As this issue of Mammoth Tales hits your mailbox, it’s darned near time for Thanksgiving. I’m relishing the opportunity to be thankful despite the challenges many of us faced in 2020.

We always hoped for the huge dividend the Ice Age National Scenic Trail paid this year. The Ice Age Trail became a mecca for outdoor recreation, sanity, family-time, peace, and tranquility. Thousands and thousands of new trail users from across the state flocked to the Trail. When other areas of our lives heard a resounding “Closed,” we were able to say “OPEN.”

Since March, I have had few greater pleasures than telling folks, “the Ice Age Trail is open…go for a hike!”

I never expected to tell you to NOT volunteer. That was tough, but our commitment to keeping our volunteers safe, while following federal, state, and local safety orders, made it a logical choice. Thank you for waiting with us until the time was right. When that time came, I’m not sure if there were more volunteers or hikers on the Trail!

Support for the Alliance’s work has been extraordinary. Our generous members and donors stepped up and renewed their memberships early. In many cases, these renewals arrived with additional financial contributions. Thanks to the Trail having been a place of refuge for so many people, we welcomed 625 new members. Many of these folks have indicated a strong interest in volunteering, too!

Opportunity abounds for the Alliance in support of our mission to create, support, and protect the Ice Age Trail. Even though our operations in the field will look different next year, we plan to expand our RECONNECT program in 2021. We’ll start by refocusing our 20-year-old Mobile Skills Crew program in a new and exciting way. Although we will scale back the scope of our large-scale trail improvement events, they will increase in frequency and empower our talented and increasingly skilled volunteer leaders. We’ll renew our commitment to advancing the length of the Trail while, at the same time, bringing existing Trail sections up to current standards.

Much of this cannot happen without protecting more land on which to host the Trail. Conveniently, we are being approached, at least once a week, by landowners expressing an interest in working with us. Significant changes at the federal level with the Great American Outdoors Act and the prospects for reauthorization of Wisconsin’s Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program in the next State budget will provide real horsepower to our capacity.

It’s been a rough year for sure, but many good things are surviving and thriving, most notably the Ice Age National Scenic Trail.

To all of you reading this, thank you from our entire team here in Cross Plains.

Happy holidays!

Mike
**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:**

Hikers pause to read one of the twenty interpretive signs installed along the Wood Lake Historical Loop Trail. This 3.6-mile loop trail is part of the Wood Lake Segment of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail in Taylor County. Photo by IATA staff.

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.

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Fall-Winter 2020 | MAMMOTH tales 3
Happy Birthday, Ice Age National Scenic Trail!

Forty years ago, on October 3rd, 1980, the Ice Age Trail became a National Scenic Trail. Fast forward to today, and there are 675 miles of Trail, 554 miles of connecting route, 2.3 million annual visitors, 13 designated Trail Communities, 4,300 devoted members, and 2,376 enthusiastic volunteers!

For those of you enjoying fall colors and hikes, you may be wondering how the Ice Age Trail became part of the National Trail System. The following is how it all began, from retired National Park Service (NPS) Superintendent, Tom Gilbert, who helped make it happen.

“In early 1980, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) submitted an application to the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service (HCRS) to have the entire Ice Age Trail designated as a National Recreation Trail by the Secretary of the Interior. Ten segments of the Trail had already been designated as NRTs. This application was for the entire Trail.

At the time, I was the HCRS Regional Trails Coordinator who reviewed the application and realized the Trail did not meet one of the eligibility criteria for NRT designation—that the trail be in existence. Less than half of the Trail was actually built. Thus, it did not qualify.

However, I believed it could qualify for National Scenic Trail (NRT) authorization by Congress because of its length and association with the nationally-significant Ice Age National Scientific Reserve. My supervisor agreed, and they called the DNR to inform them.

The DNR staff told us to call Sarah Sykes, a member of Congressman Reuss’ team because Representative Reuss had been the impetus behind the application. Reuss was ecstatic to learn the Ice Age Trail could have the same status as the Appalachian Trail. He asked me to draft the necessary amendment to the National Trails System Act, which I did. Representative Reuss introduced the bill. It was passed by Congress and signed by President Carter on October 3, 1980. Responsibility for carrying out the authorization belonged to the NPS.”

For the past 40 years, the Ice Age National Scenic Trail has enjoyed and benefitted from its partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Ice Age Trail Alliance, and the thousands of volunteers who make the Trail a reality. Throughout that time, we’ve grown together—both in numbers of people involved and the complexity of our shared mission. Because we continue to grow, it’s increasingly important that our shared commitment to exemplary standards grows along with us. I invite each of you to please review our “Professionalism in the Workforce” policy document found at nps.gov/iatr/getinvolved/supportyourpark/iatr_vip_program.htm

My sincere thanks to each of you for defining our first 40 years together, and helping craft our next 40 years of continued excellence together.
Critical Connection Complete!

ELENA MEDERAS, COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT SPECIALIST & AMERICORPS VISTA INTERN

Just outside of Cross Plains is a newly minted 81-acre preserve with an iconic shape. The distinct ridge-line on the property is reminiscent of the double-mounded back of a woolly mammoth, which inspired its name: “Mammoth’s Back Preserve.”

Mammoth’s Back Preserve was previously unattached to the Cross Plains Segment of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail to its west. However, this past May, the Alliance acquired two trail easements that will eventually connect the southern extent of the Cross Plains Segment to the existing Preserve.

At the forefront of the land acquisition efforts for the Ice Age Trail Alliance is Kevin Thusius, Director of Land Conservation. Thusius notes that finding and purchasing parcels of land to lengthen and protect the Trail can take years, so acquiring lands in quick succession in the same area is a rare and exciting occurrence for the Alliance.

“Other land trusts and nonprofits tend to buy land in clumps,” describes Thusius. “The world of trails is different. We’ve got to protect a linear path. We think: how can we get from this road to that road and get all of them lined up around the same time? That’s the ideal situation, but it almost never happens like this.”

