On May 6, over 30 participants spent the morning with Dr. Andrew Miller (far left) from the Illinois Natural History Survey learning about mushroom classification and identification at Kennekuk County Park.

“To assure our people permanent access to their outdoor heritage”
This has been an exciting spring for the VCCD. The Board of Trustees approved a $1M alternative bond issue that was finalized at the May board meeting. We have just completed our 50th Anniversary and much infrastructure needs to be addressed. This includes re-surfacing over 50% of our roads, updating electrical and water service, replacing or expanding sanitary systems, re-roofing buildings, installing energy efficient windows, repairing Willow Creek dam spillway, and much more. We do much of our work in-house with our talented staff. Therefore, we are purchasing either new or used equipment to get these projects completed. This includes new mowers, a larger excavator, an endloader, and utility tractors. We are also replacing some of our aging vehicles and will purchase a new dump truck. To fill our own pot holes, we are purchasing a machine similar to the ones used by our local highway departments. The bond is on a 10-year retirement schedule and will be paid with our Corporate Property Replacement Tax funds.

Also, at the May meeting, we approved our budget for the fiscal year 2017-2018. All of our funds will have healthy year-ending cash balances.

Our spring rains cancelled most of our spring prairie burns, but we were will able to complete many spring projects to spruce up our parks for the upcoming summer season. The Lake Vermilion boat concession is now open, summer camps begin, and our historic buildings and nature centers are being staffed by volunteers on Sundays. On May 23, we had our annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner. Why not consider volunteering for any number of available opportunities and take part in this annual event? It’s easy! Just call any of our park office for details.

Check out our website for the calendar of our summer events, such as the French and Indian War Reenactment on July 13, and our VCC Foundation’s Cheeseburgers and Fun on August 12. We are also planning an activity for the August 21 total solar eclipse. So, please enjoy your county parks this summer! We apologize for any construction activity that you may encounter, but don’t let that keep you from having a great time!
"Cheeseburgers and FUN"

Sponsored By

SATURDAY

AUGUST 12

KENNEKUK COUNTY PARK
DANVILLE, IL

NO COVER CHARGE!
DONATIONS GLADLY ACCEPTED FOR
KENNEKUK EDUCATION CENTER

LIVE BANDS

Featuring:
- RODMAN RAIL 2 - 4 P.M.
- LEFT 4 DEAD 5-7 p.m.
- LADY LUCK 8-10 p.m.

At 3:00 p.m.

CHEESEBURGER COOKOUT
burgers, chips, soda ~ $6.00
For more information call 217-442-1691

PLUS

10th Annual Bunker Hill Run
- On Display 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
- Antique, Muscle Cars,
  Hot Rods & Antique Tractors
  Cruise-in!

RAFFLES!
PRIZES!

VERMILION VOLES VINTAGE BASEBALL JAMBOREE ~ NOON
June

3 Public Hayride 7:00 p.m. meet at Forest Glen Staff Office parking lot. $1/person fee
3 Illini Bass Club & D.A.R.E. Kid’s Fishing Derby, Horseshoe Pond, Kennekuk; 9 a.m. Free!
5 VCCD Wildlife Programs begin for 9 weeks at Vermilion County Libraries. Free!
Call your local library for info or see our article on page
6 Toddling Into Nature Camp “Whoo-hoo Likes Owls” – open to ages 3-5 yrs.;
10 a.m. or 2 p.m. Preregistration & fee required, registration form online at vccd.org
or at staff offices
8 Toddling Into Nature Camp “Whoo-hoo Likes Owls” – open to ages 3, 4, 5 yrs.;
10 a.m. only. Preregistration & fee required, registration form online at vccd.org
or at staff offices
9 Vermilion County Conservation Foundation Board Meeting, 9 a.m., Kennekuk
13 Pioneer Kids Camp at Forest Glen 1st–3rd Grade; 9:30 a.m.–11:30 a.m.;
Preregistration & fee required, registration form online at vccd.org or at staff offices
13 Toddling Into Nature Camp “Investigating for Wildlife” – open to ages 3-5 yrs.;
10 a.m. or 2 p.m. Preregistration & fee required, registration form online at vccd.org
or at staff offices
14 Pioneer Kids Camp at Forest Glen 1st–3rd Grade; 9:30 a.m.–11:30 a.m.;
Preregistration & fee required, registration form online at vccd.org or at staff offices
14 VCCD Board Meeting at Gannett Education Center, 4:30 p.m.; Forest Glen.
Public Invited.
15 Toddling Into Nature Camp “Investigating for Wildlife” – open to ages 3-5 yrs.;
10 a.m. only. Preregistration & fee required, registration form online at vccd.org
or at staff offices
28 Photographing Nature Camp at Kennekuk Education Center; 5th-10th Grade;
Preregistration & fee required, registration form online at vccd.org or at staff offices
July
1 Public Hayride at Forest Glen; 7 p.m. Meet at Staff Office parking lot. $1/person
8 Spinners & Weavers Day, Forest Glen, Gannet Center; 10 a.m.- 4 p.m. Free!
11 Creek Stomping Ecology Camp at Forest Glen Gannett Education Center; 5th – 8th Grade; Preregistration & fee required, registration form online at vccd.org or at staff offices
13 Wonder Bugs Camp at Kennekuk; K – 2nd Grade; 9 – 11:30 a.m. Preregistration & fee required, registration form online at vccd.org or at staff offices
15-16 French and Indian War Re-enactment, Forest Glen Homestead Cabin. Free!
16 Forest Glen Preserve Whitetail Archery Deer Hunt Lottery Draw
For more information, call Gary Wilford 260-4637
18 Science in Nature Camp; 2nd - 5th Grade; Kennekuk Education Center. Preregistration & fee required, registration form online at vccd.org or at staff offices
19 VCCD Board Meeting at Kennekuk Environmental Education Center, 4:30 p.m.; Public Invited

