



# FRIENDS OF

## *Interstate and Straight Lake State Parks*



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## Spring Is Calling... The Trails Are Ready

Take a walk and discover the quiet beauty of spring returning to the forests and river bluffs of Interstate Park.

Walking the trails of Interstate and Straight Lake State Parks in spring is a breathtaking adventure. After months of winter, the park begins to wake up—streams run a little louder, birds return, and every bend in the trail seems to promise something new. The forest floor slowly changes from shades of brown to fresh greens, and the crisp spring air makes even a short walk feel refreshing.

Spring is one of the best times to explore the park. With fewer leaves on the trees, scenic overlooks open up to wide views of the St. Croix River valley, and the trails offer a peaceful chance to experience nature as it begins another season of renewal.

So lace up your hiking boots, take a deep breath of that cool spring air, and head out for a walk. You never know what small wonders might be waiting just around the next bend in the trail.



# Message from the Friends Board

Looking ahead, our vision for Interstate and Straight Lake State Parks is one of connection, stewardship, and discovery. We imagine parks that continue to welcome people of all ages, places where families explore trails together, where children discover wildlife for the first time, and where visitors find moments of peace and inspiration in nature.

The Friends Board is committed to building experiences that bring these parks to life. Through expanded programs like guided bird hikes, community gatherings such as the Fall Celebration, and signature events like the Ice to Water Race, we will continue creating opportunities for people to connect with the land and with each other. At Straight Lake State Park, new traditions are also beginning, including the first Candlelight Night event this fall, an experience that will invite visitors to see the park in a completely new and magical way.

Our vision also looks beyond events. We see restored habitats where native trees and wildlife thrive, improved trails that invite exploration, and engaging educational displays that help visitors understand the rich geology, history, and natural beauty of these landscapes. With the help of volunteers, partners, and donors, we will continue investing in projects that protect and enhance these parks for future generations.

Most importantly, we envision a growing community of people who feel a deep sense of belonging to these places, people who care for the cliffs of Interstate Park, the quiet waters and forests of Straight Lake, and the wildlife that call them home. Together, we are building a future where these parks remain not just destinations, but treasured places where memories are made and where the love of nature is passed from one generation to the next.



# Park Superintendent's & Web Page Update

Ready or not, here come warmer temps and a busy park. This year is shaping up to be a busy one at Interstate with several projects going on. The first is the newly completed CCC Trail, which is a complement to the CCC signage that was installed earlier. The new gravel trail is a great addition and allows for a nice stroll between the signs. Speaking of signs, there will be 5 new CCC signs added to the trail a little later this year. Two big projects will be kicking off this spring. Several buildings in the park will get a new roof, including the old office, shop, Meadow Valley (Ravine) shelter, and beach house. Our current shop building will get an upgrade as well, with some much-needed siding. These replacements will begin at the end of April and continue into May, wrapping up after Labor Day. The other large project is the beach lift station replacement. Work will begin in April and will start with sewer line replacement and enhancements. The main lift station will be replaced after Labor Day. There will be closures to some park facilities during this work, so please check the park website or call the park office for the latest information. The final project is the continuing effort of ash and hazard tree removal. We have already removed a few hundred trees in the park, but there are still many more to go. This work will continue for the remainder of the year by park staff and contractors. We will be planting a few trees this spring, but we could definitely use more. Please consider supporting the Friends Group's effort to purchase larger trees to help replace what we have lost. Thank you for your continued support, and please come out and enjoy the parks we all love!

