



*Partners in stewardship of land  
and water.*

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contact:  
Kristine Snowdeal  
[kris@valleystewardshipnetwork.org](mailto:kris@valleystewardshipnetwork.org)  
608-637-3615

## **Managing Habitat for Amphibians and Reptiles: We're neither Birds nor Mammals and that Matters!**

VIROQUA, WI March 23, 2017 – On Saturday, April 15<sup>th</sup>, the Valley Stewardship Network will kick off their 2017 Workshop Series. Since the frogs are out calling, it seems perfect to begin. It kicks off with an afternoon with Dr. Rebecca Christoffel, learning about Wisconsin's amphibians and reptiles, and how they differ from our other groups of wildlife, birds and mammals. Do these differences matter when it comes to habitat management on your land? You



bet they do! Dr. Christoffel, sole proprietor of Christoffel Conservation, will highlight how these differences matter in terms of the timing and type of habitat management activities that you conduct on your land, and present resources that you can use when managing your land with amphibians and reptiles in mind.

Dr. Rebecca Christoffel earned B.S. and M.S. degrees in Wildlife Ecology from University of Wisconsin, Madison and a Ph.D. in Fisheries and Wildlife from Michigan State University. Prior to establishing Christoffel Conservation, she was a faculty member and Wildlife Extension Biologist at Iowa State University. Rebecca has experience working with mammals, birds, amphibians and reptiles

and their associated habitats. She now focuses on helping people learn about, appreciate and manage for mysterious wildlife such as amphibians and reptiles.

Why would you manage for these animals? If nothing else, they are the cheapest form of pest control in which you'll ever invest! But beyond that, they are fascinating creatures that we still know little about. Rebecca will bring along some local reptiles for participants to meet and get to know more personally. She'll highlight each animal's natural history and conservation status in Wisconsin, as well as actions that landowners can take to help manage and conserve these animals.

Afterward, we'll head out on a tour to view some of the habitat and its management for herpetofauna (i.e. amphibians and reptiles) at Nature Nooks Retreat, owned by Tom Lukens. "This includes a constructed snake hibernaculum, installation of turtle basking logs along the banks of the West Fork, protection of an old beaver pond and the recent construction of an open water marsh." Tom says. "To protect and enhance bio-diversity and carrying capacity and to create a means of sharing Nature is the heart of the mission here. There is no doubt that habitat considerations for reptiles and amphibians are a unique and interesting part of this effort. I look forward to learning more at this workshop with Rebecca." Participants will also have the opportunity to conduct a field exercise to monitor amphibian and reptile populations.

This family friendly event will be held Saturday, April 15th from 1 pm – 4 pm at Nature Nooks Retreat, S4878 County Road S, Viroqua, WI. This is a FREE workshop. Contact VSN to reserve your spot(s) today! Contact us via email: [info@valleystewardshipnetwork.org](mailto:info@valleystewardshipnetwork.org), phone: (608) 637-3615, or register online: [www.valleystewardshipnetwork.org/calendar](http://www.valleystewardshipnetwork.org/calendar).

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Valley Stewardship Network is celebrating 17 years of land and water stewardship in the Kickapoo Valley and adjacent watersheds. Best known for its water quality monitoring programs, VSN also offers outreach and education programs to help farmers, landowners, residents and visitors understand and support our local ecology for the health of our communities. More at [www.valleystewardshipnetwork.org](http://www.valleystewardshipnetwork.org)