



# Vermilion Conservationist

## Summer 2025

Forest Glen • Kennekuk • Lake Vermilion • Heron • Kickapoo Rail Trail

### Coyote Track Ecology and Behavior Workshop on June 28

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources will host a "Coyote Track" Workshop at the Kennekuk Education Center, Kennekuk County Park, on Saturday, June 28, 2025, from 9am - 3pm.

With its interactive visualization tool, the Coyote Track website centers around coyote ecology and behavior using data collected from radio-collared coyotes in urban and rural areas of Illinois.

Several Chicago area urban coyotes and rural Illinois coyotes have been fitted with satellite tracking collars making it possible to monitor and analyze their movements and behavior over time. This presents a unique learning opportunity for students and the community to familiarize themselves with their mysterious four-legged community members.



Using real data, this workshop will guide participants through the visualization data tool and standards-based lessons that support the unit.

#### ILLINOIS



DEPARTMENT OF  
NATURAL  
RESOURCES

Participants will learn about how and why scientists are studying coyotes in Illinois including learning about telemetry and how the information is gathered.

The workshop is geared for teachers of Illinois high school and middle school students. Others may attend, but will need to adapt materials. Professional Development Hours are available. Sponsored by the IDNR, this workshop is part of the ENTICE (Environment and Nature Training Institute for Conservation Education) program.

Registration is only \$11/person at <https://enticeworkshops.com>.

**"To assure our people permanent access  
to their outdoor heritage"**



## Vermilion Conservationist

This newsletter is a publication of the Vermilion County Conservation District. It covers news, programs, and natural history information of interest to residents of Vermilion County. It is free upon request from:

Vermilion County Conservation District  
22296 Henning Road  
Danville, IL 61834

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## Director's Dateline by Jamie Pasquale

It has been some time since I have submitted an article for the Conservationist and I have fallen behind with updates on some of the projects that have occurred as well as new projects that we hope to complete.

Over the winter, the kitchen remodel at the Forest Glen Gannett Center was completed. This was one of the two final steps in completing the building renovations. The final step is now to complete the nature center room by adding displays and educational materials. The entire building has been transformed into a more usable building for the District's Outdoor School programs and events. Many thanks to the Vermilion County Conservation Foundation for their help funding the renovations.

Tree removal along the Kickapoo Rail Trail west of Oakwood to the Vermilion County line has been completed as well as from Ogden to St. Joseph in Champaign County. Construction engineering documents are finalized with bids for construction received in May or June. Actual construction of the trail should begin in this summer if all goes as planned. Final trail completion will not be until 2026. The Urbana Park District has started construction of a trail head for the KRT at Weaver Park in Urbana. The KRT has been a long process with many steps involved and often seemed like it would never be completed; hopefully we are now nearing the finish line. For more information, you can visit [www.onekrt.org](http://www.onekrt.org).

District staff have been working on a new maintenance facility at Kennekuk to replace some of the existing buildings that no longer function well and are cost prohibitive to repair. A 3,000 square foot addition is being added to a 1,000 square foot existing structure that was built in 2016.

Future projects that the district plans to start this year include:

- Adding parking spaces and sidewalks at the Kennekuk Education Center.
- Replace the decking on the boardwalk at Heron County Park. This will occur in stages and we hope to complete about a quarter of the decking this year.
- Repairs at the Bunker Hill Historic Area that include a new roof for the Red Oak School, replace some of fence at the Atwood House, and painting of buildings.
- Seal coat two miles of District roads.



Nature at Night  
Educational Series  
Illinois Bats ~ June 21  
Nocturnal Animals ~ August 15



The Nature at Night Educational Series continues this summer with two sessions at Kennekuk County Park's Education Center.

Illinois Bats will be held on Saturday, June 21, from 7:30 - 9pm. Often misunderstood, bats are incredibly beneficial wildlife in our ecosystems. Learn about their amazing adaptations with an indoor presentation, followed by a short hike outside to see them in flight. An echo-location device will help identify the bats around us.