As rare as it is to acquire a contiguous road-to-road section at one time, that is exactly what happened with the two trail easements this May. Now, the Alliance looks forward to restoring lands on the Preserve, including restoring an ecologically significant remnant prairie on the hilltop that forms the “Mammoth’s Back” of the Preserve, and building trail along the easements to connect from the existing Cross Plains Segment at CTH P to Stagecoach Road on the way to the Cross Plains Reserve.

“We’ll start restoration this fall/winter, and as early as next year, we’ll be able to build the Trail,” says Thusius enthusiastically.

Thusius notes the importance of private fundraising to acquire these three properties. “We were able to raise significant private funding to help offset costs associated with the acquisition of the properties as well as help with long-term stewardship of the land, including socking funds away in the Alliance’s Property Monitoring and Land Defense Funds.”

The Alliance’s conservation-minded friends in the Dane County Chapter of the Ice Age Trail Alliance and local business owner, Mary Devitt, of Crossroads Coffeehouse, helped raise private additional funds. The Alliance would not have been able to protect these lands if not for the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program and the Dane County Conservation Fund.

The Ice Age Trail community of volunteers, donors, landowners, and Trail users all have their own special connection to the lands that the Trail passes through. Thusius trusts that connecting the Trail to the Mammoth’s Back Preserve has the opportunity to foster stewardship of the newly acquired lands.

“People will care for the land because they have access to it: they are going to see it, help restore it, build new trail, and then be able to hike on it. These activities are what help create connection and meaning. And I think that is one thing that the Trail really brings to the landscape,” notes Thusius optimistically.

Along with the efforts of the Alliance, the mission to create, protect, and support the Ice Age Trail depends on our community of volunteers, donors, and Trail users. The privately raised funds, made possible by individuals in Cross Plains area and beyond, helped cover the cost of easement acquisition, future trail development, and land restoration. The Alliance is also in the process of securing a grant from State’s Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program to cover the remaining costs associated with the trail easement purchase.

Thank you for your support!
The Ice Age Trail Alliance does not work alone to protect land for the Ice Age National Scenic Trail. A recent acquisition demonstrates how government agencies support the Ice Age Trail in their communities.

In March 2020, Dane County completed a conservation easement on the 152-acre Coyle Farm, closing another critical gap in the Ice Age National Scenic Trail. The Coyle Farm is a picturesque property – a classic Wisconsin family farm, located right at the end of the glacial moraine. It’s a perfect setting for a National Scenic Trail that highlights Ice Age glaciation remnants that shaped the state.

Negotiations with the Coyle family had continued off and on since the early 1990s, according to Kevin Thusius, Director of Land Conservation for the Ice Age Trail Alliance. “Even twenty-five years ago, when we first started our corridor planning process, the Coyle Farm was on the collective minds of our partners,” said Thusius.

Thusius credits Ice Age Trail Alliance’s long-term, positive relationship with Dane County and other partners for this recent acquisition’s success. “With regards to the Coyle Farm, Dane County always had the lead. Laura Hicklin, Director of the Dane County Land & Water Resources Department, represented the County through most of the easement process and had a good relationship with the landowner. Hicklin was very willing to work with Mike Coyle, who wanted, more than anything, to keep his farm and have his kids take over someday. The County was able to help him do this and pulled this deal through.”

Laura Hicklin agreed, “We work together with farmers and rural landowners to provide technical assistance and build conversations around good land management practices and public access. We emphasize that good agricultural practices and natural ecosystem conservation can coexist and benefit everyone.”

The easement terms, Hicklin pointed out, were carefully drafted to address Coyle’s concerns. He wanted to save the farm, ensure public access to the Ice Age Trail wouldn’t affect his agricultural operations, and discourage trespassing. The latter was occurring as people visited, without permission, a remarkable kettle pond on the property. Built into the deed was the County’s right of first refusal. The Alliance committed to erecting signage to keep the public on the trail treadway, apart from farm operations.

Ultimately, the Coyle Farm easement provides a 30-foot right-of-way for the Ice Age Trail and protects a 14-acre pond and wetlands. It also ensures the permanent conservation of highly productive farmland. The benefits are underscored in the announcement recording the easement. Dane County Executive, Joe Parisi, said, “Dane County is committed to preserving our outdoor spaces so they can be enjoyed today, tomorrow, and for many years to come. These purchases allow us and our partners to restore Dane County’s natural resources and protect land with significant conservation benefits as our community continues to grow.”

Under a summer sky, a view from the Coyle Farm easement reveals fertile farmland and a kettle lake in the distance. Photo by Kevin Thusius.
Trailbuilding Success During a Pandemic!

PATRICK GLEISSNER
TRAIL PROGRAM LTE

LaBudde Creek Segment
Sheboygan County
August 20 – 23
Participants: 64
Volunteer Hours: 1,464

PROJECT PARTNERS:
REI
National Park Service
National Park Foundation
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Manitowoc County
Cedar Lake Improvement Association, Town of Schleswig

Coming on the heels of the dog days of summer, our first full-blown Mobile Skills Crew (MSC) event of the Mammoth Reconnect initiative experienced sultry heat, sweat, masks, social distancing, and cheers.

New this season, visibly adding to everyone’s safety and peace of mind were an abundance of masks and bottles of hand sanitizer, as were health screening checks at each greeter station. Missing in action was the kitchen tent and on-site lunch service, but camp stoves and personal brown bag lunches were a small price to pay for three days of beautiful, sunny, late summer trail work and camaraderie.

On Thursday, trailbuilding commenced, spread across three check-in stations and five work areas. The La Budde Segment in Sheboygan County received a bit of sprucing up: repainted signs, debermed trail, and brushing and mowing along the trail corridor. To show how eager we were to get back to trailbuilding, about a third of a mile of new trail formed in under three days. We went from locating the remnants of a seven-year-old flag line to the finishing touch of painted blazes. This new section of Ice Age Trail provides a much-needed corridor that bypasses a very steep hill. To add more distance to this event, a small satellite crew headed 30 miles south to assist in clearing a mile of overgrown and wind damaged trail on the Parnell Segment. An MSC event wouldn’t be complete without 248 feet of new boardwalk! Before the event, thanks to a few Lakeshore Chapter diehards, two days of preassembly work led to a speedy boardwalk build, an efficiency which helped volunteers maintain social distancing.

