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Restore the Right of the Public to Safely Step Across Railroad Right-Of-Way

The Problem: In 2006 the Wisconsin legislature rescinded the right of the public to step directly across railroad right-of-ways. Across Wisconsin for over 100 years, people have safely exercised the right to step across a railroad right-of-way in order to gain access to public land and water; and private land for which they had ownership or legal trespass rights.

Throughout Wisconsin, railroad right-of-ways run parallel to, adjoin, and bisect public lands and waters. It is very common for railroad right of ways to run adjacent to rivers and streams. The railroad right-of-way parallels the entire length of the Mississippi River in Wisconsin. Due the elimination of citizens' legal right to directly cross RR tracks, except at designated public crossings which are minimal in extent, the railroad right-of-way is now a significant and unjustified barrier to public access of public land and water.

Be It Resolved that at its annual meeting held in La Crosse County on April 11, 2016 the Wisconsin Conservation Congress recommends and requests a combined effort by the Conservation Congress, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and elected state officials; to promote railroad safety, address liability concerns**, and restore the public right to directly cross a railroad right-of-way, promptly and on foot.**

Author: Wes Domine
Address: S2870 Waumandee Creek Rd
Fountain City, WI 54629

Phone: 608-687-3230

County: Buffalo

Signature: