

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is committed to providing exceptional outdoor recreation opportunities for people of all abilities around the state. In our parks and forests on land and water, everyone can find a niche or simply enjoy a moment never experienced before. To find out more about accessible outdoor recreation and upcoming events offered by the DNR check out the Open the Outdoors website dnr.wi.gov/topic/openoutdoors

Get out there!

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources provides equal opportunity in its employment, programs, services, and functions under an Affirmative Action Plan. If you have any questions, please write to:

Chief, Public Civil Rights
Office of Civil Rights - U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

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OPEN THE OUTDOORS

Recreation for People with Disabilities

Hunting

Many people with disabilities enjoy hunting for the thrill of discovery and to enjoy Wisconsin's beautiful outdoors. To make hunting more accessible, people with certain physical disabilities--such as those requiring the use of a wheelchair, walker, prosthetics, etc. --are allowed permits such as shooting from a motor vehicle as well as opportunities to participate in special hunts. To qualify for one of the permits for hunters with disabilities, the applicant and his or her doctor will need to complete and submit a hunting permit application, available online or from DNR Customer Service at 1-888-936-7463.



Permits for people with disabilities

- Hunt from a stationary vehicle (Class A or Class B permit)
- Use a laser sight (Class C permit)
- Use an adaptive device to facilitate the use of a firearm (Class D permit)

Fishing

There are a number of areas around Wisconsin which offer excellent shore-fishing opportunities for people with disabilities.

Since the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), every fishing pier the Department of Natural Resources builds is accessible to people with disabilities. The accessible fishing piers are designed to accommodate wheelchairs, are wider to offer enough room for turning around and have lower railings and rod holders so that anglers can cast out and fish.

Some Wisconsin residents with disabilities are eligible for a discount on their annual fishing license.



These licenses must be renewed annually and do not exempt the holder from the need to purchase required fishing stamps. The licenses are available at any sales location. At the time of purchase, you must present evidence you are receiving disability benefits.

To find locations and various details by region of each accessible fishing area, check out the Open the Outdoors website and click on the "Explore" button.



Accessible Cabins

There are ten accessible cabins located within our state parks and forests, reservable by people with disabilities and their guests. Eight of these cabins feature amenities such as lowered counter tops in the kitchen for individuals in wheelchairs, adjustable hospital beds and Hoyer lifts, and bathrooms with roll-in showers and commode chairs. There are also two small rustic cabins. All cabins must be reserved ahead of time by calling the park you wish to visit or mailing in an application.

Campsites

For those who would rather camp in a tent or RV we also have accessible campsites in all of our state parks and forests. These sites provide a firm base surface that connects all of the main elements, including a tent pad, raised fire pit and accessible table. Each of these campsites has an electric hook-up for individuals with battery-powered mobility devices and are located near a restroom facility.

Adaptive Kayaks

Adaptive kayaks are equipped with outriggers which provide incredible stability on the water and a raised back with side supports that offer the user a comfortable and secure seat while paddling. A paddle with hand adaptations for people with limited grip is also provided. All of these elements can be adjusted or removed depending on the user's level of function. There are currently five kayaks within our state parks.

Beach Access

Sand is possibly the least accessible terrain for anyone with a mobility impairment, but we have ways to get you there. Some of our parks have specialized beach wheelchairs which have large inflatable tires that roll easily on sand and into water. Other parks utilize beach mats which create an accessible trail for people using wheelchairs or anyone who has difficulty walking. Find a location and come get wet!

Trails

There are over 650 miles of trails throughout Wisconsin to accommodate people with a range of varying abilities. From pavement to granite to limestone surfaces and some boardwalks, these trails will lead you to some of the state's most beautiful natural features and through many state parks and forests. To find locations, trail distances and levels of difficulty contact the friendly staff at the property you plan to visit.

Cross Country Sit Skis

Winter in Wisconsin is a difficult time of year for many people with disabilities, not only to enjoy the outdoors but just to complete simple tasks outside of the home. We now have sit skis powered by short poles available for free use at six of our state parks and forests. If you can handle the cold, this is a great way to get out in the snow and enjoy the peace that winter brings.

Disability Advisory Council (DAC)

The DAC consists of nine persons appointed by the DNR secretary for up to three year terms. Council members represent a variety of disabilities and geographic areas of the state. Members are persons with disabilities, represent organizations serving persons with disabilities, have expertise in disability-related areas and in outdoor recreation. Members have an interest in hunting, fishing, outdoor recreation, and conservation and may be involved in other state and national related organizations.

The DAC is to:

- Advise the DNR on matters pertaining to the accessibility of all department programs and services by persons with disabilities
- Identify and evaluate needs of persons with disabilities and communicate them to the department
- Advance research and design, policy and legislative changes to improve accessibility of agency programs and properties
- Communicate with individuals and other organizations and agencies with similar purposes in a collaborative process to improve accessibility

