



The Current

For the Town, by the Town



TOWN OF KINNICKINNIC

April 2019

THE ROADS MUCH TRAVELED

by Staff

Within Kinnickinnic Township there are County and State highways and 42.69 miles of roads that belong to the Town. Good roads within the Township are vital to the everyday activities of all the residents. They are a significant part of our daily lives but they are easy to take for granted. We are fortunate to have high-quality Town roads. A lot of effort goes into keeping them that way. That effort is the responsibility of the Kinnickinnic Town Board. It is important to note that approximately 75% of the Town's annual budget goes to road maintenance every year. This does not include the cost of road reconstruction.

In addition to the Town Board, the Town Road Committee oversees the maintenance of roads. The Road Committee is an important asset to the Board. They meet once a month (open meeting) to review road issues and make recommendations to the Board. The Road Committee does a road inspection twice each year. They drive the

Town roads looking for issues and repairs that need to be addressed. After each session a summary of work to be done is compiled. Some of the needs addressed include spray patching, gravel shouldering, shoulder & slope grading, tree trimming, culvert cleaning, signage, debris removal, and mowing. Each road is given a PASER rating (Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating). PASER uses a scale of 1 to 10 with a 1 being poor and a 10 good. Rating the road conditions helps determine the funding for road maintenance needed in the future. Examples of road issues would be potholes, cracking, or vegetation eroding the surface.



Town Road Pothole – Staff Photo
This type of damage would be spray patched

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The Town Board authorized the renewal of The Current. The goals are to increase elector involvement in Town affairs, inform electors on Town business and timely topics, and increase awareness of what the Town of Kinnickinnic has to offer residents.

Submissions will first appear in the Community tab under Current News in the Town Website. When sufficient content is reached in Current News a print copy of The Current containing those submissions will be made available at the Town hall.



Liberty Road - Alligator Cracking
Photo Courtesy SEH
This cracking suggests reconstruction will be necessary

Other basic road responsibilities include snow removal and sanding in the winter and right-of-way maintenance. The Town right-of-way is 33 feet either side of the center line of each Town road. Removing woody vegetation from this area and mowing are important safety issues. Visibility at intersections and feeder roads needs to be maintained. Animals, especially deer, are more visible as they approach the road if rights-of-way are kept clear.



Road Shoulder Damage – Staff Photo
This is most likely gopher damage

A Town road typically goes through a 20 to 30- year life cycle, depending on traffic volumes, type of construction, and quality of

subsoils. Within that time, the road will normally need to be crack sealed and seal coated approximately every 7 years. Some patching and gravel shouldering may be needed in some areas.

Of the 58 roads evaluated by the Road Committee during the October, 2018 road review, the average PASER rating was approximately 5.4. During that review it was noted that gravel shouldering work, spray patching, culvert cleaning, debris removal, tree trimming, mowing, and signage work were needed.

The General Transportation Aids (GTA) program from the State Department of Transportation (WisDOT) enables local governments to receive state aid payments to offset the cost of road construction and maintenance. Fuel taxes and vehicle registration fees collected by the state fund these aid payments. Sounds simple, but it is a bit more complicated than that. In order for the Town to receive these payments they must carefully document transportation/road related expenses and show the most recent 3-year history and submit this each year by March 31st. In essence, each year the Town must show they are spending money on road improvements in order to obtain State aid.

Additionally, State Grants may be available for the Town. It is important to note that the Town budget is NOT sufficient to cover the long term (30 year) and short term (6 year) road expenditure needs. The cost per mile for full reconstruction of a road is about \$285,000. The Town

would have to budget about \$400,000 a year to meet projected road reconstruction needs.

Another invaluable resource for the Town of Kinnickinnic is the Town Engineer. The Town's Engineering consultants, SEH, (Short, Elliot, Hendrickson, Inc.), have been working for the Town since 2004. In that role, they have provided a variety of consulting services to address the Town's needs. Some examples of SEH's work have included preparation of the Town's Comprehensive Plan, assistance with development reviews, updating of Town ordinances, preparation of various maps, design and construction of the Town's recycling area, writing grant applications, developing a Wild Parsnip Management Plan, and providing assistance with review of the Cooperative Boundary Plan with the City of River Falls.

SEH has been very active with the Town Road Committee in helping maintain, repair, and reconstruct the Town's roads. Several important management tools that have been developed include a Long Term (30 year) and a Short Term (6 year) Road Reconstruction and Maintenance Plan. These plans have helped guide the Town in areas of budgeting, scheduling of road improvement projects, and applying for grants. SEH has been very involved in the project management and design of the Town's roadway projects, including design, bidding, and construction oversight.

The most recent example of a Town Road reconstruction is the Liberty Road Project. The Town began planning for reconstruction of Liberty Road in 2013. It was completed by early summer 2018, over 4 years from planning to completion! It is a fair question to ask why it takes so long to get a road rebuilt. Road design, interaction with government agencies and landowners, soil testing, surveying, and funding all come into play. It is not a simple process.

Liberty Road was the top priority on the Town's six-year road plan. SEH prepared a grant application to the State of Wisconsin Town Road Discretionary Improvement Program (TRID). The Town was successful in obtaining a grant for 50% of the cost of the project. In 2014 the Town began working on the planning of the project. A topographic field survey was completed of the roadway and soil borings were obtained. Concept plans were then prepared to study several options



Liberty Road was in tough shape - Photo Courtesy SEH

for softening the sharp curves located near the south end of the project. In order to remain eligible for the grant funds, the curves had to be realigned to meet minimum State safety standards. The Town had multiple meetings

with adjacent property owners to discuss the options for realignment of the curves. The first proposal called for 50 mph curves near the south end. There was concern from citizens regarding departing from the rural and scenic nature of Liberty Road by allowing 50 mph curves. After discussions with town citizens and a traffic survey, a new grant application was submitted that included 40 mph curves.



40 MPH Liberty Rd. Curve – Photo Courtesy SEH

Planning continued throughout 2015 and 2016, including wetland permits and storm water permits. In October 2016, a special Elector meeting was held to increase the levy in anticipation of the project. The levy increase was approved. A modest increase in property tax followed. In early 2017 the Town obtained construction bids for the project. Total Excavating, LLC, out of River Falls was the low bidder. Work began in the spring of 2017 and was completed in the spring of 2018. The final project cost of \$954,000 came in below the original estimate. In 2018 the Town received the 50% grant reimbursement check from the State in the amount of \$477,000. While a modest property tax increase occurred, the grant saved the Town tax payers

significant money, and the Town has a new road that will last for many years.