**Matt Densow - Superintendent**

## New Updates to the Friends' Website

Board member Derek Anderson has been working hard to bring our website up to date and make it a more useful resource for visitors, both new and returning. If you haven't visited recently, we encourage you to check it out! One of the newest features is our Events Page. Simply click on "Events" at the top of the page to see upcoming programs, hikes, events, and special activities happening at the parks. You can search for events, view them in a list, or display them in a calendar format that you can even print. Click on any event title to see more details, including a description, location or meeting spot, which park it's in, and the date and time. You can still find upcoming events through our Facebook and Instagram pages, newsletters, and posters placed around the parks and in local communities. Our Accomplishments Page highlights recently completed projects with photos and updates. It features a few projects from the past year, along with a summary of other improvements that help make the park visitor experience just a little better. You may even spot a photo or two of the many volunteers who help make these efforts possible. Finally, be sure to visit our Blog, where we share short stories, updates, and photos from around the parks. Recent posts include highlights from Nature Storytime, Candlelight Night, recognition of our Friends group by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and the recent update of the park audio tour by Maia Leiske. Have you volunteered at a project or event and feel inspired to share your story? Reach out—we would love to include your contribution!

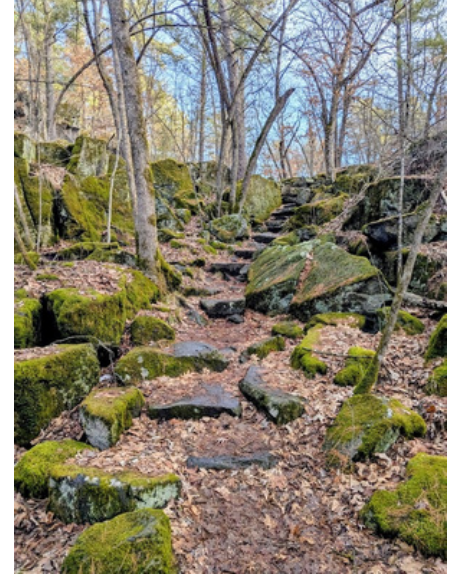
**Be sure to check back often, as there is always more to come. Visit us at <https://friendsofinterstateandstraightlakeparks.org/> or simply search for "Friends of Interstate Park."**

# Featured Hike

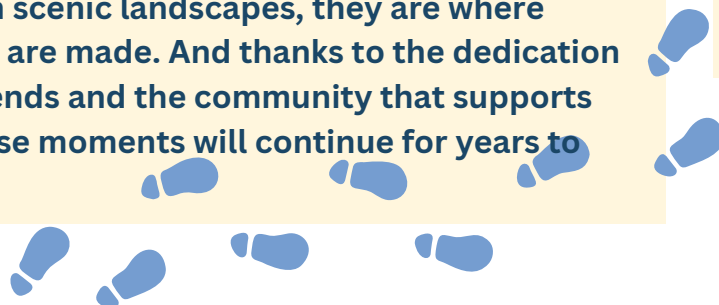
## A walk on the Summit Rock Trail

There are places that quietly stay with you long after you leave. For many visitors, Summit Rock Trail at Interstate Park is one of those places. The trail begins beneath tall pines, winding across ancient basalt rock shaped by glaciers thousands of years ago. The forest invites you to slow down. Footsteps soften on the trail, sunlight filters through the trees, and the everyday rush of life begins to fade. As the trail climbs higher, the forest gradually opens. Then you arrive at Summit Rock. From the overlook, the dramatic cliffs drop toward the winding St. Croix River below. The river moves steadily through the valley, just as it has for centuries. On some days an eagle drifts past on the rising air currents, and the breeze carries the distant sounds of the river through the trees. People often linger here. Families pause for photos. Friends sit quietly on the rock, taking in the view. Children look out across the valley with wide eyes, seeing the landscape stretch farther than they imagined. These simple moments, shared laughter, quiet reflection, a deep breath of fresh air - are the memories that bring people back to Interstate Park year after year. Helping protect and enhance experiences like this is why the Friends of Interstate Park exist. Through volunteer efforts, fundraising, and partnerships with park staff, the Friends group works to preserve the trails, viewpoints, and natural beauty that make this park so special. Their work ensures that future generations will also walk these same paths, stand at Summit Rock overlook, and feel that same sense of wonder.

Places like Summit Rock remind us that parks are more than scenic landscapes, they are where memories are made. And thanks to the dedication of the Friends and the community that supports them, those moments will continue for years to come.