There was no campfire or smoked salmon to snack on back at base camp, yet the sound of violins and laughter emanated from large, socially-distanced circles of volunteers, scattered among the tents in the evening. No amount of distance can keep down the community that develops when people with passion gather to make a little bit of earth better for all.

By Sunday, many tools needed cleaning, and we added a new step to the process – disinfecting – a task easily absorbed into the routine. Soon, the trailers were ready to be repacked and sent on to another project.

A volunteer works safely and steadily to help complete the 248-foot-long boardwalk now gracing a frequently muddy section along the LaBudde Creek Segment. Photo by Lacy Wittman, (Instagram: @lacy_and_the_elephants).
Ten years ago, I was only a couple weeks into my thru-hike of the Ice Age Trail when I came to the Southern Kewaskum Segment. I headed east down the Trail with the transmission lines above, guiding the way. About halfway through the mile-long segment, I crested a hill and saw the flooded path—a couple of hundred feet of calf-deep water with no easy way around. I took off my shoes and socks, put on sandals, and trudged through the muddy water. Many hikers have had a similar experience over the years. However, future hikers won’t—thanks to the volunteers who constructed a 269-foot long boardwalk across the ephemeral pond.

It’s a joy of my job to return to troublesome areas and make improvements for a more comfortable and enjoyable hiking experience. As Team Leader for the event, it was a treat to watch the volunteers take charge and organically form small crews. A rhythm developed as crew members got to know one another and perfected repetitive tasks. As the boardwalk grew, volunteers interspersed conversations about ancestry, the pandemic, and life in general were laced with comments to move a post to the left or right to level it, or where to place a screw.

With perfect autumn weather, and getting lucky on dry conditions at the project site, we moved quickly, like a northbound train, passing checkpoints and keeping a focus on the end goal. Two small satellite crews quickly completed their assignments, thanks to help from machinery. They safely felled hazard trees near the new boardwalk on the Holy Hill Segment to protect the Trail (and hikers!), and they removed the old, unsafe structure. A wildcard arose as the week progressed: the possibility of installing signage posts on the new Slinger Segment ahead of its grand opening in early October. The work needed to get done, and we had the volunteers to tackle the job.

It’s also a joy to work with so many hard-working and skilled volunteers. The folks were exceptionally experienced at this event, having helped construct numerous boardwalks on the Trail during the past few years and easily anticipated the next steps. I’ve learned to have full faith in our volunteers. It’s a trust built from hundreds of hours, working with the same people at dozens of projects. It’s a confidence born from seeing others bring their expertise to the worksite. This trust provides freedom for the crews to make their own decisions during the project creates more ownership, more desire to work hard, and brings a new flair to the Trail.

By midday Saturday, the crews had run themselves out of work. The new boardwalk was complete, and satellite crews had removed the old boardwalk on the Holy Hill Segment. The wildcard effort had installed dozens of trail signage posts on a new portion of the Slinger Segment. We packed up the equipment and headed our separate ways. Yet, we’ll continue to look forward to the next opportunity to improve existing or build new Trail towards our shared goal: creating a top-notch hiking experience on the Ice Age Trail.
Welcome to the Ice Age Trail Alliance
We’re Glad You’re a Part of Our Community!

AMY LORD, OUTREACH AND EDUCATION MANAGER & ERIC SHERMAN, MEMBERSHIP AND GRANTS COORDINATOR

As wild and crazy as 2020 has been, we would like to take a moment to slow down and say WELCOME and THANK YOU!

Welcome to those of you who recently joined our Ice Age Trail Alliance community, and thank you to those who renewed your membership.
The Ice Age Trail Alliance witnessed an unprecedented number of Trail enthusiasts joining in 2020! To date, we welcomed 625 new members, compared with 311 at this same point last year, while our renewal rate remained as healthy as ever. We’re now more than 4,300 members strong, an increase of about 30% over the past decade.

Even as things looked vastly different earlier in the year, our mission of creating, supporting, and protecting the Ice Age National Scenic Trail did not change. The Alliance continued to work tirelessly to acquire and preserve land, build new Ice Age Trail segments, and maintain existing ones.

More than ever, we realize the importance of having healthy, protected natural areas for everyone to enjoy and to which they can feel a special connection. This is what will ensure this Wisconsin wonder is here for generations to come.

So, what do you GET for your membership?

Our fabulous Mammoth Tales newsletter (that you are enjoying right now) arrives in your mailbox. You receive discounts on Alliance merchandise and an invitation to the annual membership meeting along with voting privileges. You are among the first to know about unique hikes and special events. In addition, your financial and volunteer contributions are recognized in various ways, beginning with our donor recognition in Member & Donor News, see pages 20-23.

However, your membership dollars DO so much more.

In a nutshell, your membership helps connect people of all races, ages, and incomes to the Ice Age Trail as a place for fun, exploration, and rejuvenation. Here’s how it makes a difference:

- The Ice Age Trail does not exist through its beauty and magic alone. Your membership helps support the trailbuilding and maintenance projects, which ultimately provide a quality hiker experience. It takes a dedicated workforce of thousands of volunteers from across the upper Mid-West to build and maintain this space for personal growth.
- The Ice Age Trail is not yet complete. Membership dollars help us close the gaps and fulfill the vision of a continuous footpath. With your support, the Alliance can permanently protect the Trail through land acquisitions.
- The Alliance firmly believes in sharing the natural story of the Ice Age Trail. Your membership helps us connect with tomorrow’s leaders through immersive, hands-on experiences. Wonder and awe are sparked in students and teachers as the Trail takes them past world-renowned glacial features and offers a lifetime of learning.

On behalf of the board of directors and staff, we appreciate your continued support in helping the Ice Age Trail Alliance with this important work.

