



Ice Age Drift

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www.dane.iceagetrail.org

Hike-a-thon Returns in 2020!

Article by Mark Graczykowski

The annual Hike-a-Thon (HAT) along the Ice Age Trail in Dane County will be back in 2020! Normally the HAT coincides with National Trail Days, which always falls on the first Saturday in June, but due to the Corona Virus pandemic and need for social distancing the HAT will be postponed until late summer or early Fall. We are still working on a new date for the HAT and will broadcast that information widely once it is available.

Despite the event's delay there is positive news to share. Over the past several months, the Dane County Chapter has established a Land Preservation Fund to assist the Ice Age Trail Alliance with land acquisition activities. In 2020, raising money for this Fund will be the focal point of the HAT. Beyond the registration fee (which will partly be returned to the Chapter for operating expenses), participants will be encouraged to raise additional donations through pledges. Non-participants are also encouraged to donate. All donations raised through the HAT will go to the new Land Preservation Fund. Those who raise enough donations will receive the brand new IAT Atlas and Guidebook as a thank you, with the individual who raises the most pledges receiving a prize pack from some of our sponsors including gear from Osprey, Vortex and Black Diamond.

In addition, several generous Chapter members have agreed to match donations raised through the HAT. We have not established the threshold yet for the match, but this additional effort will double many of the donations raised by hike participants and other donors. A huge thank you to those involved!

The other good news is the increased participation by the Ice Age Trail Alliance. The Alliance has dedicated a lot of time in the initial event planning and will continue to be involved. Raising funds to preserve land for the Ice Age Trail is a win/win for both the Alliance and the Dane County Chapter. Thank you to Luke Kloberdanz for your assistance.

The two hiking options will remain the same as in past years, with the day's events beginning and ending at Badger Prairie County Park. The long hike will start at the Brooklyn Wildlife Area, while the shorter hike will start from Prairie Moraine, both heading north. There will be a group celebration at the end.

After many requests over the years, both hikes will be different in 2021, as sewer replacement in Verona will be shutting down part of the trail next summer. We don't have the exact route delineated, but we will go and explore a new part of the Ice Age Trail in Dane County together in 2021.

While life is seemingly shut down and we are all practicing social distancing to abate the spread of the pandemic, there is so much good news to look forward to on the Ice Age Trail! We will rebound from this and personally I will appreciate every volunteer hour put in to maintain and improve the trail, and every step I get to enjoy on the trail a little more moving forward. Stay well and if you have any questions, are interested in volunteering for or want to be notified of updates on the HAT please contact me at DanecountyIATHAT@gmail.com.

Meet the new Chapter Secretary

Interview with Megan Schliesman

Article by Tom Gross

1) How and when did you first get involved with the Ice Age Trail? I read *The Thousand Miler* by Melanie Radzicki McManus as part of a Wisconsin Center for the Book committee three years ago. We chose the book to represent Wisconsin at the 2017 National Book Festival, and I became interested in hiking the trail. Not in a goal-oriented "do it all now" way, but in a "what a great way to see and explore different parts of Wisconsin's natural beauty and regions." My husband, Brent Sieling, and I began seeking out the trail as we traveled; and traveling to seek out the trail. (I do hope to complete the trail someday; I look forward hiking it at a faster pace after I retire.)

At the same time, I've been on the trail many times across the years without it really registering; even going back to my childhood before it was a trail, when my mom would pile 4 of us kids into her Volkswagen Beetle and drive us from Racine to Kettle Moraine forest for a day hike.

2) What motivates/inspires you to make the organization better?

Two things. The first is the very fact that this amazing thing exists, this trail tying natural history and diverse natural beauty of various parts of Wisconsin together into a conceptual whole. The second is that while the trail is, on the one hand, about nature, it's also about people and communities-tying us together, too. The trail doesn't exist as an entity without the people who make it possible, and I find the commitment of those people extraordinary. When we first became interested, Brent began regularly volunteering with the Dane County Chapter on workdays and going to MSC events around the state; at his urging I became an occasional chapter workday volunteer. Every time I volunteer I see and hear about people who are giving huge amounts of their time and lives to the trail-on workdays, and behind the scenes-it's amazing, and I wanted to be some small part of that. Hiking on the trail now, I'm always aware that a lot of planning and work has gone into making the path I'm walking.

