

NEW LEGISLATION

- **AB 494** — *introduced and scheduled for committee hearings*
The bill creates an exemption for active duty military personnel, Wisconsin National Guard or a Reserve Unit from existing out-of-state vehicle admission fees. Under the bill, any vehicle operated by a person who is serving in any of those capacities, regardless of their vehicle's registration, is eligible to be charged the resident rate for vehicle admission areas.
- **SB 38** — *introduced and signed into law as Act 70*
The bill repeals the current prohibition on issuing annual stickers for motor busses entering state parks, forests and natural areas where an entrance fee is charged. In addition, it establishes fees for annual vehicle admission stickers for both resident and non-resident vehicles and includes a fee for each additional sticker issued for a motor bus owned by the same business or entity.



Willow River State Park

COVER: Devil's Lake State Park



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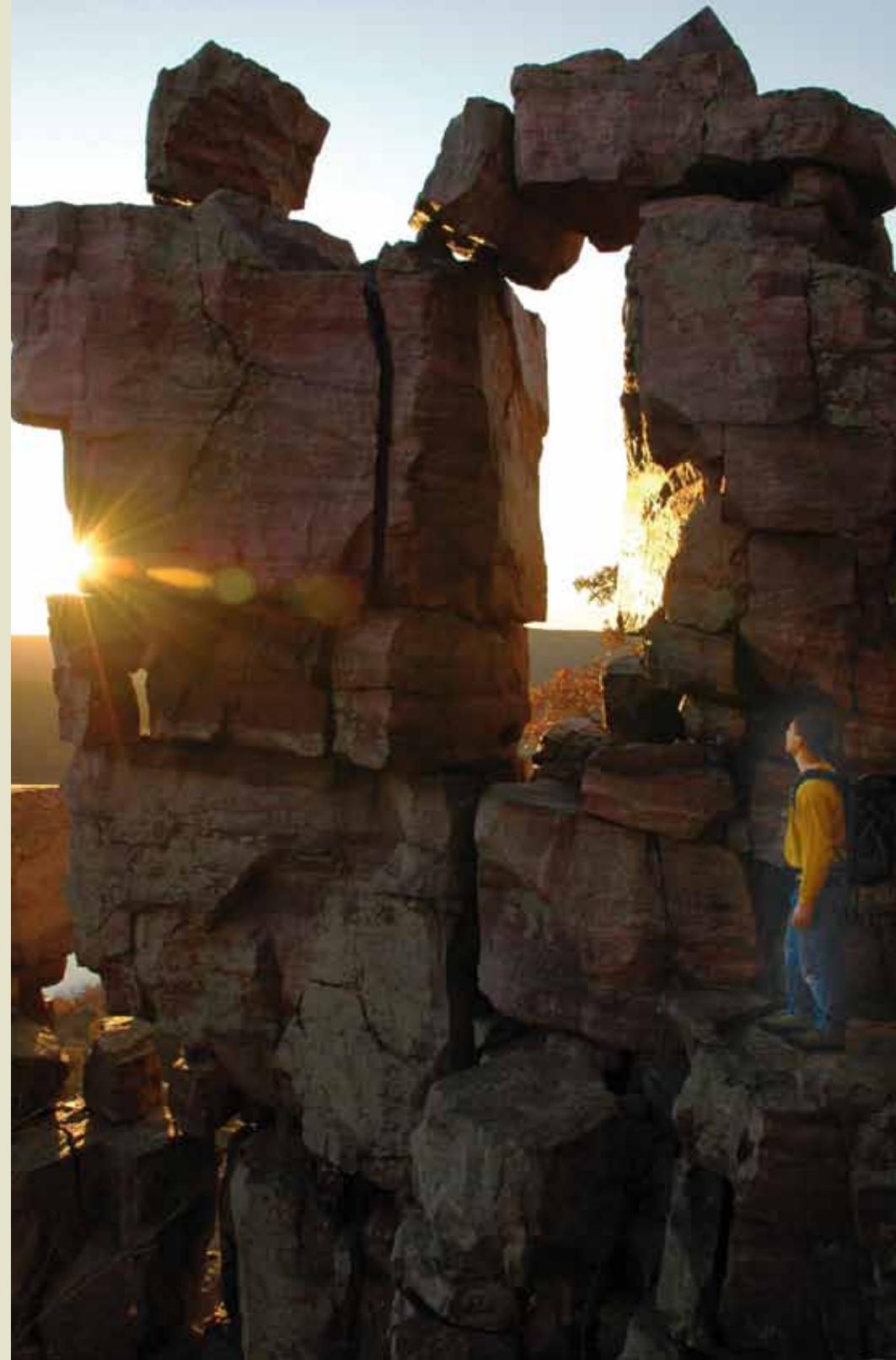


