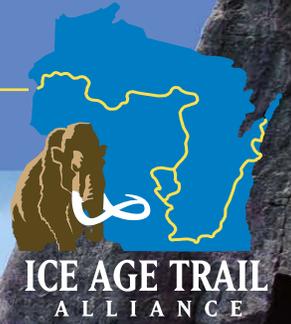


ICE AGE TRAIL ALLIANCE

JANUARY 2018 - DECEMBER 2020



Strategic Plan





IN 1958, THE ICE AGE TRAIL ALLIANCE (THEN KNOWN AS THE ICE AGE PARK AND TRAIL FOUNDATION) WAS FOUNDED TO BEGIN EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH A LINEAR NATIONAL PARK FOLLOWING THE MOST PROMINENT TOPOGRAPHICAL FEATURE OF THE STATE OF WISCONSIN: THE TERMINAL MORaine OF CONTINENTAL GLACIATION. IN 1980, THE EFFORTS OF THIS ORGANIZATION'S THOUSANDS OF GRASSROOTS SUPPORTERS, THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, AND WISCONSIN'S CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVES CULMINATED IN THE LAW ESTABLISHING THE ICE AGE TRAIL AS A NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL EXTENDING OVER 1,000 MILES ALONG A ROUTE GENERALLY FOLLOWING THE TERMINAL MORaine ACROSS THE STATE. RECOGNIZING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ICE AGE TRAIL, THE STATE OF WISCONSIN DESIGNATED IT AS AN OFFICIAL STATE TRAIL IN 1986.

FROM ITS MODEST BEGINNINGS, THE ICE AGE TRAIL ALLIANCE (THE ALLIANCE) HAS GROWN INTO A STRONG, VIBRANT NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION. AN ENGAGED BOARD OF DIRECTORS, A COMMITTED AND ENERGETIC STAFF, AND THOUSANDS OF VOLUNTEERS, MEMBERS, AND DONORS GIVE THEIR TIME, ENERGY, AND MONEY TO SUPPORT THE ICE AGE NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL.

Cover photo credit: Cameron Gillie



Strategic Planning Process

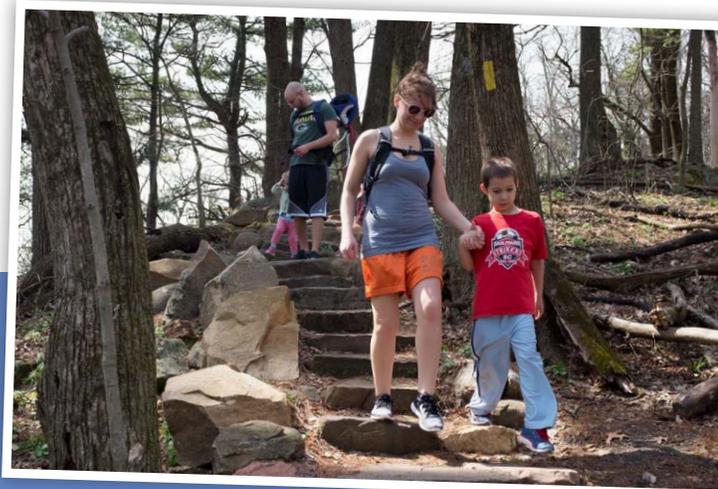
In November 2016, the President and Executive Director of the Alliance began a process to solicit an independent consultant to begin the 2018 – 2020 strategic planning process. In January 2017, a strategic planning committee (SPC) comprised of Alliance Board members, volunteers, staff, and the Executive Director was approved to guide the strategic planning process. In that same month, the Board approved a contract presented by the Executive Director to retain the services of Don Owen, principal of Lands, Trails & Parks Consulting to guide and facilitate the planning process. Don proceeded to engage Sandi Marra of Marra Consulting Group as a co-facilitator.

Three initial phases of work were identified: research, direct interviews and meetings with stakeholders prior to and during the 2017 Alliance Annual Conference, and finally, a facilitated Strategic Planning Retreat in July 2017. During this period, workgroups representing a cross-section of the Alliance were charged with one of the six specific strategic areas that had been identified and approved by the Board during the Annual Conference.

