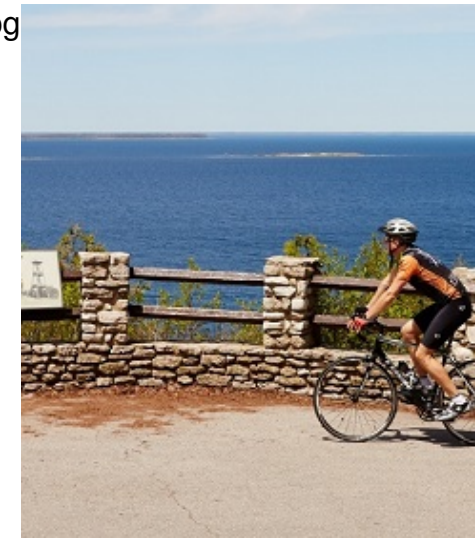
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Sen. Smith writes about the many ways Wisconsinites can enjoy the outdoors during National Camping month and the summer months beyond.

EAU CLAIRE, WI - We love our beer and cheese in Wisconsin. But Wisconsin is more than beer and cheese. A whole lot more.

Over the last century, Wisconsin has been an escape from the hustle and bustle of the big city life. In the 1920s, the state was literally an escape for gangsters , like John Dillinger, who ran away to Little Bohemia Lodge in Manitowish Waters. Baby Face Nelson's hideout was in Lac du Flambeau and the Capone's family favorite was in Mercer. But you don't need to be hiding from the law to find great adventure and enjoyment in Wisconsin.

Now is as good a time as any to plan and enjoy your great Wisconsin outdoor adventure. June happens to be National Camping Month to kick off the summer season. With numerous campgrounds spread throughout the state – access to rivers, lakes and parks is unmatched anywhere else – Wisconsin truly is the place to see, enjoy and explore.

Framed by Lake Superior on the northern border, Lake Michigan on the east and the St. Croix and Mississippi Rivers on the west, Wisconsin's freshwater resources highlight Wisconsin's natural beauty. Between those GREAT lakes and rivers, Wisconsin has 15,074 lakes

according to the Department of Natural Resources. There are more than 12,600 rivers and streams meandering along 84,000 miles of terrain. Out of those rushing waters, there are over 2,700 trout streams. For fishing enthusiasts, there's no better place for the thrill and adventure of the outdoors than here in Wisconsin.

The beauty of Wisconsin can truly be enjoyed along our waterways. For canoe and kayak enthusiasts, it's always a thrill to explore the caves along the south shores of Lake Superior. One of the longest stretches of free-flowing rivers in the nation is right here in Wisconsin. After the removal of 4 dams, the Baraboo River has 112 miles of free-flowing river that can be traveled by canoe or kayak without ever leaving the water.

It's no coincidence that some of the most noted environmentalists attached themselves to the beauty of Wisconsin. From First Nation members to more recent environmental conservation leaders, like Aldo Leopold, John Muir, Sigurd Olson and Gaylord Nelson, the natural splendor of Wisconsin inspired them and many others to protect our precious natural resources. Thanks to the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship program, established in 1989, we continue to preserve and enhance the enjoyment of Wisconsin's natural treasures. As stewards of our land and water, we must ensure future generations will continue to have the same opportunities we have by making smart investments to preserve Wisconsin's natural resources.



Wisconsin has done a great job of mixing the natural beauty around us with fun recreational activities. From Northern getaways around Hayward, Bayfield and Minocqua to Door County and the Wisconsin Dells, tourists and residents alike have plenty of fun and wondrous choices where to enjoy Wisconsin. Tourism had an economic impact of $22.2 billion in Wisconsin in 2019 and we expect an even greater impact in 2021.

Campgrounds play an important role when it comes to enjoying Wisconsin's outdoors. Camping isn't only for those who fish, hike or canoe, either. Summer is also the time for music festivals, fairs and shows. Campgrounds provide that place where folks who share interests interact and extend the fun they had during the day.

Wisconsin's music fest scene reaches nearly every corner of the state. Summerfest in Milwaukee is the largest music festival in the world. In western Wisconsin, we have Country

Jam, Eaux Claires and Blue Ox in Eau Claire, Country Fest and Rock Fest in Cadott, Ashley for the Arts in Arcadia and Blues on the Chippewa in Durand. No matter where you are in Wisconsin, camping options and outdoor activities are never too far away.

During National Camping Month and the summer months beyond, take advantage of all that Wisconsin has to offer. You'll be amazed by the opportunities and adventure that await.