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2009

ANNUAL REPORT



In 2009, the Wisconsin State Park System made changes to help the environment, get kids outdoors, and provide more recreational facilities.

GREEN INITIATIVES

As part of the Bureau of Parks and Recreation's Going Green Initiative, the bureau began purchasing electric vehicles for land management and maintenance on department lands.

- The bureau has purchased a Columbia Par Car, for facility cleaning and light transport at Governor Nelson State Park, and an E Ride, for steeper terrains and heavier work duty at Lake Kegonsa State Park.
- By summer 2010 the bureau plans to have replaced a total of 23 gas vehicles with electric vehicles at WSPS properties. Each light utility gas truck puts out an average of 10,869 pounds of carbon dioxide (CO₂) per year. By comparison, the coal burned for an electric vehicle releases only about 3,500 pounds of CO₂ per year.



Columbia Par Car Electric Vehicle

ACCOMPLISHMENT IN INTERPRETATION

- The new and improved "Wisconsin Explorers" program was launched, encouraging kids and their families to explore nature through scavenger hunts, games, hikes, crafts, and other outdoor activities. Staff distributed 45,000 booklets to children ages 3 and up and their parents.
- A family geocaching program promoted "Get Outdoors! Wisconsin." With funding from the Friends of Wisconsin State Parks, eight kits containing GPS units and related resources have been placed at selected properties for visitors to check out.
- The 2009 WSPS exhibit and booth at the Wisconsin State Fair featured the "Get Outdoors! Wisconsin" theme and included a hands-on activity table, activity hand-outs, and several informational display panels.
- We began developing a new volunteer naturalist program with the aid of UW-Extension and UW-Green Bay. With partners, we are pursuing major grants from the National Science Foundation and the EPA's Great Lakes Restoration Initiative
- The 2007-09 state budget created an interpretive program fee appropriation, enabling the parks program to retain fees generated by specially requested interpretive presentations. This appropriation totals more than \$68,000 which is available to WSPS properties for use in interpretive programming.



NEW PROPERTIES AND FACILITIES

Campground Additions

- Lake Kegonsa State Park – Added 16 family campsites, three group walk-in sites, two vault toilets and support facilities needed to supply water, electricity and access.
- Wildcat Mountain State Park – Constructed an additional 20 non-electric, cart-in family campsites, three parking lots, and three vault toilets.
- Potawatomi State Park – Constructed four group sites, 30 person maximum at each, parking, roads, two vault toilets and solar powered well pumps.
- Kohler-Andrae State Park – Added 30 family campsites (3 with electric), camp road connection, vault toilet and 6 stall parking lot.
- Lake Wissota State Park – Constructed an additional 35 family campsites, parking lots, accessible drinking fountain and campground road.

Campground Expansions

- Willow River State Park – 80-unit family campground expansion, flush toilet/shower building, flush toilet building, two vault toilets, well, septic, parking, roads and supporting infrastructure, upgraded day-use facilities and constructed a park entrance visitor station to better serve the public. Forty-one of the 80 sites have electricity. This new campground is scheduled for a summer 2010 opening.
- Harrington Beach State Park – Constructed 31 electrical sites, 32 non-electrical sites, five walk-in tent sites, 30-person group camp and one kayak site. The campground also includes a new unisex flush toilet / shower building, a mound septic system, three wells, five vault toilets, a trailer sanitary dump station and two, small overflow parking areas.