Why is it hard to fund road projects on a Township level? As previously noted, roads account for a very large part of the Town's annual budget. Funding for our Town roads comes from one of two places; the Town budget (property taxes) and State aid. Some of the ideas for increasing funding for the State General Transportation Aids include raising the gas tax, switching to a mileage-based system for car registration fees, increasing registration fees on commercial vehicles, increasing driver license fees, and eliminating certain tax exemptions on trade-ins. There are no simple solutions.



Liberty Road Reconstructed – Photo Courtesy SEH

SOURCES CITED—The Roads Much Traveled

Wisconsin Department of Transportation, road and bridge assistance programs.

Short Elliot Hendrickson Inc.

Town of Kinnickinnic Annual Budget reports

Town of Kinnickinnic Board Meeting Minutes 2013-2018

Town of Kinnickinnic Road Committee Meeting minutes 2013-2018

Town of Kinnickinnic Spring Road Review Notes, October 17, 2018

KINNICKINNIC CEMETERY TOUR

A Tour to Remember our History

by Julianne Bartos

A tour of the Kinnickinnic Cemetery, in Kinnickinnic Township, was included in the 150th anniversary of the Kinnickinnic Church in the September 2018 celebration event. The church and the cemetery have never been affiliated with each other but there are founding members of the church buried in the cemetery giving us reason to celebrate the cemetery as well. The tour focused on the history of this cemetery, seventeen people buried there, the meanings of the headstones, and finally the importance of cemeteries and their connection to our own history.



Historic Kinnickinnic Cemetery on Cemetery Road (Staff Photo)

This cemetery was opened in 1863, five years before the church was dedicated in 1868. On July 21, 1863, sixty acres of land were sold to Malone Township by Clinton and Henrietta Williams for \$30. Burials began two months later. In 1864, Malone was renamed Kinnickinnic Township. According to a copy of a deed, family lots at the cemetery sold for \$3.00 in 1886. The Hudson to Menominee stage coach route ran south of the Sandstone Monument and along the north side of the cemetery. Clinton and Henrietta Williams' home was a diner stop for the stagecoach and where they would change the stage coach horses. There used to be a County Poor farm just northeast of there.

At one time there were potter's graves in the cemetery but they were moved to New Richmond when they moved the farm.

(www.kinnickinnictwp.org/town-cemetery)

Burials have taken place here each decade since it began in 1863. The earliest burial in the cemetery, before it officially became a cemetery, was Alvin Musser in 1856. He was the youngest and only surviving child of General Peter Musser, an officer in the War of 1812.

There were six other burials before the cemetery was officially open. There are currently about 90 burials but there is room for 1,600. After 1919 there were few burials there and this is when the cemetery fell into neglect. In 1979 the Oak Valley Homemakers undertook a project to clean up the cemetery which proved to be an overwhelming project. The club succeeded in having the Circuit Judge enforce the State Statute which reads an abandoned cemetery is the responsibility of the township in which it lies. In that same year by Court order, the cemetery transferred to the Town of Kinnickinnic. In 1987 the cemetery was re-fenced and sheep were put in it to graze on grass and brush. There was also one goat to protect the grazing sheep but the goat kept jumping the fence. In 1991, a Cemetery Association was organized and the first members were Gerald Larson, Steve Cudd, John Bradley, Candy Bettendorf, Barb Larrabee, and Ester Weigel. At present date the association consists of Candy Bettendorf, Barb Larabee, Dennis Caliva, Kent Larrabee, Brad Kinkaid, and John Bettendorf.

Also, in 1991, a rededication of the cemetery occurred. The Melgard Monument Co. donated a memorial stone and Earthworks Landscaping planted the garden around it. In 1997, the flag pole was dedicated to the veterans and pioneers buried in the cemetery. There are several Veterans including those from the War of 1812, Civil War, Spanish-American War, World War II, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf Wars.



Annual Memorial Day Service at Kinnickinnic Cemetery
Staff Photo

Behind the flag pole is an interesting angel statue. A white pine stood in this location and in 2003 it was hit by lightning. Steve Cudd had the idea to carve an angel out of the remaining wood. Gary Betlack carved this beautiful statue and it was placed on the stump of the pine tree. A Christmas tree ornament was used as a model for the statue. Presently if you knock on the base you will find it is now made of cement.



Staff Photo

To the right of the angel statue is a tall white Obelisk stone. Here lies James Weston who was a founding member of the Congregationalist Church. The church was originally dedicated as a Methodist Church with the understanding that both Methodist and Congregational members would have alternating Sunday services and this arrangement continued for 39 years. After a declining Methodist membership and the fact that a new Methodist church was being built in River Falls, the Methodists sold their share of the church to the Congregationalists for \$300 in 1895. (*Hammer, 1970*)

Mr. James Weston served in Company H, Hatches Minnesota Battalion during the Civil War. The obelisk stone was a symbol quite popular during the 1880's through the 1930's.

The stone's meaning is rebirth, connection between earth and heaven. The obelisk form has Egyptian origins as there was an Egyptian fascination during this time. Typically, this stone allows for multiple family members to be listed on each side. Along with James are his wife Sarah, Edward and his brother Charles who has a motif of hand shaking on his side of the stone. The handshake or clasped hands dates back to the Victorian-era and represents a farewell to earthly existence and God's welcome into heaven. It may also indicate a relationship between the deceased and the loved ones they left behind. If the sleeves of the two hands are masculine and feminine, the handshake, or clasped hands, may symbolize holy matrimony, or the eternal unity of husband or wife. Sometimes the hand on top, or the arm positioned slightly higher than the other indicates the person who passed away first and is now guiding their loved one into the next life. Alternatively, it may indicate God reaching down to guide them to heaven.

