



Ice Age Drift

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Tools of the Trade

Article by Bob Kaspar

Editor's Note: Green County does not currently have an active IAT chapter. The crossover route discussed here is about 200 feet long.

Last July, after continuing reports of problems with the crossover from the Badger State Trail to the Sugar River Trail, Dane County Chapter Trails Committee leader Ed Spoon and I headed down into Green County to see if we could do something to make the switch from one trail to the other somewhat more visible.

There were several problems with the crossover. First, the DNR, which is responsible for maintenance of the two trails, has no responsibility to maintain the crossover, so when they come down either trail with the mower, the Ice Age Trail gets no love. Second, one of the two posts was tucked almost behind a tree, so that when a hiker came from the north on the Badger State Trail, it was all too easy to walk past the post without seeing it, especially when the tall vegetation of summer doesn't get mowed on a regular basis. Third, runoff water from an adjoining property was draining off an asphalt parking lot into culverts under the Sugar River Trail, then eroding the crossover as it flowed toward the Sugar River.

I drove out to the west side and met up with Ed. With tools and a mower loaded, we drove down through Monticello and pulled up to the Sugar River Trail. By 9:00 am, we were on site, but the mower wouldn't start. Ed called Dave Lonsdorf, who was good enough to drive down to take care of the mower problem, and while we waited, Ed hauled out his chain saw, cleared a tree down across the Badger State Trail, then cleared a few invasive trees alongside the crossover.

Dave made it down to our location by 10:15, got the mower started by pulling the spark plug and draining the fuel line, and Ed and I resumed our clearing. I spotted while Ed did the hard work of wrestling the mower through the four-foot tall plants. Once the short segment of trail was cleared, we pulled the post hole digger, the shovel and the tamping bar out of the trailer, pulled the post from the east edge of the crossover, and found a more central spot away from the obscuring tree.

Holes for trail signage posts need to be three feet deep, and gravel and shallow bedrock can make the job impossible. Even though both state trails are former railroad corridors, which can be hard-packed and full of gravel, we lucked out and in 15 minutes we had the post in place and the soil firmly tamped down.

The final job for this bit of trail maintenance involved trying to reduce the erosive capacity of the runoff from the nearby parking lot. There were two trouble spots, but we decided to deal with just one

on this trip. One of the primary tools used in building and maintaining trails is the McLeod, which has a two-sided blade. One side sports a large-tined rake, the other is a straight-edged sharpened hoe. This



Properly attired Ed Spoon attacks a fallen tree with his chain saw and uses a post-hole digger // Photo by Bob Kaspar

combination tool was created by Malcolm McLeod, a US Forest Service ranger in the Sierra National Forest, in 1905. It is a standard tool during wildfire suppression and trail restoration.

The McLeod was designed to rake fire lines with the teeth and cut branches and sod with the sharpened hoe edge, but it has found other uses. It can remove slough and berm from a trail, tamp or compact tread, and can shape a trail's backslope. If it's sharp enough, it can cut through roots crossing the trail. We used it to carve and shape a Y-shaped drainage ditch cut across one of the eroded spots, designed to reduce the slope of the channel and reduce the erosive power of the water flowing across the sandy soil....*Continued on page 2*

Land Purchase –Mammoth's Back

Article by Tom Gross

At a special meeting on September 27, the Dane County Chapter approved expenditure of \$10,000 in order to facilitate the purchase by the Alliance of a key piece of land for the Trail. According to Kevin Thusius, Director of Land Conservation for the Alliance: "we are extremely excited to have a signed offer to acquire the 46-acre Festge property along Stagecoach Road. We have dubbed it Mammoth's Back due to the shape of the limestone hill from a distance. It's a wonderful property with some native plants – leadplant galore – that lines-up perfectly for the Ice Age Trail between CTH P and Stagecoach Road. I continue to work with the farmer neighbor to the west to secure an easement from him."...*Continued on page 3*

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The picture must be crooked because we know that post is straight // Photo by Bob Kaspar

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The other main tool used was Ed Spoon's custom Pulaski. Ed Pulaski is credited with inventing the tool in 1911, after disastrous fires swept through Idaho and Montana, burning some three million acres of forest. (See *The Big Burn* by Timothy Egan, for an excellent history of the episode.) The Pulaski has an axe on one side, and an adze on the other. It's used alternately to cut or dig, and is similar to another common trail-building tool, the pick mattock. By noon we had finished our work, and retired to town to find lunch. After lunch we drove down to the southern crossing of the two trails and installed another trail signage post to hopefully eliminate some confusion down there.

Chapter Social at Wisconsin Brewing

Article by Mark Graczykowski

Did you know that the Dane County Chapter has around 800 members? I'm not sure Wisconsin Brewing's taproom can hold that many people, but why don't we give it a try!