On Friday, August 15, from 7 - 8:30pm, we will learn about Illinois Nocturnal Animals and why they prefer to roam the night with an indoor presentation, followed by a short hike outside to search for all animals big and small.

Space is limited with pre-registration required at only \$5/person. You may register for one or both programs at <https://tinyurl.com/3yu8u3xx>.

VERMILION COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

**PERSEIDS  
METEOR SHOWER  
VIEWING EVENT**

This annual meteor shower is among the best viewing opportunities to see shooting stars. On Tuesday, August 12, bring your lawn chairs or a blanket to Meadowlark Shelter at Forest Glen Preserve and set up to watch a stunning night sky from 9 - 11pm! Flashlights are encouraged, and staff will have red covers available to prevent impacting your night vision.

There will not be a reschedule in case of rain or cloud cover. Any cancellations will be posted by 12pm noon on August 12 on our website, Facebook page, and at Forest Glen's Meadowlark Shelter.

For more information, contact Brenna Karcher at 217-662-2142 or [bkarcher@vccd.org](mailto:bkarcher@vccd.org).

## Naturalist Notes: Urban Wildlife

Brenna Karcher



*Last summer I was driving to pick up dinner near the American Legion in Danville at dusk when I had an unexpected wildlife encounter. I saw movement ahead, and hit the brakes. "Just a squirrel" I thought, but then bigger movement from the right caught my eye. A huge wingspan spread over the road, with taloned feet extended. The striking predator pulls its dive up short, recognizing my car as a threat, and flaps into a tree above the road. I watch the squirrel sprint to freedom and then check out the bird above me. A beautiful brown Barred Owl rests upon a branch staring at my car, and it felt as if I made eye contact as I drove by. I knew I messed up his dinner plans, even as I went to get mine; but to this day, I feel amazed at my chance to see the urban wildlife in action.*

It can be hard to imagine seeing owls, hawks, or even deer in the middle of a city. They sound like they belong in the woods and fields; which they do, but as land availability changes and wildlife adapt to new habitats, they can be found in surprising places. This can mean that even if you rarely venture out of Danville city limits, you can see wildlife.

Some wildlife we expect; for example, the most common animals in the city are small. Insects, birds, squirrels, and chipmunks don't need a lot of space and can feast on a variety of food sources available in cities. Raccoons and opossums are omnivores with the ability to take advantage of human trash and their nocturnal behaviors lend themselves to being active when the city is least active.

Different species can change more than others when they move into town. Species of birds including sparrows, blackbirds and the great tit now have city accents. Their songs are recorded at higher pitches in city environments than in rural spaces. There are two theories currently being considered to answer the question "why?" One is that they are striving to be heard above the noise of cars and people, the other is that their calls echo through tall buildings differently. Either way, our communities of city-birds are changing their instinctive patterns to cope with city life.

Meanwhile, other animals are unanticipated. Deer are becoming more commonly seen in towns as parks become predator free safe spaces near water resources. Their camouflage and ability to move quietly is allowing them to hide effectively in small wooded areas between pretties and near golf courses.



Barred Owl photo by Pete Weiler

Article continued on page 5



## Naturalist Notes Continued from Page 4

The city of Chicago is now reported to have an estimated 1500-2000 coyotes according to The Coyote Project, which was established to track coyotes, their population and assess their interactions with the community. The coyotes are noted to have packs of 5-6 adults along with any pups born that year. Compared to rural populations, this seems average. So, despite a change in habitat, their behaviors remain remarkably similar. They hide from humans, scavenge and hunt either alone or in small packs, and sleep in dens during pup raising season.

We encourage you to keep an eye out next time you run errands and maybe you will catch a glimpse of the wild within your city limits.



Birds at a feeder, photo by Gerard Lynch



# MOONLIGHT GLOW PADDLE

ON LAKE MINGO

Kennekuk County Park      July 12, 2025      8:00-9:30 pm

Experience night on a lake from a kayak. Nights can be totally still or loud and full of life, we will use the light of the full moon and glow sticks to discover Lake Mingo after dark.

Registration for boat rental will include needed paddle equipment.  
BYO-Boats must register for the \$5 slots.  
Glow sticks will be provided for all participants.  
Lifejackets Required  
Ages 12 and up.

Registration Required  
\$15/Rental Boat • \$5/BYO Boat  
Register at <https://moonlightpaddle2025.eventbrite.com>



Vermilion County Conservation District

For up-to-date information on programs, nature news, events, and more; be sure to visit <https://vccd.org> and follow us on Facebook. You can also sign up for our free electronic newsletters by sending your name and email to [vccd@vccd.org](mailto:vccd@vccd.org).

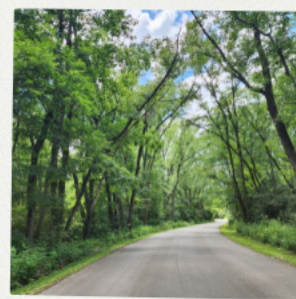
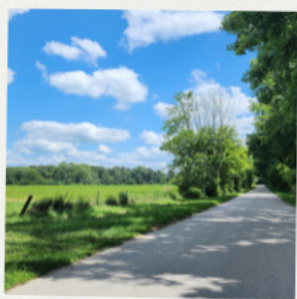
You can contact us at [vccd@vccd.org](mailto:vccd@vccd.org) or:

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

*Get Ready for the*  
**RIVER TO RAIL RIDE**

*September 13, 2025*



<https://RtoR2025.eventbrite.com>

*Four SAG-supported routes*

*Proceeds benefit the Kickapoo Rail Trail*

*Kennekuk County Park, 22296 Henning Road, Danville, IL*





## Upcoming Events and Programs

### June - September

#### June

- 1 BHHA, Education Center at Kennekuk; Nature Center, Pioneer Cabin at Forest Glen Open to Public, 1-4pm
- 2 VCCD Programs begin for 9 weeks at Vermilion County Libraries, Call your local library for dates and info
- 7 Illini Bass Club & DARE Kid's Fishing Derby, Horseshoe Pond, Kennekuk, 9am, Free
- 13 Vermilion County Conservation Foundation Board Meeting, Kennekuk Education Center, 9am
- 14 Prairie Blooms Guided Hike, Doris Westfall Tallgrass Prairie Nature Preserve, 9-10am, \$5/person  
Pre-Registration required at <https://prairieblooms.eventbrite.com>
- 18 VCCD Board Meeting at Gannett Education Center, Forest Glen, 4:30pm, Public Invited
- 21 Nature at Night Series: Illinois Bats, Kennekuk Education Center, 7:30-9pm, \$5/person  
Preregistration required at <https://NatNBats.eventbrite.com>
- 28 IDNR ENTICE Education Workshop, "Coyote Track" Kennekuk Education Center, \$10/person  
Registration and Information at <https://enticeworkshops.com>

#### July

- 6 BHHA, Education Center at Kennekuk; Nature Center, Pioneer Cabin at Forest Glen Open to Public, 1-4pm
- 12 Spinners & Weavers Day, Gannett Education Center, Forest Glen, 10am-3pm, Free
- 12 Moonlight Glow Paddle on Lake Mingo, Kennekuk, Ages 12 and up, \$15/person or BYO Boat \$5/person,  
Pre-registration required at <https://moonlightpaddle2025.eventbrite.com>
- 16 VCCD Board Meeting at Kennekuk Education Center, 4:30pm, Public Invited
- 21 Forest Glen Preserve Whitetail Deer Archery Hunt Lottery Draw; Applications due July 18

#### August

- 3 BHHA, Education Center at Kennekuk; Nature Center, Pioneer Cabin at Forest Glen Open to Public, 1-4pm
- 8 Vermilion County Conservation Foundation Board Meeting, Kennekuk Education Center, 9am
- 12 Perseid Meteor Shower Viewing Party, Meadowlark Shelter, Forest Glen, 9-11pm, Free
- 15 Nature at Night Series: Nocturnal Animals, Kennekuk Education Center, 7-8:30pm, \$5/person  
Preregistration required at <https://NatNAnimals.eventbrite.com>
- 20 VCCD Board Meeting at Kennekuk Education Center, 4:30pm, Public Invited

