

WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE TRAILS CAUCUS: Lead the Badger State's Trail Vision

What Makes Wisconsin Special?

Our state offers exciting outdoor recreational opportunities—biking, hiking, 4-wheeling & snowmobiling, horseback riding and canoeing/kayaking—for residents and visitors. Trail networks help to maximize the economic, health, community and environmental benefits generated by these assets, with Wisconsin's outdoor recreation economy currently generating \$17.9 billion in annual consumer spending and supporting 168,000 jobs. The Badger State's trail infrastructure is uniquely positioned to facilitate *Wisconsin's Special Brand of Fun!*



Losing Our Legacy As a Trail Leader

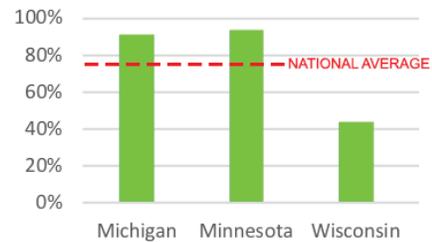
In 2006, when Sheboygan County was selected as one of four federal Nonmotorized Transportation Pilot Program communities to receive \$25 million to build trails to solve transportation problems—connecting transit stations, schools, residences, businesses, recreation areas and other community activity centers—Wisconsin was a trail leader among Midwestern states. This translated to significant economic, health and other quality of life benefits for Wisconsin residents in rural, suburban & urban areas.

A decade later, Wisconsin is trailing behind neighboring states that realize intentional investments in trail networks like Michigan's 2000+ mile Iron Belle Trail and in dedicated funding programs such as Minnesota's new Active Transportation Program are necessary to remain competitive and attract businesses/jobs and talented people. The fact that Wisconsin is currently spending less than half of its federal Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funds, which help finance walking, biking and trail projects, highlights the Badger State's potential to leverage these unobligated dollars. With better policies and smart planning, Wisconsin could build out its existing trail infrastructure to capture the full economic and health benefits of trail networks.

Miles of Trails



2013-17 Average TAP Spending for Projects



Route of the Badger: A Replicable Model

A game-changing initiative in SE Wisconsin that needs the state legislature's support is the Route of the Badger, offering a vision of healthy, thriving communities centered around a world-class, 500+ mile regional trail system that connects people and provides endless transformational opportunities for physical activity, tourism, connections to nature, recreation and stronger businesses. A relatively small investment that builds upon existing infrastructure can greatly improve connectivity regionwide—better connecting people to the places they want *and need* to go.



Getting Back On Track!

You can make a difference by helping to form a **Wisconsin Legislative Trails Caucus**, a bipartisan group of state elected officials collaborating to:

- Complete an Intrastate Trails System
- Create Epic Trail Destinations
- Support Active Transportation Networks
- Increase Recreational Opportunities

State legislators are critical to establishing policies and sustainable funding mechanisms that facilitate planning, construction and maintenance of recreational trail and active transportation networks to transform Wisconsin by driving job creation, enhancing quality of life and fostering vibrant communities, which are stronger when elected leaders intentionally invest in outdoor recreation. To join the Caucus, or for more information, contact Representative Evan Goyke's legislative aide, Ryan Knocke at Ryan.Knocke@legis.wisconsin.gov or 608.266.0645.



railstotrails.org | @railstotrails

