Everything We’re About

I was tempted to write about wind and rain after the rough weather and resulting trail damage we experienced this past summer. After very little thought, the story wasn’t the weather, but rather the response – it’s everything we’re all about: Resilience.

Within a day, via various Alliance channels, our volunteers were reporting in about obstacles users would encounter along the Trail. Shortly after that, volunteers began to organize sawyer crews to respond to the enormous challenge of clearing the trails. Volunteer-led crews quickly spread out to Langlade, Waupaca, Portage, and Polk Counties. They worked in hot, muggy, mosquito-swarmed conditions day after day. These folks, in many cases, were facing the same challenges – downed trees and storm damage – at their homes and within their own communities, yet they choose to drive across the state to where the Trail needed them most. Incredible!

On the heels of our timely volunteer crews, Alliance staff joined the efforts and provided additional manpower, support, resources, and most importantly, appreciation.

Your rapid response and resilience, in the face of these storms, serve as the perfect example of where and what we are today as an organization, and it points to the bright future that lies before us.

Our six decades together have served us well. In the not-so-distant past, we did our best, and accomplished much as smaller local and regional groups. Now, we are an organized, well-developed team. We work with heart and soul to achieve goals and continue to set new ones for ourselves. Teamwork and resilience have carried the day. It’s why our history is marked by far more successes than tribulations.

Our late past President, Cora Dversdall, always encouraged me to celebrate something at every Board meeting and to do so regularly in between. So, with that in mind, and with the words my daughter texts to me from time to time…Woo-Hoo!

You are everything we are all about. Thank all of you for your support.
**OUR mission**
The mission of the Ice Age Trail Alliance is to create, support, and protect a thousand-mile footpath tracing Ice Age formations across Wisconsin.

**ON THE COVER:** The Table Bluff Segment blanketed by snow and enjoyed by happy hikers turned snowshoers! Photo by Kris Van Handel.

The Ice Age Trail Alliance (IATA) publishes *Mammoth Tales* for its members and friends. Together with the National Park Service, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, local units of government, businesses, and volunteers from around the state, the IATA works to preserve Wisconsin’s glacial heritage through the development of the Ice Age National and State Scenic Trail.

The IATA welcomes your comments. Email them to lysianne@iceagetrail.org, call us at (800) 227-0046, or send them to Mammoth Tales, c/o IATA, 2110 Main Street, PO Box 128, Cross Plains, WI 53528.

Editor: Lysianne Unruh


Printed with soy-based ink on 10% recycled, Wisconsin-sourced paper.

Designer: Lynn LaSpisa

*Mammoth Tales* template and IATA logo design by Celtic, Inc., Brookfield, WI - (262) 789-7630 - www.celticinc.com

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**MAMMOTH TALESS**

Fall-Winter 2019...
SUPERINTENDENT’S corner

Safety First!

Greetings, everyone!

For those I haven’t yet had the pleasure to meet in person, my name is Eric Gabriel, Superintendent for the Ice Age National Scenic Trail. I’m very happy to have this opportunity to share thoughts on some topics that are important to us all.

In the months ahead, I’ll be joining you in selected editions of Mammoth Tales to speak about a variety of things such as Trail Protection, Trail Corridor Advancement, and Public Engagement to name a few. In this first message, though, I’d like to focus on the topic of Safety—and the safety of our National Park Service Volunteers-In-Parks in particular.

The National Park Service (NPS) has always had various safety standards and protocols in place, as does the Ice Age Trail Alliance—and with good reason. There are best practices for using certain tools and equipment, lifting heavy objects, working around environmental hazards, and so on. Those policies are all important and integral parts of any overall safety program, “Tools in the Tool Kit” if you will.

And yet, even with those safety policies in place, the NPS safety record was not where it needed to be. What seems to have been missing from our national safety programs, until recent years, was consideration of the critical “Human Factor” in safety. Beginning in 2010, the National Park Service implemented a program called NPS Operational Leadership, and it has made marked improvements in our agency accident and injury rates every year since.

Briefly described, NPS Operational Leadership is a 16-hour facilitated training course that explores the Human Factor of safety—examining how individuals perceive risk, how stress impacts our decision-making process, how we communicate with others, how hazards can be mitigated to acceptable levels, and so on.

Ice Age Trail Alliance volunteers are fortunate to have access to the core learning objectives of NPS Operational Leadership by participating in the Trail Safe! video series found on our park website. Please take a moment to explore these important safety videos—it’s your way of gaining access to the same material all NPS employees receive—to help create a safer work experience for us all. Trail Safe! can be found at https://www.nps.gov/iatr/trail-safe.htm.

In closing, please accept my sincere thanks and admiration for all of the diverse skill sets and success stories you each bring to the Ice Age Trail. It is an honor to be associated with such dedicated and passionate volunteers!

The safety of Ice Age Trail Alliance volunteers is paramount to our mission. “Lessons Learned” is a proven method of sharing important safety messages. Based upon real-life incidents, Lessons Learned examines root causes of why an accident or injury happened, and identifies corrective actions to reduce the chance of future accidents. Please take a moment to visit the Lessons Learned electronic library at https://www.iceagetrail.org/volunteer/resources-volunteer-leaders/ for ideas on how to keep yourself safer in your work, as well as important messages to share with others during project safety briefings.

Thank you!
**Tale of Two Projects**

*DAVE CALIEBE*
Trail Program Specialist

The bridge offers views of majestic oaks, the gorge, and the rolling hills beyond. Photo by Dave Caliebe.

**Ice Age Interpretive Site**
Dane County
June 19-23
Participants: 165
Volunteer Hours: 3,751

**PROJECT PARTNERS:**
- REI
- National Park Service
- National Park Foundation
- Sitka Salmon Shares
- Granite Gear
- Jones Dairy Farm
- Pine River Cheese
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
- Delta Beer Lab
- Dane County; Dane County Capital
- Infrastructure grant
- Plastic Ingenuity

Straddling the line dividing the Driftless and glaciated areas, the June Mobile Skills Crew project outside of Cross Plains felt like two distinct projects. One focused on a loop trail around the meltwater-formed Upper Wilkie Gorge while the second drifted around sandstone outcroppings that had escaped the pulverizing effects of the glacier.

Along the loop trail, the effects of vast amounts of rushing water have been revealed through the dedicated efforts of Dane County Chapter members and a team from Integrated Restoration. They removed the once dense mass of buckthorn and brush. It was easy to stop, put down your McLeod and admire the giant oaks dotting the gorge. Crews in the gorge worked diligently to construct two boardwalks, a massive bridge, and fine-tune tread that had been worked on during the previous year and a half.

Near the sandstone outcroppings, the southern sweep of the Trail through the Driftless didn’t look too intimidating to construct, but once crews began to use McLeod’s and pick mattocks, the delicate balance of trail grade and plumbing became apparent. The anticipated popularity of the new Trail forced crews to think bigger, and longer term, to combat potential problems caused by steady foot traffic.

Similar to the brute force the glacier used to grind down and flatten the land, mechanical advantage of two skid steers helped clear the way for this new section of Trail. These machines aided the work by moving piles of stone and gravel from one end of the gorge to the other end and by moving logs for native timber retaining walls. The Alliance’s new retention walls.

Vermeer made quick work of the holes for the bridge and boardwalk pilings.

The Trail which connects the two project locations passes an old homestead that the National Park Service is renovating before it trends upwards, skirting the old barn. Here it meanders to the top of a grassy hill where the major prominences in Southern Wisconsin are visible - the Baraboo Hills, Blue Mound, and the many hills and valleys of the Driftless.

The Trail, as it courses and grows through Wisconsin, bridges many streams and rivers and straddles ecological landscapes. It brings rural and urban communities together as it winds through countryside and Trail Communities. And here, at the Ice Age Interpretive site, it features the dramatic dichotomy of the glaciated and Driftless regions.
A Favorite Time of Year!

ALAINA DEDO
Field Operations Coordinator

Ice Age Trail University (IAT-U)
Sauk County
July 17 – 21
Participants: 108
Volunteer Hours: 1,500

PROJECT PARTNERS:
REI
National Parks Service
National Park Foundation
Sitka Salmon Shares
Granite Gear
Jones Dairy Farm
Pine River Cheese
Alliant Energy Foundation
Riverland Conservancy
Village of Merrimac
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

This event was made possible by a grant from the National Park Foundation through generous support of The Coca-Cola Company.

As someone who is still considered fairly green to the Ice Age Trail Alliance and Mobile Skills Crew events, I have to say Ice Age Trail University, or IAT-U, is one of my favorite times of year. It’s a time to slow down and take notes, a time to brush the dust off of some skills we haven’t used in a while, and a time to grow as stewards by learning and challenging ourselves with new techniques and ideas.

During the hottest and most stormy week of the summer, classes indoors, inside a barn, or under a tent were welcomed by over-heated volunteers and trainers. The agenda for the week included some classic courses such as Signage 101 and CPR/First Aid, but this year we chose to shake things up a bit and include some courses never taught before. Intro to Fire, Inventoruing Infrastructure, and Stone Treadwork were some of the newest offerings whose rosters were full shortly after being announced.