Additions to the Ice Age Interpretive Center at Interstate State Park

- Built a 1,600-square-foot addition that will accommodate up to 100 visitors, small kitchen, storage room, accessible unisex toilet, storage, mechanical and janitor's rooms and an additional entrance for the Ice Age Interpretive Center.

Addition to the Ansay Welcome Center at Harrington Beach State Park

- Built a 1,932-square-foot addition to the welcome center which included outside decks, separate men's and women's restrooms, kitchen area, storage room and outside changing stall.

Retrofit of Building at Rock Island State Park

- An older vault toilet was retrofitted and converted to a cold water, flush toilet facility with the water being supplied from a solar powered well.

Governor Thompson State Park (in progress)

- Woods Lake Day Use Area – Improvements include a gravel entrance road and parking lot, vault toilet, accessible drinking water, partially enclosed shelter, picnic tables, grills and fire rings.
- South Bay Boat Launch (# 13 Boat Landing) – 50 vehicle/trailer, paved parking lot, two launches, boarding dock, accessible fishing pier, vault toilet and solar powered lighting.

STATE TRAILS

Wyalusing State Park

- The Wisconsin State Park System (WSPS) Trail Crew rerouted the 2-mile Sugar Maple Nature Trail at Wyalusing State Park and finished phase I of the Sand Cave Trail.

After severe flooding washed out the Sugar Maple Trail in 2007, the WSPS Trail Crew was brought in to design, lay out, and construct a reroute using sustainable trail building techniques. (Sustainable trails are capable of being used with minimal effect on the environment.)

The WSPS Trail Crew then moved on to the Sand Cave Trail, which was also damaged by the floods. The area to work with was much larger and the terrain more dramatic, but the results were very rewarding. Sand Cave Trail now takes trail users to more interesting features such as caves, rock formations, a beautiful oak forest, and to the spectacular vista that Black Thunder Point grants of the Wisconsin River valley.

Kettle Moraine State Forest-Northern Unit (KMSF-Northern Unit)

- New Lighted Ski Trail – The 1.3-mile Brown Loop at the Greenbush Recreation Area in the KMSF-Northern Unit had lights installed for cross-country skiing. The project was sponsored by the Northern Kettle Moraine Nordic Ski Club. Funding for the project was provided by private donations, club funds, volunteer labor, and corporate sponsors.

- Mountain Bike Trails – New singletrack mountain bike trails at the Greenbush and New Fane recreation areas were developed. The Greenbush trails have been called some of the best mountain biking in the state. The New Fane trails, a four-loop, 5.5-mile system, accommodates a mix of skill levels.

Richard Bong State Recreation Area

- Safety, user experience, and erosion were serious concerns for all-terrain vehicle and off-highway motorcycle (ATV/OHM) trails. Thanks to a user-supported effort, funding was secured to redesign and rebuild the ATV and OHM trails. Loop 1 is complete and planning for Loop 2 is underway.



Mountain Bike Trail at Kettle Moraine State Forest-Northern Unit

PARTNERSHIPS

Friends of Wisconsin State Parks



- Through the Affinity Card Grant Program, FWSP was able to award 13 local friends groups a total of over \$10,000 to support naturalist activities in the State Park System. Local friends groups used the grants to provide nature education programs, create self-guided tours, and hire summer naturalists.
- The 2009 workshop featured sessions on endowment funds, membership recruitment and retention, the benefits of partners, and a panel discussion with the Friends of the Horicon Marsh International Education Center.

