

2010 annual report

For the Ice Age Trail Alliance, the year 2011 began with the installation of a Celebration Bell in our office. It is meant for all celebrations, big and small, in all areas of our organization. It can be rung by any staff member to call attention to something that we can all celebrate. We're looking forward to 2011 being a bell-ringer of a year!

In the challenging year that was 2010, there were many bell-ringing moments. Thanks to our volunteers, members, donors, allies and friends, we achieved great things – like the 16.4 new miles of Ice Age Trail opened this year, the 10.6 miles of Trail permanently protected, the 9% increase we saw in our membership ranks and the 11% increase we saw in volunteer hours. We added to our staff, our holiday appeal helped us raise over \$53,000 for the Trail, and we continued to support innovative programs like Summer Saunters and develop our partnerships with the National Park Service, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and many counties and private foundations. These are not small achievements; they are hard won with a lot of work and support from folks like you, and we thank you for helping us get there. So from all of us at the IATA: read on, and revel in the good work accomplished for the Ice Age Trail in 2010.



Two young volunteers help carry the load at Straight Lake State Park in Polk County. Volunteer trail builders carried all the lumber, hardware and tools to build a 400-foot boardwalk, and they carried it over half a mile. Some volunteers did nothing but carry lumber. Photo by IATA Board member John Helling of Luck, WI.

Growing and Stewarding the Trail

In 2010 Ice Age Trail volunteers helped open 16.4 new miles of the Ice Age Trail for public use. Even with the loss of 4.25 miles of the Ice Age Trail, the Trail still gained 12.15 miles in 2010 (see table below).

Net change in miles of the Ice Age Trail opened to the public			
Year	Miles	Year	Miles
2003	+6.9	2007	+7.3
2004	+5.6	2008	+8.3
2005	+6.7	2009	+10.1
2006	+17.3	2010	+12.15

Together, volunteers crafted 1,150 feet of boardwalk, created 600+ linear feet of rock retaining walls, built three clear span bridges, shaped over 50,000 linear feet of four-step sustainable tread and protected that investment with rolling grade dips and assorted trail plumbing features.

Volunteers opened “rooms with a view” that peer into what Wisconsin’s pre-European-settlement vegetative landscape might have looked like by painstakingly eradicating invasive species of plants while improving wildlife habitat in the process.

Providing perspective on all the above accomplishments is a remarkable story of how one volunteer called upon the First Aid training he received at an Ice Age Trail Alliance training to help save the life of an injured logger (see Chapter Highlights, p. 23).

To all volunteers whose diverse contributions make these and many other accomplishments possible, the Ice Age Trail Alliance extends our deepest appreciation.

Snapshots

- In **POLK COUNTY**, 2010 was a glorious madhouse of activity. The Indianhead Chapter hosted two Mobile Skills Crew (MSC) events that netted about four miles of new trail and 650 feet of boardwalk. 410 volunteers contributed 9,028 hours at these two events. The IATA partnered with the AmeriCorps National Civilian Conservation Corps program and hosted nine young men and women from the Iowa campus. These volunteers assisted with community outreach, education and trail building needs for six weeks at Straight Lake State Park. At the McKenzie Creek State Wildlife Area, the IATA crafted a handsome and durable 45-foot-long clear span bridge and boardwalk approaches from rough-sawn white oak lumber.

- The **MARATHON COUNTY CHAPTER** hosted the June and September MSC events and “IAT-U” (Ice Age Trail University). Thirty-five volunteers participated in IAT-U trainings and 194 volunteers contributed 6,198 hours to open for business two miles of new trail in the Plover River State Fishery Area.

- The **WASHINGTON/OZAUKEE COUNTY CHAPTER** successfully completed a new half-mile off-road trail section, eliminating about two miles of roadwalk. The popular Holy Hill Segment received a needed upgrade of over a mile. A Mequon Boy Scout Troop and a Slinger High School student group helped Chapter members building rock walls, removing two dozen rotted wood steps and closing social trails.

- In **WAUSHARA COUNTY**, two new miles of trail were open for business following the August MSC event. The new segment meanders through rolling hills and takes in long views to the southeast. In the Greenwood State Wildlife Area, a significant reroute to interpret a large glacial kettle was also started. 103 volunteers contributed over 1,900 hours toward these outcomes.

