

LANGLADE COUNTY ICE AGE NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL CONDITIONS

(As of January 2, 2020)

Due to situations beyond the control of the Langlade County Chapter of the Ice Age Trail Alliance, conditions are constantly changing. Hikers are urged to contact the chapter coordinator (715-623-2645) or the Langlade County Forestry Department Office (715-627-6300) at the Fairgrounds to check on current conditions in advance of any trip on one or more of the segments.

"You Are Here" signs, installed in 1997, are at select sites or where the trail crosses public roads on the Kettlebowl, Lumbercamp, Old Railroad and Parrish Hills Segments.



Frost pocket on the Kettlebowl Segment

KETTLEBOWL - Distance: Approximately 13 miles Highway 52 to Polar at Highway 64.

This segment was heavily damaged by the July 19th storm that devastated a large portion of Langlade County. Volunteers cleared the fallen timber and replaced damaged markings. There are still some damaged leaning and hung-up trees so hikers need to be aware of the situation and exercise caution.

Over half of this segment crosses privately-owned land. Hikers can reach the trailhead on Sherry Road by using Price-Polar and Oak/Sherry Roads as a connector route to Polar. The mile plus stretch of trail north of the Sherry/Oak Roads trailhead is private land.

Logging is completed along the trail in the area of the "Burma Road" alias South Kent Pond Road. The affected stretch is part of the segment covered by a six-mile state conservation and trail easement on land owned by the BTG Pactual Group and managed by Steigerwaldt Land Services of Tomahawk.

Markings were replaced where needed from Sherry Road north to the Kettlebowl Ski Hill at Highway 52 this year.

The segment passes through some of the highest terrain in Langlade County and features scenic hardwood ridges, frost pockets and Big Stone Hole, a unique glacial feature. The unique depression is a short distance from the trail but access is unimproved, so caution is advised.



Boulder field on South Slope of Summit Lake Moraine east of Baker Lake - Photo by Lee Auner

LUMBERCAMP - Distance: 12 miles Wisconsin 52 to County Trunk A

This segment was also heavily damaged by the July 19th storm that devastated a large portion of Langlade County. Volunteers cleared the fallen timber and replaced damaged markings. There are still some damaged leaning and hung-up trees so hikers need to be aware of the situation and exercise caution.

Recent logging has occurred along portions west of Highway 52. Also a portion of the stretch east from County Trunk S to the Fischer Lake intersection has been damaged by inordinate 4-wheel vehicle use and is scheduled for repair by the county. Caution is advised in these areas.

Brushing and directional arrows at critical intersections and yellow refresher markings, were refreshed this year on the stretch from County Trunk A to a half mile east of the Fischer Lake intersection. The stretch from Wisconsin Highway 52 west to County S was checked this year.

Local sportsmen have fixed up the stone cellar at the former Norem Lumbercamp site just west of Otto Mauk Road for overnight use. Although the chapter is not responsible for the accommodations, hikers are encouraged to exercise good trail stewardship if using the historic structure.

The boulder strewn slopes near Baker Lake, a former logging camp and the state's Peters Marsh Wildlife Area are features to be observed. The rugged terrain is part of a recessive moraine which stretches from Oneida County through Langlade County into Oconto County.



Spychalla Lodge-Summit Moraine Segment at County Trunk J.

Summit Moraine - Distance: 12.4 miles County Trunk A to County Trunk B

Four of the five Ice Age National Scenic Trail Segments here were heavily damaged by the July 19th storm that devastated a large portion of Langlade County. Of those four segments this one had the most devastation, especially on the east end at County Trunk A and the area just west of the Jack Lake Cross Country Ski Parking Lot. Volunteers have cleared the fallen timber and replaced damaged markings. There are still some damaged leaning and hung-up trees so be aware of the situation and exercise caution.

Rerouting of this segment was completed in 2018. The reroute involved establishment of new trail sections and restoration of existing stretches. The markings were upgraded considerably.

One new trail section utilizes a part of the popular Jack Lake Cross Country Ski system. Winter hikers are encouraged to avoid disturbing the groomed track maintained for skiers.

