Forward Movement on the Beech Grove Trail  
By Nick Jeurissen

If you haven’t been to Forest Glen in a while you may be pleasantly surprised to know progress has been made on the Beech Grove Trail Project in honor of former staff member Marilyn F. Campbell. A few years ago we reached out to the community for support in this endeavor and several organizations and private donors responded in kind. Thanks to the hard work of all parties involved the main goal of this project has been completed and additional improvements are in the works. Paving the trail with a new asphalt surface, installing guard rails near the ravine overlook, and removal of dangerous trees that presented safety issues has been completed. Other items we have on the docket include additional seating along the ravine overlook, a concrete picnic area with wheelchair friendly tables located adjacent to the parking lot, and interpretive signage explaining unique features along the trail. In addition, a memorial plaque is currently being designed by Marilyn’s dearest friends that will be mounted to a boulder at the beginning of the trail.

While you are welcome to visit anytime to see the progress for yourself, this spring we would like to extend a formal invitation to the community for the dedication of the trail in honor of Marilyn F. Campbell. Please save the date and come enjoy a walk on the newly updated all-accessible trail at Forest Glen, Saturday, May 30 at 2 p.m.

For the complete list of generous community members, friends, and businesses that donated to support this project in memory of Marilyn F. Campbell, please turn to page 10. The Vermilion County Conservation District would also like to thank the Middlefork Audubon Society, the Vermilion County Conservation Foundation, and the Wheeler Foundation.

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

Since the retirement of Forest Glen Park Superintendent Charlie Rhoden in October 2019, there have been many staffing changes within the district. Mike Kotcher transferred from Kennekuk Park Superintendent to Forest Glen Superintendent. Gary Tyrl was promoted to Kennekuk Park Superintendent. Cole Craft was promoted to Lake Vermilion/Heron Superintendent. Nick Jeurissen moved from the education department to become the District Land Manager and Facilities Repair. Jeff Lete transferred from Lake Vermilion to Kennekuk Maintenance.

After the dust settled on all of the internal movement in the district, we were in need of an Environmental Educator. We have been working on filling that position and hopefully by the time you are reading this article we will have a person in place.

VCCD staff have been busy in February and March preparing for the Maple Syrup Open House at Forest Glen on March 15. This year, 500 spiles have been placed in anticipation of cooperating weather to allow the sap to flow and be collected. We have made several changes to the syrup making process this year to reduce the staff time and physical labor needed to produce syrup. The evaporator at the Sugar Bush has been changed from a wood fired to fuel oil fired system. This greatly reduces the amount of time needed by our staff to cut firewood.

Director’s Dateline Continued on Page 3

Special Pull-Out Section Inside!

Our 2020 Calendar of Events is included in this Spring issue of the Conservationist! Be sure to keep this section handy so you can be informed of the many events and programs the VCCD offers!

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
Tower Improvements made at Heron County Park

Trillium Dell, a timber framing construction company, replaced several damaged wood beams on the observation tower at Heron County Park this winter. Trillium Dell originally constructed the tower in 2006. The repairs on the tower were funded by a grant from the Illinois Union Sportsman’s Alliance.

Director’s Dateline Continued from Page 2

The fuel oil system provides a constant uninterrupted heat source and greatly reduces the start-up and shut-down times of the evaporator. We have added more sap storage capacity at the Sugar Bush and have transport tanks on all four of the district’s utility terrain vehicles. The use of the UTV’s allows us to get closer to the trees greatly reducing the distance of carrying buckets of sap through the woods. With all the changes, we are hoping to produce more syrup to have for sale, but we are still at the mercy of the weather.

In the Spring 2019 Conservationist, I reported that the Gannett Education Center at Forest Glen would be getting some much needed remodeling and upgrades. Due to other projects and staffing changes no work was done last year. We are still committed to the project and have funding in place with the support of the Vermilion County Conservation Foundation. New flooring for the conference room, foyer, hallway, kitchen, and bathrooms has been delivered. New bathroom fixtures have been purchased. We are in the process of getting quotes for upgrading the HVAC and installing ADA-compliant front doors. The back classroom will be removed and rebuilt with additional storage. A second classroom will be added onto the east side of the building as well. These changes will improve our Outdoor School and educational programs. As with most district projects, much of the work will be done by district staff to save on expenses. Improvements will be made as time allows, no completion date will be set. During any construction and improvements, the building will remain usable for Outdoor School and other district events.