- In **DANE COUNTY**, volunteer trail builders are seeing the Ice Age Trail with new eyes; two 250-foot boardwalks (one on the Verona Segment, the other at Brooklyn State Wildlife area), and a substantial reroute above the Verona ‘quarry’ that included an impressive climb with rock walls and switchbacks, were constructed.

- In **COLUMBIA COUNTY**, the **LODI VALLEY CHAPTER** hosted the MSC season finale. 185 volunteers contributed 3,456 hours and crafted a new mile of Trail on the Gibraltar segment. Described by a local resident as “comparable” in its quality of construction to any other major trail system, such as the Appalachian or Pacific Crest National Scenic Trails’, the route is one of enduring surprise and satisfaction.

- In **LINCOLN COUNTY**, the IATA coordinated with Northwoods Chapter members, Wisconsin Public Service, DNR, the Merrill School District and a private contractor to build a 54-foot-long replacement bridge on the Grandfather Falls segment.

- **STATEWIDE**, IATA chapters and volunteers successfully met the ongoing challenge of maintaining existing sections of the trail and increasing public awareness of the trail locally.

- **THE MOBILE SKILLS CREW (MSC)** program reached new heights as 734 different volunteers from around the state and beyond dedicated a phenomenal 22,677 hours to enhancing the Ice Age National Scenic Trail through their participation in the program. These participant and volunteer hour numbers

represent an increase of nearly 30% in volunteerism for the IATA and shatters the previous record for the program.

Protecting the Trailway

Land protection of the Ice Age Trail in 2010 finished with a flurry. In total, 10.6 miles of Trail were permanently protected via 13 different land acquisitions encompassing 1,530 acres. That makes last year the second-most productive year for protecting the Ice Age Trail since the Alliance began tracking this information in 1986. What is the reason for this success?

Miles of the Ice Age Trail permanently protected			
Year	Miles	Year	Miles
2003	6.2	2007	4.8
2004	7.2	2008	4.4
2005	15.1	2009	4.4
2006	3.0	2010	10.6

There are many answers to this question, but one constant is partnerships.

Without the efforts of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and Dane County, generous donations from landowners, and funding from Wisconsin’s Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program and the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, acquisitions for the Ice Age Trail would grind to a halt.

Some of the highlights in 2010 include the state’s acquisition of the 400-acre Potter Preserve in Sauk County, a 75-acre easement in Washington County and two industrial forest lands totaling an additional 490 acres. These four acquisitions alone protected approximately 5.5 miles of Ice Age Trail. Some have existing Ice Age Trail, but most of the Trail is yet to be. Keep an eye out for future Trail construction opportunities on these properties.

The Ice Age Trail Alliance had a particularly active year in land acquisition. Highlights of our accomplishments include a 47-acre easement in Waupaca and Portage Counties, acceptance of two life estate donations and the acquisition of a key parcel in the Ice Age Interpretive site at Cross Plains (see accompanying article on p. 19). It is now the responsibility of



As part of their duties, IATA Land Management & Stewardship interns Katie Weber and Sally Gallagher worked with Kevin Thusius, Director of Land Conservation, on land restoration. Here, Katie girdles an aspen to prevent the shading out of a native prairie remnant at Baraboo University in Sauk County. IATA file photo.



The Potter Preserve, which the state of Wisconsin acquired in early 2010, encompasses 400 acres of mature forest with a 40-acre opening that provides views of the Baraboo Hills and the Narrows, a 230-foot-high gorge through the hills. The Ice Age Trail will eventually cross the property, taking advantage of the area’s abundant glacial history. Photo by Kevin Thusius.

the Alliance to maintain the easement and these life estate properties in perpetuity. With several new acquisitions on the horizon for the Alliance, support for long-term management of these properties will continue to be an essential part of our ongoing efforts.

The Alliance continued to care for the nearly 2,500 acres already owned and/or under easement around the state. We were able to hire two Land Management and Stewardship interns in 2010. They helped the Lands Program reach new heights by organizing land files, GPS-ing property boundaries, writing management plans and monitoring easements. They spent a considerable amount of time in the field performing restoration tasks, preparing for prescribed burns, identifying plants and controlling invasive species. IATA staff and interns helped two separate prairie and oak savanna restoration projects along the Ice Age Trail in Dane County to move forward significantly by cutting and stacking brush and controlling aggressive woody debris. Furthermore, the IATA continues to develop additional policies that will help us work toward protecting current easements and owned properties.

