The Boys and Girls Club of Danville had a summer field trip at Kennekuk County Park on July 7, 2017. Over 100 kids enjoyed a hayride, a tour of the BHHA Herb Garden, and fishing!

“To assure our people permanent access to their outdoor heritage”
Director’s Dateline

Work is progressing with all of our projects and vehicle and equipment purchases. We have replaced windows and doors at the Kennekuk Visitor Center and Hideaway. The Gannett Center at Forest Glen has a new HVAC system, while the Visitor Center at Kennekuk has a geo-thermal heating and cooling system installed. We have purchased an excavator, tractors, mowers, pick-up trucks, dump truck, and a variety of sizes of trailers. One of the most important pieces of equipment that we have purchased is a road patching machine. Now, we will be able to do our own road maintenance. We also will be sealing over 50% of our roads and parking lots at all four county parks.

We hope that you were able to attend some of our summer programs and events, especially our solar eclipse viewing party. We had 350 people on hand that viewed the eclipse and watched a live NASA feed from various locations across the country. It was a gorgeous day. More events are scheduled for this fall, including the fall session of Outdoor School. Check out all the events in this issue on page 4.

August 27, 2017 was a very emotional day for me. The Vermilion County Conservation Foundation and some of my Forest Glen staff members, planned a dedication and re-naming of the Staff Office Building at Forest Glen for my wife, Lorna, without me knowing about it until much later. Lorna worked in that office building for 30 years and I know that she is very honored and I am so proud of her. On a personal note, I purchased a sponsorship in her name for the native hardwood section of the Michael G. Reddy Arboretum. She was much involved in the arboretum.

I invite everyone to visit the newly named Lorna J. Konsis Visitor Center and also the arboretum this fall.

VCCD Staff Members
Susan Biggs-Warner and Nick Jeurissen hand out Solar Eclipse glasses on August 21 at the Kennekuk Environmental Education Center.
On a beautiful Sunday afternoon, the Forest Glen Staff Office was officially dedicated as the Lorna J. Konsis Visitor Center in memory of long-time VCCD employee Lorna Konsis. Over 300 people attended the dedication, with a welcome presentation by Gordon Thoennes, Chairman of the Vermilion County Conservation Foundation. Ken Konsis, executive director of the VCCD, gave thanks to the VCC Foundation and the staff committee who organized the dedication without his knowledge. He was also moved by the many people in attendance that came from such distances as Grand Rapids, Michigan, Chicago, Iowa, Carbondale, and many parts of Illinois and Indiana. Ken also presented a personal check to the VCCF for the purpose of placing the funds in a dedicated account for purpose of maintaining the Visitor Center. Soon, there will be a Lorna J. Konsis Memorial Foundation, a 501(c)3 organization in place that will be able to accept donations for the maintenance of the Visitor Center.

The LJK Visitor Center has its place in history, formally knows as the “Jenkins Place,” but was built on land first settled by Kinzer Dickerson in 1828. This 160-acre farm also included the present Audubon Barn, which was re-built after a fire. Ownership of the property changed hands many times over the years. In 1938, Andrew and Wanetta Mikel purchased the home and property and lived there until the land became part of Forest Glen Preserve. The house was first used as a nature center, then became the offices for the Naturalist and Secretarial staff at Forest Glen.

Also during the dedication, Ken Konsis presented a personal check for $5,060 to VCCD board president Jonathan Myers, for sponsorship of the Illinois Native hardwood section of the Michael G. Reddy Arboretum in Lorna’s name.
Fall Programs and Activities

September
2  Public Hayride at Forest Glen; 6 p.m. Meet at LJK Visitor Center parking lot. $1/person Fee
11 Outdoor School begins at Forest Glen & Kennekuk for 8 weeks for area 4th & 5th graders.
16 Wool Dyeing Demonstration, Forest Glen Homestead Cabin; 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Free!
20 VCCD Board Meeting at Gannett Education Center, 4:30 p.m.; Forest Glen - Public Invited
23 Haunted Happenings Advance Ticket Sales begin at noon, Visitor Center, Kennekuk. Sales continue while tickets last! Limited number of tickets available for Haunted Happenings!!
23 Pioneer Craft Day, 10 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.; Homestead Cabin area, Forest Glen, Free!
23–24 Revolutionary War Re-enactment, 10 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.; Homestead Cabin area, Forest Glen, Free!
24 Autumn Seasonal Hike, 9 a.m., Lookout Point Trail, Kennekuk. No Pre-registration is needed. For more information, call Lara at 442-1691. Free!

