

WINTER 2024

ICE AGE DRIFT



PUBLISHED BY THE DANE COUNTY CHAPTER
OF THE ICE AGE TRAIL ALLIANCE

www.dane.iceagetrail.org



IN THIS ISSUE:

- Read about the upcoming Annual Meeting & Election of Officers on **page 4**.
- Continue reading about honoring a dedicated volunteer on **page 2**.
- Learn about the safety improvements at Brooklyn on **page 3**.
- Interested in joining the Dane Drifters program? Details are on **page 2**.
- Meet one of our dedicated volunteers on **page 3**.
- A quick correction from a previous issue is on **page 2**.

A Bench to Honor a Dedicated Volunteer

By Ed Spoon, with help from Mike Livesey and Jon Bishop

Friends and family gathered September 6, 2023, on the Ice Age Trail's Lodi Marsh segment to laugh, tell stories and honor volunteer Jerry Pertzborn. A retired plumber, Jerry, age 77, is well known in the Lodi community. As a plumber on call 24/7, he supported the dairy industry for many years, specializing in installation and repair of well pumps. In 2010 Jerry began walking the Lodi Marsh segment daily. At some point, Jerry decided he'd like to help maintain the trail for everyone's enjoyment. His brother Scott said, "Upon retirement, Jerry redirected much of his energy from plumbing work to the Ice Age Trail." So, beginning in 2013, Jerry faithfully mowed the 4.3 trail miles in Dane county, no matter how hot the weather. In 2023 he decided to take it a bit easier but continues to mow a sizeable portion of the segment.

Shortly after beginning his daily hikes, Jerry began collecting yellow coneflower seeds, one of his favorite plants, in a planted prairie and distributing them in an old field nearby that was full of non-native invasive plants. Thirteen years later, the field has a thriving population of yellow coneflower, much to the delight of fellow hikers and especially the Ice Age Trail volunteers working to restore the area. As Jerry befriended the Ice Age Trail volunteers, he began coordinating his seed transfer efforts with them, moving other native species from the planted prairie to the old field. The field remains a work in progress but there is a visible difference thanks to Jerry's friendship with the other volunteers.



Continued on page 2

Dane Drifters Update for Winter 2024

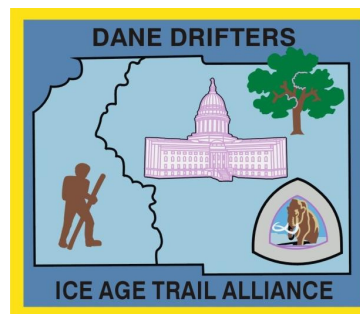
By Gary Wensing

We are completing year 10 of the Dane Drifters award. It's been quite a run with over 1125 registrations and over \$12,000 in registration fees and donations. Thank you to all those participating. Since our last newsletter, 28 more people have finished and received their patches/certificates, so a big shout out to them!

As a reminder, the Program is only \$10 for IATA members, \$12 for non-members and \$6 for a companion to a registered hiker. You'll 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.

Wouldn't you like to join them? Contact Gary Wensing to learn more at kensinginn@tds.net. Or see the Dane Co page on the IATA website (<http://dane.iceagetrail.org/home>). You can also register and pay on-line on the IATA website (for this and most other chapter hiking programs.) Whether you're working on the program or not, everyone is welcome to join us on group hikes on our trail segments. The group hikes are a great way to work on the program.

I'm hoping for some snow soon since we have some snowshoe hikes coming up in the next couple of months. Please join us January 13th at 1pm at Liebetrau Prairie on the Table Bluff segment on Pine Rd or February 18th at 2pm at Springfield Hill segment (more details will follow on the IATA website) and check the Ice Age Trail Alliance Rock and Dane County Chapters meet up group (<https://www.meetup.com/Ice-Age-Trail-Alliance-Rock-Dane-County-Chapter/>.)



