



Ice Age Drift

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This Land is Your Land

Article by Tom Gross

If you have been hiking the Ice Age Trail in Dane County, you are familiar with many of the properties that the Trail passes through. There are several other properties that the Trail does not currently touch but which were purchased for the Trail and are likely to host the Trail in the future. Some of these properties contain interesting geological features or elevations affording expansive views. Most are available for you to visit, though some are less than fully accommodating. Let me introduce you to some of these properties.

Halfway Prairie County Wildlife Area: This 128-acre property straddles Matz Rd. just north of the main entrance to Indian Lake County Park on Hwy 19. Dane County bought the land 3 years ago for the Trail. It will eventually provide a critical link between Trail segments at Springfield Hill and Indian Lake. The property has the picturesque ruins of a stone house and some marked trails for hiking and snowshoeing on the west side of Matz Rd. On the east side, there are no trails (yet) but the land rises dramatically and offers fine views of Indian Lake in the foreground and Blue Mounds in the distance. It is not practical to access the east side.

The name "Halfway Prairie" is shared with of the creek that flows westward out of Indian Lake to eventually join Black Earth Creek in Mazomanie. Along the way, the creek passes the historic Halfway Prairie School a couple miles north of the village of Black Earth. It was given the name of Halfway Prairie because it was halfway between Mineral Point and Portage, a popular transportation route for early miners. A map can be found at: https://parks-lwr.d.countyofdane.com/documents/pdf/Halfway_Prairie_Wildlife_Area.pdf

Liebetrau: Another parcel purchased by Dane County for the Trail is found on the east side of Pine Rd., which is the first road to the east off Hwy KP north of Table Bluff Rd. The Dane County Chapter has been working at this site for many years, planting prairie and maintaining the prairie through controlled burns in the spring and weeding in the summer using hand tools or power brush cutters. Volunteers have also removed trees along old fence lines to facilitate burning and open up the distant views of Blue Mounds.

The easiest way to see this property today is to park along the road and walk around the perimeter on lanes that are occasion-

ally mowed and are used as fire breaks. The fairly large planted prairie is hard to miss just after the road straightens out. Very soon there should be a new parking area near the NW corner of the property and close to the driveway signed as Liebetrau Rd. Pin flags marking a new trail through the prairie



Matz farmhouse at Halfway Prairie // Photo by Tom Gross

have been installed but they are almost impossible to follow in the tall prairie this time of year. Eventually –perhaps next year – final approval will be given and the new loop trail will be created, largely by mowing. Ultimately a portion of the loop will become part of the IAT.

Cross Plains Ice Age Complex: If you have not discovered this huge, surprising area, it's about time you did. This area includes the Cross Plains Ice Age National Scientific Reserve* –an impressive name for an impressive geological feature. The Complex lies west of Timber Lane, north of Mineral Point Rd. and on both sides of Old Sauk Pass Rd., with several private property holdings within the area. Public land owners in the area include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Shoveler's Sink), Dane County (land south and west of the intersection of Timber Lane and Old Sauk Pass Rd.), the National Park Service (157 acres on the south side of Old Sauk Pass Rd., plus a residential lot on Timber Lane), and the Wisconsin DNR, the largest of the land owners with property both north of Old Sauk Pass Rd. and also west of the NPS property on the south side of Old Sauk Pass.

Wilkie gorge is the main attraction. The glacier stopped here, just west of the gorge's location. As the glacier began its retreat, the meltwater was walled in by higher land to the west and south and by the glacier to the east and north. The resulting string of lakes extended south beyond Shoveler's Sink –beyond the present Mineral Point Rd. At some point, the ice ceased to effectively block the outlet north to the Black Earth Creek valley and all that lake water let gravity take it rapidly downhill. The rushing water carved a V-shaped gorge several hundred feet long in the relatively soft limestone bedrock. The ice dam had been very close to the present location of Old Sauk Pass Rd. so the gorge is mainly north of the road.....continued on page 3

*There are eight other features of the IANSR including the well-known Horicon Marsh and Devil's Lake.

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See the Fall calendar insert for more fun activities!

New Trail Communities Celebrated

Article by Tom Gross and Dave Lonsdorf

The Ice Age Trail Alliance's Trail Community program celebrates formal partnerships between communities along the Ice Age Trail and the Alliance. The community businesses are promoted through the Alliance website and social media, with at least two "community oriented events" each year hosted by the local chapter. Additionally, the community enjoys easy access to a well-maintained Trail segment. The Alliance benefits from increased community awareness of the Trail and support for the Alliance's mission to create, support, and protect the Ice Age National Scenic Trail. Hikers benefit from increased services (lodging, food, laundry) for them as they go through the area.

