



The Joy of Access to the Outdoors

by Patrick Devereaux
AAW Board Member & Volunteer in Barron County

I've always loved the outdoors – the quiet of a forest, the thrill of a trail, the simple joy of fresh air and open skies. Working with Access Ability Wisconsin (AAW) allows me to share that love in a way that truly matters. Helping people with mobility challenges or other barriers experience nature fully – exploring new places, navigating challenging terrain, creating memories – is deeply rewarding.

This is volunteerism at its best: giving time, effort, and care to make experiences accessible for everyone. The thrill of seeing someone light up when they can cross challenging terrain they couldn't before, hearing a person say they're going to enjoy nature for the first time in 15 years, or witnessing a child look at his father and say, "I can be just like you, Dad, if I use this," is indescribable. Moments like these remind me why this work matters, and how much joy can come from simply volunteering my time and effort.

Being part of this community fills me with gratitude and pride – knowing inclusion isn't just a goal, it's lived, and that every outing makes the outdoors possible for someone who might have thought it out of reach.

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Access Ability Wisconsin, Inc.,
166 Jones Branch Rd., Mineral Point, WI 53565

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