In the fenced area to the left of James Weston is Caroline B. Southworth Cole and Emilus Prescott Cole Sr. Their names are on the west face of the stone. They were founding Congregationalist church members. Mrs. Cole was born in Brookfield, N.Y., in 1824. At an early age she came with her parents to the southern part of the State of Wisconsin. Emilus Prescott Cole was born in Chenango County N.Y. in 1821, but had lived in the State of Wisconsin since the age of 20. Caroline and Emilus were married on June 10, 1852 in Walworth County, WI. Mr. and Mrs. Cole moved to St. Croix County in 1865 settling on their farm in section 16 of Kinnickinnic Township near the Monument. They lived there for 40 years. Mrs. Cole was a consistent member of the Congregational church. She died at her home in Kinnickinnic in 1906 at the age of 82. She was highly esteemed by all who knew her. Mr. Cole held the office of township assessor for fourteen consecutive years and was a member of the Republican party. Mr. Cole died in 1915. (*River Falls Journal, 1906*) (*History of St. Croix Valley*)

The next group of burials is along the back road. Walk to the north road and walk around the bend for about 50 feet. Looking to the west in the clump of trees at the base of the hill you will find Frank Bailey Webster. He has a small stone at ground level not visible from the road. Frank Webster was said to be the Sunday School Superintendent from 1910-1936.

There is a Bailey Webster buried in the cemetery and may be a relative of Frank Bailey Webster, but not confirmed. The interesting fact about Bailey is he was married twice and had 17 children.

(<https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/88268/kinnickinnic-cemetery>)

Walking west through a break in the trees about 25 feet, there is a group of several interesting people: the Williams', Silas Walton, and Alvah Hamilton. The Williams stone faces west and the other stones face east. You will first encounter Clinton and Henrietta Williams who sold the property for the cemetery. Henrietta Marshall Beardsley was born in 1836 at Catherine, N.Y. and died at the old homestead in Kinnickinnic where she had resided for some 71 years. She was married in 1853 to Clinton Williams at Rockton, IL, by Rev. R. Pittibone. That same year they moved to St. Croix County, travelling by boat to Prescott. She attended service in what was then called the Tid schoolhouse before the Kinnickinnic Church was built. She taught Sunday school from the time the church was dedicated. She died at 88 years and was one of the old settlers here. The funeral was held at the Kinnickinnic Church where she was a member. An interesting story of the Williams is that they rented rooms to rich trout fishermen from Minneapolis who would come to the Kinnickinnic Church. Supposedly Henrietta wore strong perfume that filled the church and she would wear black or gray silk dresses to church. Roswell S. Rod Williams was the son of Henrietta and Clinton and was a veteran of the Spanish American War.



Staff Photo

Looking to the west is Silas Walton, a veteran of the Civil War. He fought with Company G, 4th Wisconsin Cavalry. He does not have birth or death dates on his military stone. To the right of Silas is the stone of Alvah Hamilton and he was

the first burial after the cemetery was established in 1863. He was the 2-year old son of John and Hannah Hamilton.



Staff Photo

Moving east toward the top of the hill and facing east is Quentin Anderson. He has a black modern stone. Mr. Anderson was a WWII veteran serving in the National Guard until 1941, and then active duty in the Air Force until 1945. He is the son of Ida Ness and Anton Anderson and was born 1921 in Martell Township. He graduated from River Falls High School in 1940. He received Air Force flight training at Maxwell Field in Alabama and piloted B17s and B29s in the war. In 1947, he married Lorraine Stapleton of River Falls. The couple lived in the River Falls area. Quentin worked in custom home construction with Herb Cudd Builders before partnering with Donald Bostrom as Anderson-Bostrom Builders in the River Falls area until he retired. He always had a ready smile and a wave to everyone he greeted. His love of gardening and appreciation of nature was a pastime he enjoyed and shared with his family and friends. The Kinnickinnic River was a familiar and loved area where he enjoyed hiking and fishing. (Obituary)

About 20 feet in front and to the left of Quentin Anderson are two small stones with metal frames. These are the Nye brothers. Their stones have braces to hold the stones up. Bartie was 1 1/2 years old and Mertie was 11 months when they died. For children's stones one might have a broken bud or branch which means died prematurely. Other stone motifs for children are the Easter Lily meaning purity, chastity, or virginity. A lamb represents innocence and shoes usually represent the loss

of a child when one shoe is overturned. Bertie and Mertie were the brothers of the famed Bill Nye, local humorist and lecturer. Bill Nye died at age 45 and is buried in North Carolina. The Nye family lived south of the Kinnickinnic Church on County Rd. JJ. The first bridge south of the church is over the Kinnickinnic River and the second bridge is over Nye Creek. Their homestead was evidently on the knoll just north of the creek. Bill traveled and lectured with James Whitcomb Riley and is said to have practiced his public speaking to the empty pews in the Kinnickinnic Church. You may have read the plaque telling about him just south of the Town hall on Hwy. 65. Franklin Nye was their father and he is buried in River Falls. Franklin was born in Somerset County, Maine. He was married to Miss Eliza M. Loring in 1846 and came to Wisconsin in 1853 locating in Grant County. In 1854 he came to Kinnickinnic, St. Croix County, residing there until 1880, when he moved to River Falls. Franklin was at all times respected by all who knew him as an upright Christian gentleman, whose path of life never encroached upon his neighbor, and his loss was mourned by a large circle of friends. *(River Falls, 1887)*

Hepsey Ann Vandercook Wilson has a unique pillar marker made of gray granite. Red granite stones, such as Minerva Smith's stone, were quarried in Montello, Wisconsin. The sarcophagi for General and Mrs. U.S. Grant at Riverside Park, N.Y., were hewn from Montello granite. *(www.montellowi.com)*

After sampling 280 types of granite from all over the world, the Montello granite was chosen because it was the strongest and the finest. It takes 1000 years to show weathering and wear on granite vs. marble that will wear 5/8 of an inch in that same time period.

