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**3 New Miles of Ice Age National Scenic Trail Coming to Dane County**

Hundreds of volunteers will build Trail

Cross Plains, Wis (October 17, 2023) –Hundreds of volunteers will converge on National Park Service property in the town of Cross Plains this week. Their goal: create nearly three new miles of Ice Age National Scenic Trail.

The volunteers will be part of a large-scale Ice Age Trail Alliance Trailbuilding project that’s happening October 18-22. This is the eighth (and last) large-scale event of 2023 for the Alliance.

The new portion of Trail will eliminate a dangerous road walk along Old Sauk Pass, which currently serves as a connecting route between sections of officially blazed Trail.

“Projects like this get us closer to a continuous, completed Ice Age Trail,” says Luke Kloberdanz, Executive Director and CEO of the Ice Age Trail Alliance. “And, it’s thanks to our large number of volunteers that we’re able to get so much done in such a small number of days.”

“Adding three miles of blazed Trail is a nice way to finish off the Trailbuilding season,” he says.

What makes this project unique is that the new Trail (which will be part of the Cross Plains Segment), will bring hikers further into the Cross Plains Ice Age National Scientific Reserve Unit. Designated by Congress, there are nine Reserve Units in Wisconsin, which exist to highlight and preserve areas of glacial scenic and scientific value. The Cross Plains Reserve Unit (which is composed of National Park Service property, Wisconsin DNR property, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service property, and Dane County property) straddles the divide between the glaciated landscape and unglaciated Driftless Area.

“This area will no doubt become one of the highlights of the entire 1,200-mile Trail,” says Kloberdanz. “Its spectacular topography, proximity to a metropolitan area, and being so close to our National Park Service Partner’s headquarters means it will be one of the most visited.”

In addition to creating new Trail tread, volunteers will build three boardwalks and three bridges, which will span dry gorges. They’ll also install signage and paint blazes to mark the path of the Ice Age Trail.

When the project concludes on Sunday, the new portion of Trail is expected to be open for hiking.

Community Benefits from the Project

Large-scale Alliance-led projects like this one in the town of Cross Plains are good for the Trail as well as the nearby community.

“People from all across the state—even some from Illinois—are drawn to Cross Plains over the four-day project,” says Kloberdanz. Some volunteers come to work for a few hours, a day, or the whole weekend. Volunteers will likely buy gas in the area, stop at convenience stores, eat at local restaurants, etc.

Volunteers who camp will be staying on a local business’ land. And the Cross Plains Fire Department will open each day to allow volunteers a place to shower. The Lions Club in Cross Plains will host a brat cookout on Thursday night for volunteers. On Friday night, volunteers will gather at Crossroads Coffeehouse in the village of Cross Plains for dinner, including live music and ice cream.

“The Ice Age Trail is important to the people who use it, as well as the communities it runs through or near,” says Kloberdanz. “Every day, people visit small towns and rural areas of the state because of the Trail. There is no doubt it positively impacts local economies—especially when it brings hundreds of volunteers to a specific area.”

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About the Ice Age National Scenic Trail:

The Ice Age National Scenic Trail is a 1,200-mile footpath contained entirely within Wisconsin. It traverses the state from St. Croix Falls in the west, to Sturgeon Bay in the east, going as far south as Janesville. One of 11 National Scenic Trails, the Ice Age Trail highlights the landscapes that were carved out by ancient glaciers, which happen to be some of the most beautiful areas in the state. Approximately 60% of Wisconsin residents live within 20 miles of the Ice Age Trail.

About the Ice Age Trail Alliance:

The Ice Age Trail Alliance is a non-profit, member and volunteer-based organization which conserves, creates, maintains, and promotes the Ice Age National Scenic Trail. For more information visit iceagetrail.org.