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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****More Ice Age Trail Coming to Manitowoc and Waupaca Counties**

Ice Age Trail Alliance protects two strategically located properties

Cross Plains, Wis. (March 25, 2024)—Two strategically located properties in Waupaca and Manitowoc Counties are now permanently protected for future Ice Age National Scenic Trail.

The Ice Age Trail Alliance officially acquired both properties on March 21, using its own funding.

Waupaca Property Adjacent to a State Natural Area

A 28-acre parcel in the Town of Scandinavia will eventually host more than a ¼ mile of future Ice Age Trail in Waupaca County.

Tucked between Skunk and Foster Lakes State Natural Area (land owned by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources) and County Highway V, the acquisition will eliminate current Ice Age Trail road walk. Since it is adjacent to public land, the acquisition also increases the acreage available for recreation and ecological restoration. Hikers will especially enjoy the property's varied terrain: wetlands, mixed hardwood forest, and rolling glacial topography.

"The parcel also preserves more than 1,200 feet along the banks of Sannes Creek, a trout stream running through the property," says Kevin Thusius, Director of Land Conservation for the Ice Age Trail Alliance. "Protecting the stream and adjacent 11 acres of wetlands is essential for keeping the creek crystal clear."

Manitowoc Property Closes a Gap

Sixty acres acquired in the Town of Schleswig will host more than ¾ mile of future Ice Age Trail. This property increases the size of the Alliance's Brownrigg-Heier Preserve to 316 acres. It also closes a gap by connecting the Preserve to Manitowoc County Park property, which hosts the 2.3-mile Walla Hi Segment of the Ice Age Trail.

"Our map for this area used to look a lot like a checkerboard, but over time, it has become much more unified," says Thusius. "Now, these uninterrupted acres can benefit from a cohesive management plan that promotes healthy habitats for native plant and animal species."

This property was important to protect because of its location as well as its glacial geology. "This Walla-Hi area represents one of the northernmost pieces of Kettle

Moraine topography, which means steep, rolling hills and dry kettles sticking up from mostly flat terrain," says Thusius.

The additional property provides an opportunity to create a brand-new, 2.5-mile section of Ice Age Trail and connect it to existing Trail in Walla Hi County Park.

Protecting Land is the First Step to Completing the Ice Age Trail

Once the Alliance protects land, it develops a management plan, which determines property uses and future developments (such as trail and camping locations). While planning is underway, state and federal reviews take place. Once approvals are received, construction can begin on the Trail and parking lots, boundaries are marked, and signage is put up.

The Ice Age Trail Alliance continuously seeks opportunities to protect land within the up-to-three-mile-wide corridor identified by the National Park Service as the route for the National Scenic Trail. Currently, nearly 700 miles of the 1,200-mile Trail is blazed hiking trail, ready for use. The remainder of the route follows rural highways and backroads (connector routes).

In the future, the Alliance may seek reimbursement for the properties from the State's Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund or by selling it to the National Park Service.

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About the Ice Age National Scenic Trail:

The Ice Age National Scenic Trail is a 1,200-mile footpath contained entirely within Wisconsin. It traverses the state from St. Croix Falls in the west, to Sturgeon Bay in the east, going as far south as Janesville. One of 11 National Scenic Trails, the Ice Age Trail highlights the landscapes that were carved out by ancient glaciers, which are some of the most beautiful areas in the state. Approximately 60% of Wisconsin residents live within 20 miles of the Ice Age Trail.

About the Ice Age Trail Alliance:

The Ice Age Trail Alliance is a nonprofit, member- and volunteer-based organization which conserves, creates, maintains, and promotes the Ice Age National Scenic Trail. For more information, visit IceAgeTrail.org.