From this collaborative and inclusive process, the following six strategic areas were established:

- *Organizational Excellence*
- *Ensuring Financial Capacity*
- *Outreach, Engagement and Education*
- *Sustainable Trail Operations*
- *Protecting Trail Lands*
- *Advocating for the Trail*

The final strategic plan was developed from the results of the workgroups, reviewed and deliberated upon by the Alliance's Board of Directors, and approved by the Board on November 11, 2017.





Partnerships

Partnerships and Collaborative Relationships have been critical to the Alliance. Through these partnerships and relationships, the Alliance can significantly expand its capacity, outreach, and competencies. For 60 years, the Alliance has worked with and relied upon its partnerships and cooperative relationships to help reach its strategic goals. Further, the Alliance is strongly positioned to enhance the value of our partners. We are committed to continuing these long-standing partnerships, as well as working to establish new, creative relationships that can support us into the future.



Volunteerism

Volunteers are the heart and soul of the Alliance – the very bedrock of our successes. The success of this strategic plan will first and foremost be dependent on the skills and efforts put forth by our volunteers.

From our Board and chapter leaders, to our volunteers in the field and at our headquarters, to our educators and advocates, Alliance volunteers are the reason we meet our goals and fulfill our mission. Nothing speaks at a greater volume than the fact that an ever-increasing number of volunteers are counting their tenure in decades!

As we move forward with this updated plan, we look to continue to our traditions of respect and gratitude to our current volunteers, while working with them to find innovative ways to bring new members into the Alliance. We also wish to ensure that our volunteer corps have the training and tools necessary to achieve our combined success.

Mission Statement

OUR MISSION IS TO CREATE, SUPPORT AND PROTECT A THOUSAND-MILE FOOTPATH TRACING ICE AGE FORMATIONS ACROSS WISCONSIN — THE ICE AGE NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL.



Vision Statement

THE ICE AGE TRAIL ALLIANCE, IN COLLABORATION WITH ITS MANY PARTNERS, ENVISIONS A PREMIER, CONTINUOUS, PERMANENTLY PROTECTED ICE AGE NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL. COURSING THROUGH WISCONSIN, THE TRAIL IS A PLACE WHERE ALL PEOPLE CAN ENJOY AND EMBRACE THE UNIQUE NATURAL LANDSCAPES AND CULTURAL HISTORIES OF WISCONSIN, WHILE FINDING PHYSICAL AND MENTAL RENEWAL IN A PEACEFUL SETTING, AND AN ENDURING SPIRITUAL CONNECTION TO THE LAND.



The 2018-2020 Strategic Plan

This 2018 – 2020 Strategic Plan for the Ice Age Trail Alliance (the Alliance) comes at an important time in the organization’s development. The Alliance has grown substantially over the last ten years, with broad successes in developing new partnerships, new supporters, new relationships with local communities, new outreach and education programs, a strong financial foundation, and significant increases in protecting, constructing, maintaining and managing the Ice Age National Scenic Trail (the Trail). This Strategic Plan lays the foundation for continuing these successful initiatives into the future.

We thank you in advance for the important role you will play in implementing this strategy for creating, supporting and protecting the Ice Age National Scenic Trail.

Committed to Organizational Excellence

The Alliance is soundly positioned in a manner that the Board, staff, chapters, and volunteers understand their roles and responsibilities, and that ensures continuity and purpose consistent with the mission and vision of the organization.

Goal One:

The Alliance is committed to providing sufficient staff resources, physical infrastructure, and information systems to support the work of the organization.



1) Strategy:

The Alliance evaluates the need for and feasibility of adding additional staff to support its programmatic goals.

Measure of Success

- a) Annual budgets are presented to the Board that reflect adequate staffing levels.

2) Strategy:

The Alliance ensures the headquarters space is adequate to meet the current and future needs.

Measure of Success

- a) A building improvement or expansion plan is developed.

3) Strategy:

An up-to-date IT infrastructure is in place to support and enhance all organizational functions and IT security.

Measure of Success

- a) An IT infrastructure analysis is conducted.

4) Strategy:

The Alliance implements software and technology upgrades to improve staff and volunteer information sharing.

Measure of Success

- a) Resources for planning and information sharing for volunteers are widely available through multiple sources by 12/31/19.

Goal Two:

The Alliance has the framework in place to support succession across the organization and to assist in a seamless transition of leadership.

1) Strategy:

Plans for senior staff succession and transition are in place.

Measure of Success

- a) An emergency plan is in place for allocating responsibility and clarifying communication channels.
- b) A plan for staff succession and transition is written and approved.

2) Strategy:

A Board plan is developed following best practices for Board engagement, recruitment, retention, and assessment.

Measure of Success

- a) An annual discussion at the Board level regarding Board governance is conducted.

3) Strategy:

Chapters are provided with recommendations for volunteer leadership development, retention and succession planning.

Measure of Success

- a) A state-wide chapter Volunteer Leadership Team is defined and appointed annually.
- b) The chapter Leadership Team creates a volunteer leadership toolkit for use by chapters by 12/31/19.



Goal Three:

The Alliance implements appropriate mechanisms and procedures to support programmatic continuity and seamless transfer of institutional knowledge.

1) Strategy:

A process is established to ensure staff roles and responsibilities are clearly defined.

Measure of Success

- a) A job description/job analysis reconciliation is performed no later than 12/31/19.

2) Strategy:

The Alliance has policies and procedures in place to support its current activities and needs.

Measure of Success

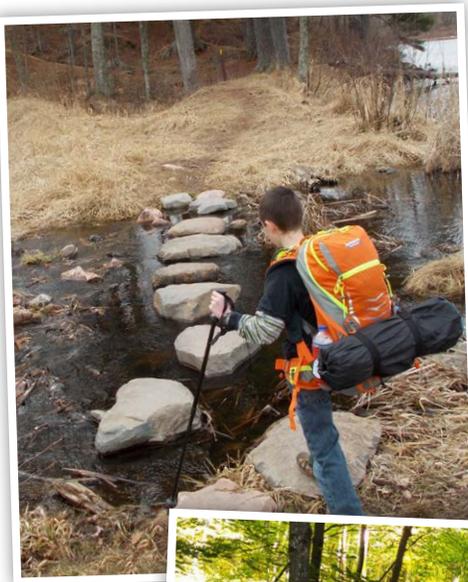
- a) An inventory of written policies and procedures is performed to compare against current needs and activities to assess for instances of incompleteness, redundancy and/or obsolescence.

3) Strategy:

Important and historical records of the Alliance and its preceding organizations, including significant partnerships, are identified and consolidated for posterity.

Measure of Success

- a) A records and archive management system is developed and promoted.



Goal Four:

The Alliance is committed to increased diversity in its stakeholder relationships and in its Board, staff, and volunteer recruitment programs.



1) Strategy:

A Diversity Initiative is undertaken by the Alliance for its Board and staff to develop a strategically aligned approach to diversity, equity, and inclusiveness.

Measure of Success

- a) A Diversity Initiative Statement is drafted and approved by the Board.

2) Strategy:

New cooperative stakeholder relationships at all levels are sought to expand our diversity, equity, and inclusiveness of stakeholders, members, volunteers, and participants on the Trail.

Measure of Success

- a) A workgroup is established to initiate and create strategies for developing new partnerships reflective of audiences we want to reach and external organizational needs.
- b) A baseline of demographic data for current membership will be developed by 12/31/18.

Goal Five:

The Alliance maintains its “Accredited Land Trust” designation by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission.

1) Strategy:

The Alliance carries out the renewal accreditation process in 2019.

Measure of Success

- a) The Alliance is successfully re-accredited in 2019.

Ensuring Financial Capacity

The Alliance has robust, diverse revenue streams to support and expand its capacity for operations, programs, endowment, capital improvements, and land acquisition.

Goal One:

The Alliance increases revenues through expanding its major individual donor, corporate, and foundation fundraising programs.



1) Strategy:

The Alliance establishes a Next Level Leaders advisory group to develop a robust major-donor giving program.

Measure of Success

- a) Baseline and major donor categories are defined.

2) Strategy:

Through the development of a targeted fundraising, marketing, and outreach program, the Alliance increases support from corporations and foundations.

Measure of Success

- a) Corporate and foundation support increases by 15% annually.

Goal Two:

The Alliance provides enhanced financial support to its programmatic goals by increasing membership revenue.