How to Make the Most of Your Membership

Deepen your connection to the Ice Age Trail Community and join us for a virtual membership orientation via Zoom. Amy Lord, Outreach and Education Manager, and special guests, will introduce you to Alliance programs and their directors and the organizations we partner with to accomplish our goals. We’ll introduce you to our chapters and the ways you can connect with this vibrant volunteer community. We’ll highlight resources you can use to plan your next adventure and spend some time answering your questions!

DATE | Wednesday, January 20, 2021
TIME | 9:00 a.m. or 6:00 p.m.
REGISTRATION DEADLINE | Sunday, January 10, 2021
REGISTER HERE | iceagetrail.org/new-member-welcome/
Closing the Gaps, One Donor at a Time

KEVIN THUSIUS, DIRECTOR OF LAND CONSERVATION & LUKE KLOBERDANZ, DIRECTOR OF PHILANTHROPY

For those wishing to claim Thousand-Miler fame, one must walk approximately 500 miles on connecting roads between off-road sections of the Ice Age Trail. Imagine walking on a quiet country road where ancient oak trees create a shady tunnel, and a gentle breeze blows the bugs away. Your mind is allowed to wander without the worry of a protruding rock or root. You can contemplate the miles behind and anticipate the miles ahead. It’s at this very moment when a massive dump truck, filled with gravel, trundles past you. Its driver’s side mirror comes dangerously close, taking your breath away and making your heart skip a beat.

For many hikers on the Waterville Road in Waukesha County, this scenario will soon be a thing of the past. After four strenuous years of negotiations, stops and starts, poor health for the landowner, and many legal opinions, the Alliance obtained a trail easement along Waterville Road. Success was two-fold. The easement will permanently eliminate a half-mile road walk along this hazardous connecting route. It will also contain a provision that could help create future off-road options along this stretch of asphalt.

This critical easement will protect hikers from fast-moving traffic as it parallels the road. This new Ice Age Trail section will cross several driveways, containing a mowed grass path through former agricultural fields. Additionally, the Alliance and neighbors plan to plant trees to provide some privacy for the nearby homes and enhance the hiker experience.

A project of this magnitude has many people and partners to recognize. The Town of Ottawa board members were steadfast in their support for more off-road Ice Age Trail in their community. The landowner’s daughter was instrumental in helping pull the easement process across the finish line. The Alliance’s Waukesha/Milwaukee County Chapter’s incredible dedication and support helped raise the necessary funds. These local volunteers helped build and implement a ‘Close the Waterville Gap!’ campaign. It engaged Trail neighbors, friends, and Trail users in southeast Wisconsin to financially support the property costs and upgrade nearly 800 feet of boardwalks and bridges. A key player in the efforts emerged as Prairie Springs: The Paul Fleckenstein Trust joined the ‘Close the Waterville Gap’ campaign by offering a dollar-for-dollar match of up to $25,000 in support of the project. Paul Fleckenstein, who died in 2011, was a steadfast supporter of environmental education and conservation programs. In recognition of his Prairie Springs home, Fleckenstein’s charitable trust is named Prairie Springs: The Paul Fleckenstein Trust.

The Ice Age Trail Alliance family continues to step up in big ways. As we protect more land in the future, this type of grassroots fundraising will help us close more gaps and stay well away from gravel trucks.
As a nation and a community, we have learned countless lessons from the coronavirus pandemic. The Ice Age Trail Alliance is no exception to this rule. We discovered just how vital the Ice Age National Scenic Trail is to people and communities. Thousands of people turned to the Ice Age Trail to process world events, improve personal wellness, and find a sense of normalcy in an abnormal time. This surge in users led to an increase in members and supporters, many of whom seek new adventures and miles to cover.

While Trail enthusiasts can access the Ice Age Trail for what it costs to get to the nearest trailhead, creating, supporting, and protecting the Trail is not as inexpensive. Purchasing land, doing the detailed behind-the-scenes work associated with layout, design, and compliance, mobilizing volunteers, and finally building new Trail sections can take years and substantial resources.

Dedicated to this work is the entire Ice Age Trail Alliance family (see page 10 for the ‘Close the Waterville Gap’ example). New members and supporters have joined us in these efforts, but we are far from done. While we celebrate the 675 completed miles of Trail, we keep the 500 remaining miles in our sights. Now, perhaps more than ever, our growing Ice Age Trail community needs the Trail we care for to process life events and improve personal wellness. As our community expands, new miles and new landscapes are needed. Individually we may not be able to purchase tracts of land or build boardwalks, but together we can.

As the clock on 2020 expires, your year-end gift will help close more gaps across the state. Donations do so much more than “keep the lights on.” They connect communities, provide a world-class outdoor classroom, support dedicated and hard-working volunteers, and create new experiences for all to enjoy. They provide the necessary foundation to get the job done and continue to advance the Ice Age National Scenic Trail for years to come.

Thank you for supporting the mission of the Ice Age Trail Alliance. Giving is easy, please join us by using one of these methods.

**Ways to Give**

**By Mail:**
Ice Age Trail Alliance
PO Box 128
Cross Plains, WI 53528

**Online:**
iceagetrail.org/year-end-2020/

**By Text:**
Text “mammoth” to 56512

**In Person:**
(We would love to see you!)
2110 Main Street
Cross Plains, WI 53528
You might find that a charming Rusk County campground is all but empty on a beautiful September weekend. This may contrast nicely with your experience trying to find a campsite in the middle of summer at a popular Wisconsin state park, where the opening of the online reservations period leaves you feeling like a homesteader during the 1889 Oklahoma Land Rush, blazing across the Plains desperately searching for someplace, any place, to pound in your stakes.

In defiance of your tendency to inflate the loveliness of past experiences, you might find that the walk-in campsite (#9) you spent a night in 10 years ago is somehow even lovelier than you remembered.

As you walk the perimeter of your site for a preliminary inspection, you might ponder whether the person who broke off part of your picnic table for firewood is the same person who, seeking atonement, perhaps, left a ¾-full bottle of Smirnoff cherry vodka in the fire ring. Realizing you didn't pack any spirits yourself, you might briefly ponder what’s the worst that could happen should you partake. Probably (hopefully), you’ll think better of it and take a quick walk down to the dumpster and back.