The White Oak Barn at Kennekuk will be getting some improvements this year. Bathrooms will be added to the west side of the barn. New interior lighting and possibly relocating the kitchen area. The White Oak Barn is one of our most popular rental facilities.

The White Oak Barn at Kennekuk will be getting some improvements this year. Bathrooms will be added to the west side of the barn. New interior lighting and possibly relocating the kitchen area. The White Oak Barn is one of our most popular rental facilities.
Vermilion County Conservation District

Maple Syrup Open House

March 15, 2020

Forest Glen Preserve
Sycamore Hollow Campus Area
11:00 am - 4:00 pm CST

Learn about maple syrup production from trees to syrup!

Enjoy the delicious Forest Glen Syrup at the
Pancake and Sausage Dinner
Adults are only $6.00 and children under twelve are $3.00

_leaf_ Visit the Sugar Bush to watch the sap-to-syrup process
_leaf_ Tour the Pioneer Homestead Cabin
_leaf_ If conditions permit, the Forest Glen Maple Syrup will be available for sale at the Maintenance Center on
March 15, 11am - 4pm, while quantities last
_leaf_ For more information, please call 217-662-2142
The Groundhog: A True Hibernator
Not an accurate indicator of spring however....
by Lara Danzl

Many holidays have wildlife animals associated with them: Easter has the bunny rabbit; spiders and bats are often used for Halloween decorations; reindeer visit our rooftops at Christmas. However, there’s one holiday specifically named after an animal with February 2 being Groundhog Day. While this date is not recognized as an official federal holiday, there is a famous movie with the same name starring Hollywood actor Bill Murray as well as an annual folk lore celebration and festival hosted by the Punxsutawney Groundhog Club in Pennsylvania. In honor of Groundhog Day, here’s some interesting information about the animal.

Groundhogs are a true hibernator going into a deep sleep for the duration of the winter months. During their hibernation, their heart rate and breathing rate slows down and their body temperature drops to almost the same temperature as the outside. Groundhogs will begin their hibernation in October or November and not resurface until late February or March, depending on the weather. Upon awakening, groundhogs do not predict our weather as folk lore would lead you to believe. Their main focus at this time is to restock on food since they will have lost a large portion of their body weight during hibernation.

Groundhogs are the largest member of the squirrel family in Illinois. Unlike their fox and gray squirrel cousins in the trees, groundhogs prefer to spend their time on or under the ground. They are well-adapted for digging, with short, powerful limbs and curved, thick claws. They dig underground burrows which can be easily identified by large mounds of dirt that are piled up at the entrances. There is usually more than one entrance to their burrows with one being an emergency exit only. This emergency “bolt hole” is excavated from the inside out without the tell-tale sign of a dirt mound making it more inconspicuous to predators. Groundhog burrows consist of two chambers, one for sleeping and nesting and one for the latrine.

Groundhogs are also known as “whistle pigs” because of the shrill whistle that they sometimes make to warn of danger. Some people also call them woodchucks, which is unrelated to wood or chucking, but stems from the Native American name of “wuchak.”

Did You Know?

Springtime is a great time to find the pink-purple flowers of the Eastern redbud tree (pictured at left). The Eastern redbud is usually one of the first trees to bloom in March and April before the leaf foliage emerges. The redbud tree is actually a member of the legume (pea) family, related to peas, peanuts, and green beans! Other Vermilion County trees included in the legume family include black and honey locust trees and the Kentucky coffeetree.
**Kickapoo Rail Trail Update**

We have had some mild temperatures a few times this winter and hopefully you have had a chance to enjoy the first phase of the Kickapoo Rail Trail that has opened from Oakwood east to Gray’s Siding Road. With a portion of the trail now open for all to enjoy, we would like to remind everyone that bicycles, pedestrians, skates, skateboards, non-motorized scooters, motorized wheelchairs, and baby strollers are allowed on the rail trail unless specifically prohibited and posted otherwise. Dogs on leashes are allowed on the Kickapoo Rail Trail, please remember to clean up after your pet as needed. All trail users must stay within the trail footprint with all off trail use prohibited. No motorized vehicles, including automobiles, trucks, farm or agricultural vehicles, motorcycles, motorbikes, motor scooters, go-carts, golf carts, snowmobiles, motorized bicycles, motorized skateboards, mopeds or all-terrain vehicles will be allowed on the rail trail or rail corridor at any time. Equestrian use is prohibited in all areas of the Kickapoo Rail Trail and rail corridor as well.