1) Strategy:

The Alliance develops a series of program-centered campaigns and a grass-roots effort to raise additional membership revenue.

Measure of Success

- a) General membership revenues represent an increase in Alliance operating revenues.

Goal Three:

The Alliance prioritizes endowed funds as a critical component of a strong financial foundation for long-term stability.

1) Strategy:

The Alliance's planned giving program is reviewed, updated, and actively promoted.

Measure of Success

- a) The Property Monitoring Endowment Fund is funded adequately as defined by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission and based on current land holdings.
 - b) A General Operations Endowment Fund is established and funded with a goal of at least \$1 million by the end of 2020.
-

Goal Four:

The feasibility of conducting a capital campaign is explored.

1) Strategy:

A feasibility study to determine goals and probability of success is conducted.

Measure of Success

- a) A study is completed in 2018 and, based on results, a campaign may be developed.
-

Goal Five:

Through establishment of an Operational Reserve Fund, the Alliance successfully meets unanticipated expenses.

1) Strategy:

An Operational Reserve Fund is established in 2018.

Measure of Success

- a) The established fund will carry a minimum of three months of budgeted operational expenses.
-

Outreach, Engagement, and Education

The Alliance strives to strengthen and expand opportunities that benefit the Trail with targeted messaging and attention to diverse audiences and imaginative partnerships.

Goal One:

Through effective communication strategies and programs, the mission of the Alliance and the Trail resonates with a broad audience of users, volunteers, and funders.

1) Strategy:

The Alliance develops and implements a multi-tiered marketing and communications plan that supports and facilitates key program initiatives, and strengthens and enhances internal and external information sharing among all stakeholders, partnerships, and cooperative relationships.

Measure of Success

- a) A communications plan is defined, developed, implemented, and distributed among Board and committee members, staff, chapters, and volunteers by 12/31/18.
- b) An outside marketing professional is engaged.

Goal Two:

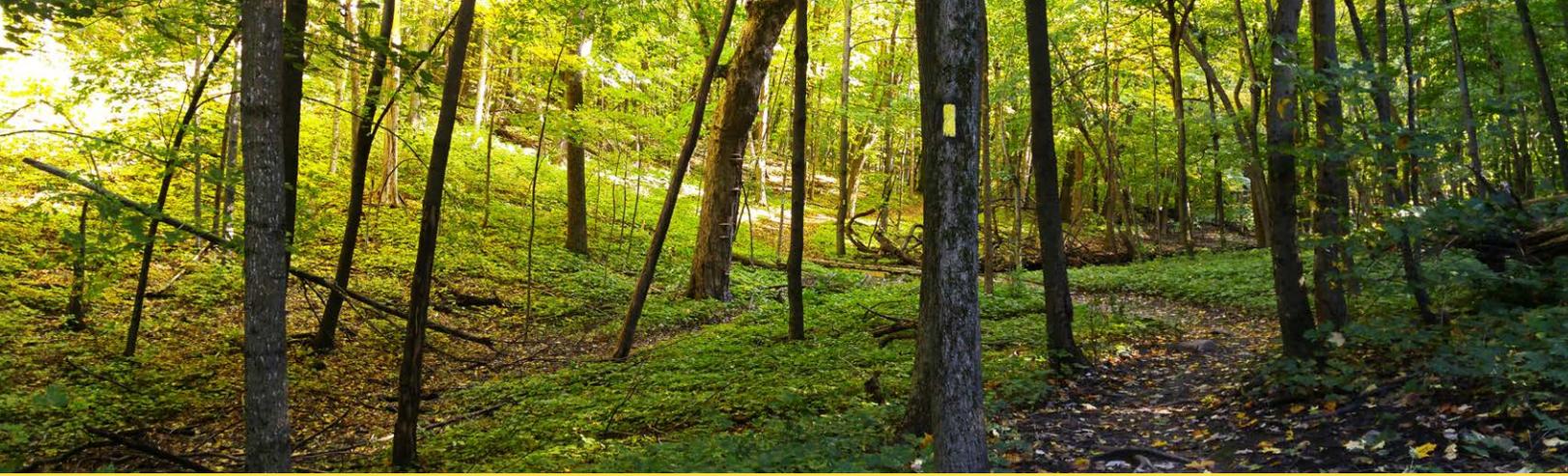
The Alliance's Outreach and Education programs are robust and thriving.

