



The Langlade Erratic

A newsletter on the Ice Age National Scenic Trail in
Langlade County, Wisconsin
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"40 YEARS AND COUNTING . . ."

**HI...COME JOIN YOUR TRAIL BUDDIES AT THE ANNUAL MEETING
OF THE LANGLADE COUNTY ICE AGE TRAIL CHAPTER.**

THURSDAY, MARCH 9, 7 PM

WOLF RIVER ROOM,

LANGLADE COUNTY RESOURCE CENTER.

837 CLERMONT STREET, ANTIGO

SEE YOU THERE AND BRING A FRIEND OR TWO OR . . . !

Future Steps

A winter hiker, Michael Summers, was featured recently on the front page of the Antigo Daily Journal. His winter trek of the 1100 plus mile trail up to his Antigo arrival was the focus of the article. More on winter hiking later but the focus here are future events besides the March 9th chapter meeting.

The following are offered for your consideration. Also please check iceagetrail.org for more events including several Mobile Skills Crew projects starting in early April.

Thursday to Sunday, April 27-30
Ice Age Trail Alliance 2017 Conference and Annual Meeting, Avalon Hotel and Conference Center, Chippewa Falls.

Saturday, April 22 - 9 AM
Spring hike - Bring a lunch. Meet in front of the Forestry Office at the Fairgrounds, Antigo.

Saturday, September 9 - 9 AM
Late summer hike - Bring a lunch. Meet in front of the Forestry Office at the Fairgrounds, Antigo.

October Steps

The day of the chapter's October hike last year was cool, gray and dreary. Not too appealing for a day outdoors but the sizeable group at the Townline Lake trailhead was game.

Along with the regulars sprinkled with several McKennas were a young Illinois couple and alliance members from Madison.

As forecasted, the dreariness evaporated and the hikers emerged from the hemlock grove towering the lake shore shucking some outerwear.

As part of the chapter's National Trails Day, an official ribbon cutting for the Old Truck marker crafted by Don Belanger and installed by Lee Auner occurred with the group's support. Fortunately the volunteer duo responsible for the trailside marker was also present to witness Dave Tlusty, chapter chair, honor their efforts by cutting the ribbon. Upon the group's return to the trailhead, a little bubbly toast was made to the trail, volunteers and host landowners.

In the grand style of a McKenna family tradition, Joe McKenna capped the memorable trail day hosting a dinner party at his home. A big thanks to all who contributed to make it happen.

100 Steps Continued- Part II

Last year the National Park Service celebrated its 100 years as “America’s best idea”. In 1980 the Ice Age Trail became one of nine national scenic trails receiving partial federal funding through the National Park Service each year.

However the connection of the Ice Age Trail to the National Park Service goes back further than the 1980 amendment to the National Trails System Act.

The following is a continuing narrative of the federal agency’s involvement with the Ice Age Trail in years prior to its inclusion in the National Trails System.

In the 1950s, besides his Milwaukee law practice, Ray Zillmer, was constantly in pursuit of promoting the establishment of the “Wisconsin Glacial Moraine Trail”. Nine file boxes of letters, articles and notes at the Wisconsin Historical Society provide a handy documented view of his extensive involvement through the years to realize a glacially based recreation/education resource in the state.

Often Zillmer replied to letters from persons requesting copies of his glacial resource pamphlet along with encouragement of their possible involvement in the effort. He also maintained a constant exchange with countless individuals at all levels of government and business to gain support and possible involvement with the proposal. A Milwaukee US Congressman, Henry S. Reuss, elected in 1955, became a critical part of Zillmer’s effort to nationally recognize Wisconsin’s glacial heritage.

In 1958 Congressman Reuss introduced a bill to establish a Moraine National Park in Wisconsin. The Congressman was also instrumental in attaining the National Park Service’s approval of sending a field team to assess the potential of the state’s glacial resource as a park system unit.

In preparation for the visit Ray Zillmer spent weeks on the road developing an itinerary for the team by identifying glacial features of the state, recruiting local leadership and support. For example, he contacted the Antigo Daily Journal and received favorable editorial support of the proposal.

The park service team arrived on September 15, 1958 and were accompanied by Reuss, Zillmer and local leaders on an extensive five

day air and auto tour to areas identified weeks earlier. They visited 11 areas of the state, including Langlade County. Months later the team released their report with a disappointing decision to not establish a Moraine National Park.

Until his death in December 1960, Ray Zillmer remained engaged in exchanges with the federal agency, legislators, specialists, journalist, state and local leaders in pursuing the realization of a moraine park in Wisconsin. Four years after Ray’s passing, Henry Reuss obtained national recognition of Wisconsin’s glacial heritage with the establishment of the Ice Age National Scientific Reserve. Sixteen years later Representative Reuss prevailed again with legislation enacted to include the Ice Age Trail as one of nine scenic trails in the national system. What occurred many years before, led to the realization of those accomplishments and continues today.

Winter Steps

A few days before Christmas last year in Door County, Michael Summers began his winter trek of the Ice Age Trail with an expected arrival at the trail’s western terminus in Polk County by mid March.

Just over a month later he arrived in Langlade County and was well into Lincoln County by January 30th, after a bare-footed ice breaking ford of the Prairie River.

Coincidentally chapter members, Lloyd and Barb Godell, crossed his path the evening of January 28th while Mike was returning on US 45 from a re-supply at Summit Lake. While with the Godells, he shared some experiences and reported no problem following the county’s trail segments.

Details are available from his blog at <http://www.improbablebutpossible.com/>

and a Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/improbablebutpossible>

He reached the trail’s western terminus at Wisconsin Interstate State Park on February 17, 2017 almost a month earlier than originally planned. Besides being the first known person to hike the entire trail in winter, considering the conditions he encountered, Mike had a cool quick trek through the state.