The second phase of the Kickapoo Rail Trail will continue east from Gray’s Siding Road to the Vermilion County Fairgrounds. This next phase will include the trestle bridge over the Middle Fork River. Plans are to include a connection trail access from the fairgrounds road into Kickapoo State Park. A major road improvement project for Kickapoo State Park is slated to begin on March 1.

**Help us Clean Up the KRT!**

Over the years, trash and litter have accumulated along the rail corridor that is now visible with the removal of shrubs and trees. We’d like to beautify the Rail Trail with a clean-up day on Saturday, April 4 beginning at 10:00 a.m. The VCCD will provide trash bags and several litter “pick-up sticks” and we’d like to ask all volunteers to please bring work gloves. We would like volunteers to first meet us at South Main Street in Oakwood to coordinate clean up locations along the trail. If you have any questions, please call Lara at 217-442-1691.
Vermilion County Conservation District

2020 Calendar of Events

For the most up-to-date information, please visit www.vccd.org, call Kennekuk County Park at 217-442-1691, Forest Glen at 217-662-2142, and like us on our Facebook page.

February
14  VCCF Board Meeting, Kennekuk Environmental Education Center, 9a.m.
10  Maple Syrup School Programs begin at Forest Glen until March 11, call 217-662-2142 for more information
19  VCCD Board Meeting at Kennekuk Environmental Education Center, 4:30p.m. Public Invited

March
14  Turkey Hunt Draw for hunting in Kennekuk; Kennekuk Environmental Education Center, 9a.m.
14  VCCF Sportsman’s Banquet at Sleepy Creek Vineyards, call 217-442-1691 for ticket information
15  Maple Syrup Open House & Pancake/Sausage Dinner, Forest Glen, 11a.m. - 4p.m.
   Gannett Education Center, Fee for the Dinner, Free tours of the Sugar Bush and Homestead Cabin
18  VCCD Board Meeting at Gannett Education Center, Forest Glen, 4:30p.m. Public Invited
30  Outdoor School begins for 8 weeks for area 4th & 5th graders at Forest Glen & Kennekuk

April
4   Kickapoo Rail Trail Clean Up Day - Volunteer opportunity, 10a.m., call 217-442-1691 for more information
5   Volunteer Fair, 1 - 4p.m., Kennekuk Environmental Education Center Learn how to become a VCCD Volunteer!
7   Full Moon Guided Night Hike, Kennekuk Environmental Education Center, $5/person, Time TBA
15  VCCD Board Meeting at Kennekuk Environmental Education Center, 4:30p.m. Public Invited
17  VCCF Board Meeting, Kennekuk Environmental Education Center, 9a.m.
25  Illinois Department of Natural Resources ENTICE Education Workshop, Pre-registration and Fee Required
   Kennekuk Environmental Education Center, call 217-442-1691 for information

May
2-3  World War II Remembrance Days at Bunker Hill Historic Area, Kennekuk.
   Saturday 10a.m. - 4p.m.; Sunday 10a.m. - 3p.m. Free!
8   Conservation Olympics - area 6th grade students, 9a.m. - 3p.m. Edgewood Center, Forest Glen
16-17 Anglo-Scandinavian Living History Program, Homestead Cabin area, Forest Glen.
   Saturday 10a.m. - 4p.m.; Sunday 10a.m. - 3p.m. Free!
20  VCCD Board Meeting at Kennekuk Environmental Education Center, 4:30p.m. Public Invited
24  Historic Buildings at Forest Glen & Kennekuk open Sundays through Labor Day, 1 - 4p.m.
30  Beech Grove Trail Dedication Day at Forest Glen, 2p.m., Free
TBA  Lake Vermilion boat ramp concessions open, call 217-442-1691 for hours