Embarking on the Summit Rock Trail is like diving into an adventure with a surprise party waiting at every twist and turn!



# Join the adventure— Volunteer with us!



## Lend a Hand Volunteer with Our Parks!

Spring has arrived, and the trails, forests, and rivers of Interstate and Straight Lake State Parks are waking up after a long winter. It's the perfect time to get outside, enjoy fresh air, and make a real difference in your state parks! Our parks rely on the help of volunteers to keep everything running smoothly. From trail maintenance, pollinator garden care and at the Gift Shop to assisting with programs and events, there are countless ways to lend a hand.

Every hour you give helps preserve the natural beauty of our parks, supports wildlife, and creates memorable experiences for visitors of all ages. Whether you have a few hours or a full day, your contribution makes a lasting impact. Plus, volunteering is a great way to meet fellow nature enthusiasts, learn more about local wildlife, and explore hidden corners of the parks you might not have noticed before.

- Scan QR code to contact us



This spring, step outside, embrace the trails, and join a community of volunteers keeping our parks beautiful, safe, and welcoming for everyone. Your time and energy help ensure that these treasured natural spaces remain a place of learning, recreation, and inspiration for generations to come.

### Volunteer Focus



Our volunteers make a lasting impact in our community.

Interested in getting involved? Learn how you can volunteer, donate, or become a valued member of our Friends community!

# Paddling Adventures: Straight Lake State Park

Early on a spring morning, Straight Lake is smooth as glass. A canoe drifts gently, paddles dipping, sending soft ripples across the water. A heron scans the shore, ducks glide past, and a beaver lodge peeks from the far edge. Even a short paddle here feels like a journey into another world—peaceful, refreshing, and full of nature’s quiet surprises. Grab a canoe or kayak and let Straight Lake show you the beauty of our State Parks.

If you’re looking for a peaceful escape on the water, Straight Lake State Park is the perfect destination for kayaking, canoeing, or paddleboarding. With its calm waters, scenic views, and abundant wildlife, the lake offers paddlers of all experience levels a chance to connect with nature.

## Why Paddle at Straight Lake?

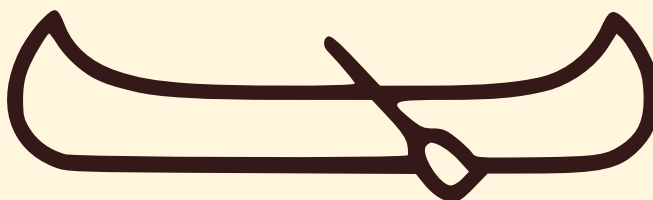
- **Scenic Beauty:** Paddle past wooded shorelines, quiet coves, and open water with views of the surrounding forest.
- **Wildlife Watching:** Keep an eye out for herons, ducks, turtles, and even the occasional beaver. Early mornings and evenings are the best times for wildlife sightings.
- **Family-Friendly:** Calm waters make it ideal for beginners and children, allowing for a relaxing day on the water.

## Tips for a Great Paddle:

- **Launch Sites:** The park has designated boat launches and access points for canoes, kayaks, and paddleboards.
- **Safety First:** Always wear a life jacket, check the weather before heading out, and let someone know your route.
- **Respect Nature:** Keep a safe distance from wildlife and leave no trace—pack out everything you bring in.

Paddling Straight Lake is not just recreation, it’s an opportunity to unplug, enjoy the tranquility of nature, and explore a hidden gem in Wisconsin’s state park system. Even a short paddle can leave you feeling refreshed and connected to the outdoors.

So grab a paddle, hop in a canoe or kayak, and experience the calm beauty of Straight Lake from the water this season!



# Spring's First Hello: The Anemones

If you walk the trails at Interstate Park or Straight Lake State Park in early spring, you might notice these tiny flowers tucked among last year's leaves. At first they seem easy to miss, but once you spot one, you begin to see them everywhere..