During campsite setup, you may be pleased to learn that monastic study of YouTube tutorials on tying the bowline, power cinch, and taut-line hitch has allowed you to trim the fair-weather setup time of your camping tarp from 2 hours all the way down to 1 hour, 50 minutes. You might wonder how the same drill will go should you ever have to set up the tarp during a rain shower, when the tarp would actually serve a purpose.

Setting off from your campsite for some hiking on the Ice Age Trail’s Hemlock Creek Segment, you might find that, within the first quarter-mile, the aroma of almost-ready-to-fall, recently fallen, and long-ago-fallen leaves fills your head to bursting, like the old cartoon character whose nemesis has crammed a fire hose in his mouth and turned it on...
full blast. Though you may not be a fan, in general, of aspens and other runty softwoods, on this hike, you might take a moment to reconsider, appreciating the unique, sweetly pungent aroma of their decomposing leaves. Further on, you might find that the sight and smell of a carpeting of white pine needles momentarily turns you back into an 8-year-old, climbing the tree in front of your grandparents’ house and getting your clothes all full of pitch (which your grandma had warned you about).

Rounding a bend, you might be pleased to encounter an old friend, the winterberry shrub, which triggers memories of lovely red berries rescuing an otherwise monochromatic day on a November hike years ago. Rounding another bend, you might be agitated to find an old enemy, buckthorn. It’s possible you’ll think that it grew in your area only, and you might despair that it’s apparently everywhere now. Hopefully, you won’t stew in those juices too long. Thinking about invasives is a stone-cold drag, baby. Today: not going there.

Mid-day, you may decide to take a momentary break from hiking and camping to head into town and meet up with an old Ice Age Trail friend. With any luck, he will recommend you gather at the best place in town (Lona’s), and be able to speak from experience when telling you that yes, the biscuits and gravy are a good choice. After an enjoyable time hanging out, you may reflect on how cool it is to be able to pick up right where you left off with a fellow Alliance member who you see only once every five years. You may further reflect on how the Trail is as much about people as it is places.

Back on the Trail, because you saw a fisher on a hike on the Chippewa Moraine Segment a few years back, you might hold out hope that every flash of movement you catch out of the corner of your eye may have been a fisher (when in fact, it was squirrels). When coming upon the shore of a remote pond, you may hear the sound of what sounds like a large person doing a cannonball. Waiting patiently, you will hopefully soon discover that the sound is coming from a beaver slapping its tail in agitation on account of your presence in its corner of the world. You might ponder that scientists would tell you that your gawking while this beaver freaks out is actually taking years off its life, before thinking further that your taking the time to sit and watch quietly in a place like this can’t possibly be bad for the universe.

Heading back to your campsite, as you pass by a swing set at the picnic area near the trailhead, if you have children you might get a surge of happiness at the thought of your kids, then a surge of sadness at the thought that your kids will soon be too old for swing sets. This may prompt you to vow to bring the kids along the next time you do something like this.

Finally, in spite of the fact that the best picture you typically get on hikes like this is from an iPhone weighing all of 6 ounces, you may decide to lug around on your weekend adventure a tripod suitable for Ansel Adams, two digital SLR camera bodies, six lenses, and an array of filters that you haven’t used in 15 years but might be proven, on this trip, to be entirely worthless. That said, you may find the whole tripod-and-camera-setup process, and the subsequent image-composition process, to be a breath of fresh air, regardless of the quality of the pictures. Like making a phone call instead of sending a text, or meeting for coffee instead of making a phone call, you might decide that the world needs more activities that slow us down and fewer that speed us up.
In May of 1942, Ray Zillmer was the chairman of a committee in the Izaac Walton League, one of America’s oldest and most successful conservation organizations. The committee authored a report on the glacial moraines and recommended the creation of The Great Wisconsin Glacier Trail – a trail for hikers and skiers. This was the genesis of the Ice Age Trail as we know it today!

In 1958, Ray founded the Ice Age Park & Trail Foundation (now known as the Ice Age Trail Alliance).

In October of 1980, Wisconsin’s US Representative Henry Reuss succeeded in advancing Bill HR7825, which amended the National Trail Systems Act to include the Ice Age National Scenic Trail.

These milestones built an infrastructure allowing for the thousands of mammoth efforts that followed – to create, support, and protect the Ice Age Trail we all experience today. In honor of all these efforts, the Ice Age Trail Alliance felt it was important to devote effort to capturing and archiving our organization’s past.

Barbara Wollmer holds one of the many binders she filled with original documents as part of her archiving efforts. Photo by IATA staff.
We held our annual meeting in May and enjoyed a pizza party while social distancing and following COVID-19 safety protocols. All sections of Ice Age Trail were adopted for a new season of trail maintenance and new folks were recruited! We hosted three hikes on sections of popular segments during the summer: McKenzie Creek, Gandy Dancer, and St. Croix Falls.

We also hosted successful trail Improvement days. Along the Indian Creek Segment, a 1,000-pound rock was moved and became a step across a creek, and rocks filled a wash gully. A bridge along the McKenzie Creek Segment received 13 new top boards, repositioned frost-heaving supports, and a newly secured kick rail. Replacement of a deteriorated and dangerous bridge happened along the St. Croix Falls Segment. A new bench was installed along each segment as well.

Barb Cedar and Paul Kuhlman are busy learning the ropes. They'll assume new leadership positions in January 2021 when Dean Dversdall retires from being Chapter Coordinator after 17 years.

- Wanda Brown

Since spring, our chapter has not held face-to-face meetings and has tried to handle all matters by email or phone calls. Before the pandemic, we led a full-moon-light hike in March. It was a clear, beautiful evening with temperatures in the thirties. Thirty-nine people met at the trailhead at Hwy H along the Timberland Hills Segment and hiked northeast three miles to the CASTA warming house. There we enjoyed Thelma’s chili and cornbread.