3) What do you like-or dislike-most about being chapter secretary? I've only begun in the role, but I'm looking forward to learning more of the ins and outs of what it takes to put all the pieces together at the chapter level. The stewardship and trail maintenance workdays and yellow blazes on trees and posts and hike-a-thons don't just happen; they take an incredible amount of organization and effort. I'm also getting a better understanding of how the chapters and the Alliance work together.

4) Do you have a favorite section of the Trail? [In Dane County or elsewhere?] The view from an open prairie, and the transformation of prairie flora across various seasons, never get old to me. I love wooded trails. The sight of Lake Michigan has been calming to me since childhood. So it's often whatever section I'm hiking at any given moment.*

Hiking here in Dane County, I often say, "I had no idea this was here." "This" being a beautiful section of prairie or woods, sometimes all in one segment, as with Cross Plains.



*While the exception to that statement is the connecting road urban sections—especially going in and out of towns—even then there are some great vistas, and I like getting the chance to visit small towns.

5) What advice/recommendation would you offer a new member on how to get involved

and/or better enjoy the Trail? Start volunteering if you can. I'm proof you don't have to have any special natural world skill or knowledge to participate in a chapter workday—even I can haul cut wood and brush to a fire, or pull weeds once someone shows me what they look like. You can stay each day for as little or as much time as works for you. You can rest when you need to. (As an aside, it's work wonderfully suited to introverts.) And if physical labor isn't possible, ask about other opportunities. [Note: Contact Tom Gross at 144tag@gmail.com to learn about volunteer opportunities.]

For hiking, the Ice Age Trail Guidebook is helpful for describing the sections of trail as well as giving insight into difficulty and if portions of a segment are handicapped accessible. I'm not a good heat-and-humidity hiker, for example, so try to avoid harder sections and wide open prairie on heat-intense, sunny summer days. The Ice Age Trail Atlas is great for detailed maps. If you're goal-oriented, tracking your progress in the atlas, or through the Guthook app, which allows you to download IAT maps, is great. (It helps to remember to hit "Record" when you head out.)

In short, pick a section and go.

Where's the Calendar!

Article by Tom Gross

For many years, the Spring issue of the Drift has included a calendar of activities for the coming 5 months or so. At this writing, we have no idea when we can return to any sort of activity involving people getting together to work, hike, etc. Once we are allowed to gather, we will schedule activities and post them on our web site: www.iceagetrail.org/volunteer/chapters/dane-county/ Please check there once Safer at Home fades into memory.

Dane Drifters Update

Article by Gary Wensing

I certainly hope you are all doing well and staying safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. We've certainly noticed that many of you are taking to the Trail for your outdoor exercise. And many new Trail users are out there too—this has been our busiest period for new Dane Drifter registrations as well as people completing the program with some of the spare time they have right now.

As reminder if you haven't already joined, 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.

Congratulations to the following Dane Drifters!

- Polly Sackett* · Madison, WI · Trail Segments
- Debby Capener* · Portage, WI · Trails Segments
- Brent Sieling* · Madison, WI · Trails+Connectors
- Megan Schliesman* · Madison, WI · Trails+Connectors
- Karen Bressett* · Madison, WI · Trails Segments
- Jacqueline Seibel* · Madison, WI · Trails+Connectors
- Amber McReynolds* · Madison, WI · Trail Segments
- Casem AbuLughod* · Madison, WI · Trail Segments
- Andy Westbrook* · Neenah, WI · Trails+Connectors
- Dan Westbrook* · Neenah, WI · Trails+Connectors
- Xiping Wang* · Verona, WI · Trail Segments
- Bradley Allen* · Beaver Dam, WI · Trails+Connectors
- Linda Allen* · Beaver Dam, WI · Trails+Connectors
- Andy Getschmann* · Sun Prairie, WI · Trails+Connectors
- Robyn Swanson* · Elkhorn, WI · Trails+Connectors
- Lisa Ruesch* · Hartford, WI · Trails+Connectors
- Robert Olson* · Madison, WI · Trail Segments
- Caitlin Olson* · Madison, WI · Trail Segments
- Kiera Depies* · Verona, WI · Trails+Connectors
- Tim Linzner* · DeForest, WI · Trail Segments

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