Supporting Our Volunteers

In the 2010 National Park Service volunteer “year” (i.e., October 1, 2009–September 30, 2010), 2,340 different volunteers reported 65,513.55 hours of labor devoted to the Ice Age National Scenic Trail, with the latter figure in particular representing a large increase compared with previous years. At the \$20.85 Independent Sector rate for a volunteer hour (see www.independentsector.org/volunteer_time), that’s a contribution valued at more than \$1,365,000.

Leaders of the IATA’s 21 active volunteer chapters along the Ice Age Trail and the Mobile Skills Crew program supported volunteers by organizing trail building and trail maintenance workdays throughout the year, providing necessary equipment and training at events and tracking and reporting volunteer hours to help volunteers earn benefits through the National Park Service’s Volunteers-In-Parks (VIP) program.

In addition to support from fellow volunteers at the chapter level, Ice Age Trail volunteers received support from IATA staff members. Staff supported volunteers by, among other duties,

- Helping secure Challenge Cost Share funding from the National Park Service for chapter-led Ice Age Trail projects,
- Providing avenues for chapter event publicity via our enhanced website and quarterly magazine Mammoth Tales and

- Helping chapter leaders understand and meet regulatory guidelines that must be cleared before on-the-ground efforts can begin.

Growing Awareness and Partnerships

Promoting the Ice Age Trail to new audiences in a variety of venues continues to be accomplished through the dedicated efforts of the Ice Age Trail Alliance volunteers and staff. Whether through hikes, bird watching or chapter reward programs, the chapters continue to be the primary force that provides Trail opportunities designed for their local communities’ needs. Chapter volunteers continue to spearhead efforts at regional events, in addition to staffing info booths at smaller events such as county- and municipal-level fairs and farmers’ markets.

In November of this year the Alliance added an Education and Outreach Manager, Karen Malhiot, to our staff. This position will enable the Alliance to further support the local chapters in their efforts as well as work to develop statewide initiatives in both the areas of outreach and education.



All our volunteers are all-stars, but one volunteer was nationally recognized in 2010. Rich Propp (left) received the Wisconsin State Trail Worker award at the 20th American Trails National Symposium. Congratulations, Rich! Photo by Diane Banta of the National Park Service.

On July 14th, the IATA went live with the new and improved Ice Age Trail Alliance website. The website has many new features, and we are continuing to update both features and content. Some of these features include:

- A Trail Map and Current Conditions page that allows you to zoom in and explore every mile of the Ice Age Trail route, with both satellite and terrain views.
- A new and improved Events Calendar page that lists the entire range of fun and rewarding Ice Age Trail Alliance events on the horizon.
- A Make a Donation page, allowing individuals to renew membership, give a gift membership or make a donation through our secure online store.
- Each page on the site includes links to our Facebook, Twitter and YouTube pages.

Much work has gone on behind the scenes on projects that will come to fruition in 2011. Countless volunteers and IATA staff have been working tirelessly to update the Ice Age Trail Atlas and Companion Guide. The new editions will be ready for release in April of this year. In addition, the IATA has been working with Discover Mediaworks developing the first of three Discover Wisconsin television shows. The show will feature the IAT beginning at the Western Terminus of the Trail, continuing through to Chippewa County. After

	10/01/06- 09/30/07	10/01/07- 9/30/08	10/01/08- 9/30/09	10/01/09- 9/30/10
No. of volunteers reporting hours	1189	1602	2281	2340
Total hours reported	48,187.5	42,288.9	58,225.3	65,513.5
Average hours per volunteer	40.5	26.4	25.5	27.9

premiering at our Annual Conference it will begin airing on network television Saturday, April 9th, 2011.

The IATA continues to work to support innovative teachers that are finding engaging ways to use the Trail for educational programming. The highly successful Summer Saunters Program in Lodi, Wisconsin, is now in its third year and continues to expand. This past year the program added a community service component, a two-day family overnight trip for a Mobile Skills Crew trail construction project. Fifty-eight students and their families, along with four teachers and a bus driver, volunteered to build trail in Straight Lake State Park.

