

For Immediate Release:

February 17, 2022



Contact: Cassie Steiner,

cassandra.steiner@sierraclub.org

(262) 930 3963

ICYMI: Every Kid Outdoors Bill passes legislative committees

Fourth graders are one step closer to free Wisconsin state park access

Madison, WI – This week, the Wisconsin Every Kid Outdoors bill (SB376/AB375) passed the Senate Committee on Sporting Heritage, Small Business and Rural Issues and the Assembly Committee on Forestry, Parks and Outdoor Recreation. The bill allows fourth graders and their families to use the federal Every Kid Outdoors pass to access Wisconsin state parks free of charge.

The Senate Committee unanimously passed the bill, and the Assembly Committee passed the bill 12 to 2, with one member absent. The bipartisan support for SB376/AB375 mirrors the statewide support for this program. In the 2021 Wisconsin Conservation Congress, Every Kid Outdoors was the most popular program suggestion, with 92% of all conservation congress voters supporting the program. The bill is not yet scheduled for a floor vote, but supporters remain hopeful that the bill will pass before the end of this legislative session.

There are several other states that accept the national pass at state parks (Idaho, Maryland, New York, Nevada, and New Mexico). These states' parks departments have seen negligible cost impacts from the program, but have seen many benefits. Most notably, the pass allows children to access state parks who otherwise would not have access due to cost barriers.

In response to the committee passage of the Every Kid Outdoors bill, Sierra Club volunteer leaders said:

"I am so excited about yesterday's positive votes. It means that we are one step closer to opening the door to the outdoors for 4th graders and their families across the state. Wisconsin's Every Kid Outdoors program will extend fee-free access from National Parks to our state parks, and now needs the support of all state legislators" said **Liz Wessel, Sierra Club - Four Lakes Group**. "It would be so great to have this program in place by summer so families can explore their Wisconsin backyard" continued Wessel.

"After almost two years of community advocacy supporting Every Kid Outdoors Pass for Wisconsin State Parks, it is absolutely wonderful to see this committee passage finally happen! This is a win-win for everyone," said **Maureen McCoy, Sierra Club - Wisconsin Chapter Lands Team**. "I cannot wait to see the legislature approve this bill!"

###

The Sierra Club is America's largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization. The Sierra Club - Wisconsin Chapter's 20,000 members work to promote clean energy, safeguard the health of our communities, protect wildlife, and preserve our remaining wild places through grassroots activism, public education, lobbying, and legal action. For more information, visit <http://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin>.