There is a red granite stone in front of Hepsey Vandercook Wilson that says Minerva Smith on the front facing east and Charles Dunning Smith is on the back. He was a founding church member. He died of bronchial pneumonia. He was born at Malone, N.Y. in 1836. He came to Kinnickinnic, WI in the spring of 1854 settling on the farm which was his lifetime home. In 1863 he was married to Lucia Gilbert Hurlbert. Mr. Smith had for many years been a member of the Methodist church. He was a kind father and neighbor, much respected by all who knew him. He was laid to rest in Hillside Cemetery on Dec. 14, 1917. Note the use of the name "Hillside Cemetery". Over the years this

cemetery has been referred to as Kinnickinnic, Hillside, or Oak Knoll Cemetery. There was a Hillside School northeast of here and the Oak Knoll School was northwest of the site. It is imagined the people from these areas who had plots here referred to it by their community or school name. *(River Falls Journal, 1917)*

Just across the road towards the east is a group of Fuller stones. Jesse Fuller has one of the most unique stones in the cemetery. It is an agate stone. This shows that any material can be used as a grave marker. We learned from a family member that this stone was taken from the farm where she lived.

George Washington Fuller who was a Methodist, died in 1866 before the church was dedicated. Reading from his obituary – please note obituaries of the time contained more details than what is reported in the present day. George lived near the Monument in the Town of Malone (later named Kinnickinnic), St. Croix County. He was suddenly killed by the falling of a shed under its weight of snow. He was examining the shed, and sent his little boy into the house for one of his neighbors to come out to assist him. When they returned the shed had fallen and he was lying under it. His neck was broken and his head badly crushed. Mr. Fuller was one of the most valued citizens in that town.

(River Falls Journal, 1866)

George Fuller has a finger pointing up on his stone which is seen as an important symbol of life. A hand with the index finger pointing down represents God reaching down for the soul. The finger pointing down does not indicate damnation; instead, it most commonly represents an untimely, sudden, or unexpected death.



Staff Photo

Alta Ellen Fuller, daughter of George Washington Fuller, had been a resident of the Kinnickinnic community for 81 years, having established residence there at the age of two, when her parents moved to that district. She was born in Rockford, IL, in 1853. Miss Fuller joined the Kinnickinnic church at an early age. Her greatest joy came from her contacts with Christian friends and the reading of her Bible. This was especially true during the latter part of her life. Many of the years of her life were devoted in caring for her mother. A large number of people attended her funeral. She will be missed. (River Falls Journal Kinnickinnic News, 1936).

Frank William Fuller was 96 years old and is the oldest known person buried in the cemetery. Frank "Bill" Fuller was born in River Falls in 1900, the son of Frank and Jessie Deyarmond Fuller. He attended school through the 8th grade, and eventually attended the River Falls Normal School for 2 years. He taught math and was a principal at Gratiot for 2 years. He then came back to River Falls and farmed until his retirement in 1966. However, he helped out around the farm until 1992. In 1936 he married Esther Jensen. He was a former president of the River Falls PTA, and was a member of the farmer's cooperative and Democratic Party. He was also the Town Clerk and assessor for the Town of Kinnickinnic. He was very active in the Kinnickinnic church and was known to step in and give a sermon if the pastor was unable to attend the services. He later joined the First Congregational, United Church of Christ, where he served on the Board of Deacons.

Beyond the Fuller's plot you will see the Gilbert bench which is a newer type of family stone. A bench allows mourners to come and sit to spend time or meditate the passing of their loved one. Gilbert was a Vietnam veteran.

To the left of the Gilbert bench is a small white stone with a dove which was an important symbolic bird in Christianity representing the Holy Spirit.

There are several other interesting facts. Alma Phernetton's stone was crushed by a tree in 1980. William Harvey Wadsworth is the youngest burial at 5 months old. By the 1920s, monument makers could purchase sandblasting units equipped with templates with fonts in several styles and sizes. The older hand-carved lettering has a v-shaped groove whereas the sides of letters that have been sandblasted are perpendicular to the memorial face. (<http://foresthill.williamcronon.net/stoes>)

If your family owns a lot with open spots, you can claim them for free. Individual lots are for sale to Kinnickinnic residents for \$400 and all others will be charged \$800. Lots are available to anyone regardless of race, color, or creed.

Finally, I would like to end with the importance of cemeteries and their connection to our own history. Cemeteries are a glimpse of the past showing you your ancestors and where you came from. We are all brothers and sisters in mortality, and our common preoccupation with death has produced many cultural and religious practices that help us deal with the ultimate mystery. Ritual burial of the dead and the building of monuments are defining occurrences for most civilizations. Death has been marked and commemorated since the beginning of human culture, reflecting an unwillingness to pass away unnoticed. (Brown)

For more information about the Kinnickinnic cemetery burials, you can use the website (<https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/88268/kinnickinnic-cemetery>).

You can also use <https://www.findagrave.com> to research your own history from almost 500,000 cemeteries in 240 countries.

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(1906, December 6). River Falls Journal

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PRAIRIE RESTORATION & PUBLIC LAND IN KINNICKINNIC

TOWNSHIP

by Staff

It's 1848. Wisconsin has just become a state. Imagine you are a European Immigrant working your way across the country searching for a place to farm and start a new life. You've arrived by boat up the Mississippi to Prescott and are working your way north. After some time, you arrive at what is then described by the recently completed land survey as Township 28N – Range 18W, St. Croix County. *(Marsh)* The population of St. Croix County was 1,674 in 1847. St. Croix County was much larger in 1848 than it is today. The boundary on the west was the St. Croix River and to the east the Chippewa River. It stretched from Prescott all the way past present day Webster, Wisconsin. *(History of WI) (WI Past & Present)*

Here you are, rolling prairies as far as the eye can see. To the southeast in Section 24 there are some nice woodlots with White and Black Oak and Aspen. And up to the northeast in section 1 there are even some White Pine. *(Marsh)* The rolling prairie seems like the perfect place to quickly get a garden planted, turn the soil, and plant some crops. The Oxen you brought with are ready for the task. The Whitetail Deer, some Elk, Prairie Chickens and Sharptail Grouse will add to your larder. And, of course, that nearby river is going to provide you with sumptuous Brook Trout.

