



The Langlade Erratic

A newsletter on the Ice Age National Scenic Trail
in Langlade County, Wisconsin

March 2021

Published by the Langlade County Chapter
of the Ice Age Trail Alliance



"48 YEARS AND COUNTING . . ."
**HI...COME JOIN YOUR TRAIL BUDDIES AT A VIRTUAL
MEETING VIA ZOOM
OF THE LANGLADE COUNTY ICE AGE TRAIL CHAPTER.
MONDAY, MARCH 22nd, 7 PM
AT YOUR HOME, PLACE OF BUSINESS OR WHEREVER.
SEE AND HEAR YOU ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN!**

Future Steps

As for now, it appears Zoom has become an important link for communications in this era of social distancing, face masks and hand hygiene. Last year chapter hikes and promotional efforts were cancelled. Fortunately, trail work was not abandoned due to special efforts by volunteers who complied with National Park Service COVID-19 requirements. Thus, the trails are open because of the committed efforts by the chapter's segment stewards.

What the future holds is a guessing game for now. Virtual events like our March 22nd chapter meeting have become standard operating procedure. Our son, Tim, said that people are "Zoomed Out". But for now, it is Zoom that prevails.

The Ice Age Trail Alliance's Annual Conference will be a virtual event (April 15-17, 2021). Included will be an array of informative programs, including the alliance's annual meeting. Registration and details are available at [2021 Annual Conference & Membership Meeting - Ice Age Trail Alliance](#)

Zoom Steps

Sam Picone, chapter treasurer, has again, generously offered his Zoom account to host the March 22nd meeting. Sam will send an invitation to all persons interested in attending the meeting. If interested in participating or have questions, please contact the coordinator at 715-623-2645 before March 22nd.

Planning Steps

For the first time, the chapter was asked to submit short and long-term trail project goals to the Ice Age Trail Alliance. There was a special chapter meeting held last month via Zoom with some officers and segment stewards to identify local trail needs. Notes from that meeting are available for anyone interested in the local planning effort.

On March 5, alliance staff members, Dave Caliebe and Patrick Gleissner, met via Zoom with the chapter officers and segment stewards to discuss local projects in relation to statewide project plans. Notes of that meeting are also available to anyone interested in the project planning effort. Or the information could be included in a future chapter newsletter. Take your pick.

Parrish Hills Steps

Kris Van Handel, avid hiker and author, agreed to share one or more experiences of her section hiking the Ice Age Trail. Her partner, Jared Wildenradt, often joins Kris. Enjoy their hike on the oldest Ice Age Trail segment in the county.

Jared and I planned to hike most of the Parrish Hills Segment during our vacation. Before doing this hike, we did a bit of trail maintenance a couple days in advance of the hike. A down tree blocking the trail had been reported just east of the Prairie River ford, so we hiked out to clean that up. The tree was causing a social trail to form, so after getting the tree cleaned up, we blocked off the social trail.

Our hiking day started at the parking lot near the Prairie River Fishery Area. We gathered up our gear, unloaded the moped and took a ride to the eastern end of the segment by Townline Lake. The morning was sunny and warm, so I did not need a jacket during the moped ride. The section of trail along the lake is always enjoyable with a nice view and it feels soft on my feet to hike on the pine needles. The large trees and plentiful blazes gave me many opportunities to take pictures as we hiked.

There were very few clouds in the sky, so when hiking through the open areas, the sun beat down on us, but there was a strong breeze that helped to keep us cool. It was enjoyable to walk through the open areas where the yellow and greens of the grass complimented the blue sky. Many grasshoppers were jumping around and chirping as we hiked through the area. After about 4 miles, we decided to stop in a shaded area for lunch. We started discussing the kinds of foods we could buy from a gas station during a thru hike. As we got back to hiking, our conversation switched to how we would set up a thru hike on the Ice Age Trail, where we would camp, and where to do food drops. Thru hiking the Ice Age Trail is a goal of mine, so this type of conversation comes up pretty frequently. This was the first time, though, that we got through the entire trail and picked out locations for food drops.

Someday, when I'm ready to do the thru hike, I will definitely have many plans and ideas to work from.

As we hiked along, we made note of a few more trees that were blocking the trail. We also stopped to admire the bridge Gerald built and were happy to have dry feet for a little while longer. As our journey continued, we had the opportunity to enjoy recently mowed trail and some black berries. Soon enough we were passing the tree we had cut up just two days earlier and then arrived at the Prairie River. We chose to end the hike with the ford so that we would have wet feet for only a short period of time. I don't mind wet shoes, but fully saturated shoes have caused blisters in the past, so I prefer to limit how much time my shoes are soaking wet. If I were to hike longer, I would bring an extra pair of socks to change into.

I last hiked this segment in October 2019 when the fall colors were at their peak. Even though the fall colors were beautiful to see, the most memorable part of the hike was fording the river because it was snowing as we made our way across the river. The water was knee deep and very cold! Before getting to the river, we met a couple people who had just come from the ford. They asked us where our spare boots were to change into. We told them we had extra shoes in the car and they gave us worried looks. Maybe we're a little crazy, but it's fun to add a little adventure into life and it gave us a great story to tell!

Our ford this time was very refreshing. After hiking in the sun all day, it felt really good to cool off my feet in the water. Most of the river was ankle deep with a section in the middle getting up to my calves. We stood in the water for a few minutes, then headed to the other side. After maneuvering around some mud, we entered the prairie and followed the mowed path out to the road. We had a short road walk back to the car where we tossed in our gear and went to collect the moped. Our trip ended with a stop in Antigo for something to drink and a quick stop by Joe's house to say hello from a distance.