Over four days, trainers shared their knowledge and experience to curious and engaged volunteers. For the majority of the courses, the classroom was almost entirely in the field where participants could practice their new-found skills in real time. With courses being stretched out over an entire day, there was plenty of time to dive deep by asking questions and having group discussions. Intro to Fire gave participants a view into the reasons behind prescribed burns, the various considerations that go into a prescribed burn and what issues may arise. Intro to Camp Chef gave curious folks a glimpse into the camp kitchen at MSC events, what it means to cook for large groups of people, along with practice in preparing two recipes for dinner Saturday night. Although Stone Treadwork and Plumbing were rained out at the end of the day, participants were still able to leave with hands-on experience from the Trail. Inventoruing Infrastructure taught participants how to use an app to take inventory of the structures along the entire Trail, which is a goal of ours to complete by the end of 2020.

The week was full of memories and as always; there is never a dull moment when dozens of volunteers come together to inspire, teach one another, and promote the dedication, commitment, and community that is the Ice Age Trail.
Another Mile of Trail Emerges

CHRISTI EHLER
Trailbuilding Volunteer
Oconomowoc, WI

Ringle Segment
Marathon County
August 13 – 18
Participants: 115
Volunteer Hours: 3,951

PROJECT PARTNERS:
REI
National Park Service
National Park Foundation
Sitka Salmon Shares
Granite Gear
Jones Dairy Farm
B.A. & Esther Greenheck Foundation
Judd S. Alexander Foundation
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Delta Dental
Marathon County Solid Waste Management
Jennie-O Turkey
Pine River Cheese

This event was made possible by a grant from the National Park Foundation through generous support of The Coca-Cola Company.

Sometimes it’s hard to see the trail for the tread. On the Ringle Segment, the terrain persists in posing conundrum after conundrum. Nests of rocks, like clutches of fossilized dinosaur eggs. Six-inch-thick nets of tangled roots, thin as spaghetti yet tough as rope. Solve one conundrum, another pops up. The same few feet surrounding one yellow pin flag changes a dozen times before approaching anything walkable. Forget to look up now and then and you quickly lose sight of how one patch of ground fits into a 200-foot section of new Ice Age Trail, much less the whole 1,000 miles.

Fortunately, it only takes one person asking “Have you seen the loppers?” or calling out “Coming through!” to remind you of your role in the larger team of Mobile Skills Crew (MSC) volunteers.

The August MSC event—the third this year at Ringle—took crews deep into a nine-mile-square area with limited vehicle access. Walks to and from the worksite were long and electronic communications spotty. Nonetheless, two teams forged toward each other, section by section, to connect trail completed in April and May at the segment's southern and northern ends.

Another mile of finished trail emerged as bucket by bucket, volunteers carried off duff and carried in fill—mineral soil from nearby borrow pits and crushed granite from offsite. Stone by stone, they built walls to hold trail on steep slopes and stairs to ease steep tread. Board by board, they laid down five new structures for wetland crossings.

Thursday and Saturday, first-time volunteers teemed up onto a single crew as participants in a new Trailbuilding Basics class. Working in the field side by side with others of a similar experience level, they applied their newly-acquired tread- and stone-work skills with energy and enthusiasm that permeated well beyond their designated trail section.

Three days out of six, it didn’t rain; and, the temperature stayed relatively comfortable. Mosquitoes, according to one assessment, ranked about four out of ten. During downtime at base camp, Dells of the Eau Claire Park, volunteers explored rock formations and swam in the river. Evenings were cool enough to make a campfire welcome and clear enough for stargazing.

When the project wrapped up at noon on Sunday, four miles of the reimagined Ringle Segment were open for hikers, complete with a new dispersed camping area, the twentieth such feature statewide.
This Mobile Skills Crew (MSC) project began many years ago before we even knew we would be a part of it. Some ice, sand, and a few rocks traveled across land and arrived at a place that would someday be named Wisconsin. From an Ice Age Trail Alliance trailbuilding standpoint, we arrived here thanks to recent land purchases by the DNR and input from the property manager and Waushara County Chapter members.

Volunteers have their own stories about how they arrived here. For example, some years ago, Jerry Pfeifer was waiting for a friend and picked up a copy of Mammoth Tales off a table. With his interest piqued, he arrived at his first project in 2012. Fast-forming friendships with other MSC volunteers encouraged him to stay.

Mobile Skills Crew events are a collaboration of partners, and this one enjoyed broad representation. From left to right: Jenny Addis, Waushara County Chapter Coordinator; Eric Gabriel, NPS, Superintendent for the Ice Age National Scenic Trail; Jarrod Kehring, DNR Property Manager for Bohn Lake; Rod Bartlow, Washington/Ozaukee County Chapter Leader; State Senator, Patrick Testin of Stevens Point (District 24); and A.J. McCaskey, Publicity Coordinator for the Waushara County Chapter. Photo by Dave Caliebe.

How We Arrived Here

TRACY MENCHACA
Trailbuilding Volunteer, Oshkosh, WI

Bohn Lake & Greenwood Segments
Waushara County
September 17-22
Participants: 142
Volunteer Hours: 3, 280

PROJECT PARTNERS:
REI
National Parks Service
National Park Foundation
Sitka Salmon Shares
Granite Gear
Jones Dairy Farm
Pine River Cheese
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Village of Hancock

This event was made possible by a grant from the National Park Foundation through generous support of The Coca-Cola Company.

First-time volunteer, Barb Everson-Bunton, hailing from Trempealeau, WI, found herself assigned to assist in the kitchen. She handily took on the job of slathering spinach-artichoke dip and hummus onto slices of bread as part of the sandwich assembly line. Photo by Tracy Menchaca.

His talents as a leader were quickly recognized by others, and with a bit of encouragement, he became a trained Crew Leader.

We all take away something different from participating in MSC events. For some it’s the sense of accomplishment, for others it’s the friendship, or even the knowledge that a great sandwich, salty snacks, fruit, and cheese sticks will be delivered to the Trail at noon; our bodies and souls well-fed. Some take away the immersive nature of the work and the ability to get to know a segment of the Ice Age Trail so intimately that we feel we know the rocks, soil, and welcoming aroma of the place that we can re-walk it in our dreams.

With this as a background, volunteers opened 0.7 miles of new Ice Age Trail, built a loop trail around Bohn Lake, officially opened one new parking lot, and laid the groundwork for a second lot. Stones were moved to create a rock garden, sand and soil was shaped to build new Trail, and the extreme high water of the lake was bridged with a new 160-foot long boardwalk.

MSC events are not a one-sided affair though, volunteers share their wealth of knowledge, skills learned over a lifetime, their kindness, and of course, dozens and dozens of cookies. As one volunteer put it, “MSC is the BEST Family Reunion that we work the hardest at!”

At base camp, sky gazers were treated to beautiful sun rises and sets of the pinkest kind. The stars shared their splendor, with the International Space Station, Milky Way, and shooting stars adding flare. Volunteers huddled around the campfire in the evenings or coffee pot in the mornings and continued the shared experience of building friendships and new Ice Age Trail.
Welcome Alaina!

Hola, my name is Alaina Dedo (Uh-layne-uh Dead-oh) and I am one of the newest members of the Ice Age Trail Alliance (IATA) family. I first began my working relationship with IATA seasonally in 2018 as the Trail Program’s Trail Operations Assistant, and began my salaried stint February 19th, 2019 as Field Operations Coordinator. My main responsibilities include supporting our Seasonal Trail Crew, assisting with Mobile Skills Crew events, managing and maintaining tools and equipment, along with representing the IATA at workshops, meetings, and other events.

I look forward to all things Trail related as the seasons change. What I enjoy most about my job is going out into the field, facilitating service learning events, and being at Mobile Skills Crew (MSC) events. I feel so fulfilled after a long day of good old-fashioned manual labor.

My first introduction to the Ice Age Trail began on a backpacking trip many moons ago. After working for a couple of years on trail crews, my second, and more personal introduction, began the summer of 2017. I showed up to the Ringle Segment MSC on a wet and rainy morning ready to work and left that day with a smile on my face and a full heart having set a few stone steps – my favorite type of trailwork. Little did I know, later in the year while leading a WisCorps crew, that I would have the chance to work with IATA again in the reroute of the Firth Lake Segment – one of my favorite segments, especially in autumn.

I am now a Southern Wisconsin transplant living in Madison, but I’ve got a soft spot in my heart for the Northwoods. My family’s roots come from da U.P. and I grew up in Central Wisconsin, as the crow flies from the Ringle Segment. When I’m not working, you can find me outside tending to my garden, sketching up landscaping plans, reading about plants, cooking delicious vegan food, going to shows, kayaking, running, working on home improvement projects, and riding on the queen seat of my spouse Greg’s chopper motorcycle.
Outside Every Day: Kids Spend Their Summer on the Trail

ABERDEEN LEARY, OUTREACH, EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM INTERN

When the students at Kennedy Heights Community Center in Madison signed up for summer camp, it’s safe to say not one of them planned on spending every day of their summer outdoors. Yet, as part of the Center’s new initiative, they got to do just that!

Kennedy Heights Community Center is located on the East side of Madison, about a six-minute drive northwest of Warner Park. The Center’s mission is to “create a community support network for low to moderate income families,” while providing resources for programs that can help to improve the lives of all community members.

Each summer, part of this community support manifests as a daily summer camp for students from first through eighth grade. Five days a week, students from the neighborhood meet at the Center from noon to five for lunch and guided learning and activities, typically ranging from computer work to arts and crafts. However, this summer, Kennedy Heights educators decided to change it up. They made the conscious decision to plan programming that got the students outside for the majority of the day... Every. Single. Day.