Verona: On May 6th, community members of all ages gathered at Badger Prairie County Park in Verona to celebrate the Town and City's designation as the Alliance's 7th Ice Age Trail Community. The event featured hikes, activities for youth put on by the Verona PTO and a ribbon cutting ceremony. Almost 100 people attended the event which featured a Tyke Hike led by Lodi Valley Chapter member Patti Herman, speeches by Verona Mayor Jon Hochkammer, Town Chair Mark Geller, and Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Le Jordan.

After the ceremonies, a bus took almost 60 people to Prairie Moraine County Park for a leisurely five-mile hike back to Badger Prairie County Park. This hike was led by Chapter member David Lonsdorf and featured several stops highlighting the Trail's glacial geology and almost a mile of newly re-routed Trail and restored landscape.

Cross Plains: On July 14 and 15, the village of Cross Plains celebrated its status as a new Trail Community. The 14th was a community work day with two groups helping to widen a section of the Trail corridor. Several dozen members of the Stingrays Swim Team spent a couple of hours removing the crowding brush and a smaller group of adults spent the day similarly engaged. The adult crew enjoyed a lunch provided on site and prepared by yet another group of volunteers. Brats, beer, and beats brought the day to a close. The Lions cooked the brats, Esser's Brewery provided the beer, and the Northern Hooks provided the beats to entertain the crowd while the children made s'mores.

On Saturday, the focus was on fun. In the morning, the National Park Service, Trout Unlimited, and the Black Earth Creek Watershed Association set up information tents, there was a tyke hike to the library, and a guided hike on the proposed route for the Trail heading south from the village. In the afternoon, there was a guided tour of the Swamplovers Preserve and a hike on the Table Bluff segment.



(Left) Jon Hochkammer, City of Verona Mayor, Le Jordan, Verona Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Director, Mark Geller, Town Chair, and Chapter representative David Lonsdorf participate in the ribbon-cutting ceremony. // Photo by Amy Lord; (Right) The crowd enjoys music by the Northern Hooks at the Cross Plains Trail Community celebration. // Photo by Mary DeVitt

Meet a Member: Gary Wensing and Kristi Kenyon

Article by Amy Lord

What first brought you to the organization?

Kristi first heard about the Ice Age Trail in February 2008. Irene Cline, Sharon Bloodgood and Barbara Voight (all in their 80s) came to talk to the Dairyland Walkers about their experience hiking the entire trail. It was an entertaining and educational presentation and it inspired Kristi, "If they can do it, I can do it!"

How long have you been volunteering with the Ice Age?

Gary's first volunteer opportunity was when the Cross Plains Lions Club worked with the Ice Age Trail Alliance moving their office from the downtown Madison to Cross Plains in June 2008. Back then, the IATA was the Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation.

Gary, Kristi and their son Kenyon attended a volunteer opportunity in 2009. They arrived around 1:00 p.m. on a weekend afternoon and the crew had finished and all left except leader Tom Gross. After a short chat, they pulled tools back out of his car and went back to the worksite. There were about 100 feet of trail left to smooth out and that's what they finished.

What inspires you to be involved or make the trail/organization better?

Gary and Kristi really like that it's a national scenic trail but it's local, right in our backyard. They are helping preserve land and natural areas for their children, grandchildren and future generations.

Are there any special projects you are involved with? Or projects you are proud of and would like to share?

Gary and Kristi are very proud of the Dane Drifters program. They had seen the idea of hiking programs in other local chapters, and asked themselves why the Dane County Chapter didn't have something in place. Both Gary and Kristi really liked the idea and thought it would do well for our chapter, but a leader was needed to take the project from idea to reality. Gary and Kristi decided it would be them. The program was approved by the chapter board and they started to promote Dane Drifters in January 2014.

Gary and Kristi lead multiple hikes throughout the year to introduce people to the Ice Age Trail here in the Dane County area. There are now over 200 hikers registered with Dane Drifters with a growing list of hikers who have completed the program.

Most favorite trail section... or maybe top 3.

Table Bluff (Cross Plains) and Dells of Eau Claire (east of Wausau) are two of their favorite sections of the trail. Gary and Kristi also have been to the two ends of the trail – Saint Croix Falls (western terminus) and Potawatomi State Park (eastern terminus).

What advice/recommendation would you give to a new member on how to get involved and how to better enjoy the trail?

Gary and Kristi love introducing people to the Ice Age Trail through leading hikes! They want hikes to be a positive and memorable experience so people get excited and want to get more involved with the Ice Age Trail Alliance. Don't be intimidated by a workday, there are many ways to get involved and all skill levels are welcome! Pick an event that fits your schedule, and go!



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Dane Drifter Update

Article by Gary Wensing

The cooler temperatures and terrific colors of fall on the Ice Age Trail approach. If you haven't finished up yet, now is a great time to get some hikes in. And if you haven't joined us yet, no better time than now to join the Dane Drifters Hiking Program. For a small registration cost (\$10 for IATA members, \$12 for non-members and \$6 for a companion to a registered hiker), you can 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.

