

INVERNONCOUNTY.COM VERNON COUNTY

CHASEBURG • COON VALLEY • DE SOTO • GENOA • HILLSBORO • LA FARGE • ONTARIO READSTOWN • ROCKTON • STODDARD • VIOLA • VIROQUA • WESTBY

VERNON COUNTY IS THE HEART OF THE DRIFTLESS AREA, DISPLAYING THE RUSTIC BEAUTY OF THE REGION WITH ITS STEEP, RUGGED HILLS, UNTOUCHED BY THE ICE AGE GLACIERS, AND THE PICTURESQUE KICKAPOO RIVER ZIGZAGGING THROUGH.

utdoor recreation abounds in Vernon County, with water sports, hiking and biking trails, camping, hunting, and fishing. Heavily wooded Wildcat Mountain State Park sits on a steep ridge overlooking the Kickapoo River, providing spectacular views for hikers, snowshoers, cross-country skiers, and horseback riders. The Kickapoo Valley Reserve, between La Farge and Ontario, offers trails for virtually every type of recreation: paved roads for touring bikes, off-road trails for mountain bikes and equestrians, and three trails reserved for hikers. In the winter, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and snowmobiles traverse the paths. Westby also hosts International & Junior Ski Jumping Tournaments at Snowflake Ski & Golf Club. They are in the process of making the hill a year-round training facility.

Along Vernon County's western border, the Mississippi River is a popular destination for boating and fishing, while the Kickapoo River, Coon Creek, and other waterways are known for idyllic kayaking, canoeing, and trout fishing.

Much of Vernon County's history is steeped in agriculture—primarily, dairy farming and tobacco growing. In recent years, more farmland has shifted to organic produce while former tobacco fields have been transformed into vineyards. Vernon County houses more organic farms than anywhere else in the U.S. outside of California, while 32 vineyards have sprouted up, covering 68 acres. The region's unglaciated hills and valleys have made the terrain a welcome place for smaller farmers rather than big, corporate operations.

Food culture has become big business for Vernon County and a focus of its new image. A major force driving that is Organic Valley, the La Farge-based cooperative of Midwest family farmers who joined forces in 1988. Today, Organic Valley produces organic

dairy products, vegetables, and eggs. It includes more than 1,600 family farms—with 84 added in 2023—and employs more than 900 people.

Another business playing a role in Vernon County's food reputation is GoMacro, whose plant-based nutrition bars are sold nationwide. Launched by a mother-and-daughter team in 2004, GoMacro is based in Viola and emphasizes sustainability, powering its operation with solar and wind energy, and partnering in a recycling program for its bar wrappers.

The Viroqua Food Co+op and many of the local restaurants and cafes focus on organic, locally grown food, contributing further to the food culture and reputation.

Vernon County's agricultural legacy is on display in its farm architecture. It is the No. 1 place for round barns in the U.S. In addition, it is home to the largest Amish settlement in Wisconsin which has grown into a tourist mecca with the thriving auction house for flowers, produce, hay, furniture and quilts. Spring brings out thousands to enjoy the greenhouse amid the bulk food stores and bakeries.

Vernon County also has become a mecca for arts and live music. VIVA Gallery is an artists' cooperative that started in 2004 and features the works of 25 local artists who are painters, potters, weavers, jewelers, and more. An annual art tour in June invites visitors to meet with artists in their studios. Viroqua also brings art outdoors, commissioning murals on several of its buildings.

Live music has been a mainstay in Vernon County for years, and since the pandemic, the trend has gained steam. Some of the popular gatherings are the Driftless Music Festival, Music in the Park, Bonfire Music & Arts Festival, Larryfest, Westby Syttende Mai Festival, Wild West Days, and the new Coon Creek Conservation Days in Coon Valley which will feature Mollie B!

FOR CALENDAR OF EVENTS & CURRENT INFORMATION: WWW.HIDDENVALLEYS.COM

# **TOP 10 VERNON COUNTY DESTINATIONS**

#### KICKAPOO RIVER

one of the most crooked rivers in the world

NORSKEDALEN NATURE \$ HERITAGE CENTER

Coon Valley

CHEYENNE VALLEY HERITAGE ROAD TOUR

WILDCAT MOUNTAIN STATE PARK

KICKAPOO VALLEY RESERVE

LaFarge

BLACKHAWK TRAIL & COUNTY PARK

GREAT RIVER ROAD INTERPRETIVE CENTER

8

DRIFTLESS MUSIC GARDENS

ORGANIC VALLEY HEADQUARTERS

La Farge

10

INTERNATIONAL SKI JUMP TOURNAMENT







International Ski Jump Tournament Photo credit: Kip Kopelke







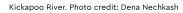






Kickapoo Valley Reserve

Wildcat Mountain State Park. Photo credit: Jenny Stelzner



#### **WESTBY**





## **Westby Rod & Gun Club**

Restaurant, campground, rifle range, trap range, banquet hall, Friday night fish, Sat & Sun breakfast. Membership not required, public welcome!

