

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Reintroduces bipartisan National Scenic Trails Parity Act

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Washington, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin reintroduced the bipartisan *National Scenic Trails Parity Act* to grant unit status to three National Scenic Trails that are part of the National Park System: the Ice Age National Scenic Trail, the North Country National Scenic Trail, and the New England National Scenic Trail. Providing unit status will improve management, establish administrative clarity and grant access to additional federal 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,” **said Senator Baldwin**. “These trails currently face unfair barriers when competing for federal resources, which is why I am proud to reintroduce this bipartisan legislation that will allow federal funds to go to Wisconsin for maintenance and improvement of these trails so they can be enjoyed by all.”

“Like other National Scenic Trails across the country, the New England National Scenic Trail (NET) offers an iconic experience and it is receiving unprecedented use as people rediscover the ease and reward of spending time outdoors,” **said John Judge, Appalachian Mountain Club President and CEO**. “It should be considered a unit of the National Park Service, like most other National Scenic Trails, to ensure it always is fully supported and promoted as part of the Park System for all to explore and enjoy.”

“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 New England National Scenic Trail (NET) is an amazing trail like all of the other NST’s, and yet, because it is not considered a unit of the National Park Service, we find ourselves at the back of the line or off the line altogether when it comes to funding, technical assistance, and support through the NPS,” **said Clare Cain, Trails Stewardship Director, Connecticut Forest & Park Association.** “This situation needs to be remedied before the NET and the other NST’s in our situation fall behind even further at a time when more people than ever are outdoors using trails.”

The bipartisan legislation is cosponsored by Senators Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Ron Johnson (R-WI), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Ed Markey (D-MA), Chris Murphy (D-CT), Gary Peters (D-MI), Tina Smith (D-MN) and Debbie Stabenow (D-MI).

The North Country, Ice Age and New England National Scenic Trails span 6,015 miles. These trails are almost twice the length of the three trails in the National Park System that currently have unit status. In 2018, thousands of volunteers contributed over 100,000 hours of work towards the completion, maintenance and protection of all these trails. The National Scenic Trails in Wisconsin drive economic growth through tourism and the use of local businesses in construction and maintenance activities. This has been particularly true during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has resulted in thousands of new tourists visiting the trails.

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