ICE AGE TRAIL ALLIANCE
Mammoth Awards

2020 Awards Spotlight

Each year we celebrate all the time, energy, and effort our volunteers put into making our organization what it is. Without their profound volunteer spirit, the Ice Age National Scenic Trail would be nothing more than a line on a map!

Under traditional circumstances, we would have rolled out the yellow carpet and publicly lauded the achievements of some of our finest, most dedicated volunteers at our 2020 Annual Conference & Membership Meeting. A global pandemic, however, hampered our ability to gather under the umbrella of the Ice Age Trail Alliance to celebrate. This Awards Spotlight is offered as a pale substitute, yet, our gratitude is as substantial as ever.

Spirit Stick Award

The Ice Age Trail Alliance’s Spirit Stick award signifies long-term dedication and service to the Trail, carried out in a spirit of cooperation, optimism and enthusiasm. The recipient leads by example and inspires those around them. A trailwide award, the Spirit Stick is presented to only one recipient each year.

The announcement of the Spirit Stick award always comes as a surprise to the one receiving the award. This remains unchanged, even now, under current circumstances. Alliance staff and members of the 2020 recipient’s chapter are planning an unveiling and presentation of the Spirit Stick. Stay tuned.
New Crew Leaders in Good Standing

This award recognizes crew leaders who meet and maintain “in Good Standing” requirements and demonstrate advanced leadership qualities, safe working practices, effectively lead volunteer crews on or off trail, maintain skill-based certifications, and serve in a Project Team role at one or more Mobile Skills Crew events within a 15-month time frame.

Congratulations:
Michele Amacker, of Madison, WI and the Dane County Chapter
Kim Ignatius, of Mount Horeb, WI and Trailwide member
Mike Livesey, of Middleton, WI and the Dane County Chapter

Public Partner Award

This award honors individuals who work for a public, governmental agency which actively partners with the Ice Age Trail Alliance.

Congratulations:
Jake Walcisak of Medford, WI, Taylor County Forest Administrator
Meleesa Johnson of Ringle, WI, Director of the Marathon County Solid Waste Department.

Walcisak is dedicated to preserving historic and ecological attributes of the Ice Age Trail. As Bob Rusch, long-time supporter of the Trail, summarized in his nomination statement: “Jake’s “can-do” attitude and ready help has played the crucial role in upgrading and protecting the Ice Age Trail through the Taylor County Forest, and setting a progressive and proactive example for other public foresters.”

Johnson has offered extensive time and resources towards enhancing the Ice Age Trail, especially during the recent relocation of the Ringle Segment. Tim Malzhan, Trailway Director, applauded Johnson in his nomination statement, saying the “cooperative, encouraging tone Director Johnson and her staff set […] engages and supports not only Ice Age Trail Alliance volunteers and Ice Age National Scenic Trail users, but Wisconsinites at large.”

Trail Steward of the Year Award

The Trail Steward of the Year award recognizes a volunteer whose work contributes in an extraordinary manner to Trail management and development.

Congratulations:
Gail Piotrowski of Wausau, WI and Chapter Co-Coordinator of the Central Moraines Chapter (Marathon County).

Piotrowski, an active Mobile Skills Crew (MSC) Leader and proud Thousand-Miler, has dedicated an extensive amount of time to both hiking and building the Trail. She leads by example, teaching volunteers the art of building sustainable trail and proper signage. She was especially instrumental in facilitating MSC events to create the Ringle Segment in 2019. Demonstrating her capable and hardworking nature, she worked in all kinds of weather, coordinated pre-project work crews, delivered food, welcomed volunteers, arranged entertainment, tracked volunteer hours, and much more. Bob Funk, Board President for the Ice Age Trail Alliance, said of Piotrowski: “Gail exemplifies the qualities of a Trail Steward with her endless chapter and trail-wide service. Working to create the best experience possible for our members, volunteers, and trail users.”

Gail’s winsome personality, dedication, enthusiasm, and hard work on behalf of the Ice Age Trail is truly an inspiration. Bill Polachek, volunteer writer, conducted an in-depth interview with Gail, visit iceagetrail.org/trail-steward-of-the-year-award-gail-piotrowski
The Ray Zillmer award recognizes individuals whose work exemplifies the ideals that inspired the establishment of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail. Nominees shall have performed at least two of the following:

- Served the Ice Age Trail for at least 20 years.
- Markedly elevated public awareness of the Trail.
- Secured significant funding.
- Significantly advanced the IATA’s mission in some other way.

Congratulations:

David Kinnamon of Hartford, WI and Trailwide member
David Phillips of Madison, WI and Trailwide member

Kinnamon has proven himself an accomplished leader over his 35+ years of involvement with the Ice Age Trail, including serving as a Board member, President, and Director of the Ice Age Trail Alliance. Throughout his various terms of service, his parliamentary and organizational governance skills guided the growth of the Alliance. On multiple occasions, his warrior’s heart rose to meet the challenge, protecting the organization from internal and external threats. Kinnamon continues to actively support both the Alliance and the Trail by serving on the Endowment, Bylaw & Policy, and Land Conservation committees. Tim Malzhan, Trailway Director for the Ice Age Trail Alliance, says of Kinnamon: “Dave’s work on behalf of the Alliance exemplifies both the ideals and the requisite wherewithal needed to create, support, and protect the Ice Age National Scenic Trail. He inspires with his skill, his commitment, his droll humor and a genuine glee that encourages diversity of style, involvement, and viewpoint.”

