

The Ice Age Trail Alliance's Spirit Stick award symbolizes long-term dedication and service to the Ice Age Trail and is presented to only one recipient per year. Spirit Stick nominees exhibit a passion for the Trail that becomes a way of life, lead by example and inspire those around them, and carry out their service in a spirit of cooperation, optimism and enthusiasm. The Lodi Valley Chapter (LVC) nominated Bill Welch for the Spirit Stick award and he was presented with the Spirit Stick at the 2014 IATA Annual Conference.

Bill's dedication and service to the IATA have been evidenced in a variety of ways since he first became involved in 2002. Bill has been a member of the IATA Board of Directors, including serving as president. He has assisted and continues to assist with Alliance strategic planning. He participates in IATA Annual Meetings and regional meetings, is a member of the Yellow Blaze Club and assists with outreach to other potential donors.

Bill has logged close to 3000 volunteer hours from January 2007 to September 2013. As an active member of the LVC Bill, has been the chapter liaison for local Mobile Skills Crew (MSC) projects, organized and led hikes, volunteered with chapter events, provided support for Saunters and attended almost all the monthly meetings. Bill organizes trail improvement days for our chapter and regional workdays involving multiple chapters. He mows a number of trails in the LVC area and does ongoing trail maintenance. He also speaks to local groups about the IAT. Bill is trained as a MSC Crew Leader and Project Support Leader and participates in a number of MSC projects across the state each year.

Bill has led and continues to lead a number of projects for youth, including scout groups, summer school groups, and others. Bill particularly enjoys working with youth and is good at engaging them in meaningful ways through their volunteer activities. Bill has also been the contact person for Boy Scouts who are working with the LVC to earn their Eagle Scout status. Bill wrote a grant to support a group of Lodi high school youth as trail maintainers and works with a Lodi high school teacher to organize work days and activities of this group.

Through all his various activities with the IATA, Bill demonstrates a spirit of cooperation while also showing a willingness to take on leadership roles as appropriate. He is a true believer in the value of the IAT for those of us who are enjoying it now and for future generations. He was so pleased when his young grandsons worked alongside him on a MSC Project! ☺

We are proud and honored to have Bill as a member of the LVC!