August
4 Vermilion County Conservation Foundation Board Meeting, 9 a.m., Kennekuk
5 Public Hayride; 7 p.m. Meet at Forest Glen Staff Office parking lot. $1/person Fee
6-11 VCCD Wildlife Display at the Georgetown Fair – Come visit us!
12 VCC Foundation “Cheesburgers & Fun” at Bunker Hill Historic Area. Live bands, antique car show & entertainment. Call 442-1691 for details
16 VCCD Board Meeting at Kennekuk Environmental Education Center, 4:30 p.m.; Public Invited
21 Solar Eclipse Program; Kennekuk Education Center. For more info call Kennekuk at 442-1691

VCCD Wildlife Literacy Program coming to your local library this summer!
The learning program “Designs in Nature” will be coming to your local library from the VCCD this summer! This presentation is for everyone, but especially school age children. This traveling exhibit will be set up at your library on the dates below and will conclude with a presentation from a staff naturalist. Schedules are subject to change, please call the library for hours and exact program times.

June 5-12 Hoopeston Public Library, Program on Monday, June 12 at 2:00pm
June 12-19 Westville Public Library, Program on Monday, June 19 at 10:00am
June 19-26 Potomac Public Library, Program on Monday, June 26 at 1:30pm
June 26-30 Catlin Public Library, Programs on Tuesday, June 27 at 1:00pm and Wednesday, June 28 at 1:00pm
June 30-July 10 Georgetown Public Library, Program on Monday, July 10 at 1:30pm
July 10-17 Danville Public Library, Program on Monday, July 17 at 1:30pm
July 17-24 Oakwood Public Library, Program on Monday, July 24 at 1:30pm
July 24-31 Sidell Public Library, Program on Monday, July 31, Time TBA
August 8-11 Vance Township Library, Program on Friday, August 11th at 3:00pm
The following people gave monetary donations in the memory of Lorna J. Konsis. Thank you all very much, we are greatly touched by this tribute in her name. Donations will be earmarked to the Vermilion County Conservation Foundation for the Kickapoo Rail Trail Project, or to the Vermilion County Conservation District.

Aqua Illinois, Vermilion County Division
Jean M. Beck
Sue Ellen Beck
Allen and Ann Cooke
William and Linda Dreffein
Russ Hiatt
Illinois Native Plant Society
Kennekuk Road Runners
Terry and Donna Light
Darrell and Margaret Light
Bob and Joyce Miles
Bert and Janetta Nicholson
Linda S. Sedlock
Glenn and Kathleen Shirley
Punk and Shirley Thompson
Lloyd Wiesemann

The Kindergarten class, left, from Liberty Elementary School, Danville, dodged the rain on their April 28 field trip for a forest exploration hike, tour of the Education Center, and scavenger hunt at Kennekuk County Park. One kid exclaimed, "I love hiking in the woods!"

Thank you Liberty Elementary School for letting the students visit us for a field trip!

For up-to-date information on programs, nature news, events, and more, be sure to visit www.vccd.org and like us on our Facebook page under “Vermilion County Conservation District”

You can contact us at:

Kennekuk County Park
22296 Hemning Road, Danville IL, 61834
217-442-1691

Forest Glen Preserve
20301 E. 900 North Road, Westville, IL 61883
217-662-2142

Email us at vccd@vccd.org
“What is the White Tower of Boxes on the north side of the entrance road at Kennekuk County Park?”