Phillips has dedicated 40+ years to supporting the Ice Age Trail in leadership roles and by founding programs that promoted inclusion and education. Along with 17 years of service on the Board of Directors and two years as President, he founded S.P.R.I.T.E program (Support-Perseverance-Respect-Initiative and Education) to invite urban youth on Ice Age Trail expeditions. He also co-founded the Alliance’s Inn-to-Inn hiking program which engages dozens of small businesses along the Trail. Luke Kloberdanz, Director of Philanthropy for the Ice Age Trail Alliance noted: “His early foundation building placed the cornerstones for long term inclusion of all people, regardless of classification or belief, in the work of the Alliance. As such, Dave has increased the diversity of the organization, opened doors to new partners, and expanded the base of lifelong supporters of the Alliance.”

Leadership Memorial

The Leadership Memorial category recognizes long-time Trail leaders who have passed away. It is given to a member of the recipient’s family at a Trail event or private gathering in collaboration with the family.

This year’s award is dedicated to Russ Helwig of the Walworth/Jefferson Chapter. Helwig was an active member of the Chapter since 2000, previously serving as Chapter Coordinator from 2006-2009. His years of service afforded him the presentation of “In the Mud,” “Spirit Stick,” and “President’s Call to Service” awards. Most notably, Helwig loved to share his love of the Ice Age Trail with others. In 2001, he established the popular “Weekly Hikes,” which now attract 35 – 40 “Helwig Hikers” every Wednesday. Even after his passing he is still drawing new members to the Ice Age Trail Alliance. Thank you, Russ!
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**Crew Leader Emeritus**
This award recognizes individuals who have provided a minimum six years of exemplary and consistently dedicated service as a Mobile Skills Crew Leader who choose to retire from actively leading crews.

**Congratulations:**
Thelma Johnson, of Cumberland, WI and the Superior Lobe Chapter (Barron and Washburn counties)

Johnson’s dedication to project support at Mobile Skills Crew events and legendary ability to serve up hearty, stick-to-your-ribs meals for hungry trailbuilding volunteers, garnered her, in 2014, a National Park Service Hartzog Award for Enduring Service. At 80-years young, Johnson was the first one up each morning at 4:30 a.m., making her way from her camper to her outdoor kitchen by flashlight and the last one standing, scrubbing pots after the final volunteer was served the evening meal. Thank you, Thelma. You and your famous cinnamon rolls will be missed.

**“In the Mud” Award**
Our “In the Mud” award recognizes volunteers who have made outstanding contributions to the Ice Age Trail over the year. The individuals below received the award for consistently coming to workdays and diving into the dirty work, epitomizing the bedrock volunteer spirit that drives the progress toward completing the Trail.

**Congratulations:**
Daniel Bartell, Portage/Waupaca County Chapter
Debby Capener, Baraboo Hills/Heritage Chapter
Norman Card, Chippewa Moraine Chapter
Barb Ceder, Indianhead Chapter
Russell Gilbertson, Central Moraines Chapter
Gerald Gilson, Sr., Walworth/Jefferson County Chapter
Wendell Holl, Lodi Valley Chapter
Bruce Jaecks, Northwoods Chapter
Paul & Rita Keber, Waukesha/Milwaukee County Chapter
Sevie Kenyon, Rock County Chapter
Jerry Krause, Central Moraines Chapter
David Lundberg, Chippewa Moraine Chapter
James Mooney, for Trailwide contributions
Mark Muellenbach, Washington/Ozaukee County Chapter
Fred & Marilyn Nash, Blue Hills Chapter (nominated by the Chippewa Moraine Chapter)
Jeff Romagna, Waukesha/Milwaukee County Chapter
Barbara Unger, for Trailwide contributions
Jared Wildenradt, Langlade County Chapter

**Stickman Scholarship**
The $500 Douglas “Stickman” Sherman Scholarship award was originally funded by the Sherman family after Douglas’s passing and continues to be funded by other interested parties. The award is presented annually to a high school or first-year college student who has made significant contributions to the mission of the IATA and whose dedication to the Trail sets an example for other youth and shows exceptional promise.

**Congratulations:**
Siri Martin, Mount Horeb, WI

Martin’s introduction to the Ice Age Trail was through a 2018 Mobile Skills Crew event where she learned to build tread, paint blazes and remove buckthorn. She went on to join the 2019 Seasonal Trail Crew and helped maintain the Trail across the State. Martin said, “My summer on the Seasonal Trail Crew solidified the fact that I love working outside…I hope to be part of another trail crew and continue to create and preserve trails for everyone.”
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Thousand-Miler Award

Nothing captures the imagination quite like the thought of hiking the entirety of a long-distance path like the Ice Age Trail. Our organization recognizes anyone who reports completion of the entire Ice Age Trail (and can have their accomplishment verified) as a Thousand-Miler. To qualify for Thousand-Miler status, an individual must have hiked all 1,000+ miles of the Ice Age Trail, including all connecting roads.

The following individuals recently completed their hikes and have officially joined the ranks of Ice Age Trail Thousand-Milers.

Congratulations:

- Mike Butterbrodt, Stoughton, WI
- Susan Crowley, Milwaukee, WI
- Lisa Densing, Germantown, WI
- Reggie Effinger, Brookfield, WI
- Sean Emmerich, “Saunters,” Wausau, WI
- Charli Fulton, “Sturdy Peasant,” Madison, WI
- David Gapiski, Burlington, WI
- Jacquelyn Geidel, Kewaskum, WI
- Mary Guell, “ChickaD,” Ripon, WI
- Susan Heiser, “Ninja Cat,” Sun Prairie, WI
- Emily Hoffmann, Nelsonville, WI
- Michael Hoffmann, Wauwatosa, WI
- Ralph Loberger, “The Diesel,” Oconto, WI
- Marty Matzinger, Madison, WI
- Bristol Nowicki, “Saber-Tooth,” Brookfield, WI
- Jeremy Nowicki, “Fuzzy Bear,” Brookfield, WI
- Nicole Nowicki, “Cheetah,” Brookfield, WI
- Piper Nowicki, “Cheetah Cub,” Brookfield, WI
- Len Punke, “Can Man,” Hartford, WI
- Kevin Quinn, “Gray Mountaineer,” Sturgeon Bay, WI
- Laura Saher, “Two Wings,” Roseville, MN
- Mark Sauer, “Sherpa & Shambles,” Waukakee, WI
- James Shortslef, Waukesha, WI
- Lori Shortslef, Waukesha, WI
- Pam Smith, Mosinee, WI
- Alexander Stuth, “Wolfgang,” Hubertus, WI
- Ricky Swanson, Colorado Springs, CO
- Robert Wirth, “Different Socks,” Wenona, MD

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE AWARDS

Volunteers in Parks (VIP) Awards

Any Ice Age Trail volunteer who reports his or her volunteer hours is on the path to recognition through the National Park Service’s Volunteers in Parks (VIP) awards program.

Annually, Ice Age Trail Alliance volunteers generate an impressive amount of volunteer hours, yet, even more remarkable are the accumulation of hours over many years of dedicated service. The following volunteers are among the 170 volunteers recognized for passing various volunteer-hours mileposts since the inception of the program in 2007.

6,000 Hours
- Gail Piotrowski, Central Moraines Chapter

4,000 Hours
- Jerry Sazama, Chippewa Moraine Chapter
- Kris Jensen, Waukesha/Milwaukee County Chapter
- Jane Wester, Washington/Ozaukee County Chapter

3,000 Hours
- Dennis James, Rock County Chapter
- Tess Mulrooney, Dane County Chapter
- Bob Kaspar, Dane County Chapter
- Fred Nash, Blue Hills Chapter
- Gary Hegeman, Walworth/Jefferson County Chapter
- Jeannie Wahlquist, Dane County Chapter
- Barbara Voigt, Northwoods Chapter
- Tom Gross, Dane County Chapter

To view the NPS awards presentation video created by Dan Watson, NPS Volunteer Coordinator, go to: www.iceagetrail.org/awards-iata/
Years of Service Awards

The following individuals have been a constant presence in support of the Ice Age Trail. Recipients of Years of Service awards have provided a foundation of consistency and continuity in our volunteer ranks, and we thank them.

**10 Years**
- Chet Anderson, Indianhead Chapter
- Andy & Mandy Crary, Lodi Valley Chapter
- Gary Ertl, Marquette County Chapter
- Richard Haas, Waukesha/Milwaukee County Chapter
- Gerald M. and Sandra Hegeman, Walworth/Jefferson County Chapter
- Bob Kaspar, Dane County Chapter
- Ruth McCann, Walworth/Jefferson County Chapter
- Christine Miller, Waukesha/Milwaukee County Chapter
- Glenn and Sherri Ritz, Waukesha/Milwaukee County Chapter
- Robert and Susan Root, Waukesha/Milwaukee County Chapter
- Charles Schwartz, Central Moraines Chapter
- Jeannine Wahlquist, Dane County Chapter

**20 Years**
- Eileen Harris, Walworth/Jefferson County Chapter
- Audrey and Bob Held, Superior Lobe Chapter
- Anne Helsley-Marchbanks, Dane County Chapter
- Dale Jefchak, Walworth/Jefferson County Chapter
- Buzz Meyer, High Point Chapter
- Jen and John Shank, Waukesha/Milwaukee County Chapter

**30 Years**
- Rodney Barlow, Washington/Ozaukee County Chapter
- Ronald Harris, Portage County Chapter
- Paula Klima, Washington/Ozaukee County Chapter
- William Knickrehm, Walworth/Jefferson County Chapter
- Carol Prchal, Walworth/Jefferson County Chapter