June
2 or 3  Toddling Into Nature Camp “All About Bats” - open to ages 3, 4, 5 yrs. 10a.m. or 2p.m.**
6   Public Hayride at Forest Glen, 7p.m. Meet at LJ K Visitor Center parking lot. $1/person Fee
8   VCCD Wildlife Programs begin for 9 weeks at Vermilion County Libraries. Free!
   Call your local library for dates and information
9 or 10 Toddling Into Nature Camp “Investigating for Wildlife” - open to ages 3, 4, 5 yrs. 10a.m. or 2p.m.**
12  VCCF Board Meeting, Kennekuk Environmental Education Center, 9a.m.
13  Illini Bass Club & D.A.R.E. Kid’s Fishing Derby, Horseshoe Pond, Kennekuk, 9a.m. Free!
17  VCCD Board Meeting at Gannett Education Center, Forest Glen, 4:30p.m. Public Invited
18  Pioneer Kids Camp - 1st-3rd Grade; 9:30a.m. - 11:30a.m. Forest Glen**
25  Nature Connect Camp - K-2nd Grade, 9:30a.m. - 11:30a.m. Kennekuk**
27-28 18th Century Living History Event, Pioneer Homestead Cabin area, Forest Glen. Free!

** VCCD Summer Camps and Programs require Preregistration & fee, registration form online at vccd.org or at park visitor centers
July
4 Public Hayride at Forest Glen, 7p.m. Meet at L J K Visitor Center parking lot. $1/person Fee
7 Paddling Around Lake Mingo for Kids, 9a.m. - 11a.m. Kennekuk, $10/person**
9 Creek Stomping Ecology Camp - 4th-6th Grade; 9a.m. - 2p.m. Forest Glen**
11 Spinners & Weavers Day, Gannett Education Center, Forest Glen; 10a.m. - 3p.m. Free!
14 Young Explorers Camp at Forest Glen - K-5th Grade; 9a.m. - 3p.m.**
15 VCCD Board Meeting at Kennekuk Environmental Education Center, 4:30p.m. Public Invited
16 Young Explorers Camp at Kennekuk - K-5th Grade; 9a.m. - 3p.m.**
18 Kickapoo de Paris Century Bike Ride - proceeds to benefit the Kickapoo Rail Trail, call 217-442-1691 for info
19 Forest Glen Preserve Whitetail Archery Deer Hunt Lottery Draw; Gannett Education Center, Forest Glen.
For more information, call Cole Craft 217-442-1691
28 Kids Cooking Class - 3rd-5th Grade; 9a.m. - 12:30p.m. Forest Glen Gannett Education Center**
30 Kids Cooking Class - 3rd-5th Grade; 9a.m. - 12:30p.m. Forest Glen Gannett Education Center**
31 VCCF Board Meeting, Kennekuk Environmental Education Center, 9a.m.

August
1 Public Hayride at Forest Glen, 7p.m. Meet at L J K Visitor Center parking lot. $1/person Fee
8 VCC Foundation “Cheeseburgers & Fun” at Kennekuk’s Bunker Hill Historic Area. Call 442-1691 for details
19 VCCD Board Meeting at Kennekuk Environmental Education Center, 4:30p.m. Public Invited

September
5 Public Hayride at Forest Glen, 6p.m. Meet at L J K Visitor Center parking lot. $1/person Fee
8 “Conservation Education Tools for Teachers” Resource Evening for Educators, 3 - 6p.m., Free
Gannett Education Center, Forest Glen, call 217-442-1691 for more information
10 “Conservation Education Tools for Teachers” Resource Evening for Educators, 3 - 6p.m., Free
Kennekuk Environmental Education Center, call 217-442-1691 for more information
12 River to Rail Bike Ride for the KRT, Preregistration & fee required, call 442-1691 for more information
19 Wool Dyeing Demonstration, Homestead Cabin, Forest Glen. 10a.m. - 3p.m. Free!
14 Outdoor School begins at Forest Glen & Kennekuk for 8 weeks for area 4th & 5th graders.
16 VCCD Board Meeting at Gannett Education Center, Forest Glen, 4:30p.m. Public Invited
26-27 Revolutionary War Re-enactment, Homestead Cabin area, Forest Glen. Free!
Saturday 10a.m. - 5p.m., Sunday 10a.m. - 4p.m.
27 Pioneer Craft Day, 10a.m. - 4p.m. Homestead Cabin area, Forest Glen. Free!