Local Friends Groups

- 18 local friends groups received a total of more than \$184,000 in Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Grants in 2009. These grants were used to fund projects such as:
 - An interpretive center at Wyalusing State Park
 - An outdoor shelter at Interstate State Park
 - Trail lighting at Buckhorn State Park
 - Prairie restoration at Kettle Moraine State Forest-Southern Unit
 - Three accessible piers at Willow River State Park
- In 2009 local friends groups generously donated their time and funds to the WSPS. Some generous donations include:
 - Friends of Mirror Lake-helped fund and build wood storage sheds at Mirror Lake State Park & Rocky Arbor State Park
 - Friends of Kohler-Andrae-Donated a \$13,000 utility vehicle to Kohler-Andrae State Park
 - Friends of Hartman Creek-Donated \$19,386 towards purchase of a Bobcat tractor
 - Friends of Governor Dodge-helped fund and built a wood storage building at Governor Dodge State Park



Friends of Peninsula State Park Photo by Norm Aulabaugh

Peninsula Golf Association, Inc (PGA)

- PGA, which has managed Peninsula Golf Course since 1981, shares a DNR desire to see Peninsula State Golf Course continue as an economically viable, yet affordable, golfing enterprise in Door County. After discussions between PGA board members and state park system staff, a new concessions agreement has been drafted for a 10-year term.

Key components in the new agreement include:

1. PGA will prepare a 10-year facilities improvement plan. The plan enumerates a broad list of golf course and clubhouse improvements and equipment purchases. Examples include Phase II of the current clubhouse renovation, new greens and asphalt pathways, mowers, and irrigation system improvements.
2. PGA will be allowed to insure buildings and rebuild them at their expense, which in most cases will be much quicker than a state response.
3. At its cost, PGA will hire a professional golf course general manager to oversee improved marketing efforts, improvements, and clubhouse/golf operations.

Governor's State Trail Council (STC)

- The STC and trail user group representatives from across the state spent much of 2009 taking a look at the structure and function of the STC and working on recommendations aimed at improving the organization of the Council.
- In July the STC voted to adjust the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) rating tool to cap the funding award for RTP projects at \$30,000. Because project costs for trails are increasing, the cap is intended to give more projects a chance to receive funding.
- The STC also supported efforts to curb snowmobiling while intoxicated, create a segregated fund for non-motorized trails, and to establish a statewide non-motorized trails council.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Governor's River Cities Tour

- July 22, 2009 — Governor Jim Doyle hit the trails at Wyalusing State Park, hiking and meeting up with fellow hikers from Milwaukee enjoying the beautiful summer day. Matt Frank, Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources, and Kelli Trumble, Secretary of Tourism, joined the Governor for the hike. Also joining the hike were Dan Schuller, Director of State Parks, Assembly Representative Phil Garthwaite, representing the Grant County area, and Lloyd Eagan, Director of the South-Central Region.
- July 24, 2009 — Governor Doyle again hit the trails, but this time at Interstate State Park. Julie Fox, a DNR educator, gave a terrific educational tour of the Pothole Trail, which is the last half mile of the 1,200-mile-long Ice Age Trail. The Governor was joined at this stop by Tourism Secretary Kelli Trumble, Natural Resources Secretary Matt Frank and State Representative Ann Hraychuck. The hike overlooked the Dalles of the St. Croix River, a deep river gorge carved by glacier meltwaters.

Work * Play * Earth Day

- In an effort to promote volunteerism and get people of all ages outside, three weekends of Work*Play*Earth Day events were held during April 2009. Volunteers were recruited from around Wisconsin to help their local state park, forest, and trail get ready for the busy summer season. Approximately 200 people contributed over 1,000 volunteer hours at Hartman Creek, Lake Wissota, Copper Falls, Buckhorn, and Perrot State Parks and Kettle Moraine State Forest-Northern Unit. This work and commitment saved the WSPS about \$9,000 in seasonal labor costs.