October
7  Public Hayride at Forest Glen; 6 p.m. Meet at Staff Office parking lot. $1/person Fee
13 Vermilion County Conservation Foundation Board Meeting, 9 a.m., Kennekuk
18 VCCD Board Meeting at Kennekuk Environmental Ed. Center, 4:30 p.m.; Public Invited
21 Haunted Happenings at Kennekuk; gates open at 6 p.m.; tickets required

November
5  Thanksgiving at the Pioneer Homestead Cabin, 1 – 4 p.m., Forest Glen, Free!
15 VCCD Board Meeting at Kennekuk Environmental Education Center, 4:30 p.m.; Public Invited
4 Ways to Get the Kids Outside This Fall

By Cole Craft

1. Take a walk through our Arboretum at Forest Glen Preserve and have the kids collect a couple seeds from the trees. By using our Arboretum guide, that is available at the Lorna J. Konsis Visitor Center, you can easily identify the trees in which you are collecting seed. Put the seeds in small Ziploc bags and write the name of the tree down on the bag with a sharpie. When you get home go online and research how to plant the seeds you have and how to get them to germinate in the spring. In the spring when you have a bunch of seedlings growing you can plant them in your yard somewhere or even give them away to friends and family as gifts!

2. Spend an evening out at Heron County Park. The park is located on the north side of Lake Vermilion and is a very unique habitat for our area. This fall and winter you can expect so many different types of birds as they migrate through the area on their way south. Don’t forget to bring a pair of binoculars!

3. Hunting season is just beginning and it is a great time to introduce kids to what it’s all about. Dove hunting was always my favorite as a kid because the temperatures are usually enjoyable and I didn’t have to sit still and be quiet the whole time. Other seasons fast approaching are early goose and teal, archery deer, youth waterfowl, and youth deer hunting. Check your season dates by going to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources website or pick up a hunting regulations manual at a local store or at Forest Glen and Kennekuk’s Visitor Centers.

4. Go for a hike. Both Forest Glen and Kennekuk offer many trails to explore. With the cool temperatures, hiking will be enjoyable and the changing of the tree leaves are always beautiful to see. Lara Darling will be leading an Autumn Seasonal Hike at Kennekuk’s Look-Out Point Trail on September 24 at 9am where participants will look for seasonal mushrooms, flowers, colors, and more!

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 Henning 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
Well, the summer season is showing signs of winding down. The morning air feels crisp and the yard doesn’t need mowed as often. It won’t be long before the leaves begin to lose their chlorophyll and display the amazing colors that lie hidden behind the green.

I decided it was only fitting as a naturalist to write my first article for the Conservationist deep in the woods of Forest Glen Preserve. So I grabbed my backpack and headed out into the heart of the preserve. The crisscrossing of spider webs across the trail can be frustrating this time of year, however a small branch makes for a good spider stick to keep those pesky webs at bay. I’m reminded of my older brother J.B., first referring to one species of these orb weavers as backpack spiders. The thorny spiked bumps on the raised abdomen give the appearance of the spider wearing a backpack. Their true names though are spined micrathena spiders (shown at left), and those thorny, spiked bumps are a deterrent to potential predators looking for a snack. I think backpack spiders are a much better description though.

After stopping to take a few pictures of vibrant orange mycena mushrooms (right), I continued my hike past the scenic overlook of the Beech Loop Trail. Late summer and especially after a rain, the deep ravines seem almost tropical. The dense canopy shades the interior, making for dark, humid conditions. As I descended down the steep slope I came across an area where several ravines merge into one creek. Eventually, all creeks in Forest Glen feed into the Vermilion River. Large boulders, known as erratics, pepper the hill sides. Some of these rocks are exposing themselves for the first time in thousands of years, only thanks to the effects of gradual erosion. I found a nice hilltop, with a soft bed of moss intermixed with dark green Christmas ferns. A young slippery elm with a slight curve provided a great place to lean back. It’s almost as if it formed in this shape from repetition of people leaning against it over time. However, it’s more likely due to the effects of snow load. The ever present poison ivy bordered my perimeter daring me to brush against it. Poison ivy and I have an extensive history together. As a child I swear I just had to look in its direction and I would be covered in it. It never stopped me from coming back though. Fortunately, I developed a bit of immunity to it or I’m simply better at avoiding it now.

While I quietly sat there writing in my field book, my senses began to tune in with the sounds around me. Every now and then I could hear the breeze pushing its way through the canopy, long before it reached me and well after it passed by. The light wind also helps to keep the flying insects down. Dogday cicadas rhythmically sing in all directions broken up by an occasional bird call. I’m far enough out now that I don’t hear cars or even one of our tractors.
All of sudden I felt something crawl up my pant leg and back around into my boot. The culprit turned out to be a five-lined skink (right), one of two lizard species found at Forest Glen. This extremely fast reptile has a blue tail and is commonly seen sunning on propane tanks. I felt it before I could see it, so I was relieved when I discovered it was a skink and not a wolf spider!

As I reflect back on this summer I recall a day my son and I hiked out near this location. I was impressed with the biodiversity in flora as well as the variety of tracks we identified along the creek. One of the unique plants we came across during that hike was the Indian Pipe (shown below left), also known as the Ghost plant. This parasitic plant, with its white, almost translucent appearance, contains no chlorophyll, and grows in the dark interior of a climax beech-maple forest. A mutually beneficial symbiotic relationship exists between specific mycorrhizae fungi found in the soil and the roots of the American beech tree. The fine, threadlike, microscopic fungi called mycellia, form a mantle, or net, around the trees root system. The fungi get carbohydrates from the tree and in return, the mycelia increase the surface area of the root system, thus increasing the trees ability to obtain key nutrients and water it may not have been able to reach. However, the Indian Pipes roots attach itself to these fungi in a form of parasitism known as mycoheterotrophy, stealing its energy, giving nothing back in exchange.

Parasites have always intrigued me. Earlier this year the kids of Outdoor School kept finding what appeared to be small, hollow, green apples sporadically spread across the forest floor. What they were finding were oak apple galls formed by a parasitic cynipid wasp. This sparked their curiosity so we learned about some other common galls including the shingle oak galls, wool sower galls, and several different leaf galls.

Even after hiking in multiple directions at each of our county parks this year I have only scraped the surface of what exists to explore. I encourage you to do the same and come see for yourself what lies within your reach. My wife says I’m a new man since I started working for the Conservation District. I wake up excited to go to work and have stories and pictures to show my boys when I get home. It’s not just the park, but all the staff that make this such a wonderful place to be. I am surrounded by people that truly love what they do. There’s a song by Luke Bryan that says “If I could make a living walking in the woods, you could bet I’d be sitting pretty good, high on a hill looking at a field downwind.” I would have to say I am a testament to that.

Hopefully soon, I’ll see you in the woods,

Nick Jeurissen
District Naturalist and Environmental Educator

Try looking up where I was in the park:
Go to https://mynasadata.larc.nasa.gov/latitudelongitude-finder/
Use these GPS coordinates to find my location: latitude 40.0198 longitude -87.5675
Thank You to our wonderful sponsors and special friends of the District and Vermilion County Conservation Foundation. Without you, this event would not be possible!

**GOLD**

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WITY 980 AM

The Vermilion County Conservation Foundation would like to extend an additional THANK YOU to the Bismarck-Henning High School Devilette Squad for collecting roadside donations at the Cheeseburgers and Fun event on August 12. The donations help support VCCD education programs.
Summer Gardens at the Bunker Hill Historic Area
by Susan Biggs-Warner

Hopefully everyone has had time this summer to visit the gardens at the Bunker Hill Historical Area at Kennekuk County Park. The gardens are maintained by the Vermilion County Master Gardeners, and I cannot say enough great things about them. The Atwood Home landscaping and the herb garden each have a different group of volunteers but many do double duty and work in both gardens.

