SNAPSHOT

14.5 miles: CTH-J to First Lake Rd.

This beautiful, remote segment features roller-coaster topography, plentiful primitive camping options and long views from the top of Lookout Mountain.

From the numerous trailside lakes, a trailside spring near the North Branch of the Prairie River and other small streams/creeks.

Primitive camping on county forest lands. Two walk-in campsites on Chain Lake.

At a walk-in campsite on Bus Lake accessible from Turtle Lake Rd. Large enough for groups.

At an ATV shelter at the CTH-B Trail access.

Dogs should be leashed (8-ft max) and under control at all times.

Portions overlap logging/forest roads and two gravel roads.

Blue-blazed spur trail to Alta Springs Rd. parking area and a spur trail to walk-in campsite on Bus Lake.

TRAIL ACCESS AND PARKING

CTH-J: From Merrill at the intersection of USH-51 and STH-64, take USH-51 north 13.0 mi to Irma. At CTH-J turn right and go east 5.1 mi. Roadside parking.

First Lake Rd.: From Merrill at the intersection of USH-51 and STH-64, take STH-64 east 0.3 mi. At STH-17 turn left and go northeast for 21.9 mi. At First Lake Rd. turn left and go north then west 1.5 mi to parking area on the north side of First Lake Rd., just before the intersection of First Lake Rd., Parrish Rd. and Fish Lake Rd. Additional roadside parking is available on Parrish Rd. just north of this intersection.
Additional Parking: (i) Alta Springs Rd. parking area, about 0.1 mi north of CTH-J on Alta Springs Rd. A blue-blazed spur trail leads to the Trail. (ii) Turtle Lake Rd. parking area (LI42). (iii) CTH-B large multiuse parking area adjacent to the main Lincoln County ATV trail system parking area and building on the west side of the road. Do not block ATV trail access.

THE HIKE

When the Wisconsin Valley lobe advanced, there was most likely a period where the lobe surged forward. Researchers have found that when today’s glaciers rapidly advance they gather sediment on their surface, especially along the marginal edges. When the ice melts it leaves behind deep kettles and high-relief hummocks. The Harrison Moraine that this segment traverses is noted for this spectacular high-relief topography, including many glacially deposited ridges and hills such as Lookout Mountain, the highest point on the Ice Age Trail at 1,920 feet above sea level. Views are especially impressive when leaves are off.

Generally on public forest lands, this segment is remote (the Harrison Hills support a thriving wolf pack) and rugged. Ongoing timber harvest can make navigation challenging at times. The Trail corridor, while generally easy to follow, can be quite narrow in some areas. Watch carefully for Trail signage, especially at intersections and when on logging/forest roads.

This segment starts off at CTH-J and almost immediately intersects a blue-blazed spur trail leading to the Alta Springs Road parking area. It then quickly crosses primitive Alta Springs Road and soon brings hikers to a natural spring bubbling trailside and a bench with a view of the North Branch of the Prairie
River. The segment follows the river briefly before heading northeast to an area with a network of public ATV trails. ATVs are often seen or heard nearby; however, the segment does not overlap any of the ATV trails.

The segment crosses Beaver Trail Road and then Turtle Lake Road (LI42) before entering a region filled with small, beautiful, undeveloped lakes. It is common to see beavers swimming in some of the lakes at dusk. Portions of the segment in this area may be wet or flooded in early spring or during rainy periods. The trail wraps around the south end of Bus Lake. Near a bench overlooking the lake, the trail intersects (LI47) a spur trail leading north along the western edge of Bus Lake to a walk-in campsite (also accessible by car). A few open timber harvest areas on this portion of the segment are reestablishing with what is called a “gap” forest. Pioneer plants, such as grasses, shrubs and raspberry bushes, close in on the Trail and the new growth of aspen and birch trees offers little shade.

The segment reaches the top of Lookout Mountain (LI1), the second highest point in Wisconsin. There are several structures at the top, including two radio towers. The segment continues from Lookout Mountain. It travels through deciduous forest dominated by oak and maple trees on its way to CTH-B. It passes an ATV parking area with vault toilets. A popular fishing destination, the northeastern section of the segment passes many lakes. There are two angler campsites on Chain Lake: the first is along a spur trail (LI48) between the west and center lobes and is approximately 100 feet off the Trail; the second is also reached by a spur trail (LI49) between the center and east lobes and is approximately 400 feet off the Trail. The second campsite may be flooded when water levels are high.

From Chain Lake, the segment continues for about 2.0 miles to its terminus on First Lake Road, right on the Lincoln/Langlade county line.

### AREA SERVICES

**Tomahawk:** See Turtle Rock Segment and Grandfather Falls Segment, p. 101. From the CTH-J Trail access go west then north 15.5 mi.

**Gleason:** Restaurant, convenience store. From the CTH-J Trail access, take CTH-J east, south and east 5.6 mi to STH-17. At STH-17, turn left (northeast) and go 1.9 mi. From the CTH-B parking area, take CTH-B east 1.2 mi to STH-17. At STH-17 turn right (southwest) and go 10.0 mi.

**Harrison:** Restaurant. From the CTH-B Trail access parking area go west and north ~7 mi.

**Merrill:** See Turtle Rock Segment and Grandfather Falls Segment, p. 101. From the First Lake Rd. Trail access go east then south ~24 mi. Also see Trail Access and Parking directions, above.

**Rhinelander:** See Parrish Hills Segment, p. 116. From the First Lake Rd. Trail access go east and north ~18 mi.

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*A highlight for us was learning that winter hiking was great. Frozen fog is beautiful. Snowshoeing at Harrison Hills was unforgettable. You see how alive the Trail is in winter by the tracks. We hiked, in two to four feet of snow, with snowshoes, and saw tracks from mice, squirrels, otter, deer, coyotes, and turkey but no humans. We didn’t see bears but saw lots of poop and tracks on the Trail.*

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Both books were written and published by the Ice Age Trail Alliance. All proceeds for each book help build and maintain the Ice Age Trail. Please call the IATA at (800) 227-0046 with any questions.

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5/25/2017