1) Strategy:

Outreach and Education programs are reviewed for efficiencies and effectiveness, and data are used to set programmatic goals.

Measure of Success

- a) New Trail Communities are identified and the number of Trail Communities is expanded at a rate of two per year. Existing Trail Communities are monitored to ensure continued engagement and joint compliance with their respective Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs).
- b) The Saunters program is assessed annually and decisions to expand, contract or continue are made.
- c) Staff leadership for the Cold Cache program is established.



Sustainable Trail Operations

The Alliance, by fostering quality trail design, construction, management, protection, and maintenance, ensures an excellent Trail and trail experience for current and future users.

Goal One:

The Alliance increases and sustains its capacity to support Trail construction, maintenance, and stewardship.

1) Strategy:

Increase the number of volunteers and partners working on or supporting work on the Trail.

Measure of Success

- a) The total number of volunteers and volunteer hours tracked and attributed to Trail construction, maintenance, and stewardship increases annually.
- b) New programs and marketing materials specifically designed to engage and retain more volunteers and partners working on or supporting work on the Trail are developed and implemented.
- c) New initiatives are developed to engage and train additional volunteers.

2) Strategy:

The Alliance engages local and regional land and recreational management partners.

Measure of Success

- a) New land and recreational land management partners are identified and reported annually.

Goal Two:

Local volunteer trail-maintenance and trail-building capacity is strengthened.

1) Strategy:

A seasonal Trail Maintenance Crew program is developed.

Measure of Success

a) A pilot seasonal Trail Maintenance Crew is deployed by 2019.

2) Strategy:

The Mobile Skills Crew Program is supported and sustained.

Measure of Success

a) Eight or more Mobile Skills Crew Program activities are conducted annually.

Goal Three:

The Alliance ensures that all new trail construction, trail improvements, and trail maintenance work meet or exceed federal and state standards.

1) Strategy:

The Alliance actively assesses trail conditions and infrastructure to prioritize and implement construction and maintenance projects locally and statewide.

Measure of Success

a) There are fewer geographic gaps in trail stewardship coverage statewide by 2020.

2) Strategy:

Training in trail planning, construction, and maintenance for volunteers is increased.

Measure of Success

a) Trail planning, construction, and maintenance workshops or training sessions are provided annually.

b) Two or more trained Crew Leaders are in good standing in all Alliance chapters by 2020.



Protecting Trail Lands

The Alliance creates a contiguous corridor of protected lands that host the Trail at a sufficient width to support its natural and cultural resources and enhance user experience.

Goal One:

The Alliance increases the amount of land protected for the Trail by boosting agency and private partners' ability to protect land.

1) Strategy:

The Alliance encourages public agency partners to acquire and hold properties for the Trail, and advocates for increased funding for land protection.

Measure of Success

- a) Properties continue to be purchased and held by agency partners.
- b) The level of funding for land protection is increased.
- c) More land is acquired by agency partners.

2) Strategy:

The Alliance assists agency partners in prioritizing, finding efficiencies, and planning for land protection by clearly communicating common goals.

Measure of Success

- a) A prioritized list of properties is developed by December of each year.



Goal One:

The Alliance increases the amount of land protected for the Trail by boosting agency and private partners' ability to protect land.

3) Strategy:

The Alliance devotes the necessary resources to help agency partners expedite all current and future Trail corridor plans and current Trailway Protection Strategies.

Measure of Success

- a) Alliance representatives participate in all corridor planning and Trailway Protections Strategy meetings.
- b) Three corridor plans currently underway are completed by December 2018, and a new corridor planning process is begun in 2019.

4) Strategy:

The Alliance expands and maintains partnerships with select private land trusts by working with them on specific properties, and requesting they incorporate the Trail into their conservation planning.

Measure of Success

- a) The Alliance identifies, meets, and works with four land trusts with service areas overlapping the Trail by 12/31/18.
- b) Three land trusts incorporate the Trail into their conservation plans by 12/31/20.

Goal Two:

The Alliance increases its ability to protect land for the Trail.