When considering this new initiative, it’s important to understand the income demographic of Madison, Wisconsin. The average income for families in Madison is roughly $54,000 a year, which means an average of 16.9% of the population lives below the poverty line in most of the city. However, when looking specifically at the Kennedy Heights neighborhood, the median household income is just under $31,000, and the number of residents living below the poverty line jumps remarkably to 27.7%, over 10% higher than the city’s average!

This matters when we look at what’s known about lower-income communities in relation to outdoor time. Lower-income neighborhoods typically consist of more apartments, meaning fewer backyards for kids to spend their time in.

Some Kennedy Heights elementary schoolers pose after conquering their first hike at Badger Prairie County Park. Photo by Aberdeen Leary.
There also tends to be less safe space in general for kids to play outside, with busy roads taking the place of parks and playground equipment. Further, because of the lower wages, parents in these neighborhoods tend to work more hours, meaning kids spend more time in the home.

This new outdoor learning initiative Kennedy Heights devised was created to combat these issues head on. When planning summer programming, they decided to designate each weekday to a new outdoor activity. This is where the Ice Age Trail comes in! While certain days were set aside for swimming and others for canoeing lessons, the Ice Age Trail took over Tuesdays. Each Tuesday, students and teachers hopped in their big white van and drove to a new segment of the Ice Age Trail that the students would spend the afternoon exploring.

As the Outreach, Education and Engagement Program Intern for the Ice Age Trail Alliance, I got the job of working with these brand-new hikers... and I mean brand new. When I first met our hikers, I asked the elementary schoolers if anyone knew what “hiking” was. You could hear the crickets chirping (literally, since we were in a prairie). Most were surprised when I said, “hiking is walking, just more fun!”

The first goal of our hiking trips was to remain local. After a classroom presentation in late June to prepare the students for what they’d see on the Ice Age National Scenic Trail, our weekly hikes began at Badger Prairie County Park in Verona. This was followed by the Cross Plains Segment, where the students got their first taste of a tough ascent as we climbed uphill off of Hickory Hill Street, an area of much grumbling for the middle schoolers and a race to the top for the much more energetic elementary students. Our third hiking location took the students to Indian Lake County Park, where they discovered frogs of every shade of green and wound their way around massive puddles after a heavy rain. Finally, our Tuesday hikes culminated in a picnic lunch and hike at Devil’s Lake State Park, where the students proudly used their Ice Age Trail bandanas as makeshift umbrellas to fight off some unfortunate rain.

Over the course of our hiking adventures, the students worked hard to accomplish our second goal for the summer: building hiking stamina. From under a mile at Badger Prairie County Park to two-and-a-half miles at Devil’s Lake, the students became faster and more confident hikers with every visit to the Trail. This was easily seen when the students who had attended all of the hikes were surpassing me by our Devil’s Lake trip!

Our third and final goal (beyond having fun, of course!) was to get the students learning about the outdoors. Through various activities, they activated their senses and observed what they could see, hear, smell, and feel on the Trail. This included identifying flowers, counting the natural sounds they heard, and drawing and painting small features that don’t always get noticed. We had thrilling discussions about how big a forest might have to be to support a bear and why nature might smell a little like cleaning supplies.

By the end of the summer, more than thirty new students had gotten out on the Ice Age Trail. Hikers who attended every trip covered almost nine miles of Trail! Together we explored four new Wisconsin locations that the students may never have seen otherwise and learned just how much you can see in your own backyard.
Where Ecology Meets People’s Experience

CHRISTI EHLER

With White Penstemon in full bloom along the Trail corridor, Gary Werner (left) emphasizes the magnitude of the conservation work that’s been done on the Holmes Preserve as he and Tom Wise (right) walk-and-talk with Christi Ehler (center). Photo by Kevin Thusius.

“The Ice Age National Scenic Trail is where ecology meets people’s experience,” says Kevin Thusius, the Ice Age Trail Alliance’s (IATA) Director of Land Conservation. Managing Ice Age Trail lands for plant and wildlife habitat and managing them for aesthetics go hand-in-hand, because the more biodiverse a landscape is, the more it contains what people go into nature to see, hear, and feel. A growing number of people, it seems, are particularly drawn to places where they might witness evidence of our ability to repair past environmental damage and create a healthier future for the earth. Ice Age Trail (IAT) segments where there are ongoing, large-scale efforts to rebuild ecological diversity are becoming some of the Trail’s most popular hikes.

One of several in the Dane County area is the Table Bluff Segment near Cross Plains. At its northern end, the segment traverses the Holmes Preserve, 73 acres of former farmland the Alliance acquired in 1992.

Dane County IATA Chapter members Gary Werner and Tom Wise became involved in restoration work here about 25 years ago and have remained active up to the present.

On a recent hike through the preserve, Kevin, Tom, and Gary highlighted some of the accomplishments here, many earned through trial and error. They also spoke about ways that the endeavors at Holmes are representative of conservation work Trail-wide.

The goal at Holmes is to bring back—as much as possible—the oak savanna ecosystem known to have existed across Southern Wisconsin until the early nineteenth century. The landscape described in historical accounts corresponds with a simplified definition for savanna: prairie beneath sporadic trees. Recreating this landscape provides hikers with a markedly different experience than the forested IAT segments of Northern Wisconsin. In a savanna, long scenic views remain open in all seasons.

Along the Table Bluff Segment, the geology of the surrounding Driftless Area is a constant presence.

Work at Holmes combines elements of prairie and woodland conservation. Scant remnants of Southern Wisconsin’s original vegetation still survive here and at several nearby locations—mostly on the sides of steep moraines that escaped plowing and overgrazing. These remnants helped inform decisions about which native species to reintroduce.

One of the first things Gary, Tom, and fellow volunteers did here was plant dozens of burr oak seedlings. Now 12 feet or taller, the oaks stand surrounded by native prairie grasses and flowering plants. This sunny morning in late June, the prairie is in a white phase: White Penstemon, White Baptisia, and yarrow are blooming. Native sunflowers add a touch of bright yellow.
During the years leading up to the first prairie seeding in 2000, volunteers concentrated on clearing the land of undesirable plant species: aggressive non-natives like buckthorn and honeysuckle, plus native species that don’t belong in this ecosystem, such as red cedar. As we make our way along the mown trail, Gary spies a few curly dock plants and out of habit, plucks them up, roots and all. “Persistence pays,” he says. Each year brings a noticeable reduction of invasive herbaceous plants as their seedbanks in the soil decrease. Consistently cutting woody plants in late summer has significantly weakened their regrowth in subsequent years. Brush-cutting, grubbing, mowing, and spot-treating with herbicide all play a vital role in controlling unwanted vegetation. Nevertheless, Tom and Gary emphasize that none of these strategies can match the effectiveness of fire.

Fire not only suppresses plants that don’t belong in the savanna ecosystem, it can invigorate those that do. Having developed in the presence of periodic fire, Southern Wisconsin’s native plant communities—and even some insects—are adapted to it. And when used over and over in one area, fire becomes more efficient. At the Holmes Preserve, repeatedly running fire from the prairie into the small oak-hickory woodland on the property will eventually create a more gradual transition between the two areas. Fire-intolerant cherry and box elder ultimately won’t survive, but flowering plants like Shooting Star and Dutchman’s Breeches will thrive in their absence. Just inside the woods, there are signs that the land’s own natural processes are beginning to help rebuild themselves. Tom identifies nearly a dozen species of native herbaceous plants at the foot of one white oak tree. He gestures toward a patch of White Penstemon blooming in dappled shade a few yards away. “The wind planted that,” he says. “We didn’t.”

But a recreated ecosystem will always require some level of help from humans to maintain it. In that sense, Kevin likens restored landscapes along the IAT to a “living museum.” Most ecosystems are too complex to replicate as they originally existed, so the best we can do is curate them to reflect our current level of understanding of how they function. Even so, restoration work allows Trail users to glimpse a relatively accurate portrayal of the land’s history and the life that once flourished there. It may be impossible to bring back the large herbivores that roamed Wisconsin’s prairies for centuries, but land managers continually apply new knowledge, as it becomes available, to facilitate relationships among organisms that are present. In the face of climate change, Kevin says, the key strategy is managing for overall resiliency.

A thousand-mile footpath for hikers also serves as a thousand-mile corridor for wildlife. Restoration work along the IAT is helping rejoin habitat fragments, in large part due to the Alliance’s many positive relationships with a wide variety of organizations responsible for managing lands adjacent to the Trail. Within and beyond the IAT stewardship zone, a haven is being created for native birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and pollinators increasingly vulnerable to extinction through habitat loss.

Midway through the hike, a bird song catches Kevin’s ear—Henslow’s sparrow. It’s a species listed as Threatened in Wisconsin that prefers open grasslands. He points out a small, inconspicuous brown bird flitting among the prairie grasses a few feet off the trail. “Hearing it here during breeding season is significant,” he says. “I’m excited.”

Christi Ehler

Christi enjoys spending as much time as possible outdoors. While hiking in a county park one autumn day, an encounter with a group of volunteers engaged in trail stewardship prompted an epiphany that led her to join a Mobile Skills Crew project in 2015. That event marked the beginning of a growing passion for trailbuilding with the IATA. Writing about trail work is icing on the cake.

The Holmes Preserve, along the Table Bluff Segment, offers a visual feast mid-summer when the prairies are in full bloom. Photo by Kevin Thiusius.
Welcome Eva!

