

WISCONSIN SPORTING FREEDOM

#IAmSportingFreedom



Bill Summaries & Talking Points

The Wisconsin Sporting Freedom Package is commonsense legislation that recognizes the impact Wisconsin's hunters and anglers have on the state. The legislation promotes policy reforms that will defend the hunt, allow greater opportunities for hunters and anglers, protect our rights and make it easier to enjoy our God-given natural resources.

This series of bills will preserve and build upon Wisconsin's sporting heritage by:

- Increasing the opportunity for hunting and fishing for Wisconsin's residents
- Reducing the regulatory burden on hunters and anglers
- Providing oversight over the state of Wisconsin's use of the money hunters and anglers contribute to resource management and hunting priorities
- Supporting the economic impact activities like hunting and fishing have on the state of Wisconsin

Pheasant Management Bill

Sponsored by Sen. Rob Stafsholt and Rep. James Edming

- Historically, Wisconsin has raised and planted a more robust number of pheasants for Wisconsin's hunters to harvest than the state currently does. This bill would increase the minimum number of pheasants being planted to 200,000 and would improve the identification of the properties where the pheasants are planted, increasing access to hunting.
 - "Hunting is a Wisconsin tradition," said Rep. Edming. "I am proud to bring forward legislation to help provide more hunting opportunities for Wisconsin sportsmen and women."
 - (Senator Stafsholt): "Originally in Wisconsin, the Department of Conservation started stocking pheasants back in 1928 to assist in providing high quality pheasant hunting opportunities here in our state. Currently in Wisconsin, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) still stocks pheasants each year, but the numbers have drastically decreased. Wisconsin sportsmen and women are not given hunting opportunities with that level of the resource. To get us back to a higher quality pheasant hunting opportunity here in Wisconsin, the DNR should be stocking these pheasants at a greater level, which is why I introduced this legislation."

Turkey Hunting Simplification Bill

Sponsored by Sen. Howard Marklein and Rep. Robert Brooks

- This bill would modify administrative rules relating to the hunting of wild turkeys to combine hunting zones and seasons to just two zones and two seasons and to modify youth hunting restrictions.
- Turkey hunting is too confusing right now for Wisconsin's hunters. This bill would make it easier for people to find out when and where they can hunt while also making it easier for Wisconsin's youth hunters to participate in the harvest.
 - "This common sense piece of legislation streamlines the process for hunting wild turkeys and provides Wisconsin's youth with a longer hunting season. Additionally, the bill is a first-rate tool for recruiting and retaining new hunters."- Rep. Brooks on LRB 3453

Mentored Hunt Bill

Sponsored by Sen. Jerry Petrowski and Rep. Robert Brooks

- This bill would allow an individual to satisfy the in-person field testing requirement for the hunter's safety program by participating in a mentored hunt.
- This is a commonsense approach that the DNR used during the pandemic and should be allowed under normal circumstances as well.
 - "This bill makes it easier for individuals to satisfy the hunter safety training requirements." – Rep. Brooks on LRB 4691
 - "If we don't teach the next generation the value and benefit of hunting in Wisconsin, we risk losing a rich portion of our state's heritage. Mentored hunting is a way for kids to safely learn the art of hunting and preserve the legacy of our sporting freedoms."

Wisconsin Brook Trout Bill

Sponsored by Sen. Eric Wimberger and Rep. Elijah Behnke

- Sets the stocking of brook trout into Lake Michigan at a minimum of 100,000 annually.
 - (Senator Wimberger) "Investing in wildlife and protecting habitat is an essential part of Wisconsin's sporting heritage. This initiative to stock Lake Michigan is right in line with the long established practice of maintaining and stocking our lakes, rivers, and streams for the enjoyment of today's anglers and the tradition of future anglers. The beautiful brook trout is very popular because it stays close to the shore of Lake Michigan, making it an accessible for all types of anglers."

