty of fresh and delicious produce and have so much left over that I end up driving around giving it to my neighbors and friends after I have packed 40 boxes for Park View Manor residents. There is plenty to go around; that is not the problem. The challenge is in how we get it from the field to the kitchens of people who need it. This gleaning project is starting to bridge that gap but it cannot grow beyond 40 boxes at Park View Manor simply as a volunteer led project.



Fresh Veggie Boxes.

This is one of the challenges that the FFI program of the Valley Stewardship Network will be tackling in the coming winter months. We thoroughly enjoy bringing fresh produce to the residents of Park View Manor once a month but we also want to spread the bounty to our area food pantries, to families who receive WIC or QUEST and to all senior citizens in our watershed. To achieve that goal, we welcome community input, suggestions and participation.

Currently, our FFI committee is comprised of VSN board members Sara Martinez and Jessica Luhning, and two community volunteers, Suzie Howe and Dani Lind. Anyone interested in joining our group or wanting to further discuss the Kickapoo Harvest Gleaning Project, please contact Nicole Penick, the Food and Farm Initiative Program Manager at 608-637-3615 or [vsnnicole@gmail.com](mailto:vsnnicole@gmail.com). We welcome your ideas !

### Reflections on a River

By Sarah Grainger

2010 was definitely a busy year for the water quality program and as such we have many accomplishments to celebrate. There were 3 successful water quality monitoring trainings: Wilton, Viola and Steuben resulting in 9 new monitors. We currently have 32 consistent water quality



Water monitoring training in Viola.

monitors at 28 sites. Six of these monitors are working around the Roth CAFO near Wauzeka, a cooperative effort with the Crawford Stewardship Project. A Quality Assurance (QA) Program was developed for both Level 1 & 2 and Sarah made QA visits to all currently active monitors. We purchased 2 new sets of electronic DO and pH meters and 5 new Level 1 water monitoring buckets through the WDNR Citizen Based Monitoring grant. Through the River Alliance of Wisconsin’s Project RED program we provided early detection for emerging aquatic invasive species. We held a training session and snapshot day where scouts canoed down the Kickapoo looking for invasives. VSN became involved with the Mussel Monitoring Program of Wisconsin by hosting a training day at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve. There were also educational sessions with the Youth Initiative High School Zoology class. WQM continues to provide monitoring and data analysis for the Karst



Project RED snapshot day

Pilot Project, via a Nuzum Foundation Grant. We have been working with the WDNR on ground-truthing stream temperature models by installing 15 thermistors in the Kickapoo and Bad Axe watersheds. Program Manager Sarah Grainger embarked on the VSN Voyage, an eight-day 100 mile journey of the Kickapoo River (see following article). Lastly we started a Water Quality Steering Committee. Whew!

In 2011 we already have work on the horizon. Completing the Mussel Monitoring program by holding additional educational & monitoring events. Creating a Watershed Assessment of the Kickapoo River Watershed that looks at the water quality collected by citizen monitors, Counties and WDNR over the past 10-years.

All of this exciting work could not have been done without the support of our grantors: Organic Valley, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (Citizen Based Monitoring and River Planning), the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board and the River Network/Miller Coors.

### VSN Voyageur

The VSN Voyage was an amazing experience and I achieved all three of my voyage goals. Here is a summary.

Sunday, September 19th was the Voyageur Launch – Ontario to Kickapoo Valley Reserve! We started the journey by testing the water quality then continued down the awe inspiring upper Kickapoo. Ah, the majestic cliffs! The day ended with a potluck at beautiful Campsite I on the river. 15 miles completed.

Day 2 of the VSN Voyage, Kickapoo Valley Reserve to Tunnelville, went very well! Again I started the day by monitoring followed by 1 ½ hour paddle to the Kickapoo Valley Reserve Center.

Continued on next page



At the Reserve Center I met up with a team of water experts and we held a series of three workshops for 35 students from both Westby High School and the Kickapoo Home School Co-op. The event finished with a delicious “Farm to School on the River Luncheon” hosted by FFI and the Vernon County Farm to School Program. After the Reserve, we continued to Tunnelville Road south of LaFarge. 27 miles completed.

Day 3 of the VSN Voyage, Tunnelville to Viola, was a feat. Day 3’s paddle team consisted of Denny Caneff, River Alliance of Wisconsin, and Mark Drake. In terms of obstructions this was the worst stretch of the Kickapoo. We had to fully portage 4 times with an estimated 30 jams crossed. I camped at the Viola Village Campsite for the night. 33 miles completed.

Day 4 of the VSN Voyage, Viola to Readstown, was a lot of fun. This stretch also had a lot of logjams. The day ended with a great “Nourish the Voyageur Potluck” in Readstown Village Park. Unfortunately, with a looming thunder-filled rain forecast, even hail, for the evening and next day, we were required to go home for the night. 46 miles completed.



Potluck in Readstown

Day 5 of the VSN Voyage, Readstown to Soldiers Grove, almost didn’t happen. We did get in 6 miles and the weather stayed at bay. Day 5’s team included Mark Drake and Marta Engel. I was so happy to have a woman on the crew. 52 miles completed.

Day 6 of the VSN Voyage, Soldiers Grove to Gays Mills, resulted in many fabulous things unfolding. We held a demonstration in the park near the dam. A great surprise was our Glamping (glamorous camping) tent at the Kickapoo Stump Dodger Campground! The day ended with the “Voyageur Reception” at the Friends of Gays Mills Tent at Applefest. 64 miles completed.

Day 7 of the VSN Voyage saw the paddle voyage come to an end. High water finally caused us to stop the trip. Safety first! Many bridges were not passable.



Oh! The log jams.

Day 8 of the VSN Voyage made me misty-eyed. Not only were there enthusiastic, supportive and gracious people meeting me at the Finale Party in Steuben but it was also the end to this AMAZING experience. It was a great way to end the Voyage, well almost end it. I really wanted to finish the journey, so I did, 5 days later. Day 7, second try, started in Gays Mills and ended in Steuben. Day 8, second try, was long but very rewarding from Steuben to Wauzeka. **100 miles completed!**

On this journey I identified over 70 log jams & 5 patches of Japanese Knotweed. I also had many observations of the extensive wildlife in the river valley and tested water quality along the way. The water quality was not exceptional nor was it severely polluted. A more detailed analysis will be given in VSN’s Watershed Assessment to be completed this year. Thank you everyone who participated including the sponsors: Organic Valley, Viroqua Food Coop, River Alliance of Wisconsin, Rutabaga Paddle Shop, Wisconsin River Outings, Titanic Canoe Rental and the Kickapoo Valley Reserve. I have a deeper understanding of the watershed as a whole. My next goal is to use this knowledge I have gained to protect this invaluable resource. *Join me in protecting our watershed!*



**Question:** What happens when you invite the food service directors of Gundersen Lutheran, Viroqua Area School District and the University of WI, La Crosse to sit at the same table with the general managers of the Westby Creamery Co-op, Premier Meats and the Viroqua Food Co-op? And what happens when you also invite a local bio-dynamic and organic farmer and the Vernon County Economic Development Director to the table?

**Answer:** Dynamic change, creative ideas, new understandings, an emerging new regional food distribution system, and a whole bunch of note taking!

The Fifth Season Co-op is both a multi-stakeholder co-op and a business where all the players in the system are members of the co-operative. This includes farmers, food processors, distributors, institutional buyers and even the workers at the co-op itself. With all the parts of the system working together, the co-operative then can more smoothly and efficiently plan, integrate and co-ordinate all of its functions.

The Fifth Season Co-op Board is currently in its initial business-planning stages, working to connect the dots between generating a fair price for produce, meat and dairy products and the tight budgets of our area’s hospitals, schools and college food service departments. Impossible some might say, but since all of the people involved are at the table, there is confidence that through communication and understanding (and lots of pencil sharpening) we will figure out a way to offer local and sustainably raised food to our public school children, the employees and patients of hospitals and to our college students.

The co-op was incorporated in August and is only one of a handful of multi-stakeholder models in the US. We are ready to start accepting investments from the community. For a minimum investment of \$500 you can put your local dollars to work helping our local farmers and food businesses develop a new market and build the infrastructure needed to make it economically viable for the future. The co-op will pay an annual dividend of 5%. Stock redemption is at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

We are looking for a five year commitment so we can use the equity to leverage other resources to help get the business off the ground and generating revenue. We are confident that over the next 2 years we can develop the distribution, food safety and value added processing infrastructure needed to meet the standards and requirements of our public and private institutions.

Farmers, processors and institutions all have a learning curve to go through as we try to find the price points that will reflect a fair value for sustainably raised and produced food. We need your support to help make these big shifts happen.

A lot of this support will come in the form of education, training and resource building, all of which an investment in the Fifth Season Co-op will help provide. We are taking all of our knowledge and values here at the Valley Stewardship Network and applying them to this new cooperative business venture. Just as you have made the choice to invest in VSN and buy local, the Fifth Season Co-op is an opportunity to invest locally and to see returns of 5%. To learn more about this exciting business, or to invest, please contact Nicole Penick, at 608-637-3615 or vsnnicole@gmail.com.



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Viroqua, WI 54665

## VSN News Has Gone Tree-Free!

Send your updated email address to [vsngeneral@gmail.com](mailto:vsngeneral@gmail.com)  
so you don't miss out on the next issue!

## Watershed Calendar of Events

### Support VSN Today!

- VSN Student or Senior \$25
- Valley Steward \$35
- Business Membership \$75
- **Additional Support** —
- Watershed Sustainer \$50
- Watershed Patron \$100
- Watershed Guardian \$250
- Visionary \$500
- Other \$\_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to VSN  
or donate on our website at  
[www.kickapooovsn.org](http://www.kickapooovsn.org).

All contributions are tax deductible.

#### Thank You Business Partners!

River Alliance of Wisconsin  
Viroqua Food Coop  
Forest City Gear

**DEC 20th — DEC 31st:** VSN will NOT have regular office hours. Regular Office Hours (9am—3pm Mon—Thurs) will resume on Jan 3rd.

**DEC 21st:** No VSN Board Meeting this month.

**JAN 18th: BuyLocal Farmer Training:** DIRECT MARKETING & CSA. 9am—3pm. Location: TBD.

**FEB 15th: BuyLocal Farmer Training:** RETAIL MARKETS. 9am—3pm. Location: TBD.

**MAR 10th: BuyLocal Farmer Training:** INSTITUTIONAL MARKETS. 9am—3pm. Location: TBD.

**APR 13th: VSN DAY at Viroqua Food Coop.** Please shop BIG that day and a portion will be contributed to VSN!!

VSN Board Meetings are on the third Tuesday of each month from 6:00-8:00p.m. Everyone is welcome. Please call the office for meeting location.

For more information about any of these events, please contact the office at 637-3615 or [vsngeneral@gmail.com](mailto:vsngeneral@gmail.com).

To stay current on all VSN events and news, visit our website at [www.kickapooovsn.org](http://www.kickapooovsn.org).



### Special Thanks to our Special Business Member!

#### Black Hawk Trout Unlimited

<http://www.wisconsintu.org/Default.aspx?alias=www.wisconsintu.org/blackhawk>

## Thank You Members and Donors

We very much want to thank those who have contributed with their membership or special support since our last newsletter.

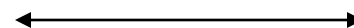
Art & Ellen Thelen, Barb Schieffer, Barb & Ed Christie, Ben & Julee Agar, Bill Brooke, Bill & Susan Townsley, Bill Putze, Bill & Barbara Motlong, Bob & Mary Ann Nash, Brad & Carolyn Steinmetz, Cecil Wright & Sonya Newenhouse, **Warm House Company**, Chuck & Karen Bolstad, Colleen Carroll, Colleen Troy, **DHKlemme Inc**, Daniel Holland, Dennis Lloyd, Steve Jensen, Kristine Stepenuck, Dave Van Dyke, Dave & Pat Fisher, **Black Hawk Trout Unlimited**, Dean Staffanson & Karen Pothen, Diane & John Craig, Douglas & Geraldine Muller, Edie Ehlert, Forest City Gear, Galen & Jayne Eiben, Gordon & Olga Browning, Grace & Gary Jones, Hank & Judith Deutsch, Harry & Sylvia Peterson, **Viroqua Food Coop**, Janet Essley & Paul Moyer, Jerry & Liz Quebe, John & Anne Tedeschi, John & Rita Hoffmann, John & Linnie Waters, Jonathon & Suzanne Howe, Kadie & Brandon Brueggen, Kathy & Paul Fairchild, Katie & Ralph Lemley, **Westby Coop Credit Union**, **Connelly Law Office**, Lara Roberts & Ken Carlson, Lars & Corina Bergan, Laura Hewitt, **Lou Mindar State Farm Insurance**, Louis & Sheila Kupersmith, Lowell Rheinheimer & Jun Liang, Maggie Jones & David Linton, Marilyn & Phillip Bland, Mark Kastel, **Martin McEvoy CPA**, **Fizeology/Full Light Consulting**, Michael & Bernadette Link, Mickie & David Rasch, Ms Evan Jones & Joel Johnson, Rebecca Wainscott, Rice & Jenny Spann, Richard & Mildred Jawson, Robert Wish, Robert Horwich, Roger Christensen, Ryan Callan, Sara Martinez & Matt Urch, Sherrill Munson, **Citizens First Bank**, Stewart & Rebecca Robinson, Tamara Dean & David Klann, Ted Glasbrenner & Jenifer Strand, Teddy Schoville, Terry & Jean Beck, Tom & Constance Vanderhyden, Trish Dougherty, Violet & Glenn Winston, Wendy Crews, Mathew Wagner, Beverly Allert, Stephen Schulhofer & Laurie Wohl, **Ewetopia Fiber Shop**, Richard & Trudy Wallin, Michael & Judith Nugen, Susan Johnson & Daniel Arnold, Ron & Karene Uhe, **Midwest Organic Services Association**, Kathleen Crittenden & Kelvin Rodolfo, Brandon & Kadie Brueggen, Shawn Lavoie & AnnaJo Doerr, Karen & Charles Dahl, Susan & Russell Pope, Rosalind Woodward, Tom & Danelle Weston, David & Diane Banner, Michael & Pamela Kalinosky, Driftless Speakers, Edward & Barbara Martinez, Suzanne West & Jerry Northington, Robert Steinhofer, Charles Hatfield, Dennis Lloyd, CynthiaOlmstead, **River Alliance of Wisconsin**, Daniel Badtke, Marcia Halligan & Steven Adams, Bruce Harvey, Roger Logan & Susie Stulz, J Morrhouse, Patricia Knower.



### Kickapoo Visions

Published Spring and Autumn

Promoting Stewardship, Connecting  
Communities in the Kickapoo Valley Region



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