



NEWS

For Release: July 8, 2021

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AAW, WWF Team Up to Increase Outdoors Access for All

With the goal of placing in every Wisconsin county motorized outdoor wheelchairs for people to use for free, the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation and Access Ability Wisconsin have teamed up for the long haul.

“When the incoming executive director offered to invite the Federation’s impressive grassroots network of affiliates to help us find local hosts for outdoor wheelchairs, trailers, and support systems in all 72 counties in Wisconsin, we welcomed them with open arms,” said AAW President and Founder Monica Spaeni, adding, “Here’s where conservation meets inclusion! Together, we will make it as easy as possible for anyone with temporary or permanent mobility issues to enjoy healthy outdoor activities.”

She said the charitable nonprofit Wisconsin Wildlife Federation and its network of affiliated clubs, ranges, county alliances and local sporting conservation groups, plus individual and business members, include some of the most avid and engaged outdoor enthusiasts throughout the state, and they know how to get things done locally, like finding host locations in their communities. Military veterans, older adults, and youth are among the target audiences already benefitting from about 20 chairs currently hosted across Wisconsin.

Spaeni said the goal of the AAW and WWF collaboration (<https://sites.google.com/accessabilitywi.org/news/wiwf-aaw>) is to increase access and outdoor activities for all by providing use of outdoor wheelchairs at no cost, and that will include providing instructors and mentors for youth and people of all ages.

WWF Executive Director Mark LaBarbera added, “Wisconsin Wildlife Federation will not only help recruit new host locations. We will help AAW connect with new users and people who will appreciate the convenience of having free loaner chairs readily available in their neck of the woods for use on private or public lands. And together we will also make chairs available for local shore fishing, hunting, target shooting and other events that will recruit, retain and reactivate outdoor enthusiasts.”

Spaeni said the AAW and WWF partnership will help both organizations continue to build stronger community relationships throughout the state while raising awareness among people with mobility issues that there is a free solution to the challenge of getting outdoors.

Access Ability Wisconsin is a 501(c)(3) grassroots community organization dedicated to facilitating and providing the means for individuals with mobility challenges to access and enjoy Wisconsin's natural resources. Contact President Monica Spaeni about “Outdoors Access 4 All!” via email at AAW@AccessAbilityWI.org or visit www.AccessAbilityWI.org.

Wisconsin Wildlife Federation is a 501(c)(3) charitable nonprofit with more than 200 affiliated member organizations dedicated to education and advocacy for sound conservation policy and individual sporting rights. For information about WWF individual or organizational membership, sponsorship or partnership, contact Executive Director Mark LaBarbera at 800-897-4161, MLaBarbera57@icloud.com or www.WIWF.org.

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Caption: An AAW chair is used at WWF affiliate club the Southwest Wisconsin Chapter Izaak Walton League which plans to become an AAW host location in Lafayette County.