DNR Regulation Simplification Bill

Sponsored by Sen. Duey Stroebel and Rep. Calvin Callahan

- This bill would require the DNR to eliminate three rules every time they propose adding another rule.
- Currently, Wisconsin's hunters face a litany of outdated and burdensome rules and regulations that make hunting more difficult than it should be. This bill would begin to reverse that process.
 - "We are cutting the red tape that the department has put up and making strides towards regulatory simplicity." – Rep. Callahan on LRB 3347

DNR Hunting License Categories Simplification Bill

Sponsored by Sen. Howard Marklein and Rep. Alex Dallman

- The DNR has made it too confusing for a hunter to figure out what sort of license — currently 26 categories — they need to ensure a legal harvest.
- This bill would require the DNR to prepare a report that identifies ways to consolidate or eliminate hunting, fishing, and trapping approvals to reduce the total number of types of licenses DNR issues.
 - “The DNR, along with many other agencies should always be looking to identify ways to consolidate and eliminate unnecessary, bureaucratic red tape in order to create more ease for the general public.” – Rep. Dallman on LRB 3452/4725
 - (Senator Marklein) “This package of legislation is about simplifying the DNR rules and regulations, so whether you’re a seasoned hunter, angler or new to the sport, you can be sure that you purchased the right licenses, permits or tags to be a part of the sporting culture in Wisconsin.”

Sandhill Crane Hunting Season Bill

Sponsored by Sen. Mary Felzkowski and Rep. Paul Tittl

- This bill requires the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to authorize the hunting of sandhill cranes by individuals who have completed a sandhill crane hunter education course and who possess the appropriate approval issued by the DNR to help manage the growing sandhill crane population in Wisconsin.
- These birds are in need of management due to their overwhelming numbers, lack of population management, and the damage they cause to farmers in our state.
 - “Creating a hunting season for sandhill cranes is not just about hunting; it’s also about farmers. Farmers have reported a flock of sandhill cranes can decimate a field in one day.” – Rep. Tittl on LRB 3594
 - (Senator Felzkowski) “For years, farmers have experienced tens of thousands of dollars’ worth of damage to their crops caused by Sandhill Cranes. This bill would allow the DNR to establish a well-regulated hunting season to keep the Sandhill Crane population in check, and ensure that the livelihood of farmers is not impacted by these birds.”

Constitutional Carry Bill

Sponsored by Sen. Mary Felzkowski and Rep. Robert Brooks

- Whether it is for hunting or personal protection, Wisconsin hunters and other citizens want to exercise their constitutional right to carry a gun, without the additional burden of a concealed carry permit.
- This bill would guarantee Wisconsinites would be able to do that under the rights already afforded to them by the 2nd Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.
 - “This bill protects the freedom, liberty, and right of law-abiding citizens to put on a coat while carrying a firearm. Our Second Amendment rights are sacred and shall not be abridged by government intrusion.” - Rep. Brooks on LRB

DNR Habitat Transparency Bill

Sponsored by Sen. John Jagler and Rep. Clint Moses

- This bill would increase transparency and accountability by requiring the DNR to create a biennial work plan that establishes priorities and goals for habitat work on lands managed by DNR and measures progress on established priorities and goals.
 - “This bill aims to provide Wisconsinites with the knowledge and confidence that we are utilizing the natural resources of our state wisely.” – Rep. Moses on LRB 3479
 - (Senator Jagler) “It should be simple enough to expect the DNR to have a plan and list of priorities for the lands under their management. The sporting community deserves to know why the DNR owns the lands they do and what they plan on doing with them. It’s a little ridiculous to think this isn’t happening already.”

DNR Public Lands Access Report Bill

Sponsored by Sen. Howard Marklein and Rep. Gae Magnafici

- This bill would require the DNR to prepare a report that identifies public access opportunities on all lands owned or managed by DNR, land acquired under the Warren Knowles-Gaylord Nelson stewardship program, and open managed forest lands.
- This report would help increase opportunities for hunters to identify lands and fully utilize available hunting locations.
 - “Wisconsin has thousands of acres of beautiful hunting land. It’s imperative Wisconsin sportsmen are aware of all the public land available to them.” – Rep. Magnafici on LRB 3450/4723

Dog Training Bill

Sponsored by Sen. Howard Marklein and Rep. Clint Moses

- This bill would require the DNR to make available on the Go Wild website dog training licenses. Currently, this license is not available on the site, making it difficult for hunters to comply.
 - “The current paper system of issuing dog training permits is outdated. This bill makes it easier to obtain permits for dog training and aligns with other products currently available on the DNR’s Go Wild website like hunting and fishing licenses.” – Rep. Moses on LRB 3478

Aquaculture Partnership Bill

Sponsored by Sen. Howard Marklein and Rep. Alex Dallman

- This bill requires the Department of Natural Resources to prepare a report that identifies opportunities for partnering with the private aquaculture industry for increased stocking of desirable sport fish in Wisconsin lakes and streams.
- “Wisconsin must return to using public-private partnerships in order to increase stocking of our sport fish more adequately and responsibly. The stocking of these sport fish will play an important role in increasing statewide tourism.” – Rep. Dallman on LRB 3451/4724