

Thousand-Miler Essay by Lynn Larson

Hiking the Ice Age Trail starts with one step at a time; but the planning, organization, and preparedness beforehand are essential to one's successful completion of this 1,147-mile journey. However, just as important are what you learn on the trail.

- **Perseverance** while in various weather conditions (rain, wind, snow, heat), muck) while hiking solo or with friends
- **Determination** to enjoy the small pleasures in life, despite frustrations and setbacks (such as difficulty in finding the trailhead or missing blazes obscured by leaves)
- The importance of **loyalty, motivation, and encouragement** to and by friends
- **Appreciation** of small victories (counting milestones, becoming more observant, learning about glaciation, wildflowers, trees, and marveling at the nature around you)
- **Recognition** of the visionaries who conceived the idea of an Ice Age Trail, the volunteers who help maintain it, and the Ice Age Trail Alliance staff that update maps and guidebook, support trail growth and work to show us opportunities to contribute our time and talents to help others enjoy the amazing experience the trail offers
- **Thankfulness** for the spiritual and emotional wellness, peace, and satisfaction that develop on this endeavor, as well as the joy of meeting other adventurers on this path

Note: I segment hiked solo 17 percent of my 133 days on the trail. During my 2-year, 8-month journey I also hiked with 8 friends on various days finishing at the Western Terminus with Gail Colrud on October 23, 2021. The others included Dianne Getz, Mary Stewart, Donna Piotrowski, Teresa Aspeslet, Ruby Jaecks, Ruth Sommers, and Randi Peters.

I have attached the Thousand-Miler Spreadsheet where I recorded my miles, dates hiked on sections, and who I hiked with. I supported all the chapters that offered award programs and shuttles and participated in two Mammoth Challenges.



Gail Colrud and Lynn Larson