

# Sen. Marklein: Rural State Trails remain closed - Just in time for Free Fun Weekend

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**MADISON, WI** - Rep. Tony Kurtz (R-Wonewoc) and Sen. Howard Marklein (R-Spring Green) today announced that storm-damaged sections of the 400 State Trail and the Elroy-Sparta State Trail have not been repaired despite the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) assurances that they are a priority.

“This weekend, June 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> is what Wisconsinites have come to know as the Free Fun Weekend. Citizens can visit the state parks without having an admission sticker and can also ride the state trails without a trails pass. And in our area of State, those trails are a major economic driver; it just so happens that June 6<sup>th</sup> is National Trails Day,” Rep. Kurtz said. **“Unfortunately, sections of two very popular state trails in our backyard remain closed due to storm damage from the August 2018 flooding, even though the DNR has assured us that they would be fixed.”**

“Rep. Kurtz and I worked hard to allocate \$100,000 in the last state budget to fix these two specific State Trails. Ultimately, Governor Tony Evers vetoed this provision in the budget, because he ‘object(s) to directing the department to repair specific trails,’” Marklein said. “While Governor Evers, vetoed the language directing the DNR how to spend the money out of the budget, the money was still available for the Department to spend at its own discretion.”

“Last summer, in 2019, we asked DNR Secretary Preston Cole to restore the funding and fix our rural trails,” Kurtz said. “Again, this request was not met. Imagine our dismay when we found out that the \$100,000 we had requested go to the 400 Trail and the Elroy-Sparta Trail was actually going to fund repairs on the Badger State

Trail, which runs between Madison and the Wisconsin-Illinois border and the Sugar River State Trail, which connect to one another.”

“So, our trails remain closed, with a tentative plan to repair them in 2021,” Marklein said. “We lose an entire summer on these trails again and our communities lose visitors. I am extremely disappointed in the administration’s decision to, once again, put Madison before our rural communities.”

The 400 State Trail, the section from La Valle to Wonewoc remains closed and according to the DNR Website “this section will remain closed until repairs can be made.”<sup>[1]</sup> Two sections of the Elroy-Sparta State Trail also remain closed due to damage from that same storm.

**Video about the two damaged trails, [here](#).**