After a long Wisconsin winter, there comes a moment on the trail when you spot something small but remarkable—a delicate flower quietly blooming through last year's leaves. It's easy to miss if you're not paying attention, but once you see one, suddenly they're everywhere.

That little flower is an anemone, one of the earliest wildflowers to greet spring. The name anemone comes from the Greek word for "daughter of the wind," which is fitting because these flowers seem to dance with the slightest breeze.

Around our woods you'll often see hepatica, wood anemone and rue anemone scattered along forest floors and trails. Their simple white, pale pink, pink and occasionally dark blue petals and bright centers may not look flashy, but after months of snow and gray skies, they might as well be fireworks.



Sharp-lobed Hepatica  
(*Anemone acutiloba* or *Hepatica acutiloba*)



Wood Anemone  
(*Anemone quinquefolia*)

Around our woods you'll often see hepatica, wood anemone and rue anemone scattered along forest floors and trails. Their simple white, pale pink, pink and occasionally dark blue petals and bright centers may not look flashy, but after months of snow and gray skies, they might as well be fireworks.

The anemones are part of the early spring wildflowers taking advantage of the brief window before the trees leaf out. They emerge quickly, bloom, and soak up sunlight while the forest floor is still bright and open. By early summer some may quietly disappear again, waiting patiently underground for next spring. Think of them as nature's version of early risers. While most of the forest is still hitting

the snooze button, the anemones are already up, dressed, and making coffee.

These flowers also play an important role in the ecosystem. Early pollinators like small bees and flies that venture out on warmer days rely on early blooms like anemones for nectar and pollen when very little else is available.

If you're hiking the trails at Interstate State Park or Straight Lake State Park this spring, take a moment to look down along the edges of the trail. The forest floor may look quiet at first glance, but once your eyes adjust, you'll start spotting these tiny messengers of spring. So, slow down, breathe in that fresh spring air, and keep an eye on the ground. The anemones are out there, quietly reminding us that winter never lasts forever.



Rue Anemone  
(*Thalictrum thalictroides*)

# Enhancing our Parks: 2026 Initiatives

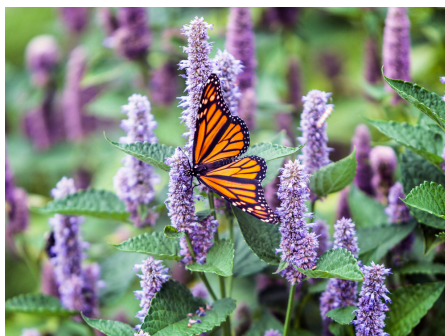
## Noteworthy Upcoming Projects

The Friends of Interstate and Straight Lake State Parks are excited to share several important projects for 2026. These initiatives aim to enhance visitor experiences, protect natural resources, and provide hands-on volunteer opportunities.

Some of the Key Projects Include:

- **Nature Journaling Trail Signs:** Installing educational and inspirational signs along the Nature Trail by the Ice Age Interpretive Center to encourage visitors to observe, reflect, and engage with the natural world.
- **Pollinator Garden Signage:** Adding more interpretive signs to our pollinator gardens to highlight the importance of native plants and pollinators for the ecosystem.
- **Invasive Species Removal:** As part of our GiveBIG Valley fundraising campaign, volunteers and staff will work to remove invasive plants, helping restore native habitats and improve the health of park ecosystems. Planting new native trees to replace ash trees that were removed due to disease or safety concerns, ensuring healthy forests for the future.
- **Trail Improvements & Maintenance:** Continued repairs, accessibility enhancements, and signage updates on popular trails throughout both parks.
- **Interactive Multimedia Displays:** Installing engaging educational displays at the Ice Age Interpretive Center and potentially other locations to highlight the park's wildlife, history, and trails.
- **CCC Camp Trail Improvements has been completed and New Signage Underway:** Improvements to the CCC Camp Trail have been completed, making the trail easier to follow and more enjoyable for visitors. New interpretive signage—coming later this year—will help tell the story of the Civilian Conservation Corps and their lasting impact on Wisconsin Interstate Park.

