

## Resolution to support increased funding in Wisconsin State Parks

**Whereas** there is currently a \$1.4 million annual deficit in the State Parks Fund, resulting in a 20-25% vacancy in park staffing, and

**Whereas** the vacancies in park staffing results in a serious maintenance deficiency of park infrastructure and natural resources including trails, buildings, interpretive programs, signage, camper safety and security, and fish and wildlife habitat management, and

**Whereas** currently nonprofit Friends Group organizations are burdened with providing funds for necessary park related programs and expenses, and

**Whereas** the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation has a dual mission to engage in conservation education and to advocate for sound conservation policies, and

**Whereas** Wisconsin state parks and wildlife are held in the public trust for all citizens under the North American Model for Wildlife Conservation, and;

**Whereas** park admission fees were raised significantly by the Legislature in 2015-2016, and;

**Whereas** recent budget proposals have outlined further park admission fee increases for 2017, and;

**Whereas** increased admission fees create barriers for families and low income visitors to enjoy Wisconsin state parks and outdoor resources in the state, and;

**Whereas** aging demographics and increased use of electronic devices by campers cause an increased demand for electrified campsites in state parks, and that currently state law limits statewide campsites in state parks to 30% electrified campsites, and

**Whereas** Wisconsin's state parks provide outstanding outdoor nature and recreational opportunity for all Wisconsin citizens regardless of economic means, and

**Whereas** the proposed Governor's 2017-2018 state budget once again increases entrance and camping fees raising \$700,000 of the current \$1.4 million park fund, leaving a remaining \$700,000 deficit; and

**Now therefore be it resolved** that the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation at its annual meeting on April 21st and 22nd, 2017, in Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin requests that the Wisconsin Legislature modestly increase the cap on electrified campsites in state parks,

**Now let it be further resolved** that the Wisconsin State Legislature provide additional funding for the State Parks Fund without further increases of admission fees, thereby allowing all citizens to enjoy the recreational, educational and aesthetic value of Wisconsin State Parks.

Submitted by the Conservation Leadership Corps:

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