

Rep. Hebl: Spring is a chance to take in Wisconsin's natural beauty

Posted on Friday, Mar 18, 2022

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Spring is finally here, and for many people that means a chance to finally get outside. While winter offers some fantastic outdoor opportunities, such as skiing, snowmobiling, and ice fishing, many people don't like to endure the cold to stay active. Luckily, with springtime upon us, more and more people are ready to get outside and get active.

After being cooped up for the long winter and having endured two years of social distancing and mask wearing due to the COVID pandemic, spring is a great time to get out of the house and visit one of Wisconsin's great local or state parks.

Wisconsin has some of the best state parks in the country, whether it's for biking, hiking, birdwatching, picnics, or other outdoor activities.

Wisconsin has 49 state parks, 15 state forests, and 44 state trails to take advantage of, with plenty to do year-round. Spring is my personal favorite time to get to the parks- to see birds and animals returning and nature beginning its yearly renewal.

Spring and early summer also offer some incredible opportunities to take a more active role in conservation. Earth Day takes place on April 23rd this year and is a great opportunity to learn more about how citizens can be better wardens of our planet. There are local events, such as the Earth Day event that will be hosted by the Friends of the Cottage Grove Library, which can help people of all ages fall in love with nature and learn to live more sustainably.

April 29th is Arbor Day, when everyone is encouraged to plant a tree. According to the Arbor Day Foundation, about five million trees are planted in the US each year. It's a great way to help get children interested in environmental conservation and the importance of protecting the planet.

Each year, during the first weekend in June, the Wisconsin State Parks System offers a Free Fun Weekend. Occurring this year on June 4th and 5th, all state parks admission fees and state trail fees are waived. Fishing licenses are also not required during the weekend. If ever there is a time to get someone interested in the outdoors, it is during Wisconsin's Free Fun Weekend.

There are tons of incredible opportunities to take in nature and to join in conservation. I encourage everyone to get outside and check out one of these events or find another near you!

Happy spring!