This is a research project by a student from the Illinois Natural History Survey. The white tower provides nesting boxes for chimney swift birds. The project is an experiment on nest box design thinking that a tower of boxes will provide cooling of the bird nests in the heat of summer. Previous single nest boxes were too hot and the birds did not nest successfully. You can also find the white towers at Allerton Park in Monticello, several Urbana Park District properties, as well as other locations which are all part of the same study.

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Do you have a question about the Vermilion County Conservation District, but never bothered to ask? Whether it is general, park maintenance, conservation education, administration, research projects, or more, this section is for you! Simply send your question to our park headquarters or email us at vccd@vccd.org. We will print what space will allow without revealing your name. All questions will be personally answered even if not selected for the newsletter.

“Friends of the District”
Thank you!

Jessica Runner, Looker’s Division - Songbirds Essentials, Milford, IL - Donation of Screech Owl and Wood Duck nesting boxes

Mary Sue Moulder - Donation of antique telephone for Neff Grocery Store

Tawna Bortley, Georgetown, IL - Monetary donation in the memory of Bill

Charlotte Jones, Georgetown, IL - Monetary donation in the memory of Bill

Henning Civic Woman's Club, Potomac, IL - Monetary donation towards the Outdoor School Education Program

Keith Hunter, Wadsworth, IL - Donation of three microscopes for the Outdoor School Education Program

Brian Wallen, Champaign, IL - Donation of telescope for the Kennekuk Environmental Education Center
VCCD Executive Director Ken Konsis
Honored by Westville High School

Ken Konsis, the executive director of the VCCD since 1992, will be inducted into the Westville High School Wall of Fame in June, at the annual WHS Alumni Banquet. Ken is a 1970 graduate of Westville High School and then received his A.S. from Danville Junior College (now DACC), and then earned a B.S. in forestry from Southern Illinois University. He began seasonal work with the VCCD in 1972 and full time in 1974. He has been with the District in some capacity ever since.

Ken has been, and still is, active in numerous local, state, and national organizations. Locally, he strives to make Vermilion County a better place to live. He acknowledges that none of this would be possible without the guidance of his wife Lorna, who passed away in February, and everyone's support throughout his career.

It's Almost Monarch Season Again!

Make sure you visit your county parks this summer to watch for the return of the Monarch Butterfly as they migrate back from Mexico. Photos at right show the egg, caterpillar, and adult stage.

For more information, and to track their northerly migration, visit https://www.learner.org/jnorth/monarch/
Vermilion County 6th grade students with their instructors, mentors, and parent volunteers for this year’s Conservation Olympics gathered at Forest Glen Preserve on Friday, May 12, 2017. This valuable educational program is now in its 33rd year. Fourteen teams representing seven schools participated in this year’s series of the VCCD’s Olympic events. They were: Salt Fork Junior High (3 teams), Judith Giacoma (Westville) (4 teams), Mary Miller Jr. High (Georgetown-Ridge Farm), Oakwood Elementary (3 teams), Potomac Elementary, Rossville-Alvin, and Schlarman Academy (Danville).

The instructors prepared the students well over the past few months, and it was evident as they competed in nine events. Each event tested the student’s knowledge concerning state and county natural heritage. The students were awarded 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place medals in each individual event and each team’s event scores were totaled and the following teams were awarded plaques.

1st place Salt Fork - Team Lightning
2nd place Oakwood - Team Johnson
3rd place Oakwood - Team Moore
4th place Salt Fork - Team Thunder
5th place Salt Fork - Team Storm
Gary L. Wilford Sporstmanship Award Judith Giacoma - Team Anderson

Thank you goes out to VCCD volunteers Jonathan Myers, the Ken Hannan Family, and Betsy Daily and her students from Georgetown-Ridge Farm High School for assisting VCCD Staff with the day's events. A special note of gratitude to Perry Jaynes, VCCD Trustee, for sponsoring the award medals again this year. We also want to send out a special thanks to those wonderful 6th grade Conservation Olympic teachers whose time and efforts are invaluable to the program’s success.
My name is Nick Jeurissen and it is an honor to have been selected as your new naturalist and environmental educator. While I did grow up in Champaign, my brothers and I spent many summer days running through the woods and wading the rivers of Vermilion County as children. In fact, I would credit this area for establishing my curiosity to explore the world. After high school, I enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. Over time I obtained the rank of sergeant, fulfilled my contract, and received my honorable discharge. The infantry battalion I belonged to, Weapons Company 1st Bn. 8th Mar. Reg. 2nd Mar. Div., was deployed all over the world. My experiences overseas definitely helped shape my understanding of how fortunate we are to live in America. I am very grateful that we have such amazing places, like Forest Glen and Kennekuk, for our children to play and learn, as well as for all of us to relieve the stress life hands us each day.

