Executive Director’s Report

2016 was a defining year for the Ice Age Trail Alliance. While, the cornerstone was set years ago, we continued to build on a solid foundation of previous achievements. In doing so, we were able to take the Alliance to a new level.

Our three main programs of Trails, Land, and Outreach were generously supported by an increasing number of volunteers who devoted incredible energy and spirit to our vision. Our seasoned, professional staff, with an average tenure with the Alliance of over 9 years, focused directly on the organizational goals set with our 2015-17 Strategic Plan. As a whole, our Board of Directors and its committees, were actively engaged and provided key leadership by governing and managing the financial well-being of the Alliance.

The Alliance posted one of its strongest years ever, financially and programmatically, and firmly positioned itself for 2017, and importantly, for years beyond. In this look towards the future, we strive to make the Alliance (and the Trail) welcoming and reflective of the cultural richness and diversity of all communities. The mission of the Alliance is more secure every year “…to create, support and protect the Ice Age National Scenic Trail…” for the benefit of trail-users and conservationists across the country.

We are, with this legacy project, well-positioned and eager to meet the opportunities before us.

### IATA Revenue and Expenses 2016

- **Trails** - $351,880
- **Lands** - $181,244
- **Outreach** - $376,745
- **Administration** - $164,315
- **Fundraising** - $128,991
- **Total expenses** - $1,203,175

**Total revenue** - $1,296,869

#### Income Sources
- **Government (state & local)** - $51,592
- **Government (federal)** - $278,284
- **Individuals & foundations** - $783,816
- **Other (events & sales)** - $183,177

#### Expense Breakdown
- **Trails** - $351,880
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2016 ANNUAL REPORT

The bright bow perched on 2016? Winning three of six categories for the George and Helen Hartzog Awards for Outstanding Volunteer Service. This recognition from the National Park Service reflects the commitment of our members and dedication of our volunteers and our staff.

**Hartzog Outstanding Volunteer Service Group Award:**
The Mobile Skills Crew Program went head-to-head and won national recognition for its passion, enthusiasm, and friendly sense of community. Since 2002, these attributes brought 13,408 volunteers on 146 project events and generated a total of 265,351 volunteer hours towards making the Ice Age National Scenic Trail a reality. Lauded was its “formalized methodology of approaching trail construction and maintenance”. In tandem, systematic and professional-level trainings have enabled volunteers to fully participate in Trail stewardship. Also noted was the keen desire to connect diverse communities to the Trail, leading to the successful, on-going establishment of new partnerships.

**Hartzog Enduring Service Award:**
Dean Dversdall, Indianhead Chapter Coordinator, won recognition across the Midwest Region for being “one of the Trail’s finest stewards by every measure.” His passion and commitment is evident in the 7,177 volunteer hours since 2007 he’s contributed to the Ice Age National Scenic Trail. Dean selflessly advances the work of building, maintaining, and protecting the Trail at all levels: board leadership, facilitating land acquisition, Mobile Skills Crew leader, spear-heading hikes, and providing taxi service for thru-hikers.

**Hartzog Outstanding Park Volunteer Program:**
Designed to get the next generation intimately connected to the Trail through an immersion experience, the Saunters Program was recognized for its “growth spurt.” In six short years, Saunters boasted a 366% increase in the number of school districts involved, and a 614% increase in students served. Extraordinary advances include introducing diverse populations – rural youth in northern Wisconsin to urban kids of Milwaukee – to the well-being found on the Trail.

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Effective Land Protection

We’re pleased to report, in 2016, the Ice Age Trail Alliance, along with its partners, acquired 10 properties totaling 426 acres, and protected ~4.3 miles of current and future Ice Age Trail.

Mile-by-mile, adding just over four miles of future Trail might not seem like much for an eventual 1,200-mile trail. Yet, the extraordinary significance of a number of properties acquired in 2016, by the Alliance and its partners, is they provide the final link between protected properties and/or roads. The Timber Lane property is worth celebrating; it is the final piece of a puzzle creating a road-to-road connection for the Ice Age Trail in Dane County. Excitingly, the acquisition of the Kreuscher property, near Bohn Lake in Waushara County, will allow for a new section of trail between two state-owned properties. Happily, the former site of the Moby Dick Campground, near Greenbush, WI will be preserved as it makes a meaningful addition to the Northern Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest.

SUCCESSFUL TRAIL EXPANSION

10th consecutive year for outstanding volunteerism on behalf of the Trail. Last year 2,620 people contributed 75,677 hours of volunteer service with a private sector value of almost $1.8 million! Achievements of these Trail enthusiasts included:

- 4 new Dispersed Camping Areas,
- 6 clear span bridges,
- 2 elevated boardwalks and puncheons totaling 1,367 feet,
- 20 rock walls were fashioned stretching 289 feet,
- 7.1 new miles of the Ice Age Trail were added,
- 10.1 miles received trail signage updates,
- 21 miles of the Trail received significant repairs.

The vision fueling these remarkable numbers is of an enjoyable hiker experience. One unfolding in quiet woods, along bubbling streams, in the intimate story woven through the glacial landscape. Crafting this reality is a swell of multi-generational volunteers, collaborative partnerships, and passionate Trail supporters who claim leadership roles in trailbuilding projects.

Thoughtful Cultivation of Conservationists

The Alliance is working hard to ensure the collective efforts of trailbuilding and land conservation continue into the future. One approach is Saunters - a youth engagement platform that changes the learning environment from one with four walls to one where the Trail is the classroom.

In 2016 the Ice Age Trail Alliance partnered with 17 schools districts to bring 1,749 youth and educators out on the Trail for a series of educational hikes, service learning events and multi-day backpacking outings. Collectively, these adventures are helping shape the minds of future generations; making positive impacts on mental and emotional well-being, and creating a culture of conservation in communities across the glacial landscape.