

Finally done! I think I am fortunate that I live in Oshkosh and have lots of friends who like to hike. I have been with an Outdoor group since 1997 and we started day hikes of the Ice Age Trail about 2002, in areas like Waupaca County, Portage County, and the Northern Kettle Moraine. When I retired in 2018 I was looking for hobbies and for ways to stay in shape. The Ice Age trail jumped out at me, especially since I had lots of miles already completed. My friend Tami Rohm saw the Facebook posts I was making and decided in 2019 (I think) to start hiking the trail in earnest. Before I knew it she had secretly passed me up! After that I redoubled my efforts to catch up to her. Eventually we decided to pool our efforts and we combined to hike slightly more than 50% of the rest of the trail together.

A highlight (maybe a "lowlight") happened July 17, 2021 when we were hiking west of Merrill on a 12.4 mile section and I started to have chest tightness. We were about halfway into the section (with no cell service!) and Tami said she thought I was having a heart attack.

We managed to complete the section and I felt much better, but when I got back home I called Nurse Direct. She looked up my records and said she didn't think it was my heart but said I should go to the ER. The doctor there also said he didn't think it was my heart but had 1 more test to come back. Long story short, they kept me in hospital and I had 3 stents put in. One month later I was hiking in Peru and have felt 15 years younger ever since! Never give up your dreams. I am 72 and we average at least 3 miles per hour on the trail, including breaks and lunch. Just keep putting one foot in front of the other.

Dale Prey