Hello, my name is Eva Ballering and although I am a Madison native, I have spent much of my adult life away from Wisconsin. I am delighted to be back in our beautiful state. I’m also happy, as the newest member, to be warmly welcomed by the great staff at the Ice Age Trail Alliance (IATA)!

In July 2019, I filled the newly created Land Steward position in the Land Program and will be working closely with Kevin Thusius, the Director of Land Conservation. I am excited about the variety of activities this position offers, including working with land owners, managing agreements, monitoring easements and boundaries, making maps, trail maintenance, and working with volunteers and school groups on ecologically based activities.

My background has been a mix of working with community focused non-profits and environmentally focused projects. I hold my BS in Environmental Horticulture from the University of Minnesota and my MS in Forest Science from the Albert Ludwig University of Freiburg, Germany. After returning from Germany, I taught employment skills to youth at a local community center while I finished my thesis on physiological responses in the Venus Flytrap. Before joining the IATA, I worked with the Wisconsin State Parks, putting me in the unique situation of having a relationship and understanding of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and their Knowles Nelson Stewardship program – one of the strong partners in land acquisition for the IATA.

My education and career goals stem from a personal connection to land conservation in Wisconsin. I grew up in the city of Madison, but spent many weekends at our family’s land near Devil’s Lake State Park. Over time, our defunct apple orchard transitioned into a sloping prairie – running into an oak-maple woodland. Our dilapidated farmhouse was transformed into a rustic, one-room log cabin. These changes did not happen without hard work. With each step, we’ve been rewarded with new species and unique plant communities emerging on the landscape.

I am excited by the opportunity to work with the IATA to protect land and restore habitat along the Trail corridor. I look forward to engaging with the community, especially youth, to preserve and enjoy our natural areas.
A New Challenge

LUKE KLOBERDANZ, DIRECTOR OF PHILANTHROPY

Last year Alliance supporters put a grand crescendo on our 60th anniversary year by not only meeting, but exceeding, a $60,000 challenge match. This incredible achievement continued the decades long support of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail – whether those contributions were with a pick mattock or through generous donations. This enthusiasm for the Ice Age Trail is contagious and motivated people who were not previously affiliated with the Alliance to support our mission. In fact, last year’s challenge match resulted in nearly 100 first-time donors.

What did we do with these financial contributions? We supported over 2,600 volunteers who gave an incredible 82,000+ hours to build or promote the Ice Age Trail; walked and talked with over 2,300 Saunters youth; protected 176 acres of glacial landscape; and hosted 8 Mobile Skills Crew events. What’s more is we brought on two new staff members, finished the headquarters expansion, and increased awareness of the Ice Age Trail across the nation. The momentum created through your support ripples across the landscape in myriad ways!

The Alliance is happy to announce a new opportunity in 2019. Once again, several generous donors have come together to build a $50,000 challenge match for this giving season!

Your gift of $60 can turn into $120. With it, we’ll protect important landscapes and close the gaps, bringing more of the Trail to restored prairies, shady woods, and inspiring vistas. We’re excited to further illuminate the geologic story and create new opportunities for personal exploration and adventure.

Together we will continue to build upon the solid foundation set over decades of work and expand the Trail across new land and into new communities.

Help us meet this new challenge and double your contribution by using the attached envelope in the middle of this issue.
Thank You!

MIKE WOLLMER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

When a word like “dechero” rolls off the tongues of newscasters, you sit up and take notice. When they begin to describe a bow-shaped line of storms known for moving at breakneck speeds and producing extreme wind gusts which can top 90 mph, you begin to worry. There are there miles and miles of Ice Age National Scenic Trail in the path of such destructive force, and even more importantly, are the many members of the Ice Age Trail Alliance family, the chapter volunteers who live near the Trail and enthusiastically care for it.

Both days, July 19 – July 20, the North and Central regions of Wisconsin were slammed by hard-hitting storms. Complicating matters in Langlade County was a “macroburst” – a massive downburst of wind which spanned a fifteen-mile-wide corridor and carried along 100 mph winds. “The storm will be remembered for generations,” reported Joe Jopek, Chapter Coordinator for Langlade County. “It took just two hours to devastate a large part of the forested landscape in the North Central part of the county.” The same could be said for much of the Northern tier of the state.

The areas hit the hardest by the storm were Polk, Langlade, Rusk, Waupaca, Portage, with swaths of Manitowoc, Fond du Lac, and Sheboygan counties also affected. Hundreds and hundreds of trees, often twisted and snapped in half, were brought down all along the Ice Age Trail corridor. In an updated, yet conservative estimate, 175 miles of Trail were drastically impacted by the storm.

The teamwork continued as chapter coordinators immediately informed the Ice Age Trail Alliance staff of the altered Trail conditions and these were posted to alert hikers. This information was also instrumental in helping Alliance staff determine where additional teams of volunteers could best be utilized. On an August 1st visit to Waupaca County, to gain first-hand knowledge of the damage, I was honored to meet and have dinner with the crew tackling the blowdowns on the Hartman Creek Segment. Astonishingly, among these volunteers were people who had asked off from work or used vacation days to get out on the Trail with their chainsaws and clippers. This was true of a number the folks whose names you’ll see listed below.

In less than 10 days from the advent of the storm, most of the Trail was open, safe, and passable. By August 5th, we received word that...
a remarkable team of three in Rusk County had cleared about a 100 down or leaning trees from the Trail. In this vein, since mid-July, dedicated volunteers have continued to spend hundreds of hours working along the Trail corridor, assessing damage, trimming and removing debris. As Dan Mitchell, Lakeshore Chapter Coordinator reported, “We had to use a come-along winch to drag as many fallen trees and branches from the East Twin River as we safely could.” Unfortunately, these storms had dealt the Lakeshore Chapter a second blow; they were still cleaning up tornado damage from the summer of 2018. The volunteer hours have accumulated. Debbie Krogwold, Chapter Coordinator for Waupaca County stated, “Overall, for our combined members, I would estimate at least 200 hours dedicated to storm cleanup.”

Indeed. As I wrote earlier in my Executive Director’s Report, the true story is about the rapid response and resilience of our chapter leadership and volunteers. Such exemplary efforts are everything we are about as an organization. Thank you.

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We’d like to recognize and thank the following for their time and efforts:

**Polk County (Indianhead Chapter):**
Dean Ellarson, Trailwide member and IATA
Jo Ellarson, Trailwide member and IATA
Administrative Assistant
Paul Kuhlman, Indianhead Chapter
Mic Pelech, Chippewa Moraine Chapter
Randy Surbaugh, Indianhead Chapter
Brook Waalen, Indianhead Chapter
Adopt-A-Segment Coordinator
Theresa Werner, Trailwide member

**Rusk County (Blue Hills Chapter):**
Fred Nash, Blue Hills Chapter Coordinator
Marilynn Nash, Blue Hills Chapter
Steve Scharenbrock, Blue Hills Chapter

**Portage & Waupaca (Waupaca County Chapter & Portage County Chapter):**
Bob Anibas
Mark Balhorn, Chapter Trail Maintenance Coordinator
Dan Bartell, Waupaca County Chapter
Dave Caliebe, IATA Trail Program Specialist
Dave Carew
John Collins, Waushara County Chapter
Gail Colrud, Portage County Chapter
Jeffrey Davis, Portage County Chapter
Alaina Dedo, IATA Trail Program Coordinator
Mike Fischer, Washington/Ozaukee County Chapter
Scott Frazier, Waupaca County Chapter
Bob Funk, Trailwide member and IATA Board President

**Langlade County (Langlade County Chapter):**
Gerald Anderson, Langlade County Chapter
Lee Auner, Langlade County Chapter Vice Chair
John Barker, Langlade County Chapter
Don Belanger, Langlade County Chapter
Dave Caliebe, IATA Trail Program Specialist
Adam Evans, Langlade County Chapter
Don Evans, Northwoods Chapter
Joe Joepke, Langlade County Chapter Coordinator
Lloyd Godell, Langlade County Chapter
Bob Hanson
Kathy Hanson
Steve Konkol, Trailwide member
Molly McKay, Langlade County Chapter
Todd McMahon, Langlade County Chapter
Brian Nelson, Langlade County Chapter
Melinda Nelson, Langlade County Chapter
Sam Picone, Langlade County Chapter Secretary/Treasurer
Samara Pillsbury
Mark Schwengel
David Tlusty, Langlade County Chapter Chair
Amy Tlusty, Langlade County Chapter Chair
Kris Van Handel, Dane County Chapter
Gary Vaughan, Trailwide member
Sharon Vaughan, Trailwide member
Jared Wildenradt, Dane County Chapter

**Fond du Lac, Sheboygan, and Manitowoc Counties:**
Dan Mitchell, Lakeshore Chapter Coordinator
Dave Gramling, Lakeshore Chapter
Zen and the Art of Volunteering

SEVIE KENYON

“Much of what I needed to know, I got from reading, Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance,” says Dennis James, Rock County Ice Age Trail Coordinator. “And my father always used to tell me that ‘no matter the job - own it.’ Make that job yours. That’s where you get satisfaction and find success.”

By way of example, Pirsig writes: “When one isn’t dominated by feelings of separateness from what he’s working on, then one can be said to “care” about what he is doing. That is what caring really is, a feeling of identification with what one’s doing. When one has this feeling then he also sees the inverse side of caring, Quality itself.”