October
2 Civil War School Days for area 6th grade students at Bunker Hill Historic Area, Kennekuk
3 Public Hayride at Forest Glen, 6p.m. Meet at L J K Visitor Center parking lot. $1/person Fee
9 VCCF Board Meeting, Kennekuk Environmental Education Center, 9a.m.
12 “Animal Olympics!” Kennekuk Environmental Education Center, 9a.m. - 3p.m., Free
21 VCCD Board Meeting at Gannett Education Center, Forest Glen, 4:30p.m. Public Invited

November
8 Thanksgiving at the Cabin, 1 - 4p.m. Homestead Cabin area, Forest Glen. Free!
18 VCCD Board Meeting at Kennekuk Environmental Education Center, 4:30p.m. Public Invited

December
4 VCCF Board Meeting, Kennekuk Environmental Education Center, 9a.m.
6 Holiday Open House, 2 - 8p.m. Bunker Hill Historic Area, Kennekuk. Free!
6-31* Holiday Lights at the Bunker Hill Historic Area, Kennekuk, Friday-Sunday only*, 5 - 8p.m. Free!
16 VCCD Board Meeting at Kennekuk Environmental Education Center, 4:30p.m. Public Invited

** VCCD Summer Camps and Programs require Preregistration & fee, registration form online at vccd.org or at park visitor centers
In the World of Volunteers

by Lara Danzl

If you noticed above, there is a new last name with your volunteer coordinator! Rick and I were married in January. I’m still getting used to seeing and using the new last name but glad to be a Danzl!

It’s almost that time again to start thinking about the summer volunteer season with our buildings opening on the weekends for park visitors. VCCD Volunteers host the buildings on Sunday afternoons at the Bunker Hill Historic Area, Education Center, and Visitor Center at Kennekuk and the Nature Center and Homestead Cabin at Forest Glen. I’ll be mailing the sign-up letters in April but will also ask for volunteers to fill openings with the volunteer electronic newsletter each month throughout the spring and summer. If you are currently not receiving the volunteer electronic newsletter and would like to, please feel free to send me your email address so I can add you to the electronic newsletter mailing list at ldarling@vccd.org.

Be sure to save the date of Sunday, August 23, 2020 for the Summer Volunteer Appreciation Cookout at Kennekuk’s White Oak Barn at 5pm. More details to come, but we hope to see everyone there!

For more information on volunteering,
Please contact Lara Danzl at 217-442-1691 or ldarling@vccd.org.

Want to Be a VCCD Volunteer?

Come out and learn how to become a part of the VCCD Volunteer Team at Forest Glen Preserve, Kennekuk County Park, Lake Vermilion, and Heron County Park!

Volunteers are needed to staff the Visitor Centers and Historic Buildings, become Trail Stewards, assist with Special Events, and more!

VCCD Volunteer Fair
Learn how to become a volunteer for the VCCD!
Sunday, April 5  1:00-4:00pm
Kennekuk Environmental Education Center
Call 217-442-1691 for details
The Vermilion County Conservation District greatly appreciates the generous support from the following for the Beech Grove Trail Project/Marilyn F. Campbell Memorial Dedication

Middlefork Audubon Society
Wheeler Foundation Grant
Robert Andrini, Kane County Chapter, IL Audubon, St. Charles, IL
Barbara L. Aren, North Aurora, IL
Valerie Blaine, St. Charles, IL
James K. & Arlene Borbely, Catlin, IL
Roger & Sharon Burge, Danville, IL
Tom & Judy Ciecka, Covington, IN
Robert & Margaret Crabb, Danville, IL
Dr. Marilyn Kolton & Dr. Louis Dwarshuis, Asheville, NC
Richard & Joan Edwardson, Danville, IL
Barbara Fuller, Urbana, IL
Tammy Garza, Punk & Shirley Thompson, Georgetown, IL
Rose Gates, Danville, IL
Myra Greazer, Danville, IL
Ken & Cheryl Hannan, Westville, IL
John M. Hoagland, Covington, IL
Mona Hunter, Allerton, IL
Dr. Alice Marie & Darrel Jacobs, Bismarck, IL
Mary Glenn Kirkland, Jackson, MI
Betsy & Peter Kuchinke, Homer, IL
Jared Lowe, Georgetown, IL
Sara Mathis, Havana, IL
John & Cindy McKee, Ottawa, IL
Ruth Meyer, Joliet, IL
Mel & Judy Myers, Danville, IL
Debbie Scott Newman, Ava, IL
Sandra Nosler, Danville, IL
Rita & Bruce Renwick, Joliet, IL
Gene, Diana & Alyssa Rod, Mendota, IL
Judy Sawyer, Pres, Georgetown Ladies Community Club, Georgetown, IL
Randall & Nancy Schietzelt, IAS Friends, Crystal Lake, IL
Bob & Sam Schifo, Catlin, IL
Lee & Roseann Sherman, Georgetown, IL
James Smith, Homer, IL
Vivian Stokes, Danville, IL
Gary Sykes, Sons of Am. Legion Post 203, Georgetown, IL
Sue Tinkle & Tom Terrien, Catlin, IL
James & Mary Toy, Vernon Fultz Memorial, Fairmount, IL
Emily Vayr, Wauconda, IL
Mike & Dona Westfall, Danville, IL
Vermilion County Conservation Foundation
Anonymous
Lorene K. Benbow, Watseka, IL
Gregory & Patricia Bluhm, Channahon, IL
Phyllis Brissenden, Springfield, IL
John & Sara Cast, Catlin, IL
Norma J. Cole, Danville, IL
John & DeAnn Currier, Oakwood, IL
Thomas & Kim Esker, Brookville, FL
Sharon A. Glossinger, Danville, IL
Greg Green, Covington, IN
Mary Anne Harrison, Highland Park, IL
Pat Hoffman, Diamond, IL
Paula Hurst, Danville, IL
Vernon & Betty Kleen, Springfield, IL
Kenneth Konsis, Westville, IL
Linda & Max Kyger, Danville, IL
Bill & Chris Lucas, Danville, IL
Don McFall, Alexandria, VA
Sybil Mervis, Danville, IL
David E. Miller, McHenry, IL
Roy Newell, Danville, IL
Bert & Janetta Nicholson, Danville, IL
Mike & Pat Pasquale, Georgetown, IL
Michael Robinson, Danville, IL
Jessica Runner Family, Milford, IL
Michael & Susan Shaw, Springfield, IL
John Taft & Mary Kay Solecki, Sidney, IL
Carole Spencer, Georgetown, IL
Wayne Svoboda, Evanston, IL
Phyllis A. Thomas, Danville, IL
Brian Wallen, Champaign, IL
Christine Zeman, Springfield, IL
“Friends of the District”
Thank you!

Michael Weller – donation of a Meade Astronomical & Terrestrial Motorized Telescope with additional lens

Meijer – donation for Civil War School Day

Daughters of the American Revolution, Governor Bradford Chapter - $500 for Revolutionary War Reenactment

Sandy Stephenson – gunpowder for Revolutionary War Reenactment

Monetary donations from:
   Dolores Toole, Danville
   Kiwanis Noon Club of Danville
   Old Town Preservation Association of Danville
   Marilyn Satterwhite, Danville
   Rita Garman, Danville
   Kathy Wicks, Homer
   James and Janis Kouzmanoff, Danville, in honor of Mr. and Mrs. J. Kent Robinson

In Memory of Dorothy Wilson:
   Robert and Sherri Hous, Bismarck
   Security Ventures, Inc., Danville

World War II Remembrance Days
May 2-3, 2020
Kennekuk County Park’s Bunker Hill Historic Area

Mark your calendars for May 2-3 to attend the WWII Reenactment at Kennekuk’s Bunker Hill Historic Area! The event will have many historic displays and activities related to the war. The U.S.O. ladies at the Atwood Home are a perennial favorite serving complimentary cookies and drinks. The reenactors encourage visitors to tour the camps and ask questions. Battle reenactments will take place each day as well. This event is free of charge and a schedule of activities will be available closer to the event. Watch for updates on our website and Facebook page!
Spring can’t be far away because the Master Gardeners have held their first garden planning meeting and the crew is tapping trees at Forest Glen. Before we know it mud and maple sap will replace the snow and frozen ground.

The gardeners are planning two new themed beds in the Bunker Hill Historical Area Herb Garden this spring. The beds will be medicinal in theme. A plant list has been developed and we are on the hunt for some of the more obscure plants.

Another project in the planning stages is the continued work on the garden walls. Last spring the Master Gardeners group, along with a few helpers, straightened two of the beds with leaning walls. This April we will work on two more beds, with much more confidence now that we “kinda” know what we’re doing.

As the days start to grow longer and the sap starts to drip, make sure you visit the parks. If you wait till it’s warm and the grass is green you will have missed all of the wonderful spring happenings.

I’ve included a recipe that uses maple syrup in an unusual way, caramel corn. This recipe was created by the chef at Churchhill Downs. As for the bourbon, it doesn’t have to be Woodford Reserve.

**Bacon Bourbon Caramel Popcorn**

**Ingredients**
- 5 qts. Plain popped corn
- ½ to 1 lb. thick cut bacon, fried crispy and well drained
- 1 cup butter
- 2 cups brown sugar
- ½ cup maple syrup
- 1 tsp. sea salt
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- 3 oz. Woodford Reserve Bourbon

**Preparation**
Preheat your oven to 250

Melt 1 cup of butter over medium heat. Mix in brown sugar, maple syrup, and sea salt and then stir until boiling at the edges. Lower the heat slightly and let boil until the caramel is 250. Remove from heat and add the baking soda, bacon and bourbon.

Divide the popcorn into two very lightly greased roasting pans and coat with the caramel. Mix well and then put the popcorn into the preheated oven for about 45 minutes to an hour, mixing every 10 – 15 minutes so the kernels are coated in bourbon bacon mixture.

Once done, pour onto parchment paper to cool and break into pieces.
Vermilion County Conservation District
2020 Summer Camp Programs

The Vermilion County Conservation District’s Summer programs offer outdoor fun for children ages 3 and older. With almost 4,500 acres between Kennekuk County Park and Forest Glen Preserve, children will gain appreciation and knowledge of wildlife and the great outdoors. Our camp programs give children the opportunity to explore their natural world through hands-on discoveries, hiking excursions, and art experiences.

If you have any questions regarding our camp programs, please call Kennekuk County Park at 217-442-1691. You can mail or drop off your registration using the order form found on our website www.vccd.org, or at the Kennekuk and Forest Glen Visitor Centers.

**Toddling Into Nature**

**Environmental Education Center, Kennekuk County Park**

This camp will introduce young children, ages 3-5, to the natural world, exploring through songs, activities, crafts, and more with a parent or guardian. Each class is organized around a theme and emphasizes active learning through sensory experiences, and movement activities. Toddlers may sign up for one camp or both.

Fee is $5.00 per child per session, due upon registration. Each session is approximately one hour long:

- **Brown Bat, Brown Bat: What do you See?** - June 2 at 10:00am or 2:00pm; June 3 at 10:00am or 2:00pm
  - Bats are amazing mammals, let’s learn why they are beneficial to our environment!
- **Investigating for Wildlife** - June 9 at 10:00am or 2:00pm; June 10 at 10:00am or 2:00pm
  - With a hike through the woods, we will use our senses to find evidence of wildlife!

**Pioneer Kids Camp**

**Grades 1st-3rd, June 18, 9:30am - 11:30am**

**Gannett Outdoor Education Center, Forest Glen Preserve**

What was it like to be a kid in the 1850’s? Come out and join us for Pioneer Kids Camp to find out! Campers will hike to the Pioneer Homestead and make a candle to take home. Before leaving, we will cook a sweet treat on the hearth to enjoy. Fee is $10/child, due upon registration, fee includes craft and snack.

**Nature Connect Camp**

**Grades K-2nd, June 25, 9:30am - 11:30am**

**Environmental Education Center, Kennekuk County Park**

Children will explore nature and how it all works together: from the trees to flowers, and the not-so-creepy crawly insects to other wildlife. We will hike a trail and make a craft to take home. Fee is $10/child, due upon registration, fee includes craft.
**Kid's Cooking Class**

Grades 3rd-5th, July 28 or 30, 9:00am - 12:30pm

Gannett Outdoor Education Center, Forest Glen Preserve

Back by popular demand, the Kid's Cooking Class will be offered on two dates. Each camp will have the same format, so please only register for one date. This camp is for kids who want to try their hand at cooking. Campers will take a short walk to the homestead garden to cut herbs for pizza. Back in the kitchen they will create their own pizza and help with making home-made ice cream. At lunch everyone gets to eat their handy work and make an ice cream sundae for dessert. Fee is $15/child, due upon registration; Fee includes lunch.