These projects offer opportunities for volunteers, donors, and community members to help preserve, enhance, and celebrate the natural beauty of Interstate and Straight Lake State Parks.



# Why have all the trees been cut down?

You may have noticed several trees were taken down in high use areas (such as campgrounds and parking lots) this past fall and now into the spring of 2026. You may have also wondered why. These are ash trees, and they have been impacted by a non-native pest, the emerald ash borer. Within a few years, infested trees quickly succumb to the pest and die. Sorrowfully, these trees are hazards to the safety of park visitors and need to be taken down.

## Emerald Ash Borer

Emerald ash borer (EAB, *Agrilus planipennis*) is native to eastern Asia and was first found in the United States in southeast Michigan in 2002. Wisconsin's first detection occurred in Ozaukee County in 2008. As of 2023, EAB is widespread in the southern half of Wisconsin and isolated infestations have been found in northern counties.



Photo Credit: Debbie Miller,  
USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org

## Impact



Photo Credit: Steven K. Rettke of Rutgers  
Cooperative Extension

EAB is very effective at finding and killing ash trees. The pest is expected to cause more than 99% mortality of susceptible Wisconsin species (white, black and green ash and their ornamental varieties). Blue ash, an uncommon species, is less likely to die. Dead branches and trunks are structurally weakened by EAB infestation and can become a safety hazard.

Less than 1 percent of larger white, black and green ash are likely to remain alive. These "lingering ash" are being studied for use in tree breeding projects to develop resistant ash.

## Firewood

Infested firewood is one way that EAB can be transported long distances, creating new infestations. To prevent the spread of emerald ash borer and other invasive insects and diseases moving in firewood, the DNR developed a permanent rule which prohibits visitors from bringing firewood into Wisconsin state parks and other state-managed lands from locations further than 10 miles away from the property (effective June 1, 2014). Treated, pest-free wood from state-certified vendors is exempted from this regulation.

# Check out the exciting programs coming to Interstate and Straight Lake State Parks!

Be sure to check out our Website, scan the QR code to see our events.



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## Spring Awakening: Forest Flora Hike



### May 2<sup>nd</sup> Spring flora hike Straight Lake State Park at 10am

May 2<sup>nd</sup> at 10 a.m. Spring Flora Hike at Straight Lake State Park with Barb Delaney, Barb is a retired botanist who specialized in MN and WI rare and native plants. Barb will lead us on a casual hike on the trails and help us identify the spring ephemerals currently in bloom. Meet at Straight Lake State Park main parking area at 2700 120<sup>th</sup> Street, Luck, WI

## Early Birds on the Trail

### May 9<sup>th</sup> Straight Lake State Park bird hike 7am

May 9<sup>th</sup> at 7 a.m. Bird Hike at **Straight Lake Park** with Robin Maercklein, expert birder who identifies birds by sound. We will walk out and back and be in search of migrating birds and those who will make their nests there for the season. Meet at main parking lot of Straight Lake State Park on 2700 120<sup>th</sup> Street, Luck, WI



### May 16<sup>th</sup> Interstate Park bird hike Silverbrook Trail 7am

May 16<sup>th</sup> at 7 a.m. Bird Hike at **Interstate Park** with Brian Collins, expert birder who identified over 60 birds migrating through the park in previous years. We will **meet at Camp Interstate** and check out nests of the Blue Herons as we walk up the hill through the Group Camp. You may also join us at the Group Camp parking area around 7:20 a.m. We will walk down the Silverbrook trail to the bridge and back.



## Mother's Day and Father's Day Celebrations

### Mothers Day - Sunday, May 10th, Fathers Day Sunday June - 21<sup>st</sup> 10am - 2pm

This will be our third year offering these special programs, and we are excited to continue the tradition. This year, we are pleased to announce a celebration of Mother's Day and Father's Day, featuring a variety of creative activities designed especially for families and children. Each event will include fun crafts and a small gift for moms and dads to make the day even more memorable. We invite families to join us at the **Interstate Park - Ice Age Interpretive Center** to celebrate and spend some quality time together.