The mere mention of Robert Pirsig’s 1974 book, Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance, is a tell. Dennis James, recipient of the 2018 National Park Service-Midwest Region’s George and Helen Hartzog Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service, Individual Volunteer Category, is serious about quality.

“Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance redefined what maintenance meant to me,” he says. “The idea isn’t being able to fix something once it’s broken, but to keep it up and running in the first place.”

Dennis James can be said to “care.” When he became Chapter Coordinator for the Rock County Chapter of the Ice Age Trail Alliance, about six years ago, James owned the responsibility. Not to the exclusion of others, nor to selfishly push things the way he wanted them to go. No, it was his interest in making the Rock County Ice Age Trail segments, and by extension, all of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail, as good as it can possibly be for everyone.

Over his life, James has assumed a lot
of qualities from serving in the Army as Airborne Squad Leader, to managing industrial processes, and eventually winding his way into academia as instructor and educational developer. All of his background, experience, learning, and curiosity followed James into retirement where the Ice Age Trail (IAT) directly benefits.

The Hartzog Award is given to volunteers to the National Park Service (NPS) who have supported the mission of the park, in this case the IAT, shown breadth and depth in the magnitude of the work done, and achieved exceptional accomplishments.

This award is especially significant when you consider the Midwest Region of the NPS encompasses 13 states, including Wisconsin, and there are 60 parks in those 13 states, including the Ice Age National Scenic Trail.

Daniel Watson, volunteer coordinator, NPS, who presented James with the award in Riverside Park in Janesville remarks that, “...there are character limits on the award form or Dennis’ list of achievements for the Ice Age Trail could be much longer.” James helped the park service make 300 pages of Trail Corridor Plans (Rock County, Marquette County, and Chippewa County) 508 compliant and therefore accessible to people with disabilities. James also helped make the 41-page Ice Age National Scenic Trail Volunteer Safety Handbook accessible. “Dennis James is an actual Trail Angel for hikers in his area, he is now also an ‘NPS Angel’ for those of us at the Ice Age National Scenic Trail who sometimes need a helping hand in meeting the NPS Mission,” Watson says.

Back in Rock County, James is found on the Ice Age Trail mowing, cutting wayward trees, shoring up tred, and clearing brush. “There’s no formula for being a chapter coordinator,” James says. “You find ways to balance volunteer activities with your life.”

Ingrained in the philosophy of owning a job is to include as many people in the community as is possible. Tips to the local newspaper, radio interviews, and constant community engagement help spread the word about the IAT. He is always on the lookout for community sponsors and ways to get people to come out and enjoy the Trail in Rock County. A short list of such engagements includes: clearing invasive plants with UW-Whitewater students; supporting the Warrior Expedition program; working with the Wisconsin Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired; coordinating volunteer activities with local businesses such as Cargill and Mercyhealth Hospital; and participating in local business and economic development programs.

Making the Ice Age Trail accessible to everyone is a personal goal for James. He marvels at how students from the Janesville School for the Blind and Visually Impaired are being introduced to the Trail. “We set up a campsite with a tent and sleeping bags,” James explains. “The youth could crawl in and out, feel the tent, the sleeping bags and learn by touch what it is like to camp.”

On the days the students from the Janesville School visit, they walk sections of the Trail, touch plants and soil, listen to the sounds of the woods, and smell the fresh air. Looking to the future, James is working on the development of a system that will enable people to go on self-guided walks on both Ice Age Trail segments and trails in other public spaces, such as Janesville’s Rotary Botanical Gardens.

There isn’t a public or private entity in the county James won’t consider when it comes to advancing the IAT. Schools, public and private; the Historical Society; trail runners; the Police Department; county and city parks; corporations large and small; universities; state government; city and village government; and more are all possible partners for helping improve the Trail.

If this all seems exhausting, James doesn’t show it. He’s always up for a new opportunity and taking care of those already in hand. One thing he mentions in a thoughtful way is the way people “age out” of groups like the Rock County Chapter. “I’m not going to be chapter coordinator once I’m 70,” James says. “All of our volunteer organizations have to keep looking for new ways to involve more people and so do we.”

**Sevie Kenyon**

Sevie Kenyon is a retired agricultural photographer and writer currently living in Oregon, Wisconsin. He is a member of the Rock County Chapter of the IATA. When asked about his favorite place on the trail, Sevie will tell you, “every step of it.” If you’re interested, many of his pictures are found here: https://www.flickr.com/photos/netagra/

And other stories and examples found here: www.netagra.com/
Jim Staudacher Looks Back: 40 Years After the First Thru-hike

BILL POLACHEK

For James (Jim) Staudacher, the inspiration for the journey of a lifetime came from the very first Ice Age Trail Guidebook, On the Trail of the Ice Age, written by Congressman Henry Reuss and published by the Milwaukee Journal in 1976. The guidebook captured the imagination of then 17-year-old Jim and he began researching the geography of the ice age in Wisconsin.

Two years later, he took a summer backpacking trip to Isle Royale National Park and decided that he wanted to be the first person to walk the entire Ice Age Trail route.

“I wanted to achieve this as a personal rite of passage but also to promote the sport of hiking which was just becoming popular in the 1970s,” recalls Jim.

The first step to realizing his dream involved contacting Reuss’ office to secure permission.

“I was a nervous 19-year-old on that fall day in 1978 when I met Rep. Reuss at his Milwaukee office,” says Jim. “He received me graciously and asked me why I wanted to hike the Trail and why I thought I could succeed in such a physically demanding endeavor. I answered awkwardly, and probably less coherently than I wanted to, but my enthusiasm was unmistakable.”

A week after the meeting, Reuss contacted Jim and gave him permission to attempt the first complete hike of the Trail in the summer of 1979. He also assigned one of his staff members, Sarah Sykes, to assist with details of trip planning. Sarah and Jim decided that he would document and informally survey the existing route of the Trail, make suggestions to improve the route, and provide descriptions of the Ice Age features found along the Trail. Reuss’ office would provide maps and postage for re-supply packages as well as reimbursement for long-distance phone calls.

Jim accepted the challenge and on May 14, 1979, the 20-year-old drove from his suburban Milwaukee home up to Sturgeon Bay, signed in on the trailhead ledger, and began his}

*Trail blazer, James (Jim) Staudacher, the first person to thru-hike the Ice Age National Scenic Trail. Here he is along the Ice Age Trail in the Chequamegon National Forest, Wisconsin, July 1979. Photo courtesy of Jim Staudacher.*
Some of those blurry shots include pictures of a tornado he spotted after a line of storms blew through west of Madison near Cross Plains. Jim says he wasn’t afraid at the time. “Maybe I was naive but I didn’t feel that vulnerable,” he recalls.

He did experience fear, however, about 130 miles north of Cross Plains at his campsite east of Stevens Point in the Kronenwetter swamp. Hot, tired, wet and covered with wood ticks, he decided to build a fire in order to fling the ticks into the flames. As he scraped the ticks with a knife, four to five wild dogs appeared and immediately approached him. The leader of the pack bared his teeth and tried to grab his ankle. In fear of his life, Jim defended himself with a piece of firewood left behind by hunters and ended up killing the alpha male. At that point, the rest of the pack retreated.

“I pitched his broken body far into the swampy woods, not wanting the other dogs to return,” Jim says. “I spent that long night sitting by a huge fire, dirty, scared, angry, and knowing that the next morning I had to pack up and walk through the very swamp from whence they came.”

One of the greatest tasks Jim faced was measuring the total length of the Ice Age Trail. The guidebook estimated 600 miles but he logged 1,006 miles on his hike. About 40% of those miles were on the road, although back then many of the gravel roads were barely distinguishable from the Trail itself. He hiked through parks, county forest land, and miles of abandoned railroad tracks. In Waukesha and Washington Counties, the Trail guided him through rows of brush and woods in the midst of open farmland. (Today, he notes, the Trail has been rerouted in these areas due to the transition to fence-to-fence farming as well as urban sprawl.)

Averaging 15-20 miles per day, Jim finished his solo hike on July 29 in Interstate State Park in Taylor Falls, Minnesota. Jim still has slides of his hike as well as his journals, topographic maps, backpack, and leather boots. But more than that, he has his memories of the summer of ‘79.
On a cold day in January of 2015, long-time friends Steve Laczniak, 34, and Mark Sauer, 34, were hiking from Tisch Mills to Point Beach north of Manitowoc when they realized that oftentimes one of them is carrying way too much and one is in less-than-ideal hiking form (sleep-deprived, injured, sick). That’s when they came up with their trail names: Sherpa and Shambles. According to Steve, it varied from month to month as to which one of them was which.

“Sometimes one of us was both,” Steve says.

That didn’t bother them, however, because Mark and Steve weren’t hiking for speed. Working for private equity and architecture engineering firms, Steve and Mark have relied on spending time outdoors to slow down the pace of their lives. They had that goal of slowing things down when they met in April of 2014 for a hike on the Blackhawk Segment of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail. After hiking a few segments, they were hooked. So, for one weekend a month, for 62 straight months, Mark and Steve completed sections of the Ice Age Trail until they had done it all.

They didn’t do it alone. Mark’s dog, Harper, logged over 100 miles and Mark’s father joined them on several occasions. They also had many friends and family members accompany them when possible.

“We always tried to get some guest hikers,” Mark recalls. “With just two of us, you can run out of conversation.”

Even the dog had company.

“We had several farm dogs follow us for miles at a time,” says Steve. “Some we returned after reaching our car, some returned on their own, and one we left with a friendly neighbor several miles down the road.”

