

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Introduces Scenic Trails Parity Act

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This bipartisan legislation will provide Wisconsin scenic trails with improved management and access to additional funding

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin introduced the *National Scenic Trails Parity Act* to provide improved management and access to additional funding for Wisconsin's Ice Age and North Country National Scenic Trails.

"The Ice Age and North Country Scenic trails are beloved by Wisconsinites, and provide opportunities for people across our state to enjoy the great outdoors. But these trails currently face unfair barriers when competing for federal resources," **said Senator Baldwin.** "I am proud to introduce this bipartisan legislation that will address this problem and allow federal funds to go to Wisconsin for maintenance and improvement of these trails, which drive tourism and provide outdoor recreation opportunities to Wisconsinites and visitors alike."

"The Partnership for the National Trails System greatly appreciates the strong support Senator Baldwin has consistently provided for the National Trails System and for robust funding of the Land & Water Conservation Fund to acquire land needed to complete the National Trails," **said Gary Werner, Executive Director, Partnership for the National Trails System.** "We are especially grateful to her for her leadership in re-introducing the National Scenic Trails Parity Act to assure that the Ice Age, North Country, and New England National Scenic Trails are administered by the National Park Service as full units of the National Park System as are the other three national scenic trails the agency administers. Without the parity provided by the new legislation the three affected trails authorized by

Congress will continue to not receive the full range of support and recognition provided by the Park Service for the units of the National Park System.”

“The National Scenic Trails Parity Act is simple and common sense legislation that corrects an inequity in the management of National Scenic Trails by the National Park Service,” **said Andrea Ketchmark, Executive Director North Country Trail Association.** “The North Country Trail Association, representing thousands of partners and volunteers along one of these forgotten trails, is so grateful for Senator Baldwin’s leadership. Her support will help ensure the agency does its part to see that these national treasures get managed properly and in line with the National Trails System Act.”

“The Ice Age Trail Alliance has been trying to establish parity for the National Scenic Trails for more than three decades,” **said Mike Wollmer, Executive Director & CEO Ice Age Trail Alliance.** “Declaring the Ice Age, North Country and New England National Scenic Trail as units of the Park Service will provide the notoriety, benefits and equality that these trails deserve. As a long-time supporter of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail, we are extremely pleased that Senator Baldwin has reintroduced the National Scenic Trails Parity Act.”

The bipartisan legislation is cosponsored by Senators Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.), Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.), Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), Al Franken (D-Minn.), Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.), Gary Peters (D-Mich.), Chris Murphy (D-Conn.), Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) and Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.).

The Ice Age Trail is used by 1.25 million people every year and in 2013, volunteers contributed more than 70,000 hours of work. The economic impact of the Ice Age Trail on the state of Wisconsin is approximately \$113 million annually. The North Country Trail logged over 77,000 hours of volunteer work in 2013, valued at \$1.7 million. The National Scenic Trails in Wisconsin drive economic growth through tourism and the use of local businesses in construction and maintenance activities.

An online version of this release is available [here](#).