

Resolution Removing Barriers to Making Wisconsin Natural Resources More Accessible to Educating the Next Generation of Conservationists

Whereas... In 1935, Wisconsin became the first state to pass legislation requiring “adequate instruction in the conservation of natural resources” for certification to teach science and social studies in public schools; and

Whereas... Environmental education is required in Wisconsin schools and environmental education objectives and activities shall be integrated into the kindergarten through grade 12 sequential curriculum plans, with the greatest emphasis in art, health, science and social studies education; and [[see Wisconsin Administrative Code PI 8.01\(2\)\(k\)](#)]

Whereas... Teachers must also be prepared to teach environmental education and those with licenses in agriculture, early childhood, middle childhood to early adolescent, science and social studies must demonstrate knowledge and understanding in environmental education including the conservation of natural resources; and [[PI 34.15\(4\)\(b\)](#)]

Whereas... the Department of Public Instruction, the Wisconsin Center for Environmental Education, and Wisconsin Environmental Foundation published *Wisconsin's Plan to Advance Education for Environmental Literacy and Sustainability in PK-12 Schools* in 2011, which includes the goal to "provide field experiences as part of the regular school curriculum and create programs that contribute to healthy lifestyles through outdoor recreation and sound nutrition;" and

Whereas... the Department of Natural Resources offers education programs to help people of all ages understand and appreciate our state's natural resources; and

Whereas... students are becoming more disconnected with our natural resources and Wisconsin's conservation legacy and they should have natural resources available to support environmental education; and

Whereas... PK-12 educators find the current DNR waiver processes limiting to their ability to deliver quality outdoor educational experiences to support environmental education requirements; and

Now therefore be it resolved that the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation at its Annual Meeting in Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin on April 11-12, 2014, does strongly recommend that the DNR create a simplified process for PK-12 educators to utilize state resources to meet environmental education requirements in the following ways:

1. examine all activities that could be done in a school setting to support student learning;
2. create a process to remove obstacles (such as fees, paperwork, and required coursework) for PK-12 educators to access these state resources in order to fulfill environmental education standards;
3. create a one-page waiver application for educators/schools to submit one time per year to allow a "blanket" waiver for all educational-related activities, including but not limited to fishing license requirements, hunter education fees, state trail fees, state natural area and park vehicle permits, for that educator/school;

Now therefore it be further resolved that the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation at its 2014 Annual Meeting on April 11-12, 2014 held in Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin directs that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Secretary of Department of Natural Resources, Chair of the Natural Resource Board, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Chair of the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board, the Chair of the Senate Natural Resources Committee and the Chair of the Assembly Natural Resources and Sporting Heritage Committee.

Submitted by:

The Wisconsin Conservation Leadership Corps

Emma Keese

Elsa Litecky

Breckyn Ryg

Alex Harp