The Atwood Home has flower gardens and borders along with some herbs and a vegetable garden. The vegetables are harvested to share with a food bank. Across the road at the Herb Garden, the Master Gardeners have created a new Native American Garden with herbs that the First People across North America grew and used for food and medicine. A layout of the plants included in this bed are shown to the right. If you have not made it out, plan to visit the garden soon.

If you enjoy gardening and antique silver, mark your calendars for September 9, 2017 and visit the Douglas Discovery Garden in Danville. That day we will be helping visitors create herb vinegars to take home. The herbs for the vinegar will come from the garden with extras supplied by the Bunker Hill garden. Make sure you also visit the top notch primitives antique market at the park pavilion and the craft vendors scattered across the lawn.
Photographing Nature Camp

On June 28, eleven kids participated in the first Photographing Nature Camp. This introductory photography class covered basic digital camera operation, shot composition, lighting, and more taught by professional photographer, Rick Danzl. After lunch, the kids took their new knowledge out on a photo nature safari hike. We are proud to present their best photos here, making them official published photographers!

Layton Kincaid, 6th Grade, Danville, IL

Jenna Conrad, 8th Grade, Danville, IL

Eric Davis, 5th Grade, Danville, IL

Layton Kincaid, 6th Grade, Danville, IL

Lilly Krause, 6th Grade, Bismarck, IL

Cooper McCarty, 6th grade, Potomac, IL

Rayvn Davis, 7th Grade, Danville, IL

Lexie Krause, 6th Grade, Bismarck, IL
Oak Wilt Disease is an up and coming disease that many of you have probably never heard of. Oak Wilt is a fungal disease caused by the fungus Ceratocystis fagacearum. The fungus enters the tree and stops the flow of water and nutrients by plugging up the vascular system. All species of oak are susceptible to the disease. The disease is primarily spread by root-to-root contact. However, the disease can also be spread by the Nitidulid Beetle. The spores of the fungus on an infected oak will attach to the beetle and if the beetle flies to another oak that is uninfected, but has an open wound or cut, the disease has then been transmitted.

The symptoms of Oak Wilt are somewhat easy to identify. One symptom is an oily green appearance in the canopy, which soon turns a tan or red color. The second symptom is rapid defoliation of the tree with individual leaves displaying the symptoms stated previously. If it is possible, do not prune your oak trees between April and July, this results in a high chance of becoming infected, but it is not always feasible. Unfortunately at this time there is not much that can be done in the way of managing the disease. It is extremely fatal to oak trees and usually results in the loss of the tree. If you think you have lost a tree due to Oak Wilt Disease immediately cut the tree down and burn it or turn it into wood chips if possible. Burying the wood has also proven effective but it seems unrealistic to do that if the tree is very large. If you think that one of your oaks has the disease do some research online and if you are still uncertain, contact the Vermilion County Conservation District. They will be glad to help!
HAUNTED HAPPENINGS
Kenneuk County Park
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21
GATES OPEN AT 6:00 P.M.
Trail & Hayride begin at dark
LIMITED NUMBER OF TICKETS SOLD FOR THIS EVENT!
Tickets available beginning September 23
Advance Tickets $10 $15 Day of the Event
Guided tours down the HAUNTED TRAIL
TAKE A HAYRIDE into the darkness
ROAST your own HOT DOG
AND enjoy CHIPS & SODA
FOR THE VERY YOUNG -- KID'S TRAIL &
FUN, GAMES AT THE LAURY BARN
TICKETS AVAILABLE WHILE THEY LAST AT:
KENNEKUK VISITOR CENTER
FOREST GLEN PRESERVE
LATOZ HARDWARE
DANVILLE AREA CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

FOR MORE INFORMATION
call 217-442-1691
OR VISIT www.vccd.org
Kenneuk County Park is
located 5 miles west of Danville on Henning Road
REVOLUTIONARY WAR REENACTMENT
September 23 & 24
PIONEER CRAFT DAY
September 23
Forest Glen Preserve

