



## The Langlade Erratic

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

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of the Ice Age Trail Alliance



**HI...COME JOIN YOUR TRAIL BUDDIES  
FOR A VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM  
OF THE LANGLADE COUNTY ICE AGE TRAIL CHAPTER.  
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23<sup>rd</sup>, 7 PM  
BRING A FRIEND OR . . .**

**"49 YEARS AND COUNTING . . ."**

### **Zoom Steps**

Sam Picone, chapter treasurer, has again generously offered his Zoom account to host the above 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, Joe Jopek, at 715-623-2645 by September 22<sup>nd</sup>. Thank you.

### **Forty-Nine Steps**

It was a lovely evening on Wednesday, May 9<sup>th</sup> 1973, but I was heading for a meeting in Wausau. Roger Drayna, former English teacher at Antigo High School, had invited a few persons that he knew in Langlade, Lincoln and Marathon Counties to a meeting about establishing the Ice Age Trail in Northcentral Wisconsin.

Roger, employed in the Public Relations Department at Employers Mutual Insurance Company, was also serving on the Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation board. The board had considered ways to extend the trail beyond the Milwaukee and Madison areas. Roger volunteered to explore the possibility in this part of the state. The May meeting was his initial effort to explore options with residents of other counties. Besides Roger,

Herb Schotz and a few friends from Lincoln County and I attended the meeting. Afterwards, Roger suggested that I contact Dr. Robert Cromer as a possible leader due to his wide outdoor interests, including mountain climbing. Bob was also our family physician so it did not require much arm twisting to recruit him for the trail effort. Later that year, Roger met Peg and me with two of our sons, Brian and Matthew, to demonstrate trail building on a wooded unmarked stretch in Marathon County. Roger stapled his blazes to trees. The blazes were yellow with a blue snowflake printed on poster board stock.

Since that simple effort, the Ice Age Trail has progressed over our forty-nine years of local trail activity and elsewhere. For that the chapter is grateful to our past and present volunteers who generously cared for the trail along with our public and private landowner hosts over the years.

All are "trail angels", as their voluntary commitment assures the presence of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail. The long-distance trail provides a hiking pathway to adventure, fun, camaraderie, exposure to nature, exercise, challenges galore and a personal sense of satisfaction for present and future generations. The following offers proof.

## Couch-Less Steps

Recently Lloyd Godell shared an interesting phenomenon occurring on the trail. What he shared, reminded me of our chapter hikes while I was still able to hike and enjoy our group trail outings during all seasons, including winter. Upon invitation, a group leader, Paul Wendelberger of Wales in Waukesha County submitted the following article about the phenomenon. Enjoy and consider heeding the crew's message of **Get Off The Couch!**

In May 2021 we had the pleasure of hiking the Kettlebowl and Lumber Camp Segments of the now National Ice Age Trail. We had an amazing time in the elements. For some of us, it was the first-time sighting of bear prints and fresh bear scat in the forest. Kettlebowl offered miles of open trail and wonderful views. Lumber Camp challenged us with mud and some fun obstacles from fresh logging. But we still had an amazing time on the trail! We had 15 to 20 some adventurous hikers on the trail "lovin' " every minute of it.

The Get Off The Couch Crew is an encouraging group that promotes health, wellness, camaraderie, fun times and above all a reason to get off your Davenport. The original founders Tom Borger, Lee Augustine "The General Lee", Matt Aschenbrener and Paul Wendelberger have kept the momentum and consistency going for over a year now. Tom and Paul originally started in Lapham Peak taking the Ice Age Trail from the Evergreen Shelter to the Lapham Tower and back. It's about a 3.7 mile out and back early morning 7 AM every Saturday - even in winter (Nov 23, 2019).

In March 2020 that short 4 miler turned into a passion that started Get Off The Couch. Since the trails were not completely closed with the onset of Covid-19 it was a great time to socialize 6 feet apart mask and all. As other opportunities to enjoy the outdoors diminished, the Saturday hikes became something to greatly look forward to every week. Eventually it was decided that we would have a dedicated Saturday hike sometimes morning sometimes afternoon but every Saturday we would hike more and more miles. We started to learn more and more about this Ice Age Trail too. We found that one good way to start the IAT is to start close to home, then hike your way east AND west from there.

We did out and backs until more opportunities to shuttle opened up. As we branched out from Lapham Peak, both east and west on the Ice Age Trail, more and more people came to the trail as we promoted it on social media. We could have anywhere from two people to 30 show-up on our expeditions. We began to learn the sweet spot of mileage: 4 miles and under for the beginners, up to 8 miles for the intermediate and over 10 to 12 or more for advanced hikers.

We continued to make videos and interview newbies that came to the trail with us. As we interviewed new people on the trail, we found out there was a common thread. The common thread was "connecting"! Hikers connected with the trail and almost more importantly, with people. It was a time where socializing was a treat and not taken for granted.

We found that many people hit the trail to heal the soul through the soles of their boots. We didn't get too picky on a group pace. Hikers hiked at their own pace. However, we often gathered over structures that were created by Ice Age Trail Alliance volunteers. We are so grateful for every one of those structures, especially the ones over water and mud!

We soon began to learn the secrets of segmenting the trail as well as hitting those blasted Connector Routes (CR's) in the winter. They became an easier hike when surrounded by friends in the group. We also learned who are the purists and who just want to "get r done".

Statistically we have thousands of miles between all of us and that number increases every time we hit the trail. Consistency is key! Hit the trail at least once a week. The 1200 miles is doable! It's a "mammoth" of a trail but we've started with a passion to finish what we started! And Get Off The Couch!

We shoot videos of our adventures to give others some insight on the trail ahead and to share our fun filled expeditions on the trail. Enjoy a walk through the segments with the GOTC! Contact Get Off The Couch group (GOTC Hiking on Facebook)

The group's outings can be seen online at:  
[https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL0oS\\_cL-oOFK1xNC0mcGUX23QZM7XU\\_US](https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL0oS_cL-oOFK1xNC0mcGUX23QZM7XU_US)