Fast forward to 2019. As you may have guessed, Township 28N – Range 18W, St. Croix County, Wisconsin, became our very own Kinnickinnic Township. Of the 300 square miles of medium and tall grass prairie and oak savanna that were located in present day southwestern Polk counties and western St. Croix County including Kinnickinnic Township at pre-settlement time, only small, scattered remnants totaling less than 1 square mile remain today. Grassland wildlife and tallgrass prairie habitats are declining faster than any other ecosystem in the United States. *(WPHRA)*

The Prairie Chickens, Sharptail Grouse and Elk are gone. The Buffalo that once roamed these prairies are gone. Ten species of birds

known to occur in the remnant prairies and savannas are state-listed as endangered or threatened and 19 species are listed as special concern. Grassland birds (think Bobolinks) have declined 70 to 90 % in the last 30 years! Grassland birds are experiencing one of the fastest and steepest population declines of any group of birds in Wisconsin and in North America. The Western Meadowlark used to be one of the most common birds in Wisconsin but since the mid-1960's, its numbers have declined by over 90%! The remnant grasslands and savanna also includes 54 rare plant species, 18 of which are state-listed endangered or threatened. *(WPHRA)*

Examples of some of the important grassland birds besides the previously mentioned Meadowlarks and Bobolinks would be Clay-colored Sparrows, Dickcissels, Field Sparrows, Henslow's Sparrows (threatened), LeConte's Sparrows, Savannah Sparrows, Upland Sandpiper (Threatened), Vesper Sparrow, Lark Sparrow, Loggerhead Shrike (Endangered), Short-eared Owl, and Northern Harrier. *(The Sibley Guide to Birds) (WDNR Endangered and Threatened Species Laws & List)*



Clay-colored Sparrow - Prairie Restoration
Kinnickinnic Township
Photo Tom Andersen

Prairies and savannas are also an important home to pollinators. Besides the birds, bees, beetles, and butterflies perform an essential service. Over 80% of the world's flowering plants like fruits, nuts, and vegetables require a pollinator.

Currently we have nearly 600 acres of land open to the public in Kinnickinnic Township. Much of these are lands made up of properties held and managed by the Department of Natural Resources. These properties include

the Swinging Gate Tract on Quarry Road and Hwy. 65, The Oscar Lee Tract on River Road, the Potton Tract on Cemetery Road and Hwy. J, and The Parker Creek Tract on Pleasant Avenue. They are co-managed by WDNR Fisheries (the Kinnickinnic River adjoins these properties) and the Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area (WPHRA) WDNR Project Manager. (KRLT) (2018 Plat)

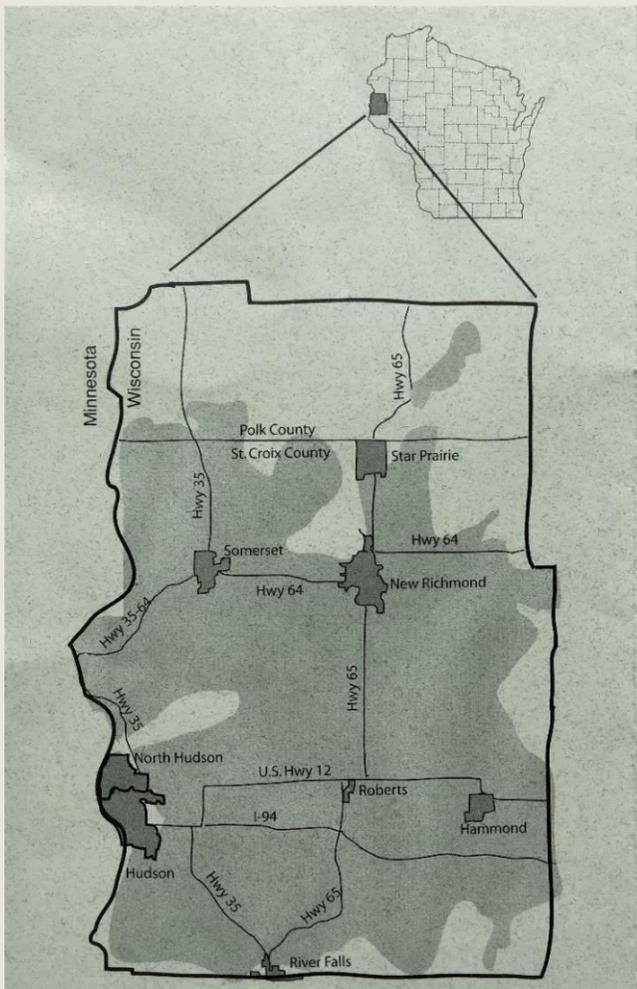
The Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area team works to protect existing native prairie or oak savanna remnants and acquire blocks of grassland, especially those that include wetlands or harbor sensitive wildlife species. Restoring grasslands by replanting with native grasses and wildflowers is a priority. The intention is to support the presence of adjacent farms, which provide a buffer for protected areas. The Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area is shown on the map. (WPHRA)



Photo T. Andersen



Prairie Restoration – 156 Acre DNR Swinging Gate Tract
Kinnickinnic Township – Photo Tom Andersen



Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area is the shaded portion. (WPHRA)

The Kinnickinnic River Land Trust (KRLT) manages another important parcel, the 70 Acre Kelly Creek Property. Kelly Creek rises from springs that come out of a limestone outcropping. This can be viewed by taking the short hiking trail to that location. The spring puts out more than 700,000 gallons of cold spring water per day. Kelly Creek is then free flowing for a short distance to the Kinnickinnic River. Wild Native Brook Trout spawn there.

Tag alder and sedge meadow wetland along the creek, and an area of planted pines are found there. Former pasture upland, oak woods, and planted prairie in what was previously an agricultural field are also found on the preserve. Along the ridge above the creek are scattered large bur oaks which indicate it was originally an oak savanna with prairie grasses and wildflowers. There are hiking trails throughout. Kelly Creek is open to the public. This is a great area for hiking, wildlife and bird photography. (KRLT)



Photo T. Andersen

A Solitary Sandpiper works the waters of Kelly Creek
Photo T. Andersen

Besides the WDNR and Kelly Creek properties there are a significant number of easements along the Kinnickinnic River and Parker Creek that are available for public use. (Public Lands Atlas) An 80-acre St. Croix County Forest property in the Township is another property open to the public. That property is primarily White and Red Pine with some hardwoods and brushy areas. A nice trail starts from the parking area on Evergreen Drive.

Some of those who have contributed to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources effort to preserve and enhance these lands are USDA, Ducks Unlimited, Landmark Conservancy, St. Croix Valley Bird Club, Prairie Enthusiasts, Pheasants Forever, the Kinnickinnic River Land Trust, the KIAP-TU-WISH Chapter of Trout Unlimited, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service,

St. Croix Alliance of Sportsmen's Clubs, St. Croix River Association, St. Croix County, Town of St. Joseph, and adjacent landowners.

For Kinnickinnic Township residents and others these lands provide a great opportunity for outdoor recreation. For the birder, ample opportunities to view many different birds exist. Wildlife and flower photographers will find no shortage of subjects. Prospects for hunting for Pheasants, Turkey, and Whitetail deer are good.

There are opportunities for landowners to establish plots beneficial to grassland species. The WPHRA partnership team assists private landowners willing to restore, maintain, and improve grasslands, savannas and wetlands on their property. Whether you have 5 acres or 100 acres there are guidelines and references available as to how to plant and maintain grassland habitat for birds and other wildlife.

A place for you to start would be:

www.dnr.wi.gov/topic/wildlifehabitat/yourland.html

Go to Publication # WM-219. There are many resources to help you.

SOURCES CITED—Prairie Restoration

Board of Commissioners of Public Land, James M. Marsh, Surveyor, Sept. 1847 – Oct. 1847, Surveyor's notebook

History of Wisconsin, Vol. 1, Alice Smith p. 508

Wisconsin's Past & Present, Historical Atlas, The Wisconsin Cartographer's Guild

WPHRA, PUB-WM-318-2001

The Sibley Guide to Birds, David Allen Sibley

WDNR Endangered and Threatened Species Laws & List PUBL-ER-001 2004 REV June 2015

KRLT Kinnickinnic Watershed Public Recreation Map

2018 St. Croix County Plat Book

Wisconsin Public Lands Atlas

Jed Hopp, Wildlife Biologist, WDNR

THREE LITTLE BIRDS

by Tom Andersen

For my money, some the best times to see our feathered friends coming back to Kinnickinnic Township is during the months of April, May, and early June. Some of these birds nest here and others are just passing through. Three of my favorite migrants are the American Redstart, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and the White-throated Sparrow.

When the American Redstart shows up in Kinnickinnic Township in April, I think about sitting at the Smokey Mermaid, a little open-air restaurant in Belize City. Each time I have visited that spot in the winter, this little bird has entertained me while I'm dining.



American Redstart (Male) – Photo TA
Photos were taken in Kinnickinnic Township



American Redstart (Female) – Photo TA

I'd like to think that very same bird has flown 1900 miles just to visit me again here in Kinnickinnic Township. The summer range of this little Wood Warbler includes Kinnickinnic Township. A likely spot to find this bird would be along our very own Kinnickinnic River.

Lots of bug life in a trout stream makes for prime habitat for this bird. Watch for them flitting among the alders feeding on mayflies, caddisflies, and other stream born insect life that emerges from the Kinnickinnic River. They rarely sit still. They have an interesting habit of fanning their tail feathers and drooping their wings as they search for food. They do nest here. (Stephenson & White, Sibley)

One of the most common migrating Wood Warblers that pass through the Township is the Yellow-rumped Warbler.



Yellow-rumped Warbler – Photo TA

As early as late March some years, but most likely in April and through the month of May, the Yellow-rump Warbler makes an appearance. They might possibly nest here but more likely as close as Northern Wisconsin. (Sibley) Like many Warblers they dine primarily on insects. When caught off guard by an April snowstorm, they often adapt to other food sources. I've observed them at suet feeders and interesting enough, dining on sap running from maple trees! They are usually rather tame and photographing them is often quite easy.



A Yellow-rumped Warbler dining on maple sap during a rough patch of spring weather – Photo TA

Another common spring migrant is *Old Sam Peabody*. Well, the real name is the White-throated Sparrow. Depending on the year, they can be seen usually from early April well into May.



White-throated Sparrow (Adult Male) – Photo TA

Their song is one of my favorites. It sounds like *Old Sam Peabody, Peabody, Peabody*. They most likely nest in Northern Wisconsin and also in Canada. Of course, once they reach the breeding grounds in Canada, the Canukes claim the bird is singing *Pure Sweet Canada, Canada, Canada*. I've not often heard their song here when they are passing through, but I hear it often in April and May when fishing some of my favorite streams in Northern Wisconsin. They prefer shrubby woods edges and brushy understorey. (Sibley, Stephenson & White)

If you like birds, spring is a great time to be out looking. Spotting migratory birds as they come through is often best done by sitting

patiently in the woods or streamside with a good pair of binoculars. Bring a comfortable stool and perhaps a cup of coffee and enjoy. When it comes to bird watching my motto is: Find the food, find the birds. Watch for birds flying back and forth from one side of the Kinnickinnic River to the other. They are catching insects that are emerging from the river. Some birds find and use "favorite" feeding areas. Usually these are particular trees or brush piles that have a goodly number of insects to dine on. Birds will return again and again to the same spot. I find these spots, get comfortable, and wait. It is usually not long before they return and give me good viewing or a photo opportunity.

If you are wandering in the woods and grasslands this spring looking for birds, make sure you take precautions against ticks. We have the Black-legged Deer Tick and tick-borne diseases are common in this area. Use a good spray repellent before venturing out. I lightly saturate around the cuffs of my pants and pant legs and around the cuffs of my shirt. A bit on the back of my hand to rub on my neck and I'm good to go. Be religious about this.

Get out this spring! Kinnickinnic Township is a great birding destination. If you don't have a woodlot of your own, there are hundreds of acres of public land in the Township and a beautiful trout stream running right through it!



Individual bird species can vary a great deal. Here's the White-throated Sparrow that is most likely an adult tan version.

Sources Cited

The Warbler Guide, Tom Stephenson & Scott White, 2015

Sibley Guide to Bird Life & Behavior, David Sibley, 2001

Sibley Guide to Birds, David Sibley, 2000

A BASIC GUIDE TO NAVIGATING YOUR TOWN GOVERNMENT

by Staff

This is intended as a guide for the Town of Kinnickinnic residents. Additional information can be obtained by contacting the Town Clerk during regular office hours, the Town Website, or by contacting your Town officials.



The Town Hall

The Town hall belongs to the people of the Town of Kinnickinnic. All regular Town meetings are held there.

