

**THE ICE AGE PARK AND TRAIL FOUNDATION ICE AGE NATIONAL
SCENIC TRAIL USAGE POLICY 10/3/91**

1.0 INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

The Ice Age Trail was conceived by Ray Zillmer in the 1950's as a footpath centerpiece at the heart of a greenway protecting a magnificent portion of Wisconsin's world-renowned glacial landscape, creating a linear park linking the states major glacial landforms. The development of a nine-unit Ice Age National Scientific Reserve was a compromise creation of Congress to implement Zillmer's idea in a few selected areas. The continuity of a connecting path between Ice Age Reserve Units was recognized in the legislation creating the reserve. In 1980, the Ice Age National Scenic Trail in Wisconsin was authorized as a component of the National Trails System. When completed, the trail will meander approximately 1000 miles across Wisconsin following a chain of glacial landscape features. The trail is being developed to preserve critical geological and ecological features of Wisconsin's landscape and to provide a pleasant outdoor educational and recreational experience. The purpose of this trail usage policy is to establish guidelines, recommended by the Ice Age Park & Trail Foundation, for consideration by all managing authorities associated with the Ice Age Trail.

2.0 MANAGING AUTHORITY

1) Managing Authority - A public agency, private organization, individual, or other entity, such as Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources or the Ice Age Park & Trail Foundation, which is directly responsible for the development and/or management of an existing or potential segment of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail.

2) The managing authority for IAT segments passing through private lands, with easement protection, license agreements or verbal agreements, is normally the Ice Age Park&Trail Foundation, in consultation with local chapters. The managing authority could also be the Ice Age Park & Trail Foundation in partnership with a local Government agency.

3) The managing authority of IAT segments located on public lands, including National forests, State lands, County forests, or other municipality lands, is the manager associated with the public land segment used by the IAT.

4) Trail usage policy is the responsibility of each managing authority within the general policy guideline of the National Park Service, Department of Natural Resources and the Ice Age Park & Trail Foundation. It is critical that overall trail usage policy, agreed to by the three principal partners, govern decisions on trail usage rather than a menu of possible uses to be chosen in isolation by each managing authority. The importance of a consistent usage policy on adjacent portions of the trail will be reflected in overall user satisfaction, safety, and landowner acceptance of the IAT as a non-threatening recreational resource.

3.0 TRAIL USAGE POLICY

1) The primary uses of all segments of the IAT are hiking, walking, backpacking, snowshoeing, and related educational activities such as the observation of glacial features and nature study.

2) Use of the IAT by motorized vehicles is prohibited by Federal Law except for maintenance or landowner access and for snowmobiling on segments where deemed appropriate by the National Park Service and the managing authority responsible for the segment.

3) It is the policy of the Ice Age Park & Trail Foundation to prohibit horses on segments of the IAT passing through lands owned by the Foundation, or upon which we hold a written easement that specifically excludes horses. The same policy applies to private lands where we have written or oral license to construct the trail, except for landowner access on their own land. It is also the policy of the Ice Age Park & Trail Foundation to discourage use of horses on all segments of the IAT unless specifically permitted by agreement with the NPS and DNR.

4) Other non-motorized uses, including, but not limited to, cross-country skiing and mountain biking may be permitted on a given trail segment according to the policies of the responsible managing authority, subject to consideration of the following:

a) The usage policy in effect on adjacent IAT segments. A consistent local usage policy minimizes confusion or conflicts. When trail usage on public lands permits activities not desired on adjacent private lands, where only hiking is permitted, user confusion may result in landowner dissatisfaction due to unauthorized trail usage. This has resulted in loss of trail right-of-way.

b) The wishes of private landowners and stated easement restrictions, or other written or verbal understandings on acceptable trail usage.

c) The effect of user density on the quality of experience, safety of the trail user, and degradation of the trail surface. Multiple usage may be permitted by the managing authority where low user density exists, but is not tolerable under heavy density usage where, because of these reasons, user conflicts are anticipated.

d) The manner in which the trail has been constructed and maintained and its proximity to glacial landscape and other natural features. It has been demonstrated that a significant increase in trail usage by hikers occurs if the trail is constructed and maintained for such use. Similarly, trail segments designed and constructed for cross-country skiing or biking attract increased usage by persons interested in those recreational activities, but discourage use by hikers due to concerns for safety and a degradation of their outdoor experience.

e) The suitability of a single trail to accommodate the speed range of multiple use without compromising user safety is a concern.

f) The cost of developing and maintaining a trail, which increases with the density of use and as types of usage broaden. As the trail is developed for uses other than hiking, the amount of time and money that must be spent on a trail segment increases sharply if the trail is to provide an acceptable experience for all users. What is judged to be desirable for one user may be an impediment to another, such as use of waterbars, steps and bridges. Mountain bike trails must be wider, more open and less rough, and the sharpest corners need to be eliminated. In areas of loose or fragile soil, or on grades, treadway degradation becomes a concern. Add cross-country skiing, and even more care must be taken in trail layout; (steep grades must be reduced or eliminated). Horse use can very quickly destroy the trail surface, making it unsuitable and unpleasant for all other users. At a minimum, if other users are to be permitted on a segment, organizations representing those users must make a commitment to assist in the cost and effort of developing and/or maintaining the segment.

g) Consideration of the feelings of the local chapters who built and maintain the trails and are familiar with the factors characteristic to their area. This may be the single most important factor, as it inherently includes all of the above considerations. Trail use decisions within the Foundation are to be group decisions that respect local chapter feelings.

4.0 HUNTING ALONG THE IAT

Hunting is an activity governed primarily by law and/or management rules on all public lands. On private lands the wishes of landowners must be respected. Wherever the landowner or where the easement requests no hunting, encourage the landowner to post the trail. During the gun deer season, hikers are discouraged from using the IAT in any areas open to deer hunting. This should be emphasized in all appropriate IAT publications.

5.0 TRAIL MARKING TO REFLECT PERMITTED USAGE

Managing authorities of portions of the trail which allow uses other than the primary uses are responsible for placing and maintaining signs at the beginning of adjacent trail segments that reflect changes in trail usage policy.