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A Note from the Director

With the unofficial start to summer underway and increasingly warmer temps, many Wisconsinites will find themselves spending more time outside. Whether hiking, biking, ATVing, or hunting, fishing, or birdwatching, we can find our niche in the vast offerings our state provides. No matter how or when we choose to get outside, it is important to remember to do so safely and responsibly.

In addition to creating a toolkit for land managers and communities, which you can find [here](#), the Wisconsin Office of Outdoor Recreation joined a national coalition of outdoor groups, businesses and agencies sharing best practices, knowledge and resources in an effort to help everyone experience the benefits of nature safely. You can learn more about the coalition and find additional resources at www.recreateresponsibly.org.

More reminders of summer are National Trails Day, held on the first Saturday in June every year, and National Get Outdoors Day on Saturday, June 13. While the events have gone virtual, we can still celebrate by finding our favorite outdoor spot or maybe exploring a trail nearby.

I invite you to get outside and discover a new adventure close to home. Share your experience, how you recreate responsibly and what the outdoors mean to you – get social and use hashtags #TravelWI #NationalTrailsDay #RecreateResponsibly in your posts.

Happy Trails,



Mary Monroe Brown
Director, Office of Outdoor Recreation

This edition of Wisconsin Outside is the second from Wisconsin's Office of Outdoor Recreation. Please share it with friends or colleagues with a vested interest in Wisconsin's outdoor recreation industry and partners by forwarding this message or [subscribing here](#). You may also update your subscription preferences [here](#).

Hayward Hospital and Community Benefit from Trails

"It is difficult to imagine a better scenario for those who love outdoor recreation," says Luke Beirl, CEO of the Hayward Area Memorial Hospital about the Hospital Trails.

On the hospital property is a system of trails used for hiking, running, biking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing. "The access to trails right out of work is something that very few organizations can offer their employees. As we continue to grow our healthcare community in northern Wisconsin, attracting excellent clinicians has been critical to our success," Beirl explains of their recruitment efforts.



Wider trails without roots and obstacles are inviting for all levels. Photo courtesy of Chequamegon Area Mountain Bike Association.

Last September the Hospital nearly doubled the trail mileage with the completion of the CAMBA Gateway Trail – 6 miles of wide and flowy mountain bike riding. The three-year project was in partnership with the Chequamegon Area Mountain Bike Association (CAMBA), the organization responsible for the development and management of over 120 miles of trails in and around the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest from Hayward to Bayfield. The hospital owned the property for the Gateway segment and funded a significant portion of the work, while CAMBA designed and managed the project including the remaining fundraising needed.

The extensive CAMBA System Trails have been a mecca for mountain bikers looking to experience technical rides only the backcountry can provide. “We’re really proud of CAMBA earning the moniker ‘Singletrack Capital of the Upper Midwest,’ and the new Gateway Trail rounds out the organization’s offerings as a trail for everybody,” says CAMBA President Joe Vadeboncoeur. “It has turned into an asset for the community of Hayward.” Right from the hospital parking lot or a quick pedal from the bike shop that offers rentals, access to the trails is easy. Vadeboncoeur adds, “Witnessing the diversity of people utilizing the trail, from moms on hybrids with kids looking for bit of adventure to the adventure seekers looking for a quick ride, has been rewarding.”

Beirl adds, “The trails have broadened the market for cycling, [think, easy access, beginner level, and welcoming partners managing the trails] but more importantly, an active and healthy lifestyle here in Hayward.”

Educational Program Develops Future Trail Stewards

While the COVID-19 pandemic put a halt to in-person instruction, group gatherings and field trips, the Ice Age Trail Alliance's (IATA) Saunters – Think Outside youth education program was on track for a record year. During the Spring 2020 semester over 5,000 fourth grade students from 90+ Wisconsin schools were scheduled to take part in their Wisconsin geology lesson in the field, on the Ice Age National Scenic Trail, that is. (Almost 2,000 fourth graders were able to get out and explore the Ice Age Trail during the Fall semester.)



A group from Luck Elementary School in Polk County. Photo courtesy of the Indianhead Chapter of the Ice Age Trail Alliance.

The innovative program, supported by the National Park Foundation, brings an IATA expert into the classroom to cover such topics as how the glaciers formed the landscape today, how to spot those features along the trail, and tips to prepare for a safe and fun hike. Part two involves the real fun with a hike on the Ice Age Trail, complete with geological features to look for, lesson plans and activities to complete along the way, and an IATA guide.

“We want to help kids have a positive experience being outside – take a break from screen time, breathe fresh air and connect with nature. It is very important for the next generation to understand the importance of our public spaces and plant the seed for lifelong outdoor adventure and stewardship,” explained Amy Lord, Outreach and Education Manager.

This Saturday in celebration of National Trails Day, the Ice Age Trail Alliance invites hikers to experience the trail safely and take pictures along the way to document all 120 segments in one day. [Read more here.](#)

Industry & Community News

Watersports See Increase in Popularity During Pandemic Paddling naturally lends itself to physical distancing, and Rutabaga Paddlesports credits this and Wisconsinites' love for the water for a banner April. [Read the article.](#)

Trek Bicycle Initiative to Replace 10 Million Vehicle Trips with Bike Trips Leveraging public sentiment that bikes are a safer alternative to public transit during the pandemic, Trek launches a global initiative #GoByBike. [Read the article.](#)

Great Lakes Beach & Water Safety With many pools closed for the summer, fewer lifeguards on the beach, and higher than average water levels, know where to look for beach reports and check for closures. [Read the article.](#)

Events

Free Fun & Fishing Weekend | June 6-7 Each year on the first full weekend in June, all of Wisconsin's waters are open to free fishing. [Visit the DNR website for seasonal regulations and more info.](#) In addition, no state park or trail passes will be required.

One Wisconsin Summer Challenge | Memorial Day – Labor Day A virtual running and walking event organized by Brookfield-based PrimeTime Event & Race Management will direct a portion of registration proceeds to benefit local running stores that have been impacted by COVID-19 closures. [Find out more here.](#)

Resources

New Driftless Area Regional ATV Route Maps Routes from 9 counties including: Clark, Wood, Jackson, Monroe, Juneau, Vernon, Richland, Sauk, and Crawford. [View the maps.](#) For a list of statewide maps visit WATVA.org.

Interim Guidance for Summer Camps Posted The Wisconsin Department of Health Services has shared guidance for summer camp program operations. [View the information.](#)

Leading with Inclusion, Equity and Diversity Through COVID-19 and Beyond A recorded webinar organized by Camber Outdoors featuring Heather McKendry of Ruffwear and Reginald Miller of VF Corporation discussing how outdoor industry

organizations can create and sustain inclusive, equitable and diverse workplaces.
[Watch the recording.](#)

The [Wisconsin Office of Outdoor Recreation](#) is housed within the
Wisconsin Department of Tourism.



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