Caution should be exercised on the trail section along the busy and high-speed County A. Parking of vehicles at the gated areas on County A is prohibited by county ordinance.

Logging is scheduled in the ski trail section and a mile east of US 45. Caution is advised.

Hikers are encouraged to use parking areas on County B, Veterans Memorial Park or Spychalla Lodge in order to avoid being a traffic risk to the volume of highspeed traffic on US 45/WI 47

Depending on varying lake levels, the bog walk at Game Lake may be underwater but hikers can follow the nature trail around the lake to connect with the Ice Age Trail.

Features of this segment are Veterans Memorial Park, bog walk, and Spychalla Lodge. The latter facility is open but overnight use is discouraged. There are two campsites along the segment on Game and Jack Lakes and a primitive campsite at Upper Vantor Lake.

Veterans Memorial Park is a county park with cabins, developed campground, picnic area, beach and arboretum. Some hikers have used the park as a base camp for their trail venture.



Crossing the West Branch of the Eau Claire River. A babbling brook or raging torrent?

HIGHLAND LAKES - Distance: 12.5 miles County Trunk B to County Trunk T.

This segment was also heavily damaged by the July 19th storm that devastated a large portion of Langlade County. Volunteers have cleared the fallen timber and replaced damaged markings. There are still some damaged leaning and hung-up trees so hikers need to be aware of the situation and exercise caution.

This segment is incomplete and requires a hike along a stretch of Forest and Kleevers Roads in the Town of Upham for approximately 4.5 miles to complete a trip from the eastern trailhead at County Trunk Highway B. An outstanding feature of this segment is the Parrish terminal moraine which parallels the trail for over 3 miles. Just north of 5 Points, is a gap cut by the West Branch of the Eau Claire River through the moraine by vast volumes of water from the melting glacier. The gap was shaped later for a railroad grade. Just west of 5 Points the trail crosses the west branch requiring a ford or a bit of creativity to get around it.

An interesting feature on the road walk along Forest Road is the Bogus Swamp Natural Area. Watch for the state marker about the unique site on the east side of the road. The marker is less than a mile north of the Bogus Road junction with Forest Road.

In 2009, the Knights Templar Club granted permission for the trail to cross their land on a forest lane north of Kleevers Road. Gates and carsonite trail markings were installed on the stretch in 2010. Yellow refresher markings and directional arrows at critical intersections for this stretch were checked earlier this year. Recent logging has occurred in the Camp Susan area east of Forest Road so caution is advised for this stretch.



Just east of Nelson Fire Lane, a vista from Blackberry Ridge. Photo by John Prokops

PARRISH HILLS - Distance: 12 miles County Trunk T to Lincoln County Line

In April 2011, a tornado devastated a portion of the segment south of 5 Cent Road. A re-route via ATV/UTV trails on the Parrish Game Trail Fire Lane and 5 Cent Road is provided until the tornado stretch cleared this year by a chapter volunteer is checked and approved.

Depending on ground water levels, the segment has several water crossings which will require a bit of creativity to get around them.

Beaver activity has created a water crossing challenge in the area between 5 Cent Road and the forest lane north of the ATV shelter. Beaver activity has also been reported in the Old Truck Marker area 2.5 miles north of the trail head on County T.

The segment was checked after the July storm with several wet areas and a few downfall trees reported at scattered locations. Brushing and trail markings were also replaced where needed on the stretch with some mowing from County T to County H last summer.

Northwoods Chapter members regularly check the stretch from County Trunk H west to the Lincoln County line.

The segment has a ford across the Prairie River southeast of Parrish. The river bottom is firm and the water level is usually below the knees.

Logging was completed recently on the stretch between the Nelson and Parrish Game Trail Fire Lanes and the state-owned property south of the Prairie River so caution is advised in these areas.

The heavy snows of last winter caused the roof of the ATV shelter to collapse. The shelter's structural members were removed from the site with plans underway to eventually replace the structure.

Features of the Parrish Hills Segment include the Old Truck Marker, natural lakes, wetlands, Blackberry Ridge, the Prairie River ford and the eastern most prominence of the Harrison Hills at Old Baldy.