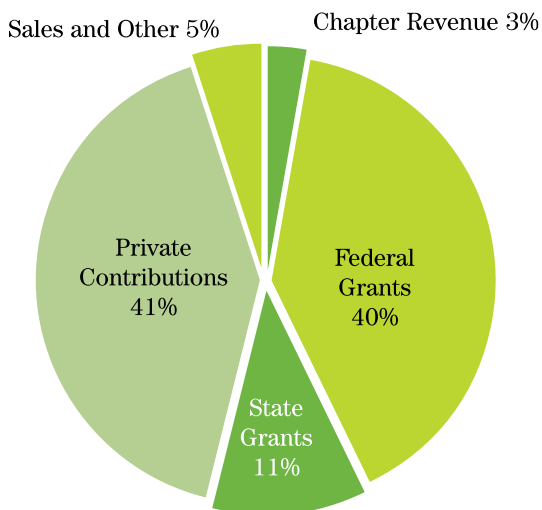
Leah Bradley, an active IATA volunteer and a teacher at Goodrich Elementary School in Milwaukee, created a Summer Saunters program tailored to her urban students. The students of Goodrich spent a day at school learning about the Ice Age Trail, what to expect out on the trail and basic hiker etiquette. Then they took to the Ice Age Trail near the Milwaukee area, walking parts of the Holy Hill, Pike Lake State Park and



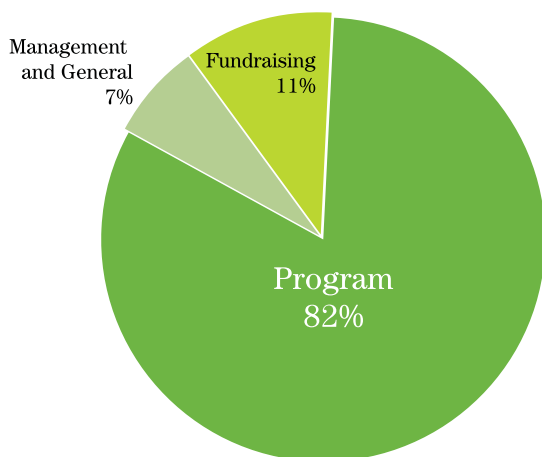
Goodrich Elementary students enjoy the view from a large erratic on the Holy Hill Segment in Waukesha County. They made journals that they used to record their experiences on the Trail. Photo by Leah Bradley of Milwaukee, WI.

Southern Kettle Moraine State Forest segments. Despite an abundance of mosquitoes, the students found great value in the experience and look forward to more summer hikes. The IATA continues to look for new ways to introduce the Trail to the next generation of users.

2010 Revenue




2010 Expenses



The Revenue pie chart reflects receipt of \$395,000 in private contributions and \$502,000 in government grants. In addition, the Alliance received \$2,745,000 in awards from our governmental partners to acquire land and easements during 2010.

Strengthening Our Organization Financially

After one of our best fundraising years in 2009, 2010 will go down as one of our most challenging. But that's not stopping us from moving ahead to 2011 with big plans to raise money and awareness for the Ice Age Trail. We continue into the new year with renewed enthusiasm for membership development and growth. We have experienced a 9.2% growth in membership from this time last year. (See our website at <http://www.iceagetrail.org/2010-membership-statistics> for complete 5-year data.) 2011 will bring new opportunities for membership recruitment and new ways to share your story. We expect that our upcoming Strategic Plan will have some goals focused on membership development and provide new ideas on how to expand our organization. Stay tuned!

Our Giving Tree has been an incredible addition to our fundraising capacity. The tree was instrumental in helping the Ice Age Trail Alliance raise over \$53,000 as the focus of the year-end holiday appeal. That total is the highest we've achieved as an organization and nearly three times as much as the 2009 appeal. As a result of the campaign, we will have over 100 items – leaves, acorns, roots, and boot prints – on the Giving Tree quilt to recognize the contributions of volunteers, donors and friends of the Ice Age Trail. We can't talk of our tree without continuing to thank IATA member Louise Schotz, the amazing artist who brought our idea of a giving tree to life. If you haven't seen it in person, please stop in our office sometime and take a look – it is a sight to behold! Watch future *Mammoth Tales* issues for a photo with the newest additions. We continue to welcome memorial and in-honor-of gifts for the Giving Tree. 



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