

mammoth TALES

A quarterly publication about the Ice Age Trail
from the Ice Age Park & Trail Foundation

ICE AGE
PARK & TRAIL
FOUNDATION

Two Score and Five Years Ago...

by Andrew
Hanson

... the late Milwaukee attorney Raymond T. Zillmer brought forth to Wisconsin a new park and pedestrian trail. Forty-five years later, we remain dedicated to the epic effort to fulfill his vision, testing whether the park and trail can long endure.

On December 8, 1958, Zillmer called a meeting at the City Club of Milwaukee, "to organize a foundation to promote a park and trail along the interlobate and terminal moraines of Wisconsin." Invited to the initial meeting were Frederick G. Schmidt, publisher of *Let's See* magazine, and fellow Milwaukee attorney James C. Mallien. To both men Zillmer wrote, "I would like you to be one of the three original directors" of the organization. Within weeks, the articles of incorporation were signed and the Ice Age Park & Trail Foundation, Inc. (IAPTF) was born.

Constructing the thousand-mile Ice Age Trail and securing the park around it (what today might be referred to as a greenway, or what we call a trailway) has proved immensely complicated and spans generations.

The Ice Age Trail is a huge conservation, recreation, education, economic and public

health project. It is more than ten times longer than the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway and 250 miles longer than all of Wisconsin's Interstate highways combined. It passes through over 350 units of government, within five miles of 740 eating and drinking establishments and within 20 miles of half of state residents. It can seem daunting, but it is not just a dream.

The multi-state Appalachian Trail is nearing completion after more than 80 years. Vermont's 265-mile Long Trail is over 90 years old yet still not complete. Patience and persistence are virtues of successful trailbuilders.

Over the years, IAPTF has gained many partners who provide valuable assistance on the mammoth project. Following Zillmer's death in 1960, his son John Zillmer and the late Congressman Henry S. Reuss at various times led the charge. The National Park Service joined the effort in 1980, the State of Wisconsin formally in 1987. Local governments and businesses fill key roles, while people who volunteer for the cause have formed the heart and soul of the Ice Age Trail since the beginning.

On this forty-fifth anniversary we are reminded of many

accomplishments. The existing 500-plus miles of Ice Age Trail and ten over-night shelters offer people healthful exercise opportunities in Wisconsin's Great Outdoors. Three Ice Age visitor centers, located near Dundee, New Auburn and St. Croix Falls, provide educational destinations. The many protected places along the Trail preserve unique natural resources that our children will cherish. The late Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, Congressman David Obey, former Governor Tommy Thompson, former Senator Gaylord Nelson, National Geographic magazine and others have trumpeted our vision for the Ice Age Trail. Many people have lent a hand and at times struggled to leave us this enduring legacy and the great task remaining before us.

To this history and future we all must rededicate ourselves — that from the noble persons who came before us and who remain with us we take increased devotion to this cause to which they gave so much; that we resolve that their work was not in vain; and that the Ice Age Trail shall remain the people's footpath for the ages. 🐘

With inspiration from Lincoln and Samsel.

features

President's Report **2**

Featured Segment:
Barrier Free
Accessibility **4**

Mobile Skills Crew **7**

2004 Board
Nominees **11**

Mark Your Calendars

Annual Membership
Conference

April 15-18, 2004

*Mt. Morris,
Waushara County*

Learn more about our
history by downloading
the 1961 article
"A National Park in
Wisconsin?" at:
<http://www.iceagetrail.org/news/bib.html>