Building meaningful partnerships with other organizations is critical to the completion of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail. With roughly 500 miles of Ice Age Trail yet to secure, the Ice Age Trail Alliance in our 2011-2015 Strategic Plan identified the need to work with local land trusts and partners around the state to further land protection efforts for the Trail. Each land trust has its own mission that guides its protection efforts, and common objectives can be realized through collaborative efforts.

Over the past 12 months, the Alliance has worked with the North Central Conservancy Trust, the Natural Heritage Land Trust and Chippewa County Land Conservancy (more on this partnership in the next issue) to protect important properties for the Trail. We have several more collaborative efforts in the works that we’re excited to share with you in the future.

**NATURAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY PROTECTED ALONG THE ICE AGE TRAIL**

On April 30 the Alliance purchased 46 acres on the south side of the Portage Canal in the city of Portage, permanently protecting a segment of the Ice Age Trail (See Map 1). The purchase was part of a larger partnership to preserve the natural areas surrounding the Historic Indian Agency House at the edge of the city.

The Alliance purchased the property from The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America in the State of Wisconsin, who also finalized a conservation easement with the Natural Heritage Land Trust to protect 161 acres of adjacent land where the restored Agency House sits.

The new Alliance property contains roughly half a mile of Ice Age Trail. The Trail follows the historic Portage Canal, completed by the Army Corps of Engineers in 1876. Both the Canal and the Agency House are on the National Register of Historic Places, the Historic Indian Agency House serving as the house for John Harris Kinzie, U.S. Agent to the Ho-Chunk Nation, and Juliette Magill Kinzie. The United States Government built the house for Kinzie and his wife in 1832.

“We are thankful to Natural Heritage Land Trust and the Ice Age Trail Alliance for uniting with us to ensure that this beautiful historic property is protected from development and open to the public,” said Anne Vravick, President of The Colonial Dames of America in the State of Wisconsin. “It will be exciting to begin the process of restoring the land to its early 19th-century historical state.”

The Alliance, Colonial Dames and NHLT plan to partner with the US Fish and Wildlife Service.
and other organizations to do restoration work on the properties. Eventually, the hope is to open up the view to the nearby site of Fort Winnebago and the Fort's Surgeons Quarters. There is also the possibility of a loop trail along the Fox River from the Ice Age Trail.

ANCHOR FOR ICE AGE TRAIL PROTECTED IN MARATHON COUNTY

Thanks to a partnership between the Alliance and the North Central Conservancy Trust, 41 acres in the Town of Reid will one day hold a section of Ice Age Trail, and potentially a trailhead, parking lot and dispersed camping area.

The protected property sits between existing sections of Ice Age Trail in Marathon and Portage Counties and will help link the Trail through central Wisconsin (See Map 2).

“This property serves as an anchor point for the Ice Age Trail in southern Marathon County,” said Kevin Thusius, director of land conservation for the Alliance. “Future trail and trail developments will give visitors a unique and interesting outdoor experience on our Rice Lake Preserve.”

In early February the Alliance purchased the land from the North Central Conservancy Trust, a Stevens Point-based land trust whose mission is to protect working lands and environmental resources in central Wisconsin.

The land includes 1,000 feet of shoreline on Rice Lake, a spring-fed, undeveloped marl lake. White cedar forest covers the majority of the property’s acreage. NCCT originally received the land as a donation in 2011 and retains a conservation easement on the property. Showing their commitment to its protection, NCCT generously donated to the Alliance’s property monitoring endowment fund for the long-term management of the Preserve.

“In addition to protecting the shoreline and wetland forests, the property will be open to the public, guaranteeing the public enjoyment of this land for years to come,” said NCCT Executive Director Betsy Kerlin. “I am thankful to the Ice Age Trail Alliance for the opportunity to collaborate on this project.”