Check out our chapter's page on in IAT website <http://www.iceagetrail.org/volunteer/chapters/dane-county/> to learn more and find a link to the registration form.

The program started at the beginning of the 2014 and we now have over 200 people signed up so far from four states (WI, IL, MI and OH). Ninety have completed all their hikes and received their rewards, but remember, there's no deadline to complete, so keep pecking away! Since our last newsletter, fourteen more (plus our second canine) have finished. Congratulations to these hikers:

Wouldn't you like to join them? Contact Gary Wensing at kensinginn@tds.net with questions.

Check the enclosed calendar to see what we have planned for the coming months.

Congratulations to the following Dane Drifters!

Name	City	Distance†
Sue Poehlman	Middleton, WI	TS
Anne Frihart	Dane, WI	TS
Colleen Mortell	Madison, WI	TS
Lisa Rondini	Madison, WI	TS
James Shortslef	Waukesha, WI	TC
George Bane	Roscoe, IL	TC
Violet Bane	Roscoe, IL	TC
Dolly McNulty	Two Rivers, WI	TC
Ruth Holly	Two Rivers, WI	TC
Donna Pederson	DeForest, WI	TC
Brian Miles	Madison, WI	TS
Lindsey Peterson & Sela	Verona, WI	TS
Jean Broge	DeForest, WI	TC

†TC: Completed trail segments and connecting routes;
TS: Completed trail segments.



Join the Dane Drifters and then hike all the beautiful IAT segments in Dane County. You'll earn this cool patch and a certificate of completion.

...Continued from page 1.

Social trails, made by repeated use rather than by planning and construction, offer easy access to the gorge. In the spring, wildflowers proliferate here: hepatica, bloodroot, Dutchman's breeches, and pasque flowers can be found here in relative abundance. Volunteers from the Chapter have been working here for many years, planting the prairie and maintaining it through fire and weeding, and removing invasives from the steep slopes. There are also a couple of loop trails on the NPS land south of Old Sauk Pass Rd. affording views of (what else) Blue Mounds, and also the ancient lake beds now mostly used as cropland so some imagination is useful to visualize the lakes that once stood here.

If you drive Mineral Point Rd. west from Madison, over the Johnstown Moraine and past Timber Lane, you see Shoveler's Sink on your right. Perhaps you have seen the sign but never gave much thought to the name. Here you can find a sinkhole that water from the lake disappears into! Even if you are not into bird-watching, you may want to visit Shoveler's Sink just to see

the water disappear. The sink hole is off the northeast corner of the lake. It's a fairly short walk almost due west from the small parking area on Timber Lane, though there is no trail and you need to do a bit of exploring. After passing a grove of trees, you arrive at a steep sandstone cliff and look down on the sink below. A small stream brings water from the lake to the sink.

Felton: This 8 acre plot is the real orphan of the group, though again the Chapter has spent time here controlling mostly garlic mustard, and more recently removing honeysuckle, in part to facilitate access to the garlic mustard. It is located on the south side of Mid-Town Rd. near the intersection with Saracen Way. There are no trails on this property and minimal signage, if any. It would provide a connection between the west end of the Madison section at Woods Rd. (University Ridge Golf Course) and the Valley View segment. The City of Verona is in the process of planning development in the IAT corridor west of Woods Rd. with IATA staff and volunteers advocating for an adequate corridor for the Trail. Felton could come into play in the foreseeable future.

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Dane County Chapter
www.dane.iceagetrail.org



Fall is a great time to get out and enjoy the Ice Age Trail

The Friends of Indian Lake are hosting the 8th annual Indian Lake Trail Run on Saturday, October 7. The event will feature a 7k, 12k, and 1k Kid's Fun Run at Indian Lake County Park. Pre-race registration is required with no day-of registration available. For more information, including directions to the park, course maps, updates, and other news, visit www.friendsofindianlake.org.

Join Fontana Sports for the Wisconsin Fall Color Run on Saturday, October 21. Enjoy one of three distances: 2, 4 or 8 Mile Run/Walk on the Ice Age Trail on the Gibraltar Segment in Lodi. \$15 from each registration will go directly to the Ice Age Trail Alliance. Register online at www.fontanasports.com/info/events.

Be Free on Saturday, November 11 as a part of the Force of Nature: Trailtessa events. Join ultrarunner Jonnah Perkins and Brenda Bland on the trail to enjoy parts of the Verona segment. Beginner and seasoned trail runners are welcome with a 6.6-mile or a 10-mile option, along with an easy pace so no one is left behind. Registration is open now at www.iceagetrail.org/trailtessa-force-of-nature.

More member-led hikes are included on the calendar insert. Join us!

