



*We champion stewardship of  
the land and waters.*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### ***VSN's Conservation on Tap begins December 10th***

VIROQUA, WI November 21, 2019 –Valley Stewardship Network (VSN) is pleased announce our second season of *Conservation on Tap*. This fun, casual and informative program series will be a five-part, monthly series of talks and discussions on local conservation topics given by regional experts. This event will be an opportunity for folks to hear engaging presentations about regional conservation topics in a relaxed setting while also getting to sample local brews and beverages. Following each of the speakers' presentation, the audience will be able to bring up questions and contribute to a broader discussion of the night's conservation topic. In our first season, participants really enjoyed the intimate learning atmosphere and made great connections not only to the presenter, but local community members.

Valley Stewardship Network's second series will kick off on **Tuesday, December 10<sup>th</sup>** at 7 pm at the Rooted Spoon in Viroqua with Kirk Olson presenting Trout in the Driftless: It's Not Just About Fishing. Many of us are aware of the effect the presence of prolific trout populations have on our local economy, but are you also aware that the presence of healthy trout populations are an indicator of ecosystem health? Trout are an aquatic 'canary in the coal mine' here in the Driftless Region, and their presence can tell us much about both our aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems. Spend an evening with WI-DNR Fisheries Biologist Kirk Olson as he helps us to understand the deeper connections between trout and water and ecosystem quality.

Kirk Olson, a native of Winter, WI, earned his BS from the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point in fisheries in 2009. He worked as a fisheries technician in northern Wisconsin with the Wisconsin DNR and later for the Yakima Nation Tribe in Peshastin, WA. In 2014, he earned his

Masters from the University of Minnesota Duluth, studying threatened trout species in northern Mongolia. Kirk finished grad school and returned to work with the Wisconsin DNR as a fisheries technician and biologist, first on Lake Superior and its tributaries and, beginning in 2017, on trout streams in the La Crosse area. Kirk has a passion for trout conservation, research and fishing. Over the past two years, he's spent much of his free time on area trout streams with a fishing rod or, on warmer days, with wetsuit and snorkel.

The other topics in the series are: January 8: Savanna Pastures - Regenerating Earth's Ultimate Ecosystems by Peter Allen, Mastodon Valley Farm; February 12: Changing Landscapes and pre-European Native Americans in the Driftless Area: A Brief Overview with Dr. James Theler, Professor Emeritus, UW-Wisconsin La Crosse at the Mississippi Valley Archeology Center; March 11: Driftless Prairie, Savanna, and Woodlands-a journey of discovery by Armund D. Bartz, Driftless Area Ecologist-Natural Heritage Conservation, WI- DNR; concluding April 8: Taking Stock of Tweety – the State of our Birds by Craig Thompson, WI- DNR.

With the exception of December, this series will be held the second Wednesday of day of each month, January – April at the Rooted Spoon, 219 South Main Street in Viroqua beginning at 7 pm – 9 pm. There is a suggested donation of \$5 and a cash bar will be available. Sponsorship for this second season is generously provided by Rooted Spoon, shopdriftless.com, Kickapoo Coffee Roasters, WiscoPop and Organic Valley.

For questions, please call 608-637-3615 or email [info@valleystewardshipnetwork.org](mailto:info@valleystewardshipnetwork.org).

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Valley Stewardship Network is celebrating 19 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)