Dane County

Table Bluff Segment (Atlas Map 64f, 65f; Databook page 63)

SNAPSHOT

Table Bluff Segment—4.8 miles (3.6 IAT, 1.2 CR): Pine Rd. to Scheele Rd.

The segment offers a trek through a stunning prairie with long ridgetop views and showcases the results of some remarkable land stewardship efforts.

- No reliable sources of water.
- At the top of the bluff 0.4 mi north of Scheele Rd.
- One ColdCache site on segment.
- Between Table Bluff Rd. and Scheele Rd., the southern two-thirds of the segment crossing private land are closed during gun deer season.
- Dogs must be leashed.
- Two white-blazed loop trails and additional informal trails.

TRAIL ACCESS AND PARKING

**Pine Rd.:** From the Ice Age Trail Alliance Headquarters in Cross Plains, take USH-14 west 1.2 mi. At CTH-KP turn right and go north 2.9 mi. At Pine Rd. turn right and go northeast 0.4 mi to the Trail access on the east side of the road. The main parking area is located 0.1 mi north on Pine Rd. A blue-blazed spur trail leads to the Trail.

**Scheele Rd.:** From the Ice Age Trail Alliance Headquarters in Cross Plains, take USH-14 west 1.2 mi. At CTH-KP turn right and go north 0.3 mi. At Scheele Rd. turn left and go west 0.3 mi to a gated gravel road on the north side. Roadside parking in mowed area. Do not block the gate.

**Additional Parking:** Table Bluff Rd. parking area, 0.3 mi west of CTH-KP on the south side of Table Bluff Rd.

THE HIKE

The segment begins with a lollipop loop trail around the Liebetrau Prairie, a culmination of nearly 15 years of prairie restoration efforts. In spring, hikers will see shooting stars and other early prairie flowers; in summer, prairie flowers include an ever-changing explosion of compass plants, monarda, rudbeckia, coneflowers, coreopsis, milkweed, liatris and many more.

The segment leaves Pine Road and quickly comes to an intersection with a blue-blazed spur trail that leads 0.1 mile to the Pine Road parking area. A little farther on, the segment reaches the junction of the lollipop loop. Following the loop to the right, the Trail begins a gradual descent, leaves the prairie and enters an area of mixed hardwoods and then crosses a small partially stone-lined ravine and begins to gradually climb back up to the prairie. The Trail climbs gradually to its highest point. Hikers will enjoy sweeping views in multiple directions, including views of the Blue Mounds to the west, particularly impressive at sunset. The segment returns to the junction of the lollipop loop and makes its way back to Pine Road.

Here hikers should turn left and head south 0.4 miles on Pine Road. At CTH-KP they should turn left and continue south 0.5 miles. At Table Bluff Road, hikers should turn right and go west 0.3 miles to the Trail access and parking area.

This portion of the segment, located in the Driftless Area of southwestern Wisconsin, traverses restored prairie as well as steep rocky slopes. There is approximately 200 feet of total vertical relief, and several vistas from the heads of two valleys and two prominent goat prairies offer great views of the Driftless Area.
Meltwater from the Laurentide ice sheet poured through a preglacial valley depositing sand and gravel and partially filling the valley floors, which now hold wetlands and a tributary stream of Black Earth Creek, a Class I trout stream.

From the Trail access on Table Bluff Road, the segment heads south across the IATA’s 73-acre Holmes Preserve. After passing through a prairie hikers will come to an intersection (DA23) with a white-blazed loop trail that offers a 0.5-mile “bubble” to the west. The loop trail traverses up a ridge through a mixed hardwood forest containing a grove of several large oaks.

Back on the main segment, from its initial encounter with the white-blazed loop trail, the T rail continues south across a large restored prairie with a thriving population of rare pale purple coneflower. This area is a wildflower treasure trove—shooting star, rattlesnake master, stiff gentian, hoary vervain, prairie smoke, cream gentian and cream baptisia have all been identified here. The segment then enters a wooded area and dips down onto a valley floor before making its second connection with the white-blazed loop trail (DA22).

The remainder of the segment traverses the privately owned Swamplovers property. From the valley floor, the segment climbs up a ridge and traverses nearly a mile of woodlands of oak and hickory before entering a prairie/oak savanna area that owners of the Swamplovers property are faithfully restoring to its native state. This area, including a second white-blazed loop, features dramatic rock outcroppings of Ordovician dolomite and views southwest to the Blue Mounds. At the top of the bluff area are a portable toilet and a shelter with picnic tables that is available to hikers when not already in use by the property owners. From the top of the bluff the segment drops precipitously on a series of switchbacks to the segment’s endpoint on the Swamplovers property access road.

\textit{Mobile Skills Crew project site, 2006}
Must-Have Ice Age Trail Books!

The Ice Age Trail Guidebook features more than 100 detailed segment-by-segment descriptions and maps to help you connect with the thousand-mile Ice Age National Scenic Trail. Written for those seeking a wide range of adventures on the Ice Age Trail.

The Ice Age Trail Atlas is a set of 105 color, shaded relief-style maps at 1:48,000 scale. In contrast to the smaller map excerpts in the Ice Age Trail Guidebook, each map in this package is printed on an 8.5” x 11” sheet and includes not just the Ice Age Trail route but also a wider snapshot of the area around the Trail.

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