1) Strategy:

The Alliance prioritizes areas for concentrated land protection.

Measure of Success

- a) A prioritized list for land protection by the Alliance is created by March of each year.
- b) New communications are conducted with owners of high-priority properties.

2) Strategy:

The Alliance identifies, develops, and uses new creative, long-term sources for funding land protection.

Measure of Success

- a) A list of current and potential funding sources is created, and new funding sources are developed and used.

3) Strategy:

The Alliance's capacity to acquire lands is increased.

Measure of Success

- a) The number of substantive in-person contacts with landowners by trained, qualified volunteers or staff is increased by 50% annually.
- b) There is an increase in chapter awareness of land acquisition opportunities in their area.

4) Strategy:

The Conservation Buyers Program is strengthened.

Measure of Success

- a) The number of people on the Conservation Buyers list is increased by 50% by 12/31/18.
- b) The Alliance completes at least one transaction using Conservation Buyers by 12/31/18, and at least one more transaction using Conservation Buyers by 12/31/20.

Goal Three:

The Alliance ensures proper land management of all Alliance-held property interests.



1) Strategy:

The Alliance prioritizes and establishes high-quality restoration sites on appropriate Alliance-held lands and promotes restoration efforts.

Measure of Success

- a) A list is created of properties and preserves where vegetative restoration efforts will occur, and the prescriptions of management plans for these highly ranked properties are executed.

2) Strategy:

All Alliance-held property interests are managed consistent with Land Trust Alliance Standards and Practices.

Measure of Success

- a) The Alliance meets or exceeds all Land Trust Alliance Standards and Practices related to land management.

Advocating for the Trail

The Alliance Board, staff, chapters, and volunteers are actively engaged in advocating for actions and decisions by all levels of government that will promote positive outcomes for the Ice Age Trail.

Goal One:

The Alliance strengthens relationships with federal, state and locally elected officials.

1) Strategy:

The Alliance maintains regular contact with Congressional staff in Washington D.C. and local federal offices.

Measure of Success

- a) In-depth meetings are held with each Congressional member or their staff annually.

2) Strategy:

The Alliance annually participates in in-depth meetings with key members of the state legislature.

Measure of Success

- a) Face-to-face meetings are held with at least five key state legislative leaders annually.

3) Strategy:

The Alliance encourages Trail supporters to sign-up for representatives' newsletters, attend local district meetings, and visit district offices.

Measure of Success

- a) Trail supporters are targeted with regular Alliance communications about how to participate in advocacy efforts.



Goal Two:

The Alliance strengthens relations with national, statewide and local organizations.

1) Strategy:

The Alliance maintains and develops relationships with groups such as Partnership for the National Trails System, Wisconsin Department of Tourism, League of Wisconsin Municipalities, and local Chambers of Commerce and service clubs.

Measure of Success

- a) The Alliance maintains current relationships and establishes three new relationships with organizations each year.

Goal Three:

The Alliance improves its capacity for advocacy.

1) Strategy:

A cadre of trained advocacy volunteers is developed.

Measure of Success

- a) Workshops and specialized advocacy trainings are held each year.

2) Strategy:

The Alliance develops a position description and encourages chapters to assign a lead person for advocacy to help respond to issues.

Measure of Success

- a) Half of the Alliance's chapters have lead persons assigned responsibilities for advocacy work.





Glossary



Accredited Land Trust:

A land trust is a private, nonprofit organization that conserves land by undertaking or assisting with land transactions. Land trust accreditation by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission is a mark of distinction, showing that a land trust has successfully implemented Land Trust Standards and Practices.

Advocacy:

Actively supporting the Ice Age Trail through political actions with government officials and governing bodies of partner agencies.

Capital Campaign:

A campaign designed to raise funds for acquiring or maintaining fixed assets, such as buildings and equipment, the cost of which would generally exceed \$1,500.

Chapter Volunteer Leadership Team:

A group of volunteer chapter leaders assembled annually to address, discuss, and debate issues and opportunities for recommendation to staff for implementation.

Cold Cache:

An activity based on GeoCaching and EarthCaching in which participants seek out natural features along the Ice Age Trail.

