

# U.S. Rep. Pocan: Introduces bipartisan National Scenic Trails Parity Act

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**WASHINGTON, D.C.** - Today, **U.S. Congressman Mark Pocan (WI-02)** introduced the ***National Scenic Trails Parity Act***, bipartisan legislation that will increase funding access and improve maintenance for three National Scenic Trails, including two in Wisconsin. The three trails, which are already part of the National Park System but currently lack full unit status, are the Ice Age National Scenic Trail, the North Country National Scenic Trail, and the New England National Scenic Trail.

“Every year, thousands of volunteers - including many of my constituents - contribute hours and hours of their time to ensure their neighbors and visitors can enjoy these beautiful trails,” **Congressman Mark Pocan said.** “These trails are invaluable natural resources that provide communities like mine with unique outdoor experiences and economic opportunities. These trails have been particularly valuable during the COVID-19 pandemic when outdoor recreation became essential for physical and mental well-being. This bill will level the playing field for some of the nation’s most beautiful trails.”

“As a lifelong Wisconsinite, I am proud to be from a state with such a beautiful natural environment,” **said Congressman Grothman (WI-06).** “I am happy to support this bipartisan effort to ensure the Ice Age Trail has the opportunity to participate as a unit of the National Park System.”

“Despite being visited by millions of people, despite having more volunteer service hours than Yellowstone National Park, despite bringing people face-to-face with internationally significant geologic features, the Ice Age National Scenic Trail

remains under-represented in the National Park System,” **Mike Wollmer, Executive Director/CEO, Ice Age Trail Alliance** said. “As a result, the Ice Age Trail faces considerable obstacles for funding and other programming. The National Scenic Trails Parity Act will bring the Ice Age Trail, as well as the North Country Trail and New England Trail, the recognition and status they deserve. We thank Rep. Pocan and other sponsors of the Act for their support to ensure the Trails’ equal involvement in the National Park System.”

“American Hiking applauds Rep. Pocan’s introduction of the bipartisan National Scenic Trails Parity Act to provide equitable access to federal resources for all National Park Service managed national scenic trails.” **said Kate Van Waes, Executive Director, American Hiking Society.** “As the 57 million strong hiking community enjoy the benefits of these world renowned congressionally designated trails, it’s critical that the North Country, Ice Age, and New England National Scenic Trails have access to the same funding and management opportunities as other NPS managed national scenic trails.”

“The New England National Scenic Trail provides accessible outdoor recreation opportunities to millions of New England residents living in urban and rural communities,” **said Susan Arnold, Interim President and CEO of the Appalachian Mountain Club.** “The National Scenic Trails Parity Act would provide access to vital federal funding and support to ensure continued public access and stewardship of this essential resource. AMC is grateful to Representative Pocan, Senator Baldwin, and to all original cosponsors of this bill in the House and Senate, for their work advancing this important legislation.”

“Each park service-administered National Scenic Trail is a national park, and they all deserve that treatment,” **said Brendan Mysliwiec, Appalachian Trail Conservancy Director of Federal Policy.** “The Appalachian Trail Conservancy supports the recognition of national park ‘unit’ status that Representative Pocan’s Parity Act would provide for all National Scenic Trails, and we are committed to working with Representative Pocan to ensure the best administration of our National Scenic Trails.”

“The Continental Divide Trail Coalition (CDTC) celebrates the opportunity for the North Country National Scenic Trail, Ice Age National Scenic Trail, and New England National Scenic Trail to be formally recognized as units of the National Park System,” **Teresa Martinez, Continental Divide Trail Coalition Executive Director** said. “These trails, along with all National Scenic Trails, provide fantastic

opportunities for both local communities and visitors from around the globe to enjoy the beauty and restorative powers of the outdoors.”

“Just as ‘all men are created equal’ I believe it was the intent of the National Trails Act that all of our trails were also meant to be ‘created equal,’” **Ellen von Karajan, Executive Director of the National Washington Rochambeau Revolutionary Route Association said.** “Our sister trails who do not have parity are hampered in their effectiveness, are not eligible to compete for certain funds for important projects they are well qualified to undertake and are denied important benefits allowed to other trails. Granting parity – leveling the playing field for all trails -isn’t just ‘equitable’, it’s an investment that will produce real and lasting results.”

“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, North Country Trail Association Executive Director.** “The North Country Trail Association, representing thousands of partners and volunteers along one of these forgotten trails, is so grateful for Rep. Pocan’s leadership. His 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.”

[Click here](#) to read the full text of the legislation.

Senator Baldwin introduced a companion bill in the United States Senate last year.

**Endorsing Organizations:** Ala Kahakai Trail Association, American Hiking Society, American Trails, Appalachian Mountain Club, Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Arizona Trail Association, Back Country Horsemen of America, Connecticut Forest & Park Association, Continental Divide Trail Association, Florida Trail Association, Ice Age Trail Alliance, Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance, National Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route Association, North Country Trail, Overmountain Victory Trail Association, Pacific Crest Trail Association, Pacific Northwest Trail Association, Partnership for the National Trails System