After the service, I attended the University of Illinois and graduated with highest honors in Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences with a concentration in Resource Conservation and Restoration Ecology. In other words, I learned how to maintain, restore, and protect our land and the wildlife that call it home. While attaining my degree I worked in the forest ecology lab as well as the assistant to the natural areas coordinator. Each day spent managing the universities natural areas allowed me to experience firsthand and discuss the latest research being conducted in wildlife, plants, soil, and water.

One of my goals as an instructor is to teach the children and public of Vermilion County about what lies within their own county parks. I have found over this last month that the Vermilion County Conservation District staff excels in achieving this goal through multiple programs such as Outdoor School, Conservation Olympics, and several summer camp opportunities. It is amazing to meet parents that recall when they too participated in one of these programs as a child.

My family feels very blessed to be given this opportunity. I will do my best to carry on the legacy that many others have dedicated their lives to building. I look forward to meeting all of you that hold our parks dear to your heart.
New Plans for Bunker Hill Historic Area’s Herb Garden

Coming very soon to the herb garden at the Bunker Hill Historic Area at Kennekuk County Park will be a new Native American Garden.

The garden bed, one of ten in the herb garden, will feature herbs and plants grown or foraged by native people in the Midwest to use as food, medicine, and many other things.

After much research by our Master Gardener volunteer crew, a plant list was developed and the search is on going to source the many and varied plants. A guide book will be available specifically for the new bed. Come visit often to see the garden grow and change.

As for the rest of the garden, plants are coming up nicely and the annuals are being planted. Here is a recipe to get you in the summer mood, it calls for fresh squash and basil.

Baked Ziti with Summer Vegetables
active: 25 minutes, total: 50 minutes

Serves 8

1 lb. uncooked ziti pasta 2 1/2 lb. yellow squash and zucchini, sliced into 1/2-inch-thick rounds and half-moons
2 pt. red grape tomatoes 3 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, divided
2 garlic cloves, minced 1 tsp. black pepper, divided
2 tsp. kosher salt, divided 2 oz. Romano cheese, grated (about 1/2 cup)
2 cups ricotta cheese 1 tsp. white wine vinegar
1/3 cup chopped fresh basil 6 oz. mozzarella cheese, shredded (about 1 1/2 cups)
1 (12 oz.) jar marinara sauce Fresh basil leaves

1. Cook pasta in salted water according to package directions. Drain and cool slightly, about 10 minutes.

2. While pasta cooks, preheat broiler with oven rack 6 inches from heat. Toss together squash, zucchini, tomatoes, garlic, 2 tablespoons of the oil, 1 teaspoon of the salt, and 1/2 teaspoon of the pepper on an aluminum foil-lined rimmed baking sheet. Spread in a single layer; broil until charred and tender, about 10 minutes.

3. Preheat oven 350 degrees F. Stir together ricotta, Romano, basil, vinegar, and remaining 1 tablespoon oil, 1 teaspoon salt, and 1/2 teaspoon pepper in a small bowl.

4. Combine pasta, cooked vegetables, and marinara sauce in a large bowl; gently stir to combine. Spoon half of pasta mixture into a 13x9 inch baking dish. Dollop 1 cup of ricotta mixture evenly on pasta mixture. Repeat with remaining pasta mixture and ricotta mixture. Top evenly with mozzarella.

5. Bake at 350 degrees F until lightly browned and bubbly, about 25 minutes. Let stand 5 minutes before serving. Sprinkle with basil.

From Southern Living
The mission of the Vermilion County Conservation Foundation is to support the efforts of the Vermilion County Conservation District through the conservation of our natural resources, improvement of natural and scenic areas, scientific research, support of conservation education to citizens of Vermilion County, Illinois, and maintenance and support of capital projects to promote historical and natural preservation. The Foundation aspires to be an organization which is committed to all natural and wildlife resource conservation activities which ensure future growth, and scenic enhancements for public use. If you would like to join us, please use the form below, selecting the level of membership that is right for you.

$25  Regular  
$50  Supporting  
$100  Patron  
$1,000 Life - Payable in up to four installments, if preferred

Name: ________________________________________________________________________________________________________
Address: ______________________________________________________________________________________________________
City, State, Zip: _______________________________________________________________________________________________
Telephone: __________________________ Email: ____________________________________________________

Enclose this form with your tax-deductible check payable to VCCF and send to:  
VCCF c/o Forest Glen Preserve, 20301 E. 900 North Road, Westville, IL 61883