- The Town Hall is open for regular office hours on Tuesday and Thursday from 9 A.M. to 2 P.M.
- The Town Hall is available for rental. This is for Town residents only. Rental is \$75 for the day with a \$200 deposit required. The deposit is refunded after cleaning by those using the hall. No alcoholic beverages are allowed and the hall capacity is 99 people.
- Contact the Town Clerk for details and reservations.
- The address for the Kinnickinnic Town Hall is 1271 County Road J, River Falls, WI 54022.

The Town Board

The Town Board of Kinnickinnic consists of a Town Chairman, four Supervisors, the Clerk, and Treasurer. Each Supervisor serves a 2-year elected term. Two of the four Supervisors are up for election or re-election each year. Some of the he duties of the Town Board include:

- Conducting the financial affairs for the Township including preparing the annual budget, financial statement, and annual audit.
- Designating public depositories for Town funds.
- Approving contracts and bills to be paid.
- Obtaining fire and ambulance service for Town residents.
- Maintaining and caring for our roads.

Town Chairperson

The Town Chairperson serves a two-year elected term. Some of the Chairperson duties are as follows:

- Presiding over meetings of the Town Board and being responsible for Board meeting agendas.
- Serving on the Planning Commission, Road Committee, and presiding at Town elector meetings
- Signing documents such as ordinances, resolutions, contracts, etc.
- Signing checks and transfer orders.

Town Clerk

The Town of Kinnickinnic Clerk is appointed by the Town Board. Some of the duties of the Clerk include:

- Being the custodian of the Town records including Town finances.
- Recording minutes at all Town meetings, providing a monthly report to the Board, and conducting regular posted office hours.
- Preparing and properly posting agendas for Town meetings, ordinances, resolutions, and bids.
- Working with the Board in the Fall to create the Annual Budget for the following year.
- Performing election functions such as scheduling election workers, supervising completion of election paperwork and testing election equipment.

- Processing alcohol licenses and providing notices.
- Attesting to and signing documents such as ordinances, resolutions, contracts, etc.
- Signing checks, drafts, and transfer orders.
- Preparing the tax roll and delivering it to the Town Treasurer.

Town Treasurer

The Treasurer is appointed by the Town Board. Some of the Treasurer's duties are:

- Receiving and taking charge of all monies belonging to the Town.
- Providing monthly financial reports to the Board, and working with the clerk to make sure it all balances each month and at the end of the year.
- Providing dog tags to residents upon receipt of proof of rabies vaccinations and appropriate fee. Providing an up-to-date list to Board members and to the County throughout the year.
- Assisting the county with Lottery Credit audits and sending out the appropriate letters to residents.
- Working with the Board in the Fall to create the budget for the following year.
- Preparing and mailing property tax bills in mid-December, and collecting the first half of the property taxes due by January 31.
- Signing checks, drafts, and transfer orders.

Dog Licenses

Dog licensing is required annually by statute. Contact the Town Treasurer at (715) 425-1180 with questions. A printable form for obtaining an annual dog license is available from the Town Website: www.kinnickinnicTwp.org. The Form is also mailed each December with the Tax Bill (s) for the year. Fees: \$4 if neutered/spayed - \$9 if not. All dogs must be licensed, 5 months of age & older, or 5 months old within the license year. Proof of Rabies shots must be submitted on purchase of license. Dates of area Rabies Clinics are published in the newspapers and shoppers. If the tag should get lost throughout the year, please contact the Town Treasurer for a replacement tag.

Town Meeting Agenda Information

An agenda is posted for all town meetings that are subject to State of Wisconsin open meeting laws. This would include agendas for Town Board meetings, Annual Town meetings, Planning Commission meetings, and Road Committee meetings.

These agendas are posted on the Town Hall front door, in the River Falls Journal, at the County Road J bulletin board, and on the Town website.

Town Board Meetings

Regular Town Board meetings are held once a month (normally the first Tuesday) and are subject to State of Wisconsin open meeting laws.

- An agenda is posted for public viewing in advance of each meeting.
- Except for a time allotted for public comments the Board must stick to the topics on the agenda.
- Town residents may bring matters of concern to the Town Board by requesting that an item be placed on the agenda. This must be done at least 2 weeks in advance of the meeting date. Residents doing so should be prepared to comment and answer questions regarding the chosen topic only.

Annual Town Meeting

Each year in April there is an annual Town meeting and all Township residents are invited to attend.

- Residents are free to bring up any topic concerning the Township.
- Concerns of all Town residents are heard at this meeting.

Kinnickinnic residents are urged to attend the Annual Meeting each year.

Town Ordinances

A Town Ordinance is an authoritative rule or law.

- They are used to regulate or prohibit certain types of conduct or actions.
- They have prohibitions or regulations typically with penalty provisions for failure to comply.
- The Town Board passes, amends, or repeals Town Ordinances.
- Ordinances can be viewed on the Town website.

- New Ordinances are posted at the Town Hall, in the River Falls Journal, at the County Road J bulletin board, and on the Town website.

Town Resolutions

A Town Resolution is a formal determination or expression of opinion by the Town Board.

- Resolutions do not contain penalties.
- They are often used to establish internal Board policy positions.
- Resolutions may be viewed on the Town website.

Elections

- Contact the Town Clerk to register to vote in the Town of Kinnickinnic.
- You must be a resident of the Town of Kinnickinnic for a minimum of 10 days in order to vote in the Township.
- You may also get information and register at the website; www.myvote.wi.gov.
- Information about elections can be found on the State website at www.elections.wi.gov.
- Voters must present an ID when voting.

Plan Commission

The Plan Commission, created by Town Ordinance 2005-2, usually meets the third Wednesday of the month.

- The commission is made up of the Town Chairperson, one additional member of the Town Board, and 5 citizen members who are not otherwise Town officials.
- The Commission is primarily concerned with land use matters and is considered the Town planning agency.
- To get on the Plan Commission agenda a request requires a minimum of 2 weeks lead time.
- Plan Commission meetings are subject to Wisconsin State Open Meeting Law.
- Meeting notices and agendas are publicly posted in the same place as Town Board meetings.