**Back by popular demand, the Kid's Cooking Class will be offered on two dates. Each camp will have the same format, so please only register for one date. This camp is for kids who want to try their hand at cooking. Campers will take a short walk to the homestead garden to cut herbs for pizza. Back in the kitchen they will create their own pizza and help with making home-made ice cream. At lunch everyone gets to eat their handy work and make an ice cream sundae for dessert. Fee is $15/child, due upon registration; Fee includes lunch.**

**Creek Stomping Ecology Camp**

Grades 4th-6th, July 9, 9:00am - 2:00pm

Gannett Outdoor Education Center, Forest Glen Preserve

Spend the day getting wet while exploring Willow Creek. Follow our Naturalists on an adventure while searching for aquatic life and observing animal tracks along the way. After eating lunch a hayride will be given back to the Gannett Outdoor Education Center. Participants must bring their own lunch, water bottle, and should wear shoes and clothes that can get wet. Fee is $25/child, due upon registration; fee includes snack.

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**Young Explorers**

Grades K-5th, 9:00am - 3:00pm

Gannett Outdoor Education Center, Forest Glen Preserve, July 14

Kennekuk Environmental Education Center, Kennekuk, July 16

Throughout the day during this fun-filled classic summer camp, your child will participate in a nature hike, hayride, arts and craft session from the Young Explorers archives with experienced camp counselors. The July 14 camp session at Forest Glen will have an up-close visit with some reptiles and amphibians while the July 16 camp session at Kennekuk will incude fishing. Fee is $35.00/child, due upon registration which includes wiener roast lunch, snacks, and a nature craft to take.

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**Paddling Around Lake Mingo**

Grades 4th-7th, July 7, 9:00am - 11:00am

Lake Mingo Boat Ramp, Kennekuk County Park

We will explore Lake Mingo in kayaks on a guided tour with District naturalists. Learn about the diversity of fish, birds, mammals, and more that call Lake Mingo home. Kayaking basics will be covered. All participants are required to wear a provided life jacket. Fee for camp is $10/child.
Please complete the registration form below and return with fee to:
Vermilion County Conservation District, Attention: Summer Camp Registration
22296 Henning Road, Danville, IL 61834

Name: ____________________________________________________________

Address, City, Zip: __________________________________________________

Home Phone: ______________________________________________________

Daytime/Secondary Phone: __________________________________________

Grade Completed Spring of 2020: _____________________________________

Parent/Guardian Name: ______________________________________________

Special information we should know: medications, allergies, etc.:______________________________

*If my child should be injured while attending the summer programs, I will be notified. If I cannot be reached, I authorize the VCCD staff to act on my behalf to secure necessary medical treatment for the above child. I understand that payment of any medical expenses is my responsibility.

________________________________________________________________________

Parent/Guardian Signature Required          Date

Frequently, the VCCD takes video or photographs of people enjoying programs and special events. These photographs are for VCCD promotions and marketing. They are used at the VCCD’s discretion and become its sole property. If a registered participant wishes to be excluded from any photographs, they may do so in writing to the VCCD or by simply stepping away from the camera.

Please Circle Appropriate Camp Date and Location. All Camp Fees are Non-Refundable.

Don’t forget to include your registration fee with your completed form.

Checks need to be made out to VCCD. Questions, contact Kennekuk County Park, 217-442-1691.

**Toddling Into Nature - Circle Date AND Time (Kennekuk)**

$5 – June 2 □ or June 3 □ Time: 10am □ or 2pm □ (Brown Bat, Brown Bat)

$5 – June 9 □ or June 10 □ Time: 10am □ or 2pm □ (Investigating for Wildlife)

**Pioneer Kids Camp (Forest Glen)**

$10 – June 18 □

**Nature Connect (Kennekuk)**

$10 – June 25 □

**Paddling Around Lake Mingo (Kennekuk)**

$10 – July 7 □

**Creek Stomping Ecology Camp (Forest Glen)**

$25 – July 9 □

**Young Explorers**

$35 – July 14 at Forest Glen Preserve □

$35 – July 16 at Kennekuk County Park □

**Kid’s Cooking Class (Forest Glen)**

$15 – July 28 □ OR July 30 □
HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2020 WITH THE VERMILION COUNTY CONSERVATION FOUNDATION?

Join the VCCF in making a difference in your community to support natural and wildlife resource conservation activities. Currently, the Foundation is working with the VCCD on the Gannett Outdoor Education Center remodel project at Forest Glen Preserve and the Kickapoo Rail Trail.

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, and conservation education programs to citizens of Vermilion County, IL as well as maintenance and support of capital projects for historic and naturel preservation.

Your VCCF membership at any level entitles you to a 10% discount on District rental and user fees, and expires each December 31. Choose a membership today 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 Code __________________________
Phone___________________________________ E-mail___________________________________________________

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