

Wisconsin Dept. of National Resources: Federal grant to fund new Lapham Lodge at Kettle Moraine State Forest

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Exterior view of new Lapham Lodge looking northwest. / Photo Credit: Galbraith Carnahan Architects LLC

MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) today announced the Friends of Lapham Peak – Kettle Moraine State Forest received a \$1.3 million grant for construction of a new year-round, multi-use facility at the park. The funding comes from the U.S. Economic Development Administration through American Rescue Plan funding.

The 5,000-square foot Lapham Lodge trailhead facility will welcome visitors to the Kettle Moraine State Forest and Lapham Peak in Delafield. The new facility will replace an existing, undersized shelter that can no longer accommodate park needs. The updated space is designed to handle visitor traffic and multiple concurrent events. It will also consolidate concessions and rental equipment to one building, making operations easier and more convenient for visitors and staff.

“Here in Wisconsin, we pride ourselves on the variety of outdoor recreational opportunities our state has to offer, including at our 50 state parks, 15 state forests, 44 state trails and countless other public lands across the state,” said Gov. Tony Evers. “Outdoor recreation isn’t just a major source of entertainment in Wisconsin, but it’s a major economic driver. This became even clearer during the height of the pandemic when our state parks had some of their highest rates of attendance on record, so we’re glad to be receiving these funds to continue bolstering the industry with infrastructure folks can enjoy for years to come.”

The Economic Development Administration’s \$1,299,900 investment will be matched with \$660,600 in local funds raised by the Friends of Lapham Peak. The Friends of Lapham Peak is one of 60 Friends groups across Wisconsin that provides direct support, resources and time to state parks, forests, trails and recreation areas. The Friends group has an additional \$400,000 more to raise for this [project](#).

“The success of our park system is strengthened by partnerships like those with our Friends of state parks groups. Their support, dedication and fundraising to move projects along provides an invaluable benefit to our public lands,” said DNR Secretary Preston D. Cole. “The connections forged between the Lapham Peak community, the state and the federal government shows we can achieve more together.”

At the end of construction, the Friends group will donate the new building to the DNR for ongoing ownership, operations and maintenance. The Friends group will continue to oversee the winter snowmaking operation at Lapham Peak, the only state park property that makes snow for cross-country skiing, drawing in visitors

from across the region.

This project is funded under the Economic Development Administration's \$240 million competitive American Rescue Plan Travel, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation program. The two programs are designed to accelerate the recovery of communities that rely on the travel, tourism and outdoor recreation sectors. The project is anticipated to create 35 jobs and boost regional tourism.

Kettle Moraine State Forest - Lapham Peak Unit is the ninth most visited state park property in Wisconsin, with about 674,000 visitors annually. The Lapham Peak Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest was formed 10,000 years ago when a glacier covered much of Wisconsin. Lapham Peak's glaciated topography provides excellent hiking, backpacking and cross-country skiing on lighted trails. Learn more about the property [here](#).