In August, chapter members gathered along the Tuscoobra Segment trailhead at CTH-SS north of Rice Lake. Wearing masks and social distancing, we showed our appreciation to Mary Hilfiker. She donated a 60” Cub Cadet riding lawn mower for use on that segment. The chapter deeply appreciates Mary’s gift, which will help trail maintenance. The mower gives a shorter cut and saves time compared to using the tractor and brush hog as in previous years. With all the rain in our area, the grass and weeds keep growing. As of August, we are mowing for the third time.

- Audrey Held

2020 brought the COVID-19 pandemic, during which no trail work was allowed. Fortunately, there wasn’t severe damage to the Trail, which required care. Luckily, the storm damage from the prior July was already cleaned up. However, chapter members were encouraged to complete online training, coordinate, and plan. Chapter members attended “Think Outside” training held at the Obey Ice Age Interpretive Center in March. They also participated in the virtual meetings and voting normally held at the annual conference in April.

Chapter volunteers assessed the Trail during the June Mammoth Steps event. In July, our Reconnect event accomplished mowing, updating signage, painting and installing trail signage posts (TSPs), clearing berry brambles, and lopping overgrown trail corridor. IATA Trail Program Specialist Dave Caliebe and volunteers from the Chippewa Moraine Chapter and a volunteer from Chicago joined our efforts. Chapter members also volunteered in other Reconnect events.

A variety of people enjoyed using the Blue Hills Segments of the Ice Age Trail during the pandemic, and hikers did a good job of social distancing and keeping the Trail clean.

The Trail Layout and Design (TL&D) project scheduled for early May in the Blue Hills will hopefully take place in late October.

- Marilynn Nash

Superior Lobe Chapter members are all smiles behind their masks as they assume ownership of a new mower, gift from Mary Hilfiker. L to R-Mary Hilfiker, Bob Held, Dale Crisler, Laura Sandstrom, and Linda Thompson. Photo by Don Erickson.
Despite the pandemic, chapter volunteers have been busy on the Trail this spring and summer contending with nasty windfalls, pesky beavers, water galore, and heavy vegetative growth. Chapter members from Dane County, Jared Wildenradt, Kris Van Handel, Renae Sieling, Robert Sieling, and Priscilla Matthews, have joined local segment stewards in dealing with these constant challenges of trail maintenance. All five segments in the county have received the volunteers’ best attention within the extent of their available time.

Efforts of note include Dave Tlusty, who makes an eight-mile round trip mowing a stretch of Lumbercamp while Lee Auner does the same on the Summit Moraine Segment. Jared Wildenrath and Kris Van Handel scouted an alternative for a severely eroded access point on the Kettlebowl Segment. They then headed across the county to the Parrish Hills Segments to take care of several windfalls and brushing long stretches before heading home. Gerald Anderson tackled stabilizing a marker post on the edge of a flooded river while standing in shin-high water. Others, like Adam Evans, Lloyd Godell, Brian and Melinda Nelson, and Sam Picone, unselfishly provided the constant care required to keep Trail segments passable.

Such is the nature of volunteerism. To some, it is fun; to others, tedious but either way, there is the satisfaction of a job well done.

- Joe Jopek

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**CENTRAL MORAINES CHAPTER**

Co-Coordinators: Gail Piotrowski (715-370-2958) and Steve Kaiser (352-249-6366)

CentralMorainesChapter@iceagetrail.org

Individuals, pairs, micro-crews; these have been the order of the day for the Central Moraines Chapter. Dedicated chapter volunteers, many actively choosing to avoid groups, have continued to hike, mow, and maintain “their sections” of the Ice Age Trail in Marathon County. Some exceptional efforts include:

- individuals who went above and beyond to address wet sections of the trail so hikers could keep their feet dry;
- a socially-distanced crew of eight which successfully cleared an additional stretch of corridor (in preparation for the anticipated Mobile Skills Crew event in October on the reimagined Ringle Segment); and
- a crew that stepped up to reset and anchor two bridges, displaced by the flooded Eau Claire River, on the Dells of the Eau Claire Segment.

By the time you read this, we anticipate that we will have hosted the chapter’s second annual Hike-A-Thon (adapted to follow COVID-19 protocols for a safe event) and the October MSC event, further extending the reimagined Ringle Segment!

- Gail Piotrowski

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**PORTAGE/WAUPACA COUNTY CHAPTER**

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

Although COVID-19 had a suppressing effect on our Spring/Summer outreach events and activities, our trails have benefitted from the increased volunteer availability and enthusiasm. Summers are always the busiest, and the need for volunteers the greatest. We’re so grateful to our dedicated volunteer force!

Sawyer crews have been busy keeping trails cleared of fallen trees and ‘widow-makers’. Trail section chiefs have had their hands full following a wet spring, keeping up with mowing and beating back the ever-present bramble bushes. The reward? Beautifully-maintained trails that beckon hikers and provide a great and tranquil hiking experience.

Highlights include several workdays organized to address two re-routes. In the Skunk & Foster Lakes Segment, the section just north of Rieben Road was moved a little further east and now traverses the west side of a drumlin, meanders through erratics, and has a beautiful view of the Anderson farm fields below. In the New Hope-Iola Ski Hill Segment, the trail just south of the Hwy Z trailhead now winds east through mature woods and around a wet kettle.

- Joe Jopek
The bridge that crossed the kettle is underwater – the highest level seen in over 30 years. We are grateful to the property owners, Mark & Dawn Anderson and Mark & Tammie Ellingson. They’ve been terrific supporters of the Ice Age Trail, welcoming hikers to experience this area’s amazing glacial topography.

Two Trail sections remain closed in our area due to high water and treacherous bridge crossings. These are: Edminster Road north to Hwy 54 in the Hartman Creek Segment and Hwy T north to Krogwold Road in the New Hope-Iola Ski Hill Segment. Our Chapter is working closely with IATA staff and property owners to address the high-water issues. Please respect the ‘Trail Closed’ and ‘Private Property’ signs until we can safely re-open these sections.

- Debbie Krogwold

Our trail maintenance days have been attracting more volunteers than last summer, which has been wonderful! We continue to clear the Trail as needed and refresh signage on the western portion of the Sauk Point Segment.