Connectors & Segments

Alex Beideck, Madison, WI	Kathleen LaBeau, Sun Prairie, WI
Benjamin Calkins, Verona, WI	Lyra LaDousa, Fitchburg, WI
Emilie Cull, LaCrosse, WI	Audrey Liimatainen, Monroe, WI
Leslie de Lange, Verona, WI	Brian Nickel, Mayville, WI
Kristin Gorton, Fitchburg, WI	Emily Richardson, Oregon, WI
Steve Gorton, Fitchburg, WI	Greg Sellers, Naperville, IL
Amy Grunewald Mattison, Madison, WI	Michael Simon, Madison, WI
Roxane Kelley, Fond du Lac, WI	Sarah Simon, Madison, WI

Segments

Amy Betzelberger, Madison, WI	Ryan Matzuk, Madison, WI
Zachary Henak, Madison, WI	James Pederson, Oregon, WI
Corinne Henak, Madison, WI	Kristina Shumate, Mt Horeb, WI
Ezekiel Henak, Madison, WI	Brian Sweeney, Dane, WI
Obadiah Henak, Madison, WI	Katrina Sweeney, Dane, WI
Eriketa Henak, Madison, WI	Sara Tate-Pederson, Oregon, WI

Continued: A Bench to Honor a Dedicated Volunteer

By Ed Spoon, with help from Mike Livesey and Jon Bishop

To show appreciation for Jerry's dedication, Dane County volunteer Mike Livesey handcrafted a wooden trailside bench. Appropriately dubbed "Jerry's Bench," it is located on the Ice Age Trail at the intersection with a side trail leading to the Twin Pines trailhead. The bench bears a plaque with the inscription, "Honoring the contribution to the Ice Age Trail by volunteer extraordinaire Jerry Pertzborn, The Plumber of Lodi Marsh" and the slogan, "The Journey is the Destination."

Chapter volunteer Jon Bishop was MC of the informal gathering. Jon, who has led habitat restoration work at Lodi Marsh for 17 years, said, "Jerry has become a wonderful friend to all of us who volunteer at Lodi. We look forward to seeing him during our workdays and usually stop work to go visit with him when he goes by the work site. We feel blessed that Jerry has focused his passion on Lodi Marsh."

Jerry's wife Dorothy, brothers Scott, Mark, Dale and Bob, son Derek and their families joined with neighbors to celebrate Jerry's dedication to the Ice Age National Scenic Trail. Wildlife Biologist Julie Widholm joined the gathering, representing the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources which hosts the Ice Age Trail in the Lodi Marsh Wildlife Area.

Mea Culpa

By Tom Gross

It is very rare for me to receive any feedback from readers of the Drift. However, the Spring issue was a notable exception. Several people informed me that my picture of the bark of an "easy to identify" hackberry tree was not a hackberry. Totally my fault. I had to eat crow on that one; or was that a raven? Here is my humble correction



Walnut



Hackberry (really)

Volunteer Spotlight: Maria Verbrugge

By Lynsey Ray

Veterinarian Maria Verbrugge started hiking the Ice Age Trail back in 2011. In 2017, she was looking for outdoorsy things to do in her spare time, so she joined a mobile skills project in the Kettle Moraine South segment. Even though she hadn't used a power tool before, other volunteers began putting power tools in her hand and by the end of the event she had contributed to her first boardwalk. "People were so friendly. I was hooked."

Maria likes volunteering for the big events because they are lots of fun and social with so many people out there. Larger statewide events also get her out and further away from home to distant trail segments and parts of Wisconsin that she might not usually visit. That said, they might not be for everyone.

In addition to editing the guidebook while hiking, Maria recently started working on smaller local projects. She recently passed her test and certification to do chainsaw work. While newly certified, she wasn't sure where best to apply her new skills. Smaller local projects are more relaxed and provide opportunities to learn skills and develop mentoring relationships with more experienced volunteers.