A Wisconsin State Park vehicle admission sticker is required unless otherwise stated. Outdoor programs are weather dependent—check our Facebook page for any programming cancelations due to weather.

Straight Lake State Park, 2700 120<sup>th</sup> Street, Luck, WI 54853  
Interstate Park, 851 State Highway 35, St Croix Falls WI 54024  
Scan the QR code to contact us with any questions



# Check out the exciting programs coming to Interstate and Straight Lake State Parks!

Be sure to check out our Website, scan the QR code to see our events.



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## Wisconsin State Parks Free Fun Weekend - June 6 & 7

During the first weekend in June, Free Fun Weekend (Wisconsin State Parks) lets you explore Wisconsin's outdoors with park admission, fishing licenses, and trail passes waived. Join us at Interstate Park (Wisconsin) and Straight Lake State Park for fun activities for visitors of all ages including:

**The book: "Fam, the Remarkable Story of a Canada Goose Adopted by Sandhill Cranes" - June 6th at 1pm - Ice Age Interpretive Center!**

A pair of Sandhill Cranes arrived in their backyard with a colt—and a surprise companion, a Canada gosling! Over three years, they followed this remarkable blended family, the program will include a reading of the book and related activities for participants.

**Meet the Bugs with Bruce the Bug Guy June 7th at 1pm - Ice Age Interpretive Center!**

A fun, interactive program for all ages will explore the amazing world of insects through fun stories, fascinating facts, hands-on activities, and an up-close look at LIVE critters from the Arthropod Zoo in this 45–50 minute interactive program.

## Discover the Art of Nature Journaling!

Scan the QR code above for updated information



Join Park Naturalist and volunteer Sandy Anderson at **Interstate Park - Ice Age Interpretive Center** for these inspiring workshops that help you connect with the great outdoors—and discover the power of mindfulness along the way.

Stay tuned—we'll share topics and registration info soon. You won't want to miss this chance to explore, learn, and relax in nature!



## 6th Annual Ice to Water Race

July 25<sup>th</sup> at Interstate Park 7:30am - 10am



Get ready for the 6th Annual Ice to Water Race at **Interstate Park!** This fun, family-friendly event invites runners and walkers of all ages to enjoy scenic trails, celebrate summer, and embrace the outdoors. Whether you're racing, strolling, or cheering from the sidelines, it's a great way to connect with nature and your community while having a blast in the beautiful park setting.



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## Snake Discovery

**August 15<sup>th</sup> Snake Discovery 2:30pm – 4pm**

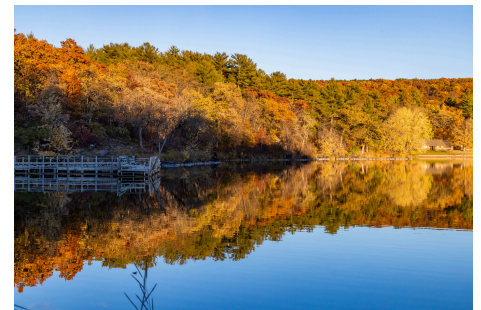
Join us at **Interstate Park -Ice Age Interpretive Center** for an exciting afternoon of reptiles and amphibians! You will get an opportunity to watch a salamander eat, debunk turtle myths, touch live snakes and more! The Snake Discovery center will bring a tiger salamander, 1-2 native turtles, 3-4 native snakes, and 2-4 exotic reptiles (just for fun). A large boa constrictor makes an appearance as well. Time is reserved after the presentation to touch and hold the reptiles for a truly hands-on experience.



