

LANGLADE COUNTY ICE AGE NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL CONDITIONS

(As of October 17, 2020)

COVID-19

All five Ice Age Trail segments in the county are open for hiking. However, hikers are encouraged to keep an appropriate distance when encountering other hikers on the trail. Also having a facemask handy if close encounters occur is recommended.

Due to situations beyond the control of the Langlade County Ice Age Trail Chapter, 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 hike.

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



Frost pocket on the Kettlebowl Segment

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

Last year this segment was heavily damaged by a severe storm that devastated over 30,000 acres in Langlade County. Volunteers cleared the fallen timber and replaced damaged markings. There are still damaged leaning and hung-up trees so hikers should be aware of them and exercise caution. One damaged tree on private land just east of the Sherry/Oak Roads Trailhead was reported recently. The property owner has advised the chapter that it will be removed as part of a future logging operation in the area.

Over half of this segment crosses privately-owned land. The mile plus stretch of trail north of the Sherry/Oak Roads Trailhead is private land.

A logging operation was completed last spring along the trail in the "Burma Road" alias Kent Pond Road area. 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. No future logging operations in the area are known at this time.

Brushing and markings were refreshed where needed from Sherry/OakRoads north to the Kettlebowl Ski Hill at Highway 52 this year. Seasonal growth of trees screens markings so be alert.

The segment passes through some of the highest terrain in Langlade County and features scenic hardwood ridges and frost pockets. Near to the trail is Kent Hill at 1903 feet above sea level which is the county's highest point of elevation. Big Stone Hole, a unique glacial feature, is just off 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 last year's storm that devastated a large portion of Langlade County. Volunteers cleared the fallen timber and replaced damaged markings. There are still damaged leaning and hung-up trees so hikers need to be aware of them and exercise caution.

Salvage logging was approved by the county to occur on significant stretches west of Highway 52, especially west and east of Otto Mauk Road. A stretch of the segment at the CTY A trailhead was also approved for salvage logging. If logging is occurring, please exercise caution through these areas.

The stretch especially west of Otto Mauk Road to County Trunk S has an inordinate amount of use by 4-wheel vehicles. With the abnormal rain this summer, pools of water have collected in depressions formed by the vehicular traffic. Caution is advised in these areas.

Brushing and directional arrows at critical intersections and markings were refreshed this year on from Wisconsin Highway 52 west to County A. Access to parking at the north end of Hill Road is not available currently as a deep pool of water covers the entire width of the town road and beyond.

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 noted features of this segment. The east end of the segment has rugged terrain which is part of a recessive moraine known as the Summit Lake 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 segments of Ice Age National Scenic Trail Segments were heavily damaged by a 2019 wind storm, Of the four segments, this one had the most devastation,

Volunteers have cleared the fallen timber and replaced damaged markings. There are still damaged and leaning trees, so caution is advised.

Rerouting of this segment was completed in 2018. The reroute involved establishment of new trail sections and upgrading existing stretches. The segment 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 any gated areas on County A is prohibited by county ordinance and the DNR.

Salvage logging has been approved by the county to occur on significant stretches of the segment north of CTH A, west of Pence Lake Road and in the Jack Lake Cross Country Ski Area north of CTH J. If logging is occurring, please exercise caution through these areas. A pine plantation a mile east of US 45/WI 47 has been approved for logging in the ski trail section. Caution is advised.

Hikers are encouraged to use parking areas on County B, Veterans Memorial Park or the Jack Lake Cross Country Ski Trail Area on County J to avoid the volume of highspeed traffic on US 45/WI 47

Higher lake levels have caused the bog walk and the overflow bridge at Game Lake to become non-useable. Hikers should use the longer portion of a nature trail around the lake as a bypass to connect east or west with the Ice Age Trail. The bypass will serve as the trail until the structures are restored.

Features of this segment are Veterans Memorial Park, the 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, a beach and arboretum. Some hikers have used the park as a base camp for their treks.



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 severe storm that devastated the county last year. Volunteers have cleared the fallen timber and replaced damaged markings. There are still damaged leaning and hung-up trees so hikers should exercise caution in these areas.

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 trail markings were installed on the stretch the following year. Brushing, refresher markings and directional arrows at critical intersections were completed this year on the segment.

This segment is incomplete and requires a hike on 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 interesting feature on 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.

An outstanding feature of this segment is the Parrish terminal moraine which closely parallels the stretch north of Kleevers Road for over 3 miles. Just north of 5 Points, is a gap cut by the West Branch of the Eau Claire River through the terminal moraine by vast volumes of water from the melting glacier. The gap was shaped later for a railroad grade. Just west of 5 Points is the west branch requiring a ford or a bit of creativity, depending on water levels, to avoid wet feet.



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

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

A tornado in 2011 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 damaged stretch is re-established. Last year a chapter volunteer this year completed clearing of the original trail and is awaiting approval before any re-opening.

Depending on ground water levels, the segment has several water crossings which will require a bit of creativity to get around them. A recent report indicated that some of the wet area are “down dramatically” from previous levels.

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. Several of the windfalls were removed. Brushing and trail markings were also replaced this year where needed on the stretch with some mowing in the Pine Road area and “Blackberry Ridge” east of Nelson Firelane.

Hikers may encounter a No Trespassing sign on the rail grade just west of Pine Road in Parrish. However, the landowner has granted permission for hikers to pass over his property.

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

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. Mucky stretches just north and south of the river can be expected.

Logging was partially completed on the stretch between the Nelson and Parrish Game Trail Fire Lanes and the state-owned property south of the Prairie River. Caution is advised in these areas when any logging operation is active.

Heavy snows caused the ATV shelter roof to collapse. The shelter’s structural members were removed from the site to replace the structure by next year.

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.