

WINTER 2025

ICE AGE DRIFT



PUBLISHED BY THE DANE COUNTY CHAPTER
OF THE ICE AGE TRAIL ALLIANCE

dane.iceagetrail.org



IN THIS ISSUE:

- Read a special Thank You to one of our own on page 2.
- Continue reading about Tess Mulrooney's volunteerism on page 2.
- Interested in joining the Dane Drifters program? Details are on page 3.
- Meet one of our dedicated volunteers on page 3.
- Save the date for the annual meeting and more - details on page 4.

Evolving Glacially

By Tess Mulrooney (tlmmdsn@aol.com)

Editor's note: Tess Mulrooney has volunteered with the Dane County Chapter for many years. I asked her to describe her volunteer activities and motivations. For more information on any of these volunteer activities, please contact the Dane County Chapter at DaneCoChapter@iceagetrail.org.

When I was about halfway through my section hike of the Ice Age Trail, I knew I wanted to give back to the trail that had brought me so much tranquility and pleasure. The occasional Trail Crew events that I volunteered for weren't enough.

After I retired from my job in 2014, I had more free time, so I jumped in by serving as chapter secretary, serving as coordinator instead some years, started joining chapter work days to learn how to identify invasive vegetation, and also shuttled hikers as a Trail Angel.

Another need I identified was repainting the yellow blazes in Dane County. Ideally, all blazes are repainted every three years. After repainting the prairie segments several times, I was happy to turn over these duties to the newest Dazzling Daubers of Dane this year. One of the Daubers tells me that they work in pairs on kiosks. When working on trees or posts, she knows that someone is working both behind and just ahead of her in a leapfrog fashion. She says that blazing isn't as physical as clearing invasives. The group may be seeking additional members next season.

Continued on page 2

Liebetrau Prairie



Tess at Glacier National Park.
Photo by Paul Eastwood

Thank you, Tom Gross

By Lynsey Ray

For anyone who has read the Dane Drift, attended a Dane County Chapter Annual Meeting, or participated in the annual Hike-A-Thon, you've no doubt met Tom Gross. This issue of the Drift is the first one that is being published without Tom as its editor. It is for that reason, I reached out to a few folks who have worked with Tom for decades or only a few short years. Gary Werner recalled some favorite trail memories of growing up and growing old on the Trail. In the early days, Tom was a regular volunteer, leading work parties, helping with the volunteer appreciation events, and planning the annual Hike-A-Thon. As time passed, Tom shifted his focus from trail work to editing the Drift. One of Gary's favorite memories working with Tom was on a Prairie Moraine work party in the early 90's. Tom worked to engage UW Hoofers to support trail restoration and clear a whole thicket of honeysuckle.

"What Tom has given to the trail has been a very quiet and persistent effort to be there and do whatever needed to be done." Over the years, he has served as Chapter Coordinator, Treasurer and Secretary at different times.

He has helped make decisions, guide things and organize different events. In a volunteer organization, having people who are willing to stick with it for the duration is the "glue that keeps us together."

EJ Temme summed up a perfect example from the June 2024 Hike-A-Thon. The day ended up being quite rainy and cold, but there were still over 170 hikers that showed up! Tom selflessly accepted the parking enforcement role, which entailed standing in the rain helping hikers get parked. This was a great example of who Tom is—always stepping in to help where he is needed, even if it's not the most glamorous job. He is a wonderful person and volunteer, and we are lucky to have him!

Thank you, Tom, for all that you've done to support the Ice Age Trail throughout the years and congratulations on your retirement!

Continued: Evolving Glacially

When I started focusing on the one-mile Montrose North area in 2016, the roughly 7-acre woods was completely overrun with garlic mustard. My husband insisted that "that's how it is," and "live with it." I picked and picked for the first year. The second year, I bagged the plants that had gotten away from me. IATA staffer Patrick Gleisner remembers that he was one of the many hikers I asked for help bagging as he hiked through. He thought I was crazy as he pushed south along the trail. After compacting the weeds in the bags three times, they were too heavy for me to haul out of the woods, so I had to ask for more help. That November, I sprayed the remaining first year plants. If you have a long memory, you may recall a Mammoth Tales cover shot of a profusion of wild geraniums which sprouted after the soil was healed. The new flowers proved what I had been told: if you remove the woody invasives, the native plants will return!

Besides garlic mustard, I needed a lot of sawyer help with bigger invasives, as the trees were too large to clear with loppers. I also had help in seeding two prairies, although only one is still in existence. After four years, the area has gained much more color.

I did take chainsaw training, but my 4'11" frame with scoliosis meant that I couldn't use any equipment with a pull start – basically, no gas-powered tools. But my sister

showed me a battery-powered reciprocating saw, and I found one on sale and bought it! It works well on anything up to 4 inches in diameter and can clear bigger fallen trees from the trail if I'm patient.

This year, I've pulled back from some volunteering with thousand-miler profiles and as a Trail Angel. I wanted to spend more time on removing invasives. There may be opportunities for new volunteers as Trail Angels!



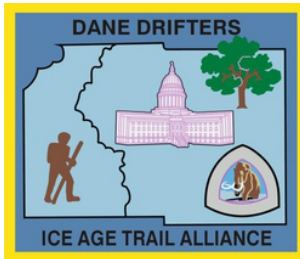
Photo by Dave Caliebe

Don't Forget!

I continue to track volunteer hours on the Ice Age Trail for Dane County. These are submitted to the Alliance and the National Park Service. Organized events are usually tracked by the event leader. However, if you aren't getting my quarterly emails, and are not reporting your own independent time, it's not being counted! Let's talk!

Dane Drifters Update for Winter 2025

By Gary Wensing



With the successful completion of another Mammoth Hike Challenge, it wasn't surprising to see a good number of people also finish the Dane Drifter program. But don't worry if you didn't send in your info to me yet – you can complete Dane Drifters anytime and there's no time limit on finishing.

Since our last newsletter, 18 more people have turned in their logs and received their patches & certificates! A big shout out goes to our newest finishers.

As a reminder, the Program is only \$10 for IATA members, \$12 for non-members and \$6 for a companion to a registered hiker and you can earn a patch and a certificate of completion for hiking all of the segments of IAT in Dane County, while also supporting the Dane County Chapter of the Ice Age Trail Alliance.

Wouldn't you like to join them? See the Dane County page on the IATA website: <http://dane.iceagetrail.org/home>.

Whether you're working on the program or not, everyone is welcome to join us on group hikes on our trail segments. I'm hoping for some snow soon since we have some snowshoe hikes coming up in the next couple of months. Check out the the IATA website, as well as the Ice Age Trail Alliance Rock and Dane County Chapters Meet-Up group (<https://www.meetup.com/Ice-Age-Trail-Alliance-Rock-Dane-County-Chapter/>) for updates on events. The group hