



Ice Age Drift

Newsletter of the Dane County Chapter
Ice Age Trail Alliance

Winter 2015

Visit us online at www.dane.iceagetrail.org

New Springfield Hill Loop Invites Boots, Snowshoes

Thanks to the hard work of nearly 300 volunteers from across the state on four and one-half days in late October, nearly two miles of new trail at Springfield Hill northwest of Middleton is now open to boots and snowshoes.

The IATA's Mobile Skills Crew project from October 22 through 26 completed most of the tread work through the mostly wooded portion of an old farmstead, where an old log outbuilding still stands within view of the pathway.

On the following weekend, chapter volunteers completed enough of the remaining work to permit comfortable walking along the entire route. A few days later two of them (Ed Spoon and Bob Virnig) returned to do some cleanup and touchup, and to remove the first tree that had fallen across the trail!

The October project included cutting trail into steep cross slope and building 400 feet of rock retaining wall.

Located about 10 miles northwest of Middleton near the junction of Highway 12 and Ballweg Road in the Town of Roxbury, the 118-acre Springfield Hill site hosts the first off-road section of Ice Age Trail between Indian Lake and Lodi Marsh State Wildlife Area.

Dane County Parks, which owns the property, will build a parking lot off Ballweg Road sometime during 2015. In the meantime, the parks department will remove snow along the old Highway 12 right-of-way on the site's south side so that winter visitors can park there. The department is hoping that Springfield Hill will attract snowshoe enthusiasts away from its groomed ski trails at nearby Indian Lake County Park.

Work this winter will include burning the brush piles created by previous restoration and corridor clearing work, preparing firebreaks and clearing more buckthorn and other invasive brush from under a stand of old open-grown oaks, one of the highlights along the new trail.

Spoon, the chapter's point person and crew leader manager for the Springfield project, will lead several volunteer workdays, but also has engaged Operation Fresh Start crews through Dane County Parks for some of the winter work, which began in December.

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Two of the "Oak Room" giants at Springfield Hill stand out against early snow, late afternoon sky and distant field and ridge. The brush in front of them has been cleared, but some remains downhill. More big oaks (and brush to clear) are uphill, behind the camera. Photo by Dave Jenkins.

What Do You Want for a Newsletter?

The cost of printing and mailing a newsletter has gone up more than our chapter's income, especially since the sheltered workshop that did our mailing preparation closed. And in the five years that the *Ice Age Drift* has been my baby, I've gotten precious little feedback. So, (with a nudge from our leadership) I've decided to ask for some.

Early in 2015, we will be emailing you a request to fill out a short on-line survey if you've given us a digital address. For those who lose track of the email or haven't given us a digital contact, we'll also post a link to the survey on our webpage (www.daneiceagetrail.org) in February. Please watch for it and respond—we need to hear from you.

Dave Jenkins, editor

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Help or Participate

Save These Special Events Dates

If you'd like to run in twilight on the trail, see outdoor adventure films, be a parking valet for cyclists or take an extended walk with food and drink provided (all while helping out the Ice Age Trail Alliance), reserve time for at least one of these special spring events.

First up is the Banff Mountain Film Festival, featuring outdoor adventure films on the evenings of April 14-15 at Madison's Barrymore Theater and sponsored by REI (7484 W Towne Way, Madison). It offers valet bike parking, but volunteer ushers are needed, too. Luke Kloberdanz (luke@iceagetrail.org, 608 798-4453), IATA's outreach and education manager, is your contact.

Next on the slate is the Headlamp Hustle, an evening cross country run over Table Bluff and Swamplovers trails starting at 7:30 p.m. May 22 at the south trailhead off Scheele Rd. Runners may register at Fontana Sports (Junction Rd and downtown on Henry St.), while volunteers can sign up with Kloberdanz.

The fourth annual Hike-a-Thon fundraiser returns to National Trails Day (Saturday, June 6). Probable starting point is the Ice Age Junction lot on McKee Rd, but organizer Dave Lonsdorf(dblonsdo@wisc.edu, 608-212-1135) is considering options for out-and-back walks and offering a choice of hikes of varying length. Call him with suggestions or for more information.

