

Resolution to Increase Awareness of Free/Low Cost Environmental Education Programs in
Wisconsin

Whereas, the personal benefits to youth who take part in outdoor education include physical, emotional, social, and cognitive health. Children who routinely take part in outdoor activities have lower levels of depression, anxiety, and severity of ADHD symptoms; furthermore, they are more effective at coping with stressors, interacting socially/emotionally, and participating in the classroom; and

Whereas, environmental education also benefits society as a whole. Outdoor activities benefit physical health and help combat the childhood obesity epidemic (and associated illness), reducing the cost of healthcare. Outdoor activity increases productivity in the classroom, creating greater cognitive and technical skills in students, facilitating civic action and responsibility; and

Whereas, socioeconomic factors are significant barriers to the achievement of these benefits. In the 2016-2017 academic year, 57.5% of students were eligible for reduced or free meals due to family's income being at or below 185% of the federal income poverty threshold; and

Whereas, insufficient funding for environmental education reduces these opportunities within schools, and can be partially addressed by outdoor programming of other organizations; and

Whereas, the most predominant obstacles to participating in outdoor activity/environmental education include insufficient funding and lack of information rather than inadequate opportunities; and

Whereas, a major component of the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation's mission is conservation education; and

Whereas, increased promotion of free/low-cost environmental education opportunities via electronic platforms, printed media, and other avenues of advertisement would reduce barriers to participation.

Now therefore be it resolved, that the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation at its annual meeting assembled April 13, 2019 in Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin supports the Federation's Education Committee, partnering with the Wisconsin Association for Environmental Education, the Wisconsin Green Schools Network and other organizations to provide increased access to environmental education programming in Wisconsin by leveraging existing platforms and media outlets to promote free/low cost programming to a wider, more diverse audience.

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Resources:

<http://www.elkhornsloughctp.org/uploads/files/1374624954Changing%20learner%20behavior%20-%20H%20and%20V.pdf>

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/yd.399>

<https://ijheld.lakeheadu.ca/article/viewFile/1383/707>

<https://dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/program-statistics>

<http://www.wisconsinbudgetproject.org/lawmakers-seek-to-eliminate-or-limit-tool-that-lets-school-districts-save-money>

<http://www.wisconsinbudgetproject.org/lawmakers-seek-to-rescind-voters-decisions-to-raise-resources-for-local-schools-on-an-on-going-basis>

[Who qualifies for free/reduced lunch](#)

<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2018-05-08/pdf/2018-09679.pdf>

[Wisconsin strategic plan for EE](#) (some good background information on importance)

[Research summary](#) of the benefits of outdoor education (Links to many studies proving benefit)