Conservation Buyers:

An Alliance initiative that identifies individuals or other entities that are willing to assist the Alliance in the process of securing permanent protection of lands that will host the Ice Age Trail.

Corridor Plan:

A plan completed in partnership with the National Park Service and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources whereby a corridor of trail routing opportunities is defined, within which state and federal funds may be used to acquire lands.

Endowed Funds:

Funds accumulated over time from gifts of money and/or property that provide a permanent source of income for Alliance operations.

Goal:

A broad statement of what the Alliance plans to achieve.

Ice Age Trail (the Ice Age National Scenic Trail or Trail):

Congressionally authorized in 1980, the Ice Age National Scenic Trail is a thousand-mile footpath — entirely within Wisconsin — that highlights Ice Age landscape features while providing access to some of the state's most beautiful natural areas.



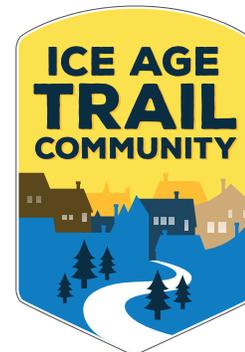
Ice Age Trail Alliance (the Alliance):

The Ice Age Trail Alliance, Inc., and its staff, Board, chapters, members and volunteers.



Ice Age Trail Communities (Trail Communities):

A trademarked program of the Ice Age Trail Alliance designed to formalize a multi-beneficial partnership between the Alliance and communities through which the Trail passes.



Ice Age Trail - University (IAT-U):

The main training platform for Alliance volunteers, IAT-U is designed with multiple course offerings related to building on-trail and off-trail skill sets of our volunteers.

Land Trust Alliance:

A national conservation organization that works to save the places people love by strengthening land conservation across America. The Land Trust Alliance represents more than 1,000 member land trusts, including the Ice Age Trail Alliance.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU):

A formal agreement between the Alliance and one or more other parties to establish official partnerships. While not legally binding, an MOU defines common objectives and each parties' roles and responsibilities.

Mobile Skills Crew (MSC):

A trademarked program of the Ice Age Trail Alliance. The focus of the Mobile Skills Crew program is to educate and empower volunteers to build, maintain and steward the Ice Age Trail.



Next Level Leaders Advisory Group:

A select group of individuals who have demonstrated leadership and support for the Alliance over time and understand the importance of helping to identify and cultivate the next generation of major donors.

Operational Reserve Fund:

A balance at the end of the fiscal year sufficient to cover three months of operating expenses equal to unrestricted and undesignated assets, less current liabilities.

Planned Giving:

A means of gift planning that enables philanthropic donors to make gifts at the present time to be allocated at a future date. A planned gift represents an alignment of the values and vision of a donor and the Alliance for a gift at some point in the future.

Property Monitoring Endowment Fund:

A board-restricted fund established and maintained in an amount sufficient to generate resources to cover the costs associated with performing property monitoring tasks.

Protected Lands:

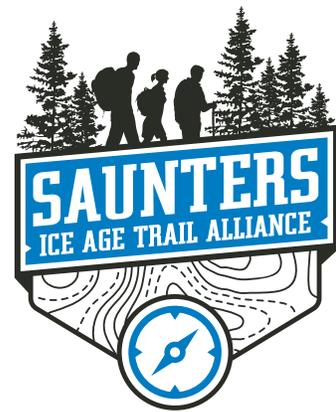
Any property where the Ice Age Trail is permanently protected via fee ownership, easement, deed restriction, or other covenants.

Public Agency Partner:

A federal, state, or local government entity that has entered into a formal agreement with the Alliance to protect, manage, maintain, and/or promote the Ice Age Trail.

Saunters:

A trademarked program of the Alliance. The focus of Saunters is to engage the next generation(s) of Trail enthusiasts by collaborating with schools and community groups to take youth out on the Trail.



Strategy:

A statement of a major approach that will be implemented to attain goals.

Trail Maintenance Crew:

A mobile group of trained staff, who in coordination with local volunteers, addresses seasonal unforeseen and/or known trail construction, maintenance or stewardship needs across the state.

Triad:

The Alliance has a formal partnership, codified in a formal agreement called a Memorandum of Understanding, which manages all aspects of the Ice Age Trail. The partnership is between the Alliance, the National Park Service and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.