



Directions

Address: Tunnelville Road, La Farge, WI

Directions: From La Farge, WI, head east on W Main St. Turn right onto WI- 131 S/S State St Continue to follow WI-131 S. Turn Right onto Tunnelville Rd, destination and parking is on the left.

Tunnelville
Cliffs
State Natural Area

History

Along the east branch of the Kickapoo River in Vernon County sit two spectacular MVC properties: Tunnelville Cliffs State Natural Area and the adjacent, newly-acquired Kings Point Farm Tract.

Mississippi Valley Conservancy permanently protected Tunnelville Cliffs in May 2005. The DNR designated the site as a State Natural Area in 2006. Among the many noteworthy features of Tunnelville Cliffs State Natural Area are east facing Cambrian sandstone cliffs with seepages at the base, the Kickapoo River and an associated wetland, a small goat prairie, wooded ridges and a hilltop with a fantastic overlook of the valley. This is a great property to visit any time of the year with wildflowers and sand hill cranes in the spring, the lush greenness of summer, changing colors of fall, and icicles on the cliffs to see in the winter.

What Can I do at Tunnelville Cliffs State Natural Area?

- ◆ Open to the public for hiking, hunting, trapping, fishing, snowshoeing and wildlife observation. (See trail map)
- ◆ Hikers are encouraged to take precautions during hunting seasons.
- ◆ You can help keep our Preserve beautiful by carrying out your trash.

Features of Tunnelville Cliffs

In December 2009, the Babson family, former owners of the Chicago-based Surge milking machine business that was part of the modernization of dairy farming, donated to Mississippi Valley Conservancy 1,118 acres on the Kickapoo River north of Viola in Vernon County. The site includes springs, creeks, over 9,000 feet of frontage on the Kickapoo River, forests, cliffs, prairie, sedge meadow, and open grasslands. It hosts populations of the state threatened Henslow's sparrow and the state threatened cherrystone drop snail.

It's an astonishing gift that gives further protection to important ecological features and wildlife as well as increasing public access to this spectacular part of the Wisconsin landscape. The Babsons' donation, appraised at \$2.5 million, is the largest gift of land received by the MVC since it was started in 1997. MVC's president George Kerckhove said, "I think I can speak for all the people of Wisconsin in expressing our gratitude to the Babsons for their splendid gift," Kerckhove said.

Jean Babson said her late husband, James Babson, "had vision, had a love of the land. The whole place meant a lot to him...not just the cattle, but being here. It's such a beloved part of the country that meant so much to me and my husband, and it's nice to know its going to be in good hands."

In the spring of 2010, MVC conducted its largest-ever prescribed burn on the property to restore some of the rare native habitat, including oak savanna.

Mississippi Valley Conservancy

Mississippi Valley Conservancy was formed by a group of concerned local citizens that responded to the growing development in the blufflands of southwestern Wisconsin by organizing a land trust to ensure conservation of the remaining special places in this region.

MVC works with willing land owners to protect our region's beautiful and natural areas for the enjoyment of future generations. We focus on areas of scenic, biological, agricultural and cultural importance throughout nine counties of southwestern Wisconsin (Buffalo, Trempealeau, Jackson, Monroe, La Crosse, Vernon, Crawford, Richland and Grant). Our various tools for land conservation include:

- ◆ Conservation Agreements
- ◆ Land Donations & Purchases
- ◆ Land Acquisition

You can help! Please become a contributing member by sending a tax-deductible donation to:

Mississippi Valley Conservancy
1309 Norplex Dr., Suite 9
P.O. Box 2611
La Crosse, WI 54602
(608) 784-3606

info@MississippiValleyConservancy.org