Finally, anyone seeking an indoor volunteer opportunity during the winter can sign up with Kloberdanz for a shift staffing the IATA information booth at Wisconsin Public Television's Garden Expo (Feb. 13-15) or Canoecopia (March 13-15) at the Alliant Energy Center. Volunteers get free admission to the show.

Springfield Hill

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This spring will afford volunteers another chance to get dirty finishing the remaining tread work, including cutting a higher route where a short stretch of the present path crosses an occasionally wet lowland.

All told, more than 6000 volunteer hours have been devoted to the project so far. This includes more than 4800 hours during the October blitz, when participants included students from Middleton/Cross Plains High School and Park Elementary, UW-Madison Hoofers Outing Club and UW-Platteville Outdoor Recreation Department.



Dane County chapter member Jim Parry has lots of dirt to dispose of as he and other volunteers cut the trail tread into a steep hillside during the October Springfield Hill MSC project. Parry, who lives nearby, also helped chain saw and burn cedar and brush during many of the advance workdays. Photo by Dave Jenkins.

Volunteer Profile: Ed Spoon

By Jen Rockwell and Dave Jenkins

Anyone who has ever worked on the just-completed Springfield Hill trail probably has met Ed Spoon—or should have.

As the chapter's point person for the project, he organized or led most of the 1200 hours of volunteer work leading up to last October's big build.

When volunteers from all across the state rolled into Dane County for the main event (Mobile Skills Crew project) last October, Spoon was at center again, organizing workgroups to carve out trail 100 or 200 feet at a time.

The high point was October 25, when Spoon, as Springfield crew leader manager, had to assign 17 qualified leaders and deftly distribute nearly 140 volunteers, from novice to near pro, among them.

The October project provided Spoon with his most memorable moments with the IATA. "When I walked into the middle of the double circle of volunteers on that Saturday morning, it was pretty amazing. The best part was working with so many happy, energetic, motivated volunteers," he said.

As an integral member of the Springfield MSC team, consisting mostly of staff, "I was 'on' from the moment I got up until I went to bed. It was exhausting, but so exhilarating," Spoon recalled.

Spoon first volunteered at a Dane County chapter workday in Verona, where he lives, in November of 2009.

"I was planning to retire [as a special agent for the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service] in January 2010 and looking for opportunities to do outside activities," he said. "And operate a chainsaw!" he adds with a chuckle. "But really, I like to walk and hike [especially on the IAT and as "Finder" on the Appalachian Trail], so doing something with trails was a good fit because I enjoy the physical work and the satisfaction I derive from making immediate and noticeable improvements."

Since then, his efforts for the Ice Age Trail have included building improved signage (yellow blazes, 4x4 posts, kiosks and routed wooden trail signs) from one end of the county to the other. He has served as mentor for several Eagle Scout projects, including building and installing several kiosks and a boardwalk, and has personally maintained up-to-date signage and postings at those kiosks and others. He served three years as chapter secretary.

"I want the trail to be enjoyable and memorable for people who walk it," Spoon reflects. "I hope to add small bits of interpretive information, so that trail users have the chance to learn something new while they're enjoying the experience."

He also has been a leader in trail maintenance, regularly mowing several segments, filling in on neglected ones, sawing downed trees on short notice, and drafting others to help maintain the trail. He is leading an ongoing major restoration project, now entering its third year, at the Verona Park and Ride lot, a trailhead for the Ice Age and Military Ridge Trails and the county's Ice Age Junction bike trail. Last summer he also found time to serve on the IATA's statewide strategic planning committee.

"I enjoy working with the land," Spoon says. "I don't own much property, so I work to improve public lands instead. And I get great satisfaction from making the Ice Age Trail a more walkable and attractive trail."

"I have learned so much since becoming a volunteer because the people I volunteer with are so willing to share what they know," Spoon acknowledges. "So, if you have a little time and a desire to work in the out of doors, we'll get you started!"