Volunteers at Copper Falls State Park

Leopold Legacy Trail System

- On June 4, 2009, Wisconsin's 42 outdoor recreational trails were declared the Aldo Leopold Legacy Trail System during a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Lussier Family Heritage Center. DNR Secretary Matt Frank was joined by Tourism Secretary Kelli Trumble, Dane County Executive Kathleen Falk, Nina Leopold Bradley (daughter of Aldo Leopold), Aldo Leopold Nature Center Board of Director Rick Phelps and members of conservation, recreation and tourism organizations for the ceremony. This event followed Gov. Doyle's enactment of the legislation which named Wisconsin State Trails (covering 1,728 miles statewide) as the Aldo Leopold Legacy Trail system.



Peninsula State Park Centennial

- On June 7, 2009, Peninsula State Park celebrated its centennial. The year long celebration featured many special programs including the 100 Mile Club program, Sunsets & S'mores event, and Centennial Geocache. The Centennial celebration also included the planting of the Centennial Forest, where volunteers and the Gibraltar Ecology Club planted 100 trees for 100 years of the park's existence, and the display of the Woodwind Maritime Sculpture, with Peninsula State Park and the Peninsula School of Arts collaborating to bring artist Dan Engleke's 22 solar-powered structures to Tension Bay for exhibit.

Volunteer Jamboree

- From September 13-15, 2009, more than 120 WSPS volunteers and campground hosts gathered at Peninsula State Park for an event held to honor and thank them for their service and dedication. The three-day celebration featured a trolley tour of Door County, meals from local restaurants, and an educational presentation on wolves from Newport State Park Manager Michelle Hefty. An awards ceremony was also held to recognize long time WSPS volunteers, many who have served for more than 20 years.

PLANNING

Master Plans Approved

- Straight Lake State Park – August 2009
- Kettle Moraine State Forest-Pike Lake Unit – October 2009

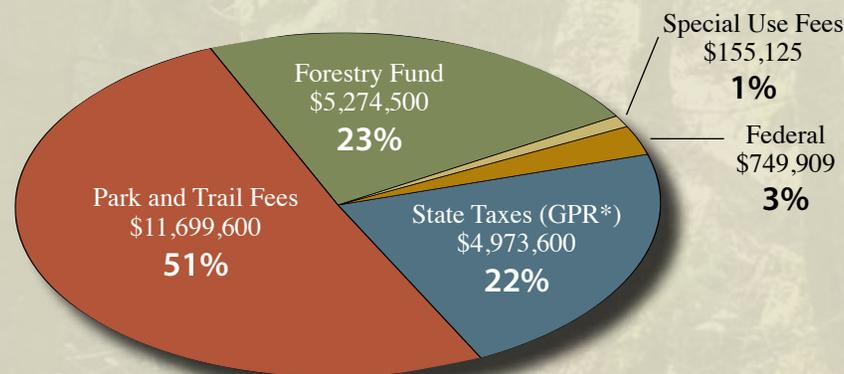
LAND ACQUISITION

Property Name	Acres	Cost
Devil's Lake State Park	0.34	\$220,000
Glacial Drumlin State Park	2.59	\$11,300
Governor Dodge State Park	1.00	\$0
Ice Age Trail	158.31	\$968,200
Nicolet State Trail	110.01	\$68,848
North Country National Scenic Trail	42.83	\$98,500
Peninsula State Park	51.00	\$0
Rib Mountain State Park	12.10	\$112,500
TOTALS	378.18	\$1,479,348

CAMPING

	2008	2009	Increase
Advance Reservations	114,231	121,755	6.6%
Walk-in Reservations	52,423	56,700	8.2%
Web-made Reservations	84,071	96,230	14.5%

SOURCES OF FUNDING FOR STATE PARKS, TRAILS AND SOUTHERN FORESTS – 2009



*GPR: General Purpose Revenue

VOLUNTEER HOURS

	2009
Number of Volunteers	5,597
Total Number of Hours	128,303

DONATIONS

	2009
In-Kind Donations	\$122,543.03
Dollar Donations	\$700,754.24