

After 5 years, 2 trucks, 2 pair of boots, and 2 dogs, I finally completed the final segment of the trail on 9-21 2022. After hiking the North Country Trail 2017 100 mile challenge, I decided to give this one a try. (It took longer than I had figured.)

I began on the Chippewa Moraine Segment, as it is the closest to home.

(It is still my favorite segment.) After doing that, and adjoining segments, it was winter and I switched over to road miles (which in general I detested, but they are great in the winter, as the roads are plowed, where the trail is not.)

In the spring, I moved to the western segments beginning in St. Croix Falls and following the trail eastward for a time. In the summer, I started at Potawatomi State Park, and worked to get the peninsula out of the way. After that, I did a lot of jumping around to different segments and road miles. Where I went depended on how much time I had on any particular day. I considered any segment within a 3 hour one way drive to be doable. About 2/3 of the time I had to allow enough time to hike both ways as I rarely had my wife available for a shuttle. (I was VERY grateful when she was.)

In the summer of 2019, my old trail dog Amos died at 14, and I lost motivation for a few months, as he had been my constant companion for all my adventures. After I replaced him with my new dog Jackson, I had to train him before he was trail ready. That set me back even more time.

I started up again in the southern portion (Janesville area) to get the southern loop out of the way. I then moved back north and worked my way east toward Wausau, where I tripped and fell for the only time on the trail. (Not seriously injured.) I continued to work my way south for awhile until once again my wife as available to shuttle, so I went to Devils Lake and set up a basecamp to hike that area.

I then went back north to continue south from Wausau. Once my wife was available again, we set up camp at Point Beach, and I was able to hike that area.

That pretty much brings me to this year where once again my wife was able to shuttle, and we did several base camps at the Kettle Moraine Stat Forests and the occasional state park in order to get those areas in the southeastern part of the state completed, which finally did complete my quest to complete this trail.

I do remember that I ran into few people along the trail until I got to the southeastern part of the state. I don't think I ran into more than

20 people until I got to the Kettle Moraine area then I ran into more people than I could keep count of. I much prefer the northern segments due to the lack of people and in general more of a wilderness feeling.

Also, in the north, I had to carry water only for me, as there was plenty of surface water for my dog to drink. In the southern portions, there was not that much surface water available, so I had to carry water for both of us. (And on a couple of 90+ days, that was a gallon of water both AM and PM.)

Overall, it has been a pleasant experience to complete the Ice Age Trail and slay my white whale.

Thank You,

Sgt. Pete

Richard Peterson