I am so grateful for the outdoors in this time of social distancing. Stay safe everyone!

- Debby Capener

Volunteers, including local Scouts, have been participating in a few maintenance days to keep Trail segments in good condition. We have also been hearing from several Scouts interested in having us work with them to identify additional volunteer opportunities on the Trail, including a few aspiring Eagle Scouts. The third annual Art on the Trail event took place in August and featured some fantastic art installations along the Gibraltar Segment. As part of Art on the Trail, the chapter worked with the

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

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

BARABOO HILLS/HERITAGE TRAIL CHAPTER
Coordinator: Debby Capener (262-930-9713, BarabooHillsHeritageChapter@iceagetrail.org)

The Ice Age Trail segments in our care are in pretty good shape despite the spike in use! While, there are always a lot of people in Devil’s Lake State Park, vast numbers of people visited it and hiked the trails during the pandemic.

After Memorial Day, when we were able to volunteer again, we went on a kiosk painting spree—see the before and after pictures. A severe storm came through the Portage area in early June. About 25 trees came down along a mile and a half of the Portage Canal Segment on the city’s east side. With the Portage Canal Society and IATA staff’s help, the Trail was cleared in about ten days.

Before (left). Portage Canal Segment trailhead signage in need of a fresh coat of paint. After (right). Portage Canal Segment trailhead signage after plenty of yellow paint is applied. Photos by Debby Capener.

Children putting their new hiking sticks to good use on the Ice Age Trail. Photo courtesy of the Lodi Valley Chapter.
Lodi Public Library to sponsor a “Create Your Own Hiking Stick” event in place of the Tyke Hikes we are not doing at this time. Young children picked up a peeled hiking stick (thanks to the Scouts for peeling them!) and a bag of items they could use to decorate their hiking stick at home. We’re pleased. Kids claimed 41 hiking stick kits, and from the pictures that we’ve received (and put on our chapter Facebook page), the hiking sticks are well-used on the Trail. The chapter is pleased to be working with the Alliance, the local Chamber of Commerce, and the City of Lodi staff to develop and promote the Mammoth Hike 40 Challenge event which will take place in October.

- Patti Herman

**DANE COUNTY CHAPTER**

Co-Coordinators: David Lonsdorf (608-212-1135, dblonsdo@wisc.edu) and Bob Kaspar (608-239-0168, bobkaspar@sbcglobal.net) or DaneCoChapter@iceagetrail.org

Over two hot Saturdays in July, chapter volunteers traced out the upcoming path to Timber Lane from Ice Age Lane on the west end of the Valley View Segment. Their work awaits a bridge over the now-common high-water occurrences throughout the county.

Fire season was canceled due to the Coronavirus, but garlic mustard has been pulled or sprayed. Curly dock, wild clovers, Japanese hedge parsley, and other invasive weeding is going on over the summer months.

A new mower is in the forecast after several years of problems with one in the fleet. If you are a tinkerer and enjoy maintaining equipment, you might give Dave Lonsdorf a jingle (608-212-1135). He would appreciate sharing the workload.

The Dazzling Daubers are out and about, refreshing five-year-old blazes. Madison’s facelift is complete, and other segments are underway. Contact Jeannine Wahlquist (jkwahlquist@sbcglobal.net) if you like wielding a paintbrush or a pair of loppers to make the trail more accessible for the team’s work.

Chapter meetings are being held on Zoom roughly every six weeks. Anyone interested in being a part of them, should contact Bob Kaspar (bobkaspar@sbcglobal.net).

- Tess Mulrooney

**ROCK COUNTY CHAPTER**

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

Even during a pandemic, the Rock County Chapter continued to maintain and improve the Trail in the county. In May, the chapter began a system of routine trail improvement days to keep the Trail in shape and continue the momentum. Each Wednesday and Friday, chapter leadership invites volunteer assistance for specific projects within a targeted area, typically from 9:00 a.m. until noon. Social distancing is practiced. These efforts are timely. Chapter members have noticed more and more people enjoying local segments. The number of people participating in the “Walk the Rock” hikes across the county has increased significantly.

In July, the chapter welcomed an important new member of the team. Ashley Wille volunteered to help manage the chapter’s social media outreach. Wille has listed some ambitious goals for the chapter’s social media efforts: to aid in minimizing the stereotype that the Ice Age Trail in Rock County is dangerous, to promote events, to show ways the Trail can be used, to encourage people to get out and have fun without leaving town, to let the community know you don’t have to be a serious hiker or super fit to use the Trail, and primarily increase awareness about the Trail segments in Rock County. Wille stresses that a successful social media program depends on the participation of chapter members and the community. “I am very passionate about the Ice Age Trail, hiking, the environment, and conservation in general, and this just seemed like the perfect fit for not only me but also IATA,” Wille says.

- Sevie Kenyon

**WALWORTH/JEFFERSON COUNTY CHAPTER**

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

There comes a point when the “before time” doesn’t seem real any longer, but the record shows the Walworth/Jefferson Counties Chapter was off to a heady start at the beginning of 2020. January was welcomed with the annual New Year’s Day Hike/Potluck and wrapped up with the 20+y tract tradition of a potluck/indoor workday at the Converse residence; the latter focused on getting materials ready for the Mini Maker Faire in Elkhorn, WI, in February. The chapter’s offerings for that event allowed participants to carve hiking sticks, “build a boardwalk,” and craft personalized artworks using all sorts of nature-themed materials (seeds, bark, moss, etc.). Chapter members also staffed a booth at the Sky Circus – a celebratory kite flying event on frozen Delavan Lake. We also had a presence at the Frozen Polar Plunge event in Whitewater, held on a moonlight hike along a converted railroad bed near Lake Geneva, hosted speakers at each of our meetings, and elected the proffered slate of Officers for the year.

