



# Kickapoo Sustainable Post

Newsletter of the Kickapoo Woods Cooperative

## U. S. Government Sharing Costs of Land Management

The U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s Natural Resource Conservation Service offers cost-sharing for conservation practices that are mostly oriented toward farming and agriculture, but there is one program that supports practices of interest to woodland owners and managers. The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides subsidies for timber stand improvement, establishing access roads to facilitate land management, closing roads and landings that are no longer needed, establishing fire breaks, pruning, brush management, woody residue treatment, managing invasives, and tree planting are all supported by EQIP funds.

These practices restore the health of native plant communities and improve wildlife habitat. The application is simple, and landowners are advised to contact the District Conservationist in your county to discuss your project, and have them come out and take a look. There is even a special program for landowners with limited means to provide additional support to complete your conservation practices. Each project requires a management plan, and there's even EQIP funding to subsidize the cost of developing one. A Managed Forest Law (MFL) plan is NOT required; a stewardship plan is sufficient for EQIP funding. The funding is competitive, however, and not all applications receive support. In fact, Sam Skemp, Jr, Vernon County's District Conservationist, reports that usually about 30% to 50% of applicants receive funding on average. Still it's worth asking, and it could greatly help the natural communities on your land. And this year there is no deadline, and a rolling admissions process means projects will keep getting considered on an ongoing basis.

### District Conservationists in Southwest Wisconsin.

Crawford County: Karyl Fritsche  
608-326-7179 karyl.fritsche@wi.usda.gov

Grant County: Joseph Schmelz  
608-723-6377 joe.schmelz@wi.usda.gov

Iowa County: Andy Walsh  
608-935-2791 andy.walsh@wi.usda.gov

La Crosse County: Gregory Yakle  
608-782-0180 greg.yakle@wi.usda.gov

Monroe County: Greg Wheeler  
608-269-8136 greg.wheeler@wi.usda.gov

Richland County: Carlton Peterson  
608-647-8874 carlton.peterson@wi.usda.gov

Vernon County: Samuel Skemp  
608-637-2183 sam.skemp@qi.usda.gov

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## *The Forester's View*

by Thomas Wyse,  
KWC Forester

The first cold blustery day in the field sure made me feel soft, but once I got walking and out of the wind, it was actually a pleasant day to be in the field. Timber sale setup is going well, but the list continues to grow about as fast as I can set sales up. I



am training a local guy to be my forest technician to speed things up. He's smart, sturdy and has a flexible schedule, so he's a perfect fit. He's also a darned funny guy. He's been reading, observing and asking astute questions, and I'm confident he'll be marking timber like a pro in no time at all. We just had to get him over his sentimentality for trees. I had to keep telling him, "Take it out!" when we were marking. But he soon showed that special gleam in his eyes when he saw a perfect tree to mark.

Timber prices continue to be strong, and there are several active KWC jobs right now. The loggers are making it look easy, and I'm pleased with their work. I'll put up a blog post with videos of loggers in action when I get some down time, so keep an eye out for that.

### **KWC Board of Directors**

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608-606-4373  
lehcunningham@yahoo.com

## **KWC Winter Member Gathering**

Date: March 28, 2015; Noon to 4pm

Place: Kickapoo Valley Reserve Visitor Center, S3661 State Hwy 131, LaFarge, WI

**Guest Speaker- Scott Craven:** An Emeritus UW-Extension wildlife specialist and Professor of wildlife ecology, Scott is an expert on human-wildlife interactions, wildlife management and conservation, and wildlife-based recreation.

**Also: Get updates** on the KWC Board's plans for a Paul Bader memorial white oak in the KVR, thank Lila for her years of service and meet our new Education Coordinator.

**Pot Luck Meal-** Bring a dish to pass. Dessert and beverages will be provided.

**Silent Auction** - Bring your donated item to be auctioned off that day.

## Wisconsin COVERTS Project

by Adrian Amelse, KWC Board President

I attended the 2014 Coverts project and learned a great deal and found the program to be an engaging and memorable experience.

The Wisconsin Coverts Project is a woodland wildlife management program for private landowners. At the core of the program is a three-day workshop including classroom and field demonstrations designed to empower private woodland owners to manage their land for wildlife and to reach out to others in their community. Through this program landowners agree to create and implement wildlife management plans on their lands and to contact other landowners in their communities.

The Wisconsin Coverts Project utilizes forestry and wildlife professionals from state and federal agencies, non-profit organizations, as well as private landowners to provide the content. The workshop is conducted by Wildlife Specialists in the University of Wisconsin – Madison's Department of Forest and Wildlife Ecology. The program objective is to provide science-based knowledge to Wisconsin citizens on matters relating to the use, management, perpetuation and appreciation of wildlife resources.

Since 1994, 610 Wisconsin landowners have become Coverts Cooperators. Collectively, they have influenced the management of over 825,000 acres of land.

The 2015 workshop is being planned for August 13-16 at Kemp Natural Resources Station in Woodruff. Applications are due June 15. Here is a link for more information:

<http://forestandwildlifeecology.wisc.edu/coverts>

*Sponsors of the program include: The Ruffed Grouse Society/American Woodcock Society, UW – Extension, UW – Madison Department of Forest and Wildlife Ecology, Wisconsin Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI®) Implementation Committee, Louisiana-Pacific Corporation, the Anne and Jason Spaeth Family, and Braun Woodlands.*

## Neighborhood Forestry Gatherings, Anyone?

Can you imagine a gathering with your neighbors where you talk about landscape scale thinking and planning to support biodiversity, wildlife habitat, preservation of rare natural communities, and possibly even cooperation on timber harvests to bring specialized equipment and buyers. The Kickapoo Woods Cooperative, in cooperation with natural resource educators and organizations, would like to organize that gathering for your valley, watershed, or section. We will even include a drawing for door prizes and a good foundation for a potluck lunch. When the KWC Board considered creating a mini-COVERTS event for our region, this idea surfaced, so please provide your feedback and ideas.

If you think your neck of the woods is a good place to try such a gathering, please contact Jackie Yocum, KWC Education Coordinator, [kickapoowoodsed@gmail.com](mailto:kickapoowoodsed@gmail.com); 608-479-0890 or Scott Walter, KWC Board member.

**WANTED:** Small logs for mushroom production. We'd like to offer the mushroom inoculation workshop this spring, but for this we need 3 to 5 inch diameter logs 42 inches long. White oak is best, but other oaks and ironwood will also work, but they must be fresh. If you are cutting this winter and can provide some, the co-op will pay one dollar per log. Please contact Jackie Yocum, [kickapoowoodsed@gmail.com](mailto:kickapoowoodsed@gmail.com), phone 608-479-0890.



Kü-lē Region Forestry, Inc.

Custom, Quality Forest & Land Management (608) 386-3904 La Crosse, WI

## ***KWC Education: Passing the Torch***

by Lila Marmel

It seems unbelievable that I am stepping away from my role as Education Coordinator for the Kickapoo Woods Cooperative. My tenure in that position since 2002 has been rich, full of learning about the natural world, which I love, and meeting the wonderful members and staff of the KWC, very rewarding. As soon as the KWC Board realized that Thomas, our forester, was spending time in the office that would be better spent in the field, they began crafting a job description that included my responsibilities plus some time in the office supporting Thomas' work. They presented it to me, hoping I would apply. But with new medical challenges, and the possibility of some paid work in another field I am passionate about, for Ridge and Valley Restorative Justice, I was not sure I would apply.

The board found energetic, young Jackie Yocum to take the position, and Jackie and I are working on a smooth transition.

When I began doing contract work for the KWC, I was the hired pen taking meeting notes for a group of woodland owners concerned about the degraded quality of our forests after decades of high-grade timber harvesting removed the finest trees. Now 15 years later, KWC is a strong co-op with more than 450 members managing 40,000 acres, with our own forester, and many allies among those in the timber industry and the government agencies as well. The educational mission was drafted along with the mission to provide forest management services. With services and information available, landowners would be able to make the choices to manage their woodlands sustainably, and assure that quality forest products, as well as healthy, biodiverse woodland communities will continuously improve into the future.

Landowners understood the need and have responded positively. From my experience, most KWC members are thoughtful, lifelong learners who want to leave a legacy of healthy, vibrant woodlands. It has been my honor to try to facilitate those thoughtful choices with information, skills, and hands-on practice for landowners. I am still a mem-



## ***Hi Everyone!***

I would like to take a minute and a few paragraphs of this newsletter to introduce myself. My name is Jackie Yocum and I am the new KWC Education and Events Coordinator. I am very excited to be part of the positive opportunities the KWC is working toward. I look forward to continuing the hard work that Lila has done over the years, and to bringing some new ideas and programs to KWC Education Program.

I live on 10 acres in rural Viola, with my family. I was born and raised in the Kickapoo Valley and I love that I get to raise my children here. My husband is an OTR truck driver. My son is a Junior at Viterbo University. He is a broad field Social Studies Education major and looks forward to teaching Middle and High School History. My daughter is a Sophomore at Kickapoo High School and is active in sports, band and choir. She aspires to become a Photojournalist. Our other family members are furry and we all share in the joy of our pets, large and small. My daughter's animal of choice besides the dogs is her Llamas.

In my free time I enjoy hiking, horseback riding, kayaking, cross country skiing and just being outdoors. In 2005 I discovered my true passion after taking a 3 day class on trail building. I earned a master trail builder certificate and have recently started the extensive application process for membership to the PTBA (Professional Trail Builders Association). I have done trail work all across Wisconsin and also in North & South Carolina and Georgia.

I have worked at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve since 2009 and in the summer months you will find me on the trails of the KVR, build-




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### ***Passing the Torch, continued***

ber and hope to participate in future KWC events and meetings, so I look forward to seeing you there. Jackie is well-positioned to take up this work, and has written her own introduction. Watch for her emails and check out the new KWC facebook page.

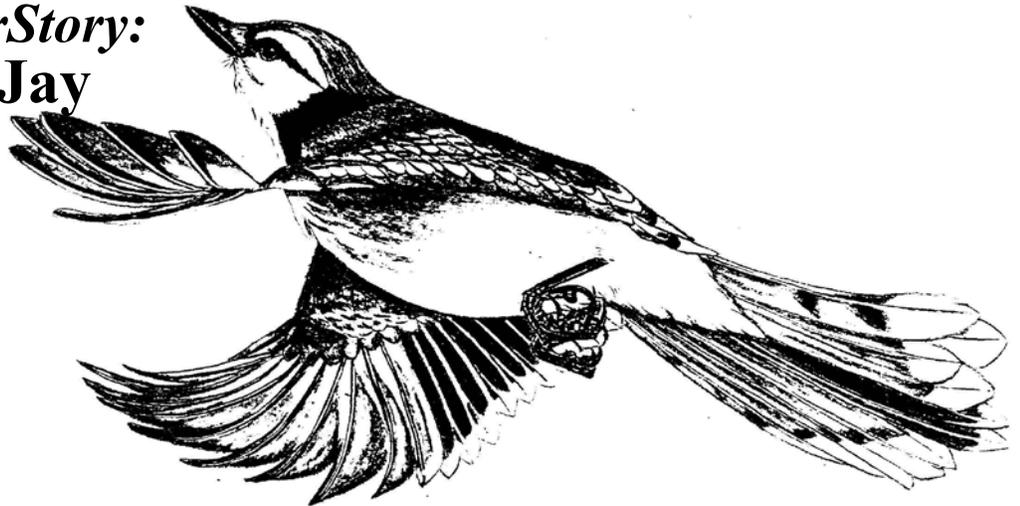
## *Exploring the UnderStory:* **The Blue Jay**

by Ken Workowski

In this issue, I write for you about a bird we are all familiar with and I suspect many of you, like me, have a love-hate relationship with. That bird is the noisy and rowdy Blue Jay.

If you have a bird feeder you probably get somewhat irritated when you hear and see a few noisy Blue Jays come into the feeder and scatter the other birds away like bullies on a playground. But this is mostly because they are bigger than many other birds at the feeder. Other larger birds like woodpeckers, grackles and doves scatter the smaller birds as well. Blue Jays are actually good neighbors with their woodland counterparts because of their loud voices and their attention to what is going on around them. They warn everyone of potential danger in the area.

Blue Jays have a large vocabulary. They whistle, peep, squack, mew, buzz, twitter, click, clack and cluck. They imitate all kinds of sounds from a cat's meow to a screech owl's whinny. I am always



Dan Hazlett  
1995

impressed when I hear a Red-tailed Hawk call and upon looking for the hawk, I discover a Blue Jay making the sound.

When nesting time comes around both the male and female pitch in. Most generally the male collects the materials and the female builds the nest. I observed this a couple of years ago when a pair chose to build their nest about 20 ft from our living room window. I discovered it when it was about half built and we would watch as the presumed male would bring in a twig and the presumed

*Blue Jay, continued on page 6*

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### *Hi Everyone!, continued*

ing and maintaining them. I truly love what I do! In the winter months I am an office associate at the KVR and am a member of support staff for the Education and Events Coordinators.

Through all of that, here I am, passionate about conservation, especially in the Driftless Region and very excited to share in the education and promotion of stewardship of our lands and waters. I want my children and their children and beyond to have amazing opportunities to experience the natural world that surrounds us and that we are lucky enough to call home.

I would like to thank the KWC Board for this amazing opportunity to assist them in providing quality educational programming to the public and members of the Kickapoo Woods Cooperative.

I encourage you to contact me with any questions, thoughts or education programming ideas. See you in the woods!

Jackie  
kickapoowoodsed@gmail.com  
608-479-0890 (cell)

*Blue Jay, continued from page 5*

female would sit on the nest edge and place the twig. She would then snuggle down in the center and shift the material into place with her body and feet. About the time she seemed to be happy with the position of things he would show up with another twig or piece of grass. Once the eggs are laid the female incubates the eggs, rarely leaving the nest. The male's job is to feed the female which is a treat to be able to observe. After the eggs hatch, the male is kept very busy as he is the sole provider of food for the female and the chicks. After about a week the female starts to share in providing food for the young. After 17 to 21 days, the young learn to fly and then leave the nest. Family groups usually stay together all summer long.

Blue Jays are what I will call occasional migrators. Research has shown that one winter particular birds migrate south and other winters they may stay in their summer grounds. To survive our Wisconsin winters, Blue Jays have to cache their food. One of their favorite foods are acorns. They have a specialized pouch in their esophagus and upper throat. They are able to carry 4 or 5 acorns at once. As they collect the acorns, they examine each one for holes which would indicate that there is a bug larvae inside eating the meat of the nut. These are discarded. They might transfer acorns up to 3 miles away. Most typically they cache these acorns on the ground under leaves or pound them, with their beaks, into the soft earth to be retrieved later. In one study, six birds, fitted with radio transmitters, each cached 3,000 to 5,000 acorns in about 3 weeks. Blue Jays have exceptional memories. Researchers have found that the part of the brain that recalls places and directions is larger and more developed in Blue Jays than in birds that don't cache food. Naturally the birds don't recall and find every nut they cache. So to some degree they serve to plant and spread oak trees over the landscape. Over the years, as I have observed and learned more about this regal bird, I

**Member Profile: Duane Koons**

When family doctor Duane Koons had three patients in a week tell him he should be a tree farmer, he began to listen. He and his wife Maureen O'Connor have owned and enjoyed their 96 acres since 1990, but the distractions of establishing his medical practice and raising a family did not leave time for work in their woodlands.

Now that their children have all grown up and left home, Duane is ready to open his mind to the bigger scale of thinking about trees, and spend time

outdoors working with them. Pine plantings that were there when they bought it have grown, so he has been thinning them and making brush piles for wildlife. They have enjoyed seeing weasels in both the brown



and white phases, and finding their tracks around a brush pile. Duane began cutting box elders thinking to eradicate them, but when he noticed that the grass was thinner under the trees, he left some, figuring there would be less competition for the sugar maples he would like to plant there.

Duane and Maureen's land is along the Mississippi flyway for migrating birds, so he plans to reforest some open areas to increase habitat for interior

*continued on next page*

have gained much admiration and respect for their place in our ecosystem. Maybe after reading this, you too might see the Blue Jays in a better light and get a smile instead of a frown as they fly to your feeder.

forest birds. Duane gathered walnuts last fall and planted 550; and also plans to plant swamp white oak and red maple across a low, wet area. Duane would like his forestry operation to be self-sustaining, so he will plan on harvests, probably in his small black locust clone, and he is enrolling in the managed forest law this year, so he will see those tax benefits. Duane has also been working on establishing trails so he will have access to the land with his truck. He is on the board of Vernon Trails, and actually met KWC forester Thomas Wyse on a trail building project.

Having joined KWC in 2014, Duane has been very appreciative of forester Thomas Wyse's patience in answering his many questions on a wide range of topics including both the science and craft of forestry. He also likes contracting with an organization that has goals about forest stewardship more than profit motive. And he is looking forward to meeting more KWC members, others with similar interests. He would like to see the co-op expand its educational mission to provide workshops on more different topics relating to land management.

The Kickapoo Sustainable Post is produced 4 times per year. Subscriptions are free to members. Kickapoo Woods Cooperative, PO Box 71, La Farge WI 54639. Forester is Thomas Wyse, 608-606-5815; our office is at 110 Main St, Viroqua; [kwc@mwt.net](mailto:kwc@mwt.net). Editing design, and layout by Lila Marmel, [sunmoon@mwt.net](mailto:sunmoon@mwt.net). Submissions for the Spring 2015 issue go to Jackie Yocum, [kickapoowoodsed@gmail.com](mailto:kickapoowoodsed@gmail.com); 608-479-0890

Classified Ad

**For Sale:**

Super winch Terra 35  
 3500 pound pull winch  
 for ATV or UTV  
 New in box  
 \$125.

Used Tree Tubes, about 300, 4' and 5' long, \$2.50 ea.  
 David Van Dyke 608-689-2391

**Become a member and enjoy:**

- Free woods walk to evaluate your forest
- Information, support and education.
- Member service and discounts.

**Thank You!**

I want to join the Kickapoo Woods Co-op.  
 \_\_\_ Enclosed is \$200. for membership stock.  
 \_\_\_ Voting                      \_\_\_ Associate

In addition, I would like to:  
 \_\_\_ Make a donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_ Work on a committee  
 \_\_\_ Offer a skill to support the co-op's work:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Please print.  
 Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City State Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address of woodland property if different:

\_\_\_\_\_

Total acres \_\_\_\_\_ Forested acres \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_

Township \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a management plan?  
 \_\_\_ Yes: MFL \_\_\_ Stewardship \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_  
 \_\_\_ No: I need one \_\_\_ What is it? \_\_\_\_\_



Kickapoo Woods Cooperative  
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[kickapoowoods.org](http://kickapoowoods.org)

**The mission of the Kickapoo Wood Cooperative is to provide sustainable forestry education, management and marketing services to residents of the Kickapoo Valley and neighboring watersheds.**

## Events Coming Up

These events are in the planning stages for the months ahead. Watch for more information in the local papers, on our website or from our email list.

Feb 28 - Noon-4pm Winter Woods Walk: Tree ID and winter wildlife by horse drawn sleigh.. Location to be announced.

March 28 - KWC Member Gathering. More info on page 2.

April 10-11 - Chainsaw Safety level 1&2



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