Road Committee

- The Road Committee advises the Board on all matters concerning Town roads.
- Road reviews are done on a semi-annual basis, (one review in the spring and one in the fall).
- You must be on the Road Committee agenda if you wish to bring up a topic at the meeting. A 2-week lead time is required.
- Road Committee meetings are subject to open meeting laws and notices are posted on the Town Hall front door, at the County Road J bulletin board, and on the Town Website.

Roads and Driveways

A driveway permit is required by the Town to access Town roads. For County roads contact the St. Croix County Highway Department. For State roads contact Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

Town of Kinnickinnic Road and Driveway Ordinance 2013-4 spells out requirements for driveways and for placement of mailboxes.

The Town of Kinnickinnic contracts St. Croix County to perform snow plowing and mowing duties. In addition, a private contractor performs woody vegetation removal for the Town.

Fire Numbers

The Road and Driveway Ordinance 2013-4 spells out the requirements for placement of house addresses. Emergency responders rely upon these numbers when responding to an emergency call.

- Fire numbers should be placed on the right side of the driveway, when facing the driveway from the road, and at the right-of-way line.
- The sign shall be kept clear of obstruction and shall be placed parallel to the road for visibility in both directions.
- Fire numbers are issued for new building permits and are to be picked up at the Town Hall.
- It is the responsibility of the home owner to place these signs properly.

Property Tax Assessment

The Property Tax Assessor for the Township is a state certified independent contractor appointed by the Town Board.

Open Book

The "Open Book" is held during the month of May and is publicly noticed.

- At the Open Book the Township Assessor is present at the Town Hall to review questions and concerns regarding property tax assessment.
- If residents disagree with their property tax assessment and it is not resolved at Open Book, then they may request that their argument be heard at the Board of Review (BOR).

Board of Review

The Board of Review is a quasi-legal body made up of members of the Town Board.

- Residents who have not resolved property tax issues at Open Book may wish to be heard at the Board of Review (BOR).
- Those wishing to bring their case to the BOR must file to do so no less than 48 hours prior to the BOR's first meeting. This can be done with the Town Clerk during regular business hours at the Town Hall.

Zoning

The Town of Kinnickinnic falls under the zoning laws of St. Croix County. The St. Croix County website, www.co.saint-croix.wi.us provides detailed information on zoning law.

Building Inspector & Building Permits

The Town of Kinnickinnic Building Code (Ordinance 2010A) provides for the Board to hire a Building Inspector.

- Our State Certified Building Inspector issues permits and performs inspections for the Town of Kinnickinnic.
- Permits are required for new structures, and certain remodeling, electrical, plumbing projects, septic systems, driveways, etc.
- Ordinance 2010-1A, Building Code for the Town spells out the requirements for permits.

Fire and Ambulance Service

Fire and ambulance services are provided by the City of River Falls.

Burning

Actual burning permits are not issued but you must contact the St. Croix County Dispatch at 715-386-4701 on the day you intend to burn. When issued, County burning bans must be obeyed. If you live on the border of Pierce and St. Croix Counties it would be advisable to call Pierce Co. Dispatch also.

Garbage and Recycling

The Town offers a recycling container which is on the Town Hall property. The recycling facility is for Town of Kinnickinnic residents only. Only items listed on the container may be deposited in the bins. Examples include; Newspaper, cardboard, magazines and other paper products suitable for recycling, like office paper, bundled or put in brown paper bags. Metal (food cans, pop cans, etc. tin and aluminum, flattened will take up less space), Plastics (#1 and #2 caps removed). Glass products, rinsed and caps removed.

St. Croix County offers special collections for hazardous waste, appliances, electronics, and tires. www.co.saint-croix.wi.us/Departments/Recycling/

St. Croix County

Kinnickinnic Township is one of 21 townships that make up St. Croix County. An official directory for St. Croix County can be obtained for \$1.00 from the County Clerk's office at the St. Croix Co. Government Center at 1101 Carmichael Road, Hudson, WI 54016. Visit the St. Croix County website at www.co.saint-croix.wi.us.

Law enforcement services for Town of Kinnickinnic are provided by St. Croix County. For emergencies call 911 and for non-emergencies contact the St. Croix County Dispatch at 715-386-4701.

Town Contact Information

Chair: Jerry Olson – 715-307-4627
kinnijerryo@gmail.com

Supervisor 1: Axel Bogdan – 715-426-6119
kinnisupervisor1@icloud.com

Supervisor 2: Dave Nelson – 715-425-8774
kinnisupervisor2@icloud.com

Supervisor 3: Alex Williams – 715-222-4111
kinnisupervisor3@icloud.com

Supervisor 4: Mae Wolfe – 715-821-9350
kinnisupervisor4@icloud.com

Clerk: Nicky Thompson -- 715-425-8082
kinniclerk@icloud.com

Treasurer: Brenda LaValley -- 715-425-1180
kinnitreasurer@icloud.com

Assessor: Ron Meyer – 715-232-9068
ronkar@hughes.net

Building Inspector: See Town Website

Town Website:
www.kinnickinnicTwp.org

GUIDELINES FOR
 SUBMISSION

- Submissions to *Current News* may come from any Town of Kinnickinnic resident and should be turned in at the town hall during regular office hours.
- Submissions may be sent to the Editor @ ttrico@outlook.com

- Submissions should be in a Word file if sent by e-mail or typed or handwritten if presented to the Town hall.
- Submissions should be approximately 1000 words but can be longer. Pictures may be used and they should be in jpg format.
- All submissions must be accompanied by the author’s name and contact information.
- Questions about submissions may be directed to the Editor at- ttrico@outlook.com
- Current Editor and Town Board must approve all submissions.
- Current Editor and or Town Board reserve the right to proof and make necessary corrections [grammatical errors, etc.] in all submissions.
- All submissions must strive to be factual.
- Partisan political submissions will not be accepted.
- Op-Ed submissions will not be accepted.
- Ideas for articles are welcomed.

Special Thanks

- *To Town resident Sydney Wachtler for designing, creating the template.
- *To Town resident Julianne Bartos for writing for *The Current*.
- *To Dave Simons, Town Engineer for technical assistance.
- *To Jed Hopp, WDNR Wildlife Biologist for technical assistance.

BE SURE TO VISIT YOUR TOWN WEBSITE-

www.KinnickinnicTwp.org