Dane County Chapter Contacts

Officers and Newsletter

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Andrew Bent, Table Bluff, University Ridge, Montrose-south

Tom Gross, Cross Plains

Anne Helsley-Marchbanks, Montrose south (Piller Rd to Hwy PD)

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Dan Wallace, Brooklyn SWA, 608 835-5144, danwallace@src.wisc.edu

Tom Wise, Valley View

Nine More Earn Dane Drifters Patches

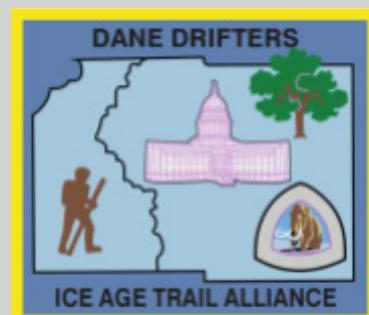
by Gary Wensing

As we close out the first year of the Dane Drifters hiking program, I wonder, "Why didn't we do this sooner?" We have gotten off to a great start with a total of 49 people who have registered and 14 who already have hike the whole county.

I'm sure some of you reading this have hiked all our segments – have you sent your log in? Have you even registered? If you've done all the segments within the last several years, drop us a note and we can discuss what you can take credit for – we're willing to do a little retroactive credit.

Since our last newsletter, nine more people have turned in their logs and received their patches/certificates. Two completed both the trail segments (34 miles) and connecting routes (28 miles more).

Name	City	Distance
Gary Wensing	Cross Plains	Trail segments
Kristi Kenyon	Cross Plains	Trail segments
Marlene Welton	Sun Prairie	Trail segments
Kevin Welton	Sun Prairie	Trail segments
Paul Turpin	Middleton	Trail segments
Laura Clark-Taylor	Madison	Trails+Connectors
Jim Cousin	Madison	Trails+Connectors
Lee Sorensen	Cross Plains	Trail segments
Marian Sorensen	Cross Plains	Trail segments



With the addition of the new Springfield Hill segment, trail mileage has increase by 1.25 miles. We will be sending out an updated brochure and hiking log early next year to registrants who haven't finished yet.

Wouldn't you like to join them? Contact Gary Wensing and Kristi Kenyon of Cross Plains to learn more at kensinginn@tds.net or 608-798-3006.

Become a Member

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

The IATA does NOT share or sell member personal information.

I have enclosed a check payable to the Ice Age Trail Alliance.

No payment is enclosed: please send sign-up forms for secure automatic bank withdrawals.

Please charge my (circle one) VISA Mastercard \$Amount _____

Card # _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____ IATA Code _____

Trail Maintainer

\$35 \$50 \$75

Trail Protector

\$500 \$750

Trail Builder

Yellow Blaze Club

\$100 \$150 \$250 \$1,000 \$2,500 \$5,000

Glacial Leadership Circle

\$10,000 \$25,000

Mail to:

Dane County Chapter

Ice Age Trail Alliance

2110 Main St. Cross Plains, WI 53528

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Layout Editor Wanted

Would you like to help get the Ice Age Drift and possibly other materials ready for the printing and posting on the web? If so, we could use your volunteer help.

To serve our needs, you'll need to know how to produce a pdf file from the stories and photos submitted to you in digital format (such as Word for text). You will need to use desktop publishing software, such as Adobe InDesign, Adobe PageMaker, Microsoft Publisher or Serif's Page Plus, and have access to a computer with the appropriate software. Digital photo editing skills and software may be helpful as well.

We usually print the Drift three times a year, and we also post a color version to our website at the same time. If interested, contact Dave Jenkins at 608 836-8879 or dpjenkins@tds.net.

Election, Potluck Set for January 25

Members of the Dane County chapter will assemble at the Rosemary Garfoot Public Library in Cross Plains at 6 p.m. Sunday, January 25, 2015, for the chapter's potluck supper, annual meeting, and election of officers.

Officer candidates proposed by the nominating committee are incumbents Tom Gross as chapter coordinator, Deb Diller as secretary and Anne Helsley-Marchbanks as treasurer. Andrew Bent, who has held several officer positions in the past, was nominated for co-coordinator.

At the meeting, members also may propose additional candidates, provided they are willing to serve if elected.

The meeting will feature a review of the chapter's accomplishments in 2014, and may include an additional program. Also, Tess Mulrooney will be leading a hike/snowshoe earlier in the day on the nearby Table Bluff segment.

To get to the Cross Plains library (2107 Julius St.) from Madison, go west on U. S. 14 three blocks past the traffic light at the intersection with County Highway P, then north (right) on Jovina Street for about a block. Use the Jovina Street entrance.