215 S. Main St., Westby 608-634-4314 westbyrodandgun.com (7)



**Bowling - Food - Drinks** 

**Friday Night Fish** Homemade Pizza **Daily Specials** 

511 N. Main St. Westby, WI 608-634-4000



### Esofea's Bad Axe River **Country Club**

"8 miles from everywhere"

E5415 Park Rd., Westby, WI 608-634-3022

Greenhouse • Bar • House Rental Short Course Golf Course









202 W Old Towne Rd. Westby, WI 54667 608-634-3276 nordiccreamery.com

World Champion Artisan Cheese & Butter!



THE ONLY GOLF COURSE IN THE WORLD AT THE BOTTOM OF FIVE SKI JUMPS!





E7940 CTH P, Westby, WI (608) 634-3211 www.snowflakeskiclub.com



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#### HILLSBORO

#### **Lisney Grand Log Cabin** Heart Of The Kickapoo Valley Reserve Fully Furnished ~ Open Year Round Accommodates Up To 10 People E13021 Lisney Rd., La Farge, WI **Rustic Ridge Resort** uc. ~ Your Complete Event Center ~ (Open May 15 to Oct. 15) 1890's Wedding Chapel ~ Reception Halls ~ Parties Camping "Motel "Lodge E15765A Hwy 33 & Burr Salem Rd., Hillsboro, WI (608) 625-4456 (217) 377-5458 mrartist2@gmail.com



## GENOA



#### COON VALLEY





Double Booth at:

#### **SWEET VALLEY ARTISANS**

219 Central Ave, Coon Valley, WI Open 7 Days a Week!

> Social Media: FARMER DANIKA WEHLING

FRESH EGGS - MEAT LEFSE - IAMS - HONEY SYRUP - SOAP - LOTION CBD - SEEDS -DÉCOR & MUCH MORE!

Ioin Farmer Danika and Landmark Tours on the yearly trip! Get \$100 off by mentioning Farmer Danika on any trip!

**GOWITHLANDMARK.COM** FARMERDANIKA.COM



**DE SOTO** 

# J&R Military Surplus

Open Thursday, Friday, Saturday & Sunday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Closed Holidays

Hwy. 35, De Soto, WI 54624 (608) 648-2112

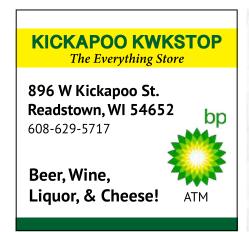
## Pork's Bar

315 Main Street DeSoto, WI

**Broasted Chicken and Pizza!** 

Monday 3pm-Close Tues-Sun 11am- Close

#### **READSTOWN**

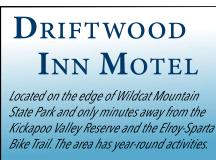






#### **ONTARIO**

















#### LA FARGE

## Village of La Farge

### Village Park

Picnic shelters. Camping with electric, restroom & shower facility.

### Bean Park

Playground equipment, basketball court.

Call for Events

## 4th of July - 3 & 4th

Farmers Market Saturdays-May-October Village Wide Rummage Sale (1st Weekend in June & October)

Small Town Christmas (1st Sat. in December)

Sandmire Memorial Park 9-Hole Disc Golf Course (Mill & Pearl Streets)

### 608-625-4422

www.LaFarge-wisconsin.com



#### www.wildthingsfur.com

Headbands • Fur Hats • Tails Deerskin Gloves • Sheepskin Seat Covers

## 608.625.4181

Located in Rockton, WI 54639 5 miles N. of LaFarge 7 miles S. of Ontario

## Phil & Deb's

Town Tap

#### 115 W. Main St, Lafarge, WI

Breakfast • Lunch • Dinner Mon-Sat 6am-close, Sun 7am-2pm

#### Lunch Specials 5 days a week

Pizza Everyday • Thursday Tacos Friday Night Fish Saturday Steak & Prime Rib





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## **VIROQUA**











