

ICE AGE Trail Diaries

September 2009 ~ Volume 2, Issue 1

News from the Ice Age Trail Alliance ~ Waukesha/Milwaukee Chapter

Letter from the Editor

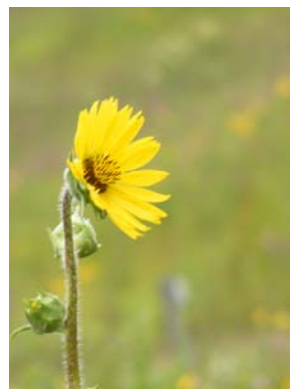
Welcome! The Ice Age Trail Diaries took a short hiatus while I had some time off to spend with the Ice Age Trail's newest hiker and future volunteer! At the end of April, we welcomed Cashmir Lane into the world. She is now nearly five months old and surely no longer the youngest hiker! For this issue, I had the extreme pleasure of learning much about our very own Ken and Sally Waraczynski, long time volunteers and greeters for IATA events in the Waukesha/Milwaukee County Chapter. What an exquisite story these two share!

Happy hiking! ~ Amanda Christiansen, Editor

Monthly Chapter Meetings

Join us in the Trecker Lodge of Homestead Hollow at Lapham Peak on the third Thursday of every month at 7pm, except December and July. Lapham Peak is a unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest one mile south of Delafield on County Road C.

Trail Imagery



These are photos from the wildflower hike guided by naturalist Mike Fort on August 1st. The hike drew 35+ enthusiasts, including little Cashmir for her first adventure on the Ice Age Trail.

Hike with Us

Fall 2009

Saturday, Sept. 19th, 9:30am – Pinewoods

Join us as we hike south from the trailhead on Waukesha Cty C to the parking area on Cty ZZ. We will see the Milwaukee Public Schools Oak Ridge Farms, pass thru the Pinewoods Campground, and see strong glacial features, finishing at Cty ZZ. The total distance is 3.3 miles. We will meet at the trailhead on the south side of C, less than a mile southwest of the First Presbyterian Church of Ottawa. The church is located at the intersection of C & D, which is south of Dousman, north of Eagle and east of Hwy 67. Free return shuttles provided.

Eagle Segment Workday

Saturday, Sept. 19th, 1:00-4:00pm

(Contact Pat at gwit@charter.net or 262-490-3515 if you have questions.)

This trail maintenance workday will include repairing a puncheon structure, cleaning debris from a clear cut, and pruning. Tools are supplied. Bring work gloves, a water bottle and bug spray. Park at the Hwy 67 IAT lot 7 miles south of Dousman on Hwy 67. Look for the yellow IAT event signs. A State Park sticker is required to park in this lot.

Saturday, Oct. 3rd, 1:30pm – Lapham Peak

Young children, their families, and those less active are invited to join naturalist Mike Fort as we hike with him along the paved nature trail loop in Lapham Peak. We are partnering with REI, doing some seed picking along the way, and getting a brief look at the Ice Age Trail. The loop is 1.5 miles long. Meet at Homestead Hollow in the forest unit, which is located on County C, just south of Delafield. Take exit 285 from I-94, and go south one mile.

Saturday, Nov. 21st, 9:30am – Milwaukee River

We invite you to share the challenge as we follow a set of primitive paths below the bike path along the east bank of the Milwaukee River. A major new park is being proposed for this area. We will meet at the intersection of Oakland Ave. and Geneva Place, one block south of Locust St. We will pass the Shorewood River Club and the Hubbard Park Lodge and end in Estabrook Park. The hike distance is 2.8 miles. A hiking stick is recommended. A free return shuttle will be provided.

For more information, contact Frank at 414-351-9129 or Russ at 262-968-4489.

20 Years & Counting

Although Ken and Sally Waraczynski have been volunteers for the Ice Age Trail Alliance for 20 years, the adventure actually began in the fall of 1983 when the couple purchased Henry Reuss' book "On the Trail of the Ice Age". It was only intended to be a few Sunday walks in the Delafield area, and soon evolved into an appetite to explore the rest of the mapped trail across the entire state.

This led to Ken and Sally's best accomplishment and "the one of which we are most proud, of course, was hiking the entire 1000 miles over 5 years of dogged persistence." They were mentioned in Reuss' 2nd edition as the 3rd and 4th persons to do it and they did it as a team! Ken likes to say, "If it weren't for me, we wouldn't have gotten anywhere; but if it weren't for Sally, we wouldn't have seen anything." After finishing the 1000-mile hike, Sally prepared a summary for the Board of Directors to help future hikers.

Ken and Sally have a lot under their belts, they have been co-vice-presidents of the chapter, attended and reported on the annual meetings of

The challenge presented by following maps of a trail that we later learned was largely tentative resulted in our having what I'll bet was more "fun" than subsequent hikers following a more settled route. We were forced to abandon our anonymity and thereby made acquaintances with those pioneer chapter leaders of the Trail Council who helped us find our way. They not only offered guidance but so impressed us with their enthusiasm and evident hard work, that we knew we had to become part of the effort. Therefore, we officially joined the Foundation and became active members of the Waukesha Chapter in 1989.