## Fall Celebration & Interstate Park Anniversary Weekend!

**Fall Celebration & Anniversary Weekend  
Saturday, Sept 19th and Sunday, Sept 20th**

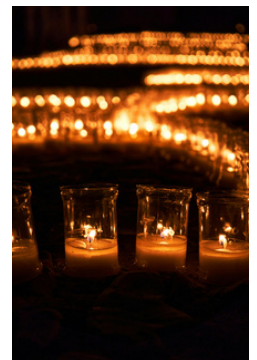
Celebrate the season and a milestone at **Interstate Park**! Join us for the Fall Celebration, a weekend filled with fun activities, music, and family-friendly adventures among the colorful autumn scenery. At the same time, we'll mark the park's 126th anniversary, honoring its rich history and natural beauty. Best of all, admission to the park is free on Sunday Sept 20! Come for the weekend festivities, enjoy the outdoors, and help us make this a memorable celebration for all ages!



## Straight Lake State Park Candlelight Night Hike

**Straight Lake State Park Candlelight Night Hike  
Saturday, Oct 24th**

Experience the magic of **Straight Lake State Park** on candlelit trails! Wander along softly lit trails as the evening unfolds, listening to the sounds of nature and enjoying the peaceful ambiance. This serene, family-friendly event offers a unique way to connect with the outdoors after dark—perfect for all ages looking to explore the park in a whole new light.



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Straight Lake State Park, 2700 120<sup>th</sup> Street, Luck, WI 54853  
Interstate Park, 851 State Highway 35, St Croix Falls WI 54024  
Scan the QR code to contact us with any questions



# Be a part of something bigger!

## Whether through donations, membership, or volunteering, your support makes a lasting impact.

*All members and donors will be acknowledged in our Annual Report, to be published in February 2027*

### Every gift—big or small—helps protect and enhance Interstate and Straight Lake State Parks!

Name	_____	Friend - \$10/yr.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Address	_____	Family - \$20/yr.	<input type="checkbox"/>
City, State, Zip code	_____	Good Friend - \$25/yr.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Email and Phone Number	_____	Best Friend - \$100/yr.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enclosed Membership	\$ _____	Best Friend Life - \$250/Life	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enclosed Donation	\$ _____	Corporation - \$500/Life	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enclosed Endowment	\$ _____		

**You can also sign up online with PayPal at:**  
<https://friendsofinterstateandstraightlakeparks.org/membership/>

**Please Send To: Membership, Friends of Interstate Park, PO Box 703, St. Croix Falls WI 54024**

## Legacy Giving Corner: Leave a Lasting Impact

For 125 years, Wisconsin Interstate Park has been a beloved natural sanctuary, offering stunning landscapes, outdoor adventures, and rich history. Help preserve the park's beauty and legacy for generations to come through legacy giving.

By including Wisconsin Interstate Park and the Friends of Interstate and Straight Lake State Parks in your estate plans, you create a lasting impact that supports conservation, educational programs, and visitor experiences for years to come. Whether through a bequest, trust, or other planned gift, your generosity will help preserve these special places.

To explore legacy giving options, contact Heather Logelin at the St. Croix Valley Foundation (715-386-9490) or email [info@scvfoundation.org](mailto:info@scvfoundation.org).

*Thank you for being a steward of Wisconsin Interstate Park and Straight Lake State Park's future!*

# Board of Directors and Park Staff

Friends of Interstate and Straight Lake State Parks  
2026 Board of Directors  
Dedicated to Preserving and Enhancing Our Parks

### Executive Board

President: Dani Mortenson – [dani.mortenson@yahoo.com](mailto:dani.mortenson@yahoo.com)  
Vice President: Art Anderson – [acaenator@gmail.com](mailto:acaenator@gmail.com)  
Secretary: Derek Anderson – [derekanderson06@gmail.com](mailto:derekanderson06@gmail.com)  
Treasurer: Sandy Anderson – [sanand56.sa@gmail.com](mailto:sanand56.sa@gmail.com)

