

# Injured Veterans Feed the Need to Hike at Starved Rock Park

OGLESBY, Ill., Sept. 9, 2018 /PRNewswire/ -- Warriors and their guests donned their hiking gear and hit the rugged trails of Starved Rock State Park during a recent Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) outing.

"This was something that both my wife and I have always wanted to try," said Army veteran Marcia Falls. "Hiking was on our bucket list. It was very exciting and invigorating."

WWP program gatherings offer settings that provide opportunities for injured veterans to form bonds with one another, their families, and their communities.

Warriors explored the park's canyons, caverns, waterfalls, and bluffs as they got to know one another better. About halfway through the 4.5-mile hike, they climbed to a scenic peak for a refreshing bite to eat.

"Hiking and viewing the wonders of nature with other friendly veterans made it even better," Marcia said. "We're up for trying almost anything that gets us out of the house and pushes us to our limits."

Isolation is one of the most significant struggles wounded warriors face after serving their country. A supportive community makes all the difference for a warrior struggling to find new purpose in civilian life.

Activities like hiking and socializing with other veterans can help warriors cope with stress and emotional concerns. In a WWP survey (<https://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/survey>) of the wounded warriors it serves, more than half of survey respondents (51.6 percent) expressed they talk with fellow veterans to address their mental health issues, and 30.3 percent indicated physical activity helps.

"For me, Wounded Warrior Project is an outlet from all the stress I feel," Marcia said. "These types of events, and the people who help organize them, help me out of the depression I'm in most of the time."

To learn more about how WWP connects warriors to build strength through community, visit