~ Ken and Sally

the Foundation and participated in events such as National Trails Day and the fall Hike-A-Thons, even winning the grand prize for HAT fund-raising. They have worked on the trail as long as physically able

Preparing the presentations stimulated a greater appreciation of the statewide fabric we had become part of and led to further attempts to educate ourselves about the geographic or geologic "big picture". Knowledge of a different sort came from listening to our fellow members express their grievances and by doing our best to foster better communication. In the long run, the preservation and further development of the Ice Age Trail is a seductive goal and sufficient glue to bind the diversity of our membership together.

~ Ken and Sally

and have the "In the Mud" patches to prove it. These days, the couple continues to contribute in less strenuous ways, acting as greeters at 3 Mobile Skill Crew projects with a fourth one is coming up in Polk County. They have completed the "Walk the Wauk" project with their granddaughter, and continue to attend chapter meetings. Sally contacts and welcomes new members to the chapter. Ken and Sally boast about the pleasure they take in walking new segments throughout the state as they are developed. They must have covered another 500 or so miles that way!

For several years, Ken and Sally created slide presentations for civic groups or other gatherings. They were challenged to order their thoughts and

Playing Favorites...

As for our favorite section, we can't find a satisfactory answer to that one. We have to say each section of overland trail has its own points of interest, or, for us, memories. Sally once said, "The next section is my favorite". She meant she valued the evidence of progress. Since we live closer to them, the Waukesha County segments might be considered favorites because of their familiarity. Here, we have known the trail in different seasons, can anticipate the arrival and departure of plants and birds, and can better appreciate improvements over time.

be more critical of their photograph collection.

They have stored up so many memories over the years, it would take days to recount them all; and yet these fragmented recollections are their stories. Sally remembers a younger Tim Malzahn at a Trail Council meeting in Poynette - fresh off the trail and eager to share his beautiful view camera studies; the cry of the loon and breathtaking fall color in the Chippewa Moraine; the bellow of a stag somewhere beyond the snowy trail near Wood Lake; crossing the Rock River on a railroad trestle; and on and on.

A Story from Ken...

Ken has chosen to tell of an encounter with Joe Jopek, pioneer leader and friend:

One set of events, when hiking the entire IAT (1983-1989), that sticks in my mind vividly was when we were hiking through the Langlade County segment. We arrived in Antigo on a Sunday afternoon and called Joe Jopek from our motel to get a little information about the trail through that county. He not only gave us a little information but took it upon himself to come to our motel room with maps, etc. in spite of the fact that there were storm warnings and tornado watches in the area. He also offered to lead us through one section of the trail that was overland on private property and unmarked, later that week.

When we successfully compassed our way through that [unmarked] section and came out on a local road that led to the end of the section and while talking as we walked, we lost our way by not paying attention to where we were supposed to go. We had to back-track to find the correct road to take. How ironic, hiking through an unmarked segment, using a compass, and finding our way out of the woods, only to get lost on well-marked roads and/or city streets. The three of us often laugh about this to this day when we talk about it.

A Story from Sally...

The first hikes in Marathon County are the basis for this story of Sally's choosing:

Henry Reuss' book said, "...you will cross an old beaver dam, ford the Eau Claire River on two poles..." I didn't sleep well that night but thought we had to give it a try. The beaver dam was surprisingly solid and well bristled with saplings and grasses to hang onto. Looking over to one side, I saw the stream trickling out a few feet below. On the other side was a wide stretch of water almost flush with the top of the dam. We edged forward expecting to come to the other bank in short order, but the dam kept curving to the right and the lake kept spreading. Our determination diminishing with every step, we decided to go back to the car and drive over to the next identifiable point on the map. The only thing we saw at this little spur road was more water. OK - we'll walk the highway up to the next section.

The Kronenwetter started out dry enough; but after picking our way past a rusty culvert and around remnants of a logging operation, we began noticing our footing was getting soggy. Soon we were following little yellow sticks or flags as we hopped along a good half mile on tussock sedges. Then while perched on tussocks, we had to shove aspens aside in hope of finding another marker. Eventually, we came to a logging road and followed it up to the "park" entrance. We later learned, when recounting our story to Norm Huth who helped lay out that trail, that it had been done in what turned out to have been a drought year. To this day, there is no overland trail in Marathon County south of Highway 29.

Ice Age Trail Diaries Masthead

Amanda Christiansen, Editor – Submit to acorn_rock@yahoo.com
Frank Evans – Hike & Public Outreach Coordinator 414.351.9129
Visit the IATA online www.iceagetrail.org

Kris Jensen – Walk the Wauk 262.966.9788
Pat Witkowski – Trail Coordinator; Work day opportunities
(H) 262.567-6285, (C) 262-490-3515, gwit@charter.net

The mission of the Ice Age Trail Alliance is to create, support and protect a thousand-mile footpath tracing Ice Age formations across Wisconsin -- the Ice Age National Scenic Trail.