On November 2nd from 3 to 5 PM, the Chapter will be hosting a Social Event at Wisconsin Brewing in Verona. The Brewery is a short walk from the Ice Age Trail at the southeast corner of CTHs M and PB. We have worked hard in 2019, and as the year winds down, we should get together and celebrate our successes. Snacks will be provided by the Chapter. Beers will be available for cash at the bar. Wisconsin Brewing has long been a supporter of the Chapter's annual Hike-a-thon and this is also a chance to say thanks while quenching our collective thirsts. There will be brief introductions, but otherwise the focus is an opportunity for socializing and connecting with more members.

Whether you've been a member working on the Ice Age Trail for decades or just found out about the Ice Age Trail last week (and everything in between), we'd like you to join us. Feel free to bring a friend or two as well. The Ice Age Trail is a gem, not only for Dane County, but for all of Wisconsin because of the contributions large and small of each one of us.

Lastly, both the staff at the Ice Age Trail Alliance in Cross Plains and our friends at the National Park Service in Madison will be invited to the event. We can't guarantee their attendance, but it may be an opportunity to interact with the staff who make the Ice Age Trail run every day.

We are requesting your RSVP ahead of time so we know how much area to secure the day of the event. Please email Mark Graczykowski (mark.a.graczykowski@gmail.com) or Tess Mulrooney (tlmmsn@aol.com) if you can attend. No worries if you decide last minute, we'll happily welcome everyone who joins us.

Volunteer Profile Kathy Mulbrandon

Article by Bob Kaspar

Kathy Mulbrandon is retired from the federal government's Social Security Administration. She now works part-time for REI. She says, "I love all silent sports, including kayaking, backpacking, camping, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, road bicycling, and hiking." Several times a year you may spot her name as a group-activity leader in the chapter newsletter.



Kathy has been volunteering with the Ice Age Trail for 17 years. She recalls, "My first project was spreading prairie flower seeds in a new prairie. I learned so much from the leader of the project regarding the various types of prairie flowers that I just wanted to continue to do more projects with the Ice Age Trail. I was involved in several Mobile Skill Crew projects building/maintaining trail. I then started leading hikes on the Dane County segments of the Ice Age Trail to share my love of the Trail with others. For the past three years, I also done trail property/easement monitoring with about 10 other volunteers. This involves annual visits to all IAT property and easements as required to retain accreditation. This is a great way to explore off-trail easements, and also get to know a little about the administrative side of things."

What first brought you to the organization?

When I was growing up in the Sheboygan area, my Dad took us kids to buy our first cross-country skis. Some of my fondest memories were skiing on the Ice Age Trail in the northern Kettle Moraine. At that time, the Greenbush trail system in that area was just being developed, but I preferred the Ice Age Trail with its many ups and downs and twists and turns. Boy, did we have fun as kids skiing the IAT. As an adult, I continue to hike on the IAT and often camp at campgrounds that are close to the trail. You will often see me hiking the Trail around Verona and Cross Plains.

What inspires you to be involved or make the trail/organization better?

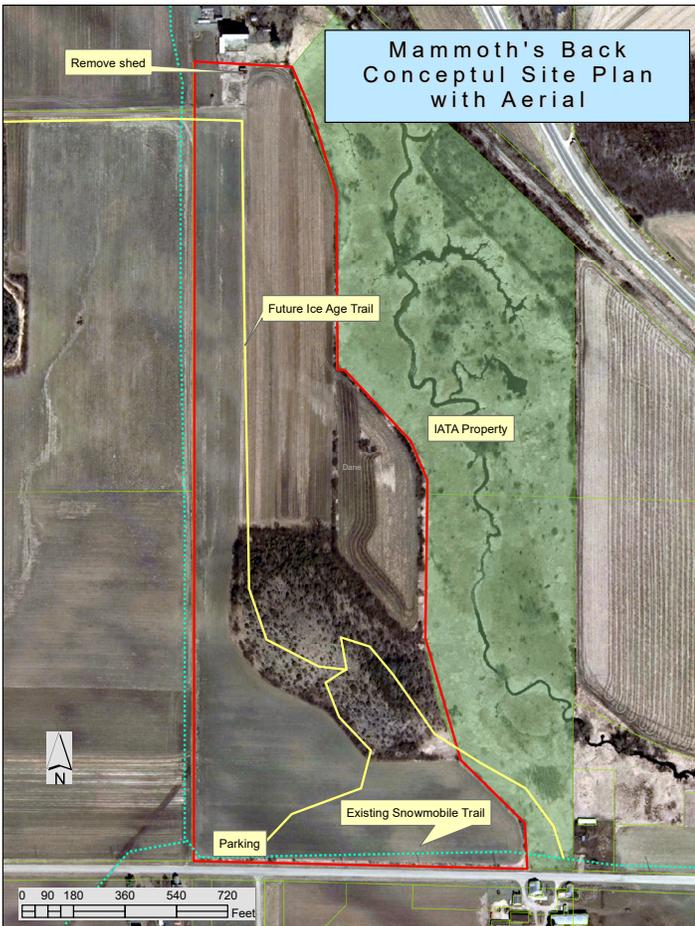
When I first moved to the Verona area 18 years ago, I was surprised by the number of people who had never heard of the Ice Age Trail, even though it was right in their backyard, so to speak. Just seeing the Trail improvements in this area is truly amazing! And now the number of people out, especially families, enjoying the Trail is so wonderful. Getting people outside is what inspires me to make the trail/organization better.

What advice/recommendation would you give to a new member on how to get involved and how to better enjoy the trail?

I would recommend to just get out, hike, observe, and enjoy the trail. Get an Ice Age Trail Atlas or Guidebook to assist finding different trail segments, or download a smartphone application. You will naturally just want to help out, especially when you see that downed tree over the trail, or the trail overgrown with invasives, or building a new section of trail. Check out the event calendar on the Ice Age Trail website. Share your enthusiasm with others, so join in on a hike, or a service project, and get others involved, too. You will have a great time!

Land Purchase... Continued from page 1

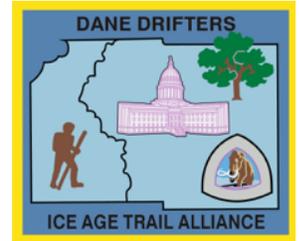
The commitment of \$10,000 by the Chapter will put a strain on our budget, but everyone felt that this was too good an opportunity to pass by. If you would like to make a donation to the Chapter in support of this purchase, it would be greatly appreciated. Donations can be sent to the Treasurer, Michele Amacker, at 510 Orchard Dr., Madison, WI 53711



Dane Drifter Update

Article by Gary Wensing

As fall approaches, that means cooler temperatures and terrific colors on the Ice Age Trail. Now is a great time to check out our Dane Drifters Hiking Program. For a small registration cost (\$10 for IATA members, \$12 for non-members and \$6 for a companion to a registered hiker), you can earn a patch, a certificate of completion for hiking all of the segments of IAT in Dane County, and support the Dane Co Chapter of the Ice Age Trail Alliance.



Join the Dane Drifters and then hike all the beautiful IAT segments in Dane County. You'll earn this cool patch and a certificate of completion.

Remember, there's no time limit to finish, so even if you registered a few years ago, you can keep working on it and earn your reward! Download current log form from IATA website if you lost yours.

Whether you're working on the program or not, everyone is welcome to join us on group hikes on our trail segments. Check out the enclosed calendar for future hikes (more details are on the IATA website) and check the Ice Age Trail Alliance Rock and Dane County Chapters meet up group (<https://www.meetup.com/Ice-Age-Trail-Alliance-Rock-Dane-County-Chapter/>.) The group hikes are a great way to work on the program.

We're now have 340 registered and, with the above, 160 have completed the program. I hope you'll join us! Check out our chapter's page on in IAT website <http://www.iceagetrail.org/volunteer/chapters/dane-county/> to learn more and find a link to the registration form.

Congratulations to the following Dane Drifters!

- Deeanna Shidler • Danville, IL • Trails+Connectors
- Abigail Mapes • Madison, WI • Trails+Connectors
- Ellie Enghofer • Verona, WI • Trails+Connectors
- Ed Abell • Cedar Grove, WI • Trails+Connectors
- Mary Pat Olson • Middleton, WI • Trail Segments
- Susan Jensen • Madison, WI • Trail Segments
- Christy Sullivan • Madison, WI • Trails+Connectors
- Lori Mertens-Pellitteri • Madison, WI • Trails+Connectors
- Mary Patterson-Delap • Rhinelander, WI • Trails+Connectors
- Jane Hendricks • Rhinelander, WI • Trails +Connectors

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You are Needed

Article by Tess Mulrooney and Tom Gross

Several of the scheduled chapter activities (see enclosed calendar) represent Mobile Skills Crew projects Past, Present, and Future. While Future tasks are great, it is a burden to continue to maintain the Trail that already exists.

The Dane County chapter, thanks in large part to a grant from Dane County, can anticipate up to three new trail projects in as many years. However, the current volunteers are hard pressed to keep up. And that's where you come in. We are asking you to look for one date in our calendar and come out to help us get through our backlog of work. It may be for as little as two hours, but it will be greatly appreciated. You are also welcome to come out and watch us work, looking for the task that may be just right for you, whether wielding loppers, tending a burn pile, dragging downed materials, or running a brush cutter or chainsaw. Please RSVP to the leader cited for the work day.

There is also plenty of work behind the scenes for those whose skills are more adapted to indoor pursuits. These include, but are not limited to, repair and maintenance of equipment, community outreach events, and putting this newsletter together. If you have skills you want to contribute and/or develop, please contact Tom Gross (tagr@umich.edu) and I'll point you in the right direction.



We have scheduled an after-work party at Wisconsin Brewing Company on November 2, and you are cordially invited to join us. Ask questions of the crew coming from the work outing, look for signs of tiredness or the satisfaction of a day's work well done. To find more information about this and other Chapter events, please check the on-line calendar: <https://www.iceagetrail.org/events> Enter "Dane" in the search box to select Dane County Chapter events.