#### September

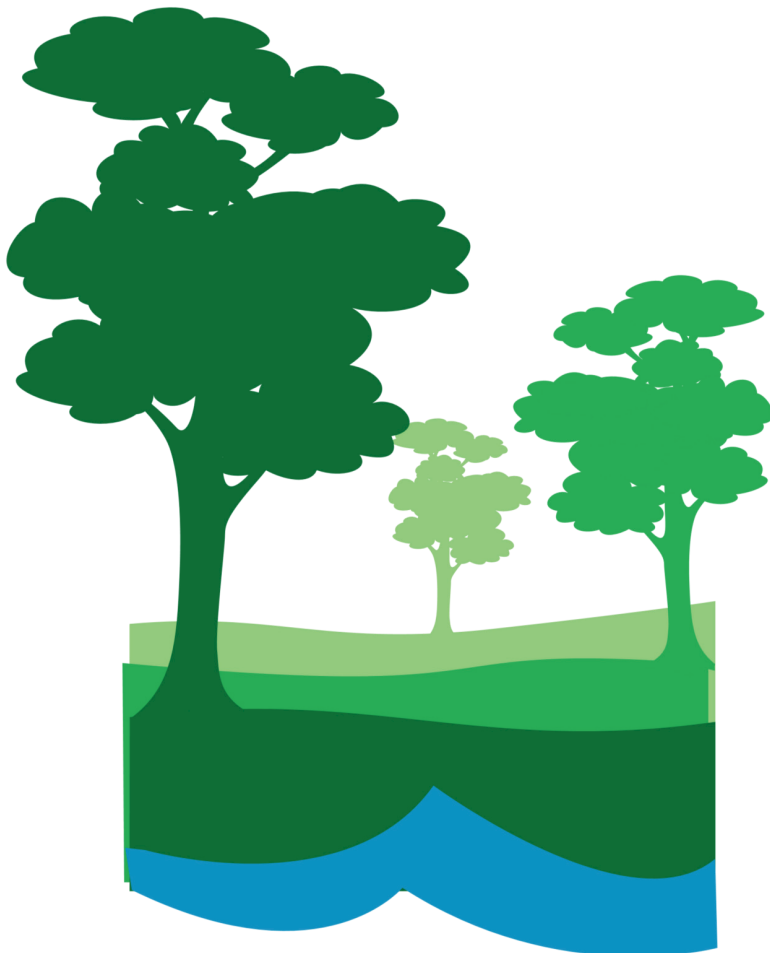
- 7 BHHA, Education Center at Kennekuk; Nature Center, Pioneer Cabin at Forest Glen Open to Public, 1-4pm
- 13 River to Rail Bike Ride for the KRT with Four SAG-supported Cycling Routes  
Pre-registration required at <https://RtoR2025.eventbrite.com>
- 13 Natural Dye Day, Pioneer Homestead Cabin, Forest Glen, 10am-3pm, Free
- 15 Waterfowl Hunt Draw for Lake Mingo and Lake Vermilion, Applications due Sept 12, call 217-442-1691 for info
- 17 VCCD Board Meeting at Kennekuk Education Center, 4:30pm, Public Invited
- 27-28 Revolutionary War Re-enactment, Pioneer Homestead Cabin area, Forest Glen, 10am-4pm, Free
- 28 Pioneer Craft Day, Pioneer Homestead Cabin area, Forest Glen, 10am-4pm Free

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## *Join the Foundation Today* for your 10% discount on:

- Building Rentals
- Boat Decals
- Camping at Forest Glen
- Property Hunt Permits

*Your Vermilion County Conservation Foundation membership will assist the VCCD to conserve and protect natural areas, support environmental education, maintain public access to your outdoor heritage, and more.*

Choose a level of giving that is right for you:

- **LIFE** \$1000 (payable in up to 4 installments)
- **PATRON** \$100
- **SUPPORTING** \$50
- **REGULAR** \$25

Mail your check or money order to:

VCCF, 22296 Henning Rd., Danville, IL 61834  
Or Scan the QR Code to join through the website