Then, as the anticipation of Spring was about to be realized, nature had other plans. It was mid-May before we gathered again, this time
Our chapter received the materials for a white cedar log bench from Creek Segment, and part of the Greenwood Segment. In exchange, Creek Segment, Wedderburn signage in the Chaffee Creek Segment, and proper tutored by the Blazing Babes, at Waushara’s Randy Lennartz for installation along the Monches Segment at the iconic Oconomowoc River Bridge. They also passed their skills in having fun while creating National Scenic Trail quality signage to a local chapter member who worked with them.

Hikers in Waushara County familiar with the often-harrowing mile-and-a-half connecting road stretch in our Waterville Segment were cheered by the news that an easement will permanently eliminate a half-mile road walk along this hazardous connecting route. It will also contain a provision that could help create future off-road options along this stretch of asphalt.

- Robert Root

WASHINGTON/OZAUKEE COUNTY CHAPTER
Interim Coordinator: Brad Crary, IATA staff
(608-798-4453 ext. 225, Brad@iceagetrail.org)

WAUKESHA/MILWAUKEE COUNTY CHAPTER
Co-Coordinators: Barb Johnson (414-779-0996, barbjoh@hotmail.com) and Robert Root (262-349-9339, rootco@msn.com)

The Waukesha/Milwaukee County Chapter membership grew as the Trail invited many hikers and volunteers needed immersion in something other than newscasts and home isolation. Meetings were cancelled through the spring, summer, and fall, though chapter leaders met in person in June—at safe social distances—outside Trecker Lodge at Lapham Peak.

The Waukesha/Milwaukee County Chapter’s Blazing Babes were part of a great collaborative project with the Waushara County Chapter this summer. The Babe’s upgraded signage in the Chaffee Creek Segment, Wedde Creek Segment, and part of the Greenwood Segment. In exchange, our chapter received the materials for a white cedar log bench from Waushara’s Randy Lennartz.

- Vince Lazzaroni

Bruce Gorsuch happily celebrates turning THREE with a hike on the Ice Age Trail with his parents and grandmother. Photo by Cheryl Gorsuch.
MEMBER & DONOR news

January 1 — September 15, 2020

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:

- Sara & Brian Klawikowski
- Leah Lalor
- Larry & Judy Loizzo
- Kimberly Mast
- Jodi Nienkerk

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.

MATCHING GIFTS

Matching gifts were received from:

- AbbVie thanks to Azita Saleki-Gerhardt
- Alliant Energy Foundation thanks to Bradley Chopp
- American Family Insurance thanks to Patricia Carey
- American Transmission Company thanks to Jennifer Bradley-Vent
- BMO Harris Bank thanks to David W. Johnson
- Caterpillar Foundation thanks to Charles Poat
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- Schreiber Foods thanks to Roz Barker
- Thrivent Financial thanks to Phil Snyder
- Varian Medical Systems thanks to Dale Eckstrom
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MILESTONES

Gifts to the IATA were made in honor of:

- Bill & Jody Beers by Ken & Julie Richardson
- Abigail Cantor by Katherine Hall
- Tony Denzin & Lydia Philips’ wedding by Dale & Penny Schaber
- Armin Gerhardt by Azita Saleki-Gerhardt
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- Herb Schotz by Mark & Barbara Crapster-Pregont
- Don Evans
- Tom Goitz
- Gerald Gombien
- Bruce & Ruby Jaacks

ABBREVIATIONS

- IATA: Ice Age Trail Alliance
- AIT: Ice Age Trail
- AITAP: Ice Age Trail Alliance Program
- AITPA: Ice Age Trail Program
- AITPA: Ice Age Trail Program

- ABV: AbbVie
- AELF: Alliant Energy Foundation
- AMF: American Family Insurance
- AMTC: American Transmission Company
- BMO: BMO Harris Bank
- CATP: Caterpillar Foundation
- DEL: Delta Dental
- ETL: Edwards Lifesciences Foundation
- ETH: Elasticsearch
- GEF: GE Foundation
- LGM: Liberty Mutual
- MTF: Medtronic
- ORC: Oracle
- SCH: Schreiber Foods
- TF: Thrivent Financial
- VAR: Varian Medical Systems
- XER: Xcel Energy Foundation

- ANO: Anonymous

- MMT: MAMMOTH tales
- FM: Fall-Winter

- PIERCE: PIERCE
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Elizabeth Landergren
Bill & Sandy Lussenhop
Jim Olson
Ruth Sommers
Rita Wiechman
Jane Wininger
Anerka Simic
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Shelby Suhr
by Joan Suhr
Pat Witkowski & Kevin Thius
by Village of Hartland Police Department
Coree Woltering
by Lorraine Bradley

Gifts to the IATA were made in memory of:
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continued on page 22
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by Sandy & David Street  
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Bruce Vosseller  
by the Vosseller Family: Colomba, Troy & Mary, Shannon & Shoko, and Gina & Ben  
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**January 1 – September 15, 2020**

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Barbara Wollmer agreed to tackle the project of gathering and organizing the Ice Age Trail Alliance assets we’ve accumulated across the decades. From protecting Henry Reuss’ public service radio announcements telling folks to “get out of the noise of the city and hike the trail” to saving early segment maps, old patches, handwritten correspondence, newspaper clippings, and so much more, we are developing a detailed record of our history.

Barbara is determining the best way to preserve the historical items and catalog them. “We are gathering items that reflect the hard work of so many people. Passion and hard work made this happen, and we want to capture and learn from it,” reports Barbara. As Barbara spends her time unboxing memorabilia and reviewing correspondence, her appreciation continues to grow. “We don’t want to lose our history because it helps us define our future; we want to pay homage to the people who worked so hard and were so passionate. So many people dedicated their time and effort to make this happen for us to enjoy today.”

The Alliance invites chapter leaders and members to send historical items to us for cataloging and archiving. You may direct your questions about this project to Mike Wollmer, Executive Director, Mike@iceagetrail.org.

Tricia Baker hails from Summit, Wisconsin. She started her own marketing firm Baker Creative/Consulting, after a career in business and marketing. Tricia also serves on the Boards of an ad agency and a Milwaukee-based non-profit. In her free time, Tricia, along with her husband Brian, is hiking all Ice Age Trail segments.