For anyone who has been hiking and volunteering for a while, Maria encourages individuals to consider crew leader training. It's fun to spend a weekend with other people who are interested in learning new skills and learning about the trail. It can prepare you to lead a team for big MSC projects but also to lead smaller crews closer to home. Maria encourages new members or potential volunteers to "Try out lots of things -there are so many different ways to volunteer. There are some that require big time commitments, some are small. Some are really social. If you try something and it's not really your thing, there are lots of other ways to volunteer."

As for Maria, she volunteers because she likes going out and making the trail better, making the ecosystem healthier, and it's really fun. She says, "I love going out there and learning something I didn't know before, meeting new people and developing friendships and rapport."



Safety Improvement at Brooklyn

By Dan Wallace

In cooperation with the Dane County chapter of the IAT, the Friends of The Brooklyn SWA initiated an invasives removal project along the IAT. After several years of looking at the safety and environmental issues of a major thicket along Dane County Hwy D, where the IAT crosses the busy road, we gathered our volunteers and energy to improve the situation. We realize that we are not alone in dealing with honeysuckle, locust and buckthorn problems as many other groups are fortunately continuing the same important and much needed work. The project resulted in significant benefits beyond the obvious invasives removal as detailed below.

To accomplish our goal we: conducted safety briefings; reassessed the safety situation as we proceeded; used separate work zones for sawyers, haulers and the cut-and-treat team; and established a safe work program for the tractor/grapple that hauled the brush away. After two workdays, the invasive thicket was completely removed, while taking care to protect the native highbush cranberries and elderberries. The road safety situation was greatly improved with better sightlines for hikers and better visibility for drivers watching for hikers and pets. This project also cleared brush that could hide deer about to cross the road.

The project was made much easier since the snow had all melted in early March but returned with perfect timing for safe brush pile burning. Two days later the brush pile was burned well away from the highway. Roasted brats were enjoyed by some of the volunteers and Ken and Laura's scones were a real treat.

A special thanks to Ken, Laura, John, Amy, Bill and Tess for their good-natured cooperation and dedication to improving our native landscapes. Our team was so diligent with invasives removal that we even found the missing pair of \$65 sunglasses, buried in a brush pile.

Tess Mulrooney adds: Dan had placed a warning sign to the south of our work area, but we had a runner come south from Frenchtown Rd. He was a little confused to see so many people but we waved him on through.

This area has been a perennial garlic mustard spot which I helped maintain for about four years (2013-2017) before focusing my time on the Piller Road woods. I was happy to see this initial 1/4 mile of trail cleared out with lots more to do. Not being able to burn brush piles here has long been a problem, but having the ability to grapple-hook piles from a no-fire area to a friendly neighbor's property made this project possible.

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Dane County Chapter
dane.iceagetrail.org



*Thank you to Inkworks for helping
us print this newsletter.*

2024 Annual Meeting & Election of Officers

By Tom Gross

The Dane County Chapter will hold its annual meeting Live and In Person at the Cross Plains Public Library beginning at 5:45 p.m. on January 21, 2024. Enter through the side door on Jovina St. We will begin with a potluck with eating to begin about 6:15 followed by the business meeting.

The business portion of the meeting will involve approval of the annual budget and the election of officers for 2024. The nominating committee is pleased to announce that the incumbents have all agreed to continue serving. They are: Bob Kaspar, Coordinator; EJ Temme, Co-coordinator, Carrie Preston, Secretary, and Jamie Droessler, Treasurer. Nominations will also be accepted at the meeting. If the proposed candidate is not present at the meeting, their written permission must be presented in order that they be considered for an office. The proposed budget will be sent along with the agenda prior to the meeting.

Our speaker for the evening will be photographer Cameron Gillie. He has hiked the entire Trail and produced a book of pictures and stories about the places and people he encountered. You won't want to miss this. Read more about Cameron at: <https://thepinholething.com/cameron-gillie/>

Hope to see you there!!