SEPT. 23 ~ Watch, Learn & Try your hand at old fashion crafts & games
Candle Dipping ☑ Cider Making ☑ Fry Bread ☑ Rope Making & much more!
SEPT. 23 & 24 ~ Revolutionary War Battles ☑ Tour the Encampments
Historic Clothing ☑ Cannons ☑ Tomahawk Throw

Sponsored by The North West Territory Alliance &
The Vermilion County Conservation District  For more information call 662-2142

Thanksgiving
Hearth Cooking Demonstration
at the Cabin  1 - 4 p.m.
Sunday, November 5

Forest Glen Preserve
Homestead Cabin

Watch as Thanksgiving Day foods are prepared
in traditional ways of yesteryear.
Call 217-662-2142 for more information.
The following people gave monetary donations in the memory of Vance E. Pearson.

Thank you all very much, we are greatly touched by this tribute in his name.

Donations will be earmarked to benefit the wildlife at Forest Glen Preserve

Janina T. Greth, Mason, OH
Taryn and Nicholas Barker, Cincinnati, OH
Business Women of Vermilion County, Danville, IL
Ron and Julie Todd, Terre Haute, IN
Alfred and Belva Morris, Georgetown, IL
Frances Ellis, Georgetown, IL
Lana K. Bates, Champaign, IL
Kate Morgan, St Joseph, IL
David and Debra Kirsch, Paris, IL
Douglas and Theresa Lane, Sullivan, IL
Randy and Linda Gardner, Ridge Farm, IL
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Kathleen Mahalek, Terre Haute, IN
Carol Parker, Lincoln, IL
Philip & Ginger Shelato, Rochester, IL
Mary Taran, Georgetown, IL
Virginia Denton Family, Normal, IL
Anonymous

The following people gave monetary donations in the memory of Bob Miles.

Thank you all very much, we are greatly touched by this tribute in his name.

Donations will be earmarked to benefit the Vermilion County Conservation District.

David and Karen McGinnis, Danville, IL
John and Pam Brewer, Westville, IL
Pete and Tracy Vincent, Danville, IL
Jay and Judith Puzey, Fairmount, IL
Ralph and Linda Jennings, Monticello, IN
Betty Thomas and Family, Jim and Kathy Thomas, Lisa and Mark Lawlyes,
   Lori and Scott Morscheiser, Danville, IL
Betty Thomas Bunco Club, Danville, IL
Donald and Patricia Gillis, Northbrook, IL
John Rosso, Branchburg, NJ
Tom and Linda Harrigan, Ken and Jean Harrigan, Danville, IL
Ken Konsis, Westville, IL
“Friends of the District”
Thank you!

Molly Anderson, Danville, IL - Replica of Neff Grocery Store decor in memory of Jerry M. Anderson for the Neff Grocery Store

Mary Sue Moulder and Brad Bates, Danville, IL - Donation of antique hand-crank wall mount oak telephone for Neff Grocery Store

Catherine Thomas, Danville, IL - Large rock for memorial plaque for Lorna Konsis Memorial Garden

Danville Sunrise Rotary - Monetary donation for the Kennekuk Environmental Education Center

Danville Lions Club - Monetary donation for the Kennekuk Environmental Education Center

Old Town Preservation, Danville, IL - Monetary donation for the VCCD

Pete and Caryn Hatfield, Millie Justice, Rossville, IL - Monetary donation in memory of Dorothy Iungerich for the Kennekuk Herb Garden

Wayne Wynn, Oakwood, IL - Donation of a deer skull and antlers for education programming

Darla Cooke, Westville, IL - Donation of tiki torches for BHHA and special events.

Katrina and Jim Kotowski, Champaign, IL - Monetary donation for the VCCD

James Hebermehl, Danville, IL - Donation of antique National Audubon Society bird identification cards for BHHA

The VCCD was at the Georgetown Fair! The display had many visitors, including kids, this past August. We hope you were able to stop by and visit the display. If not, we will be back in 2018!
Support Your Vermilion County Parks
Vermilion County Conservation Foundation
https://vccfoundation.info

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: ____________________________________________________________________________________________
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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