They ran into plenty of friendly folks along the way. Annette near the Parish Hills Segment let them park in her driveway since the trailhead was washed out. Sandra gave them a ride to the trailhead and then happened to run into them 13 miles later while eating dinner at the Backwoods Bar. Ari in Buffalo greeted them along a connecting route (CR) and explained the history of his home which was built by a German master carpenter and once served as a brothel.

Steve enjoyed his time on the connecting routes.

“CRs offered some of the most insightful glimpses into life in Wisconsin,” he says, “either through a small town or routing along vast expanses of farm field. CRs offered a welcome change of pace from stretches of formal trail and were often more accessible during the winter months.”

Mark and Steve made a point of patronizing the local watering holes. Steve remembers stopping at the Alban General Store for happy hour after completing a 10-mile hike. The proprietor told them that they get a lot of hikers, but not many who buy beer. Steve says it wasn’t unusual for them to walk straight to the bar, order a beer, and then ask the bartender to fill their water packs with the soda gun.

The bars were also a great place to grab a meal. When possible, Steve made a point of ordering the burger named after the bar. Of course, they also carried food with them. As section hikers, they were able to learn from their mistakes and make improvements as they went along.

“Warm tuna is not the way to go,” Mark recalls.

The first time they went out, the only snack they brought was peanut butter. By the end, they had a full supply of granola, GU packs, and fruit.

A highlight for Mark took place in Taylor County...
near Medford on a summer hike. They had been hiking most of the day and couldn’t see around the next bend because the berry bushes were high. Knowing they were in bear country, they clapped their hands and shouted out, “Bear there! Bear there!” to make sure they didn’t surprise an unexpected Ursus. As they turned a corner, Mark saw two cubs scurry up a tree no more than 15 feet away. The two hikers carefully retreated, then stood and listened for a mother bear. Mark, who had never seen a bear in the wild, pulled out his buck knife and Steve his bear spray.

“We couldn’t really go around,” Mark remembers. “Our options were to go back well over five miles to a road or push ahead.”

They took a picture of the cubs and then decided to push ahead. They never saw the mama bear.

On May 26, 2019, Steve and Mark arrived at the Jerry Lake Segment near Medford and became the 200th hikers to complete the entire Ice Age Trail. Two weeks later, Mark’s wife had a baby. Consequently, June was the first month he didn’t hike in over five years. But Steve and Mark are already talking about hiking the Western Bifurcation.

“You start to get that itch,” Mark says.

And somewhere, at the end of a trail, there’s a burger with Steve’s name on it.
CHAPTER highlights

INDIANHEAD CHAPTER
Coordinator: Dean Doversall
(715-205-4487, EdgeLong@lakeland.ws)

We celebrated National Trails Day with a Tyke Hike and enjoyed a beautiful evening in Straight Lake State Park. The City of Trails Run in St. Croix Falls held their first ever marathon and chapter volunteers were there to support the event. Later in the afternoon, a ceremony on the Overlook welcomed St. Croix Falls as an Ice Age Trail Community. The Frederic Schools Summer Saunters program occurred June 3-7 with perfect weather and fun for participants. Special thanks to Wanda Brown for her involvement in the City of Trails Run, Paul Kuhlman for always supporting the Tyke Hike, and Carrie Petersen for her dedication to the Saunters Program in Frederic.

July brought the worst storm to hit Polk County in 70 years. The storm downed trees along the Ice Age Trail and throughout Polk County. Kudos to the sawyers and volunteers who worked long hours to clear over 240 trees from the Trail. While August continued to be busy with Trail cleanup from the storms, we were also busy providing shuttles and other support to hikers.

We had an excellent turnout for the Red Cross Training at Café Wren. Thanks to Joy Zasadny for the training and those inspired to receive the Red Cross certification. We hosted a booth at the Festival on the Gandy Dancer with Tom Jablonski, John Helling, and Lisa Swenson supporting this event. Luck Summer Saunters spent the first week in August hiking the Trail. Thanks to Amy Aquado for all of her support getting this program started in Luck Schools. We look forward to the Wisconsin Go Hike group arriving and hiking our Trail segments in late September.

- Cheryl Whitman

SUPERIOR LOBE CHAPTER
Coordinator: Bob Held
(715-822-3428, HeldHarbor@gmail.com, SuperiorLobeChapter@iceagetrail.org)

On Friday, May 31, 2019, the Superior Lobe Chapter gathered with a multitude of friends to celebrate effects of the last Ice Age on the remarkable landscape features that compose the region in and around Cumberland, Wisconsin. Worthy of note: 2nd Avenue in Cumberland runs along an esker and torrents of water from a melting glacier gouged out the earth creating the basins where the area’s lakes now reside. These features are now highlighted with an attractive interpretive panel thanks to a stellar team from the Superior Lobe Chapter who adroitly pursued the project from adoption to completion: Bob Held, Audrey Held, Carole Crisler, and Tim McRaith.

This team worked with an excellent group of partners. Brenda Shelby at 3M Company assisted in obtaining company funding for the project. They reached out to Lausanne, Switzerland to obtain the Tunnel Channel photograph taken by Romain Schlappy. Kirby Crawford provided the aerial photo of the City of Cumberland. Bryan Shapp created the woolly mammoth on the marble slab. Jim Bucholtz and his crew at the Schmeckle Reserve, University of Wisconsin—Stevens Point produced the interpretative panel for the National Park Service-type, low profile, wayside exhibit. Mark Erickson of Erickson Excavating contributed the rock. Lori Wiegret at Kudos Awards, Inc. arranged for the bronze plaque. Al Jones of Traditional Artisans Inc. fitted the slab and bronze plaque to the rock. Dan Watson, National Park Service (NPS) Volunteer Coordinator

The interpretive panel is unveiled while project partners look on: Don Erickson, Superior Lobe Chapter; Representative Romaine Quinn, 75th Assembly District; Autumn Schwarz, 3M Product Manager; Bert Skinner, Mayor of Cumberland; Bob Held, Chapter Coordinator, Superior Lobe Chapter; David Mickelson, Professor Emeritus, UW-Madison; Julie Fox, Regional Tourism Specialist, Wisconsin Department of Tourism; Senator Janet Bewley, District 25; Herb Lundberg, Indianhead Chapter. Photo by Kirby Crawford.

A bevy of partners welcomed St. Croix Falls as an Ice Age Trail Community. From left to right: Lacy Sellent, LTE Natural Resource Educator, Interstate Park; Amy Lord, IATA Outreach and Education Manager; Joy Zasadny, St. Croix Falls City Council member and Ice Age Trail Alliance member; Annie Carlson, Mayor of St. Croix Falls; Dean Doversall, Indianhead Chapter Coordinator; Julie Fox, Regional Tourism Specialist, Wisconsin Department of Tourism; Nancy Schuster, Ice Age Trail Alliance Board of Directors; Dean Johansen, Polk County Board Chair; Julie Galonska, Superintendent, St. Croix National Scenic River Way. Photo by William Johnson.

Don Erickson, member of the Superior Lobe Chapter presents the giant erratic donated by Mark Erickson of Erickson Excavating as part of the efforts to highlight the geological features that make Barron County endlessly interesting. Photo by Kirby Crawford.
offered program assistance, and Pam Schuler, Ice Age Trail Manager NPS, enabled Don Erickson to attend an Interpretative Messaging workshop that proved to be extremely helpful in developing the Sand Creek Tunnel Channel wayside exhibit.

- Don Erickson

BLUE HILLS CHAPTER
Coordinator: Fred Nash
(715-353-2948, nashfd@bevcomm.net)

In June the IATA Seasonal Trail Crew mowed, updated signage, cleared berry brambles, lopped overgrown trail corridor, and worked with volunteers at a chapter Trail Improvement Day. Volunteers from the Blue Hills, the Chippewa Moraine, and the Superior Lobe Chapters joined the Seasonal Trail Crew (STC) to install a new large sign at the entrance to Murphy Flowage, install trail signage posts (TSPs), mow, ward off mosquitoes, and blaze. In addition, an unstable bridge was removed and replaced with expertly placed stones and crafted trail at the edges of a small stream. An early afternoon lightning storm brought the work to a halt. Resulting from all of these efforts is a beautiful new sign at the entrance to Murphy Picnic Area, a new sign at the end of Stout Road, a blue-blazed access trail, and more and improved TSPs in the farm pasture. Chapter members also made and installed brochure holders at trail heads.

In July three severe storms brought down more than one hundred trees, which chapter volunteers cleaned up. Several chapter members also cleaned up storm damage at their own homes. In August, the STC returned to mow, lop, install TSPs, and cut brush. The chapter coordinator participated in these efforts. Conveniently, the number of chapter members who've completed chainsaw training and first aid increased to four, a welcome change from the one previously qualified member.

- Marilyn Nash

CHIPPEWA MORaine CHAPTER
Coordinator: Richard Smith (715-933-0252, ChippewaMoraineChapter@iceagetrail.org)

In July three severe storms brought down more than one hundred trees, which chapter volunteers cleaned up. Several chapter members also cleaned up storm damage at their own homes. In August, the STC returned to mow, lop, install TSPs, and cut brush. The chapter coordinator participated in these efforts. Conveniently, the number of chapter members who've completed chainsaw training and first aid increased to four, a welcome change from the one previously qualified member.