### Board Members

Barb Ceder – [barbara.ceder@gmail.com](mailto:barbara.ceder@gmail.com)  
Kirby McDonald – [Kirbymcdonald1@gmail.com](mailto:Kirbymcdonald1@gmail.com)  
Kathy Scharfenberg – [kathyscharfenberg299@gmail.com](mailto:kathyscharfenberg299@gmail.com)  
Kevin Rogers – [kjrogers1208@hotmail.com](mailto:kjrogers1208@hotmail.com)  
Carol Wickboldt (Membership Chair) – [carolwickboldt@gmail.com](mailto:carolwickboldt@gmail.com)

### Interstate and Straight Lake State Parks Staff

Park Superintendent: Matthew Densow – [matthew.densow@wisconsin.gov](mailto:matthew.densow@wisconsin.gov)  
Park Manager: Hannah Reed – [hannah.reed@wisconsin.gov](mailto:hannah.reed@wisconsin.gov)

The Friends of Interstate and Straight Lake State Parks is a volunteer-driven organization committed to supporting the parks through conservation efforts, educational programs, and community engagement.

On a mission to fit all the puzzle pieces into a masterpiece for our Parks!



# Extra Trailblazing Adventures!

## So Many Hikes, So Little Time

With miles of scenic trails to explore, it sometimes feels like there are so many hikes and so little time. Whether you're climbing the bluff trails for breathtaking river views at Wisconsin Interstate Park or enjoying the quiet forests and wetlands at Straight Lake State Park, there is always something new to discover.

From short nature walks to longer adventures, our parks offer trails for every pace and ability. Each season brings its own rewards—wildflowers in spring, cool forest shade in summer, colorful leaves in fall, and peaceful snowy landscapes in winter. So lace up your hiking boots, grab a friend, and come explore. The trails are waiting!

## A note from Board Member Kathy Scharfenberg

### Hike the Trails-See the views

With 9 miles of summer trails and 12.5 miles of winter trails, Wisconsin Interstate Park is a fabulous place to hike. Walk along the basalt bluffs of the Summit Rock Trail to view the spectacular St. Croix River gorge, which was formed thousands of years ago when the glaciers melted. Continue downward on the Echo Canyon Trail which winds through the picturesque woods around rock formations next to high canyon walls or take the River Bluff trail for more beautiful river views. Visit the Pothole Trail, also the western terminus of the Ice Age Trail, and see where an ancient river formed large potholes in the rock. Look upriver from the Pothole observation deck to see the Old Man of the Dalles rock formation. Travel on the Skyline trail to the Ravine Trail which offers a taste of ferns and old growth forest as it meanders down 260 feet to the Lake of the Dalles beach. Don't miss the Silverbrook Trail which leads to a scenic waterfall and clear springs. Other trails like Horizon Rock, Meadow Valley and Eagle Peak are nature trails you don't want to miss in your exploration of Interstate Park.

We are on a mission to help people explore everything our parks have to offer—whether that means hiking the trails, discovering the natural beauty around them, or joining one of the many programs and events held throughout the year.





# SAVE THE DATE!

## TUESDAY, APRIL 28<sup>TH</sup>, 2026



### GiveBig 2026 – Let's Plant Some Trees

If you have been to Interstate Park, it is hard not to notice that a lot of trees that have been cut down. While unsightly, it is necessary. These trees are either Ash trees that have been or will be infested with Emerald Ash Borer, or they are trees that have been determined to be hazardous.

This work was not completed in 2025; many more are scheduled to be cut down in 2026.

While it is unfortunate that trees need to be cut down, it comes with the landscape. The good thing about trees is that new ones grow. The Friends of Interstate and Straight Lake State Parks are planning to jump start the process. We have dedicated this year's Give Big campaign to purchase trees for planting in the park to replace some of the trees that have been removed. It will not be possible to replace all of the trees, but with your help we will be able to do some strategic planting to keep the park looking beautiful for now and into the future.



# SAVE THE DATE!

## TUESDAY, APRIL 28<sup>TH</sup>, 2026

