

# **Facilitating Long-Distance Travel On the Ice Age National Scenic Trail (a.k.a. End-to-End Trail Marking)**

More and more people are becoming aware of the outstanding recreation opportunities afforded by the Ice Age National Scenic Trail (NST). Interest in hiking the entire route, or long segments of the trail, is increasing. However, only approximately half of the projected 1,000-mile trail has been developed. The existing (off-road) portions of the trail are separated by gaps of varying length.

In considering how long-distance, or end-to-end, travel on the trail might be facilitated, the Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation (IAPTF), Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and National Park Service (NPS) have developed and adopted this policy for identifying, and in some cases marking, connecting links between existing segments.

By adopting and implementing this policy, the IAPTF, DNR, and NPS are not intending to give the impression that the goal of establishing a premier (off-road) hiking trail along the entire length of the Ice Age NST has in any way been diminished. However, identifying, mapping, and/or marking non-certifiable temporary or connecting routes is a reasonable and expedient way to facilitate end-to-end or long-distance use of the Ice Age NST through areas where permanent off-road trail has not yet been established. This should also help to increase public awareness of the Ice Age Trail and support for its completion and protection.

## **General Philosophy**

It is in the long-term best interest of the Ice Age NST, and those working to establish and maintain it, to provide a way for hikers to enjoy longer treks on the trail than can be afforded by any one existing segment. The way to do this is to identify connecting routes between existing (off-road) segments of the trail. These connecting routes may be roads, rail-trails that permit motorized use (thus preventing their certification as official segments of the NST), or other routes or rights-of-way that for some reason are not intended to be the eventual permanent route of the Ice Age NST. The identification and availability of these routes for long-distance hikers will be communicated through a combination of on-the-ground markings and printed materials (maps and/or narratives), as appropriate in each situation.

## **Public Roads as Connectors**

The extensive network of public roads affords many options for identifying connecting routes between trail segments. However, the suitability of roads as connecting links varies, due to their varying design. In general, when the distance between existing trail segments is 5 miles or less, marking a connecting route along roads is desirable if there are no other alternative types of connecting routes. Generally, if the distance is more than 5 miles, the identification of connecting routes along roads will only occur in printed information.

IN ALL CASES, whether the identification is on-the-ground along the connecting road route or in printed literature, prior consent from the governmental body having jurisdiction over the roads in question shall be obtained. Printed literature will prominently feature a DISCLAIMER stating that the road(s), while legally open to pedestrians, may not have been designed for safe use by pedestrians (in contrast to off-road trail segments), and that, by identifying these routes, the IAPTF, DNR, NPS, and the responsible governmental body are not implying any guarantee about their safety or suitability for Ice Age Trail hikers.

### **Other Temporary Routes as Connectors**

There are other routes and rights-of-way that can serve as connecting links between trail segments. A good example is a rail-trail that does not lend itself to consideration as the permanent route of the Ice Age NST, either because it is open to motorized use (the National Trails System Act prohibits motorized use on national scenic trails) or its route does not coincide with the general alignment contemplated for the permanent trailway. The Gandy Dancer Trail and the Casco line reflect these types of circumstances. Other routes that might be useful as temporary connecting links include utility rights-of-way or any route across private or public lands that does not coincide with the contemplated permanent trailway. In general, identification of these non-road connecting links shall be accomplished by marking them on-the-ground, regardless of their length.

IN ALL CASES, whether the identification is on-the-ground along the connecting route or in printed literature, prior consent from the private landowner or governmental body having jurisdiction over the lands in question shall be obtained. Printed literature will prominently feature a DISCLAIMER stating that by identifying these routes, the IAPTF, DNR, NPS, and the landowner or responsible governmental body are not implying any guarantee about their safety or suitability for Ice Age Trail hikers.

### **Marking Connectors**

Where identifying the connecting route on-the-ground is deemed appropriate, the markers will be placed and regularly maintained by the local IAPTF chapter. Care should be taken to not place the markers too frequently; the emphasis in marking connecting routes should be on line of sight spacing and clear marking of turns/changes in direction.

The marker for connecting routes will be the same rounded triangular shape as the official Ice Age NST marker. The woolly mammoth design in the center of the official marker will be replaced by a single hiker figure from the universal hiking trail symbol reversed out of a background of the blue/turquoise used for the sky on the official NST marker. In the identification band around the center design will be AIce Age Trail≅ arranged over the apex, and either ATrail Connector≅ or ATemporary Connector≅ across the bottom. Both forms will be produced and supplied by the NPS as individual signs and as Acarsonite≅ decals.

The ATrail Connector≅ form will be used where the IAPTF, DNR, and NPS have determined that scenic roads and other non-certifiable routes will be the permanent route of the trail. This includes places where the roads or other routes are the preferable alignment due to scenic qualities, access to communities or points of interest, etc., and places where there appear to be no other routing opportunities even in the long term.

The ATemporary Connector≅ form will be used where roads and other uncertifiable routes (such as rail-trails open to ATV use) can be used to create marked connections no more than 5 miles in length between permanent portions of the trail. The intent is that permanently protected, certified trail segments would replace these routes in the future.

## Approvals:

<u>/s/ David Phillips</u> President, Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation	<u>4-6-00</u> Date
<u>/s/ Thomas L. Gilbert</u> Superintendent, Ice Age National Scenic Trail, National Park Service	<u>3-24-2000</u> Date
<u>/s/ Sue Black</u> Director, Bureau of Parks and Recreation, Department of Natural Resources	<u>3-15-00</u> Date

# Ice Age National and State Scenic Trail Temporary Routes and Trail Connectors

## Proposal and Implementation Checklist

**Type:**  Temporary Route  Trail Connector (permanent, non-certifiable route)

**Location:**

County \_\_\_\_\_ Town \_\_\_\_\_ Topo Quadrangle(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Length \_\_\_\_\_ End \_\_\_\_\_

Points \_\_\_\_\_

**Proposer/Sponsor:**

IAPTF Chapter Contact \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by the \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter at a meeting on \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter Coordinator=s initials:

\_\_\_\_\_

(date)

**Route Consists of (check all that apply):**

Sidewalk  Utility right-of-way  Road right-of-way (beyond shoulder)

Road shoulders  Railroad right-of-way  Route agreed to with landowner

On-road walking  Existing multiple-use trail  Other (describe) \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description and Map(s) of Route:**

Attach a description of the route along with appropriate maps. For any portions of the route that follow public road rights-of-way, a county road map or city/village street map should be used. For other portions of the route, a topographic map (good photocopy acceptable), should be used.

**Public Information Level Recommended:**

Marked on-the-ground  Map  Narrative only [ printed  on web-site]

**Reviews and Approvals (as applicable):**

\_\_\_\_\_ Approvals received from Town and/or County road/highway officials (attach letter(s), etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Approvals received from utility or railroad companies (attach letter(s), etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Approvals received from manager(s) of existing non-certifiable trails (attach letter(s), etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Approvals received from private landowner(s) (attach letter, sketch map, or other evidence)

(If no documentation, give date of visit and verbal approval \_\_\_\_\_)

RecommendedXNational Park Service: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

RecommendedXDept. of Natural Resources: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Approved Ice Age Park & Trail Foundation: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Marking, map, narrative assigned to \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Completed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_