- Marilyn Nash

HIGH POINT CHAPTER
Co-Coordinators: Buzz Meyer (715-748-5627, gtmeyer@charter.net) and Lee “Butch” Clendenning (715-427-1101, leeclendenning1@yahoo.com)

The Wood Lake Segment loop project is progressing and should be completed in 2020.

- Lee “Butch” Clendenning

NORTHWOODS CHAPTER
Coordinator: Ruby Jaecks
(715-551-1118, brjaecks@outlook.com)

The Season Trail Crew made the most of their time in Taylor County. The work they did included installing a 20-foot-long bridge made of logs and 2”x 6” boards alongside a beaver dam. They also built a drainage swale downstream from another beaver dam 0.3 miles south of the westernmost Bear Ave crossing where the resulting drainage improved approximately 210 feet of waterlogged trail. Photo by Mark Rippke.

- Lee “Butch” Clendenning
One of the many blowdowns in Taylor County encountered by the Seasonal Trail Crew which they handily removed. Photo by Mark Rippke.

**LANGLADE COUNTY CHAPTER**

Coordinator: Joe Jopek  
(715-623-2645, jjjopekj@frontier.com)

The storm of July 19th will be remembered for generations. It took just two hours to devastate a large part of the forested landscape in the North Central part of the county, including several Ice Age Trail segments.

Adam Evans was the first to make some order of the chaos he encountered on the Old Railroad Segment the day after the storm. Jared Wildenratd followed by chainsawing a path through the Kettlebowl Segment and Lee Auner followed suit on the Lumbercamp Segment. Dave Tsusty and Dave Callebe organized a volunteer crew to continue Adam’s efforts and chainsawed their way into the leaning, twisted mess on the Old Railroad Segment. Lee and Jared finished the rest of the segment weeks later.

Sam Picone cleared his section of the Highland Lakes Segment while others such as Brian and Melinda Nelson, John Barker, Mark Schwegel, Kris Handel, Todd McMahon, Samara Pillsbury, Gary and Sharon Vaughan assisted the sawyers by trimming and removing volumes of debris from miles of Trail. Another effort by Adam, joined this time by Molly McKay and Don Evans, helped to trim the path in advance of a sawyer crew. Besides installing a bench, Don Belanger trimmed and removed trees on the Trail. Scouting efforts by Gerald Anderson, Lloyd Godell, and hikers Bob and Kathy Hanson, provided an assessment of conditions facing the clearing crews. A splendid effort by all in a real time of need.  

- Joe Jopek

**CENTRAL MORAINES CHAPTER**

Co-Coordinators: Gail Piotrowski (715-370-2958) and Steve Kaiser (352-249-6366)  
CentralMorainesChapter@iceagetrail.org

The Central Moraines Chapter’s inaugural Hike-a-Thon, held on June 8th, was a great success. 65 hikers enjoyed perfect weather, delicious food, and beautiful scenery. Hiker comments were so positive and encouraging that another Hike-A-Thon in 2020 has already been discussed. Stay tuned!

The third Mobile Skills Crew (MSC) event of the year has been completed and the fabulous new Ringle Segment moves one step closer to completion. Huge thanks to everyone who came out to share their time and skills at our three MSC events in 2019.

Fall activities will include a chapter meeting and potluck, a Fall Colors hike, and a fall Trail Improvement Day. We know there is always something that can be trimmed, touched up, or generally improved along the Trail in an effort to keep the Ice Age Trail a world-class National Scenic Trail!

- Pattie Mishkar

**PORTAGE COUNTY CHAPTER**

Coordinator: Julie Schneider  
(715-570-6370, PortageCoCounty@iceagetrail.org)

**WAUPACA COUNTY CHAPTER**

Coordinator: Debbie Krogwold (715-677-4974, wdkrogwold@wi-net.com)

Summers are always the busiest and many times the most rewarding, from volunteers participating in various outreach events to maintaining the miles of Ice Age Trail that meanders along the border between the two counties. Chapter volunteers set up booths and disseminated IAT information at June Dairy Days, the Midwest Renewable Energy Fair, and Turners Farm Market, and set up a month-long display at the Portage County Library in June in celebration of National Trails Day.

In June, volunteers attacked garlic mustard in Hartman Creek State Park, an ongoing endeavor, and continuous rains in June and July kept

A previously closed segment of the Ice Age Trail in Langlade County is now open and passable thanks to the many volunteers who donated their time and energy to post-storm cleanup. Photo by Bob Hanson.

The ‘Fabulous Four’ with their tools of choice and still smiling after a long day on the New Hope Segment. Donna Piotrowski, Mary Stewart, Gail Colrud, and Ruth Sommer. Photo by Debbie Krogwold.
chapter volunteers busy with mowing and general trail maintenance. You all know who you are. Thank you!

Then came the storm at the end of July, uprooting trees helter-skelter along the trail from Hartman Creek State Park all the way north to the New Hope Segment. Numerous chapter volunteers spent many long hours clearing trail and nursing sore muscles afterward. A heartfelt thank you to IATA staff member Dave Caliebe for organizing trail-wide members to assist us in getting our trails re-opened. Work continues on the loop trail in Skunk-Foster State Natural Area where there is still a major blowdown to contend with.

News of the Year! The Portage County and Waupaca County Chapters are in the process of merging. Operational Guidelines have been drafted and the merger will be voted on at a joint chapter meeting Sept 28. Work has already begun to consolidate equipment at our storage building in Hartman Creek State Park. A new work bench and shelving have been installed, thanks to the expertise and assistance of one of our newest members, Ingmar Hallin.

Coming up is the annual Fall Hike-a-Thon October 5th. This event will mark the 33rd year the Portage and Waupaca Chapters have jointly worked together to fundraise. Wow! Thank you all! Exciting times ahead!

- Debbie Krogwold

WAUSHARA COUNTY CHAPTER
Coordinator: Jenny Addis
(715-249-5666, addisjenny@yahoo.com)

The Waushara County Chapter collaborated with the Waushara County Health and Parks Departments to host the second “Walk-the-Waush” Summer Challenge. This event encouraged the community to hike or walk as many miles as possible from Memorial Day through Labor Day for awards and prizes.

To assist the Challenge, we offered three extra guided hikes. John Shillinglaw, Ice Age Trail and prairie enthusiast, led over 30 hikers on a guided prairie hike along the Mecan River Segment. He shared his knowledge and passion for prairie restoration as the group meandered through savannah, grasslands and a prairie restoration area. Environmentalist and educator, Scott Tootant, and his wife, Wendy, along with former DNR Park Ranger, Randy Lennartz, led over 20 adults and 12 kids on a Hiking with Bears outing, on the Bohn Lake Segment. The highlight of the morning was the kid’s reaction to a hidden bear hide with claws and all! We also hosted Pups, Perks and Kuchen: A Sunrise Hike and Dog Walk at the Mt. Morris Mill Coffee Shop, supplied the coffee and Kuchen (treat) for all to enjoy. We will host a post-challenge award ceremony during the Chapter’s annual Let’s Light Up the Night GLOW Hike at Willow Creek County Park in Wild Rose.

The chapter was excited to host the Mobile Skills Crew trailbuilding event in September. New trail, nearly three-quarters-of-a-mile in length, was added to extend a loop trail at the Bohn Lake Segment. Access was improved to the Mecan River Segment. We would like to thank all of our volunteers and guests for taking the time to make these hikes and events possible!

- Jenny Addis

A long line of hikers eagerly follow the leader on Waushara County’s Hiking with Bears outing. Photo by Kathy Kehl.

MARQUETTE COUNTY CHAPTER
Coordinator: Gary Ertl
(608-369-3543, garebear510@hotmail.com)

BARABOO HILLS/HERITAGE TRAIL CHAPTER
Coordinator: Scot Harvey (608-335-2286, BarabooHillsHeritageChapter@iceagetrail.org)

25 volunteers from Dances with Dirt, a trail race organization, helped out at our Trail Improvement Day in June. Race officials and runners were eager to ready the Ice Age Trail through the Devil’s Lake, Sauk Point, and Merrimac Segments for their annual marathon and half-marathon.

continued on page 28
Our chapter helped host Ice Age Trail University which was held in Sauk County on the grounds of the Riverland Conservancy. Despite very hot and humid weather, attendees learned great information. The Blazing Babes taught Signage 101 and set up a plan to improve some very outdated signage on the Sauk Point Segment. Beautiful stone work was also done by attendees on the same segment to make a stoney section much easier to navigate.

Recently, the chapter staffed a booth at a health fair at the Baraboo Senior Center.

- Debby Capener

**LODI VALLEY CHAPTER**

Coordinator: Joanna Fanney  
(608-577-9984, LodiValleyChapter@iceagetrail.org)

The second annual Art on the Trail event took place throughout the month of May with more than 20 artists participating, including a few school groups. Some great publicity helped attract many, many visitors to view the art and walk the Trail segments, including people who had never been on the Ice Age Trail previously. We appreciate the efforts of the coordinating team and the artists in making this year’s event a success.

The day of our National Trails Day Mammoth Fun Run/Walk started out with rain but the clouds passed over by the time the event began. Participants came from as far away as Prairie du Chien to walk and run the Lodi Marsh Segment and enjoy the beautiful views and the sound of cranes calling. Thanks to all the sponsors and volunteers who contributed to a great event.

In addition to our monthly Trail Improvement Days, trail runs, Full Moon hikes and Tyke Hikes, chapter volunteers were also involved in other youth-oriented activities. Chapter volunteers led hikes for students from Tower Rock School as well as a group of Girl Scouts. As is our tradition, the chapter sponsored the Saunters program through a monetary donation as well as providing daily snack bags for all participants. We welcome all these opportunities to get youth connected to the trail.

Work on the Steenbock Preserve on the Gibraltar Segment continued as Tom Wise put in many hours to prepare for a burn of the preserve that he led in May. It is exciting to see the effects of that burn as the prairie starts to re-assert itself. Cedar removal will continue and additional burns will take place in the coming years. If you haven’t visited this preserve lately you’re invited to come and be amazed at the changes that are taking place.

- Patti Herman

**WALWORTH/JEFFERSON COUNTY CHAPTER**

Coordinator: Andrew Whitney  
(262-949-0286, andywhitney1@yahoo.com)

Summer was chock-full for the Walworth-Jefferson Counties Chapter. In preparation for Farm Tech Days, chapter volunteers assisting with the “Food Tent” operations at Farm Tech Days attended related training sessions. Our chapter held a joint workday with Rock County to deal with ever bounteous garlic mustard. Trail cleanup continued in anticipation of National Trails Day. We hosted 26 hikers for our June 1st, the National Trails Day hike; however, turnout for the Family Hike option fell well-short of expectations. A Trail Improvement Day had great turnout whereby a Dispersed Camping Area (DCA) was established near the Mitchell property (as previously proposed by Tim Malzhan). A grant through Thrivent helped supply some materials, lunch for the crew, and T-shirts.

A promotional opportunity included Ruth McMann giving a talk at the Whitewater Rotary Club. We also participated in the 4th of July parade sponsored by City of Whitewater (an Ice Age Trail Community). Even though we were only awarded the 3rd place prize in the Costumed Marchers category, we still felt our efforts, publicity-wise, were worthwhile. The end of July had chapter members actively manning the Farm Tech Days’ Food Tent, as well as an information booth at the Recreational Tent. The staffing was ably coordinated by Nancy Lazaroni, and former chapter member, Dolly McNulty. Finally, the first weekend in August, the chapter participated in Whitewater’s Maxwell Street Days, manning an informational booth and bringing out our mascot, Monty the Mammoth (brought to life by a UW-Whitewater student). Going forward, we hope to have a lot more college-related participation in events since the University recently became an Ice Age Trail Campus.

- Vince Lazaroni

**DANE COUNTY CHAPTER**

Co-Coordinator: Anne Helsley-Marchbanks  
(608-231-3479) and James Luebke (970-723-9591)  
DaneCoChapter@iceagetrail.org

**ROCK COUNTY CHAPTER**

Coordinator: Dennis James  
(608-302-1885, RockCoChapter@iceagetrail.org)

The Waukesha/Milwaukee Chapter celebrated National Trails Day by combining woodland trail work with woodland walking. Chapter members teamed with Waukesha County Parks & Land Use and REI, over forty participants strong, to pull vast amounts of garlic mustard in our Monches Segment before enjoying an informative hike along the Oconomowoc River led by Conservative Biologist Julia Robson. Photo by Eddee Daniel.
A host of projects made summer hectic, including trail maintenance by our Monday Mudders and Blazing Babes teams, our mowing crew, a Boy Scout troop, an Eagle Scout, corporate volunteers, and our sawyer crew, who tackled local storm damage and traveled to western counties to help out there. We keep hammering away at the Aldo Leopold Overlook in Hartland and the Evergreen Grove Puncheon.

Chapter meetings throughout the year have been graced with a range of speakers on a range of topics. In April, at the Delafield Brewhaus, Annie Weiss gave us insights into how she accomplished the “Fastest Known Time” as a thru-hiking Thousand-Miler. In May, at our usual Trecker Lodge site, Marlin Johnson, Resident Manager at the Waukesha Field Station, reported on prairie restoration at the Northern Trailhead of the Waterville Segment and Mike and Yvonne Fort reported on prairie restoration at Lapham Peak. In June, photographer Eddee Daniel spoke about his work with Preserve Our Parks and introduced his website (awealthofnature.org) centering on six counties in southeastern Wisconsin and sharing photos and stories about natural locales there. In August, Kristin Krokowski, University of Wisconsin-Madison Extension, educated us about the infestation of the Emerald Ash Borer, which has been devastating ash trees across the state at an alarming rate in recent decades. Our speakers gave us insight into the Ice Age Trail from multiple perspectives.

We’re looking forward to leading a popular Full Moon hike along the Point Beach Segment on November 9th. If you’re interested in joining us, see our chapter contact information above, or visit the event calendar on the IATA website.

- Cheryl Gorsuch

Heavy rainfall and strong winds kept the Lakeshore Chapter extremely busy maintaining our segments of the Ice Age Trail this summer. Our trail stewards did an excellent job of reporting issues on their Trail segments, and our two work crews have been diligent in addressing those issues.

One challenge was the Tisch Mills Segment which follows the East Twin River where canary reed grass and river willows grow along the trail. Due to spring flooding and torrential summer rains, the segment, often under water, didn’t get mowed until the middle of July, six weeks later than usual! However, a happy coincidence happened. Just as we finished mowing, a hiker arrived intent on hiking the segment. How lucky he was to get a freshly mowed trail; other hikers were not so fortunate!

Another challenge was the Northern Kettle Moraine region where portions of the Trail were closed already in early spring. The Department of Natural Resources had several crews out clearing trail along with the help of our chapter volunteers who were trained and certified sawyers. (A big thank you to our volunteers who attended the chainsaw training and were recertified as sawyers!)

We’ve actively attended community events to promote the Trail and educate the public on the history, location, and benefits of the Ice Age Trail. Our chapter was present at Dash at the Dunes and Subfest in Manitowoc and Community Care Day in Two Rivers. Many people had heard of the Trail, but in some cases, were unaware it is right in their own backyard.

Here’s just a glimpse at the destruction caused by wind and rain in the Northern Kettle Moraine State Forest which hosts a number of segments the Lakeshore Chapter maintains. Photo by Dan Mitchell.
May 14 - September 9, 2019

THE IATA WELCOMES...

NEW YELLOW BLAZE CLUB MEMBERS

The Yellow Blaze Club consists of members giving $1,000 or more annually in unrestricted gifts. Thank you to the following new members:

Charles & Anne Frihart
Rob Malewicz
David Nelsen
Randy Reddemann

MATCHING GIFTS

Matching gifts were received from:

Alliant Energy Foundation
to thanks to Bradley Chopp
American Family Insurance
to thanks to Susan Frikken & Deb Hanrahan
American Transmission Company
to thanks to Jennifer Bradley Vent
GE Foundation
to thanks to Tim Putra
Illinois Tool Works
to thanks to Mark Ulrich

BURR OAK LEGACY SOCIETY

The Burr Oak Legacy Society recognizes those who have made a commitment to support the Ice Age Trail Alliance through their estate plans. We are honored to celebrate those people today for their future gifts toward the growth and success of the Ice Age Trail.

David & Kathy Adam
Bess & Bernard Alberg
Mike & Sally Armbrust
John & Sharon Bloodgood
Bruce & Roberta Boczkiewicz
Nancy Brownrigg
Robert & Victoria Connors
Jerome & Barbara Converse
Jason Dorgan
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Brook Waalen & Stephanie Lundeen
Wendy Watson
Sally Wilmeth & Terry Geurkink
Tom & Bonnie Wise
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MILESTONES

Gifts to the IATA were made in honor of:

Amy Bayer
by Nick & Jenny White
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Casey & Beth Eggleston, Rita Pulver, and Joanne & Jay Eggleston
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Gifts to the IATA were made in memory of:

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Milton Mitchell
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Laurel & Jerry Sazama
Robert Alva Purdy
by Ice Age Trail Segment Hikers
John Purdy
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Dawn Tessman
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Judy & David Weiss
James Youngquist
New and Updated Books Available Soon!

The Ice Age National Scenic Trail continues to evolve as a footpath. Each year volunteers construct new segments and reroute existing ones. To reflect our progress the Alliance publishes updated editions of its Atlas, Guidebook, and Databook every three years.

We are excited to announce that the updated versions of these key resources are scheduled for release in February 2020. We aim to have a pre-order option for the Guidebook and Atlas available at iceagetrail.org by mid-November...keep it in mind for your holiday shopping!

ICE AGE TRAIL GUIDEBOOK
The book is intended for day hikers and includes segment descriptions and map excerpts from the Ice Age Trail Atlas. Segments are categorized on a set of criteria, including elevation change, ruggedness, camping opportunities, and availability of drinking water. The book will have standard binding and be printed in full color.

We will continue to use a light-weight paper while retaining the book’s backpack friendly 6” x 9” dimensions.

ICE AGE TRAIL ATLAS
This resource contains hiking maps showing all established segments and connecting routes. The maps include segment names and amenities along the Trail, such as parking, water, camping, etc. The Atlas also includes maps for the entire western branch of the bifurcation. The Atlas comes as a shrink-wrapped set of three-hole-punched maps, ready to put into your own binder.

ICE AGE TRAIL DATABOOK
This resource is aimed primarily at long-distance hikers and is designed to be used in partnership with Atlas maps. The Databook lists specific mileage points along each segment and connecting routes, and also includes information on area services. The Databook will remain an “e-book” available for download. It will not be available for pre-order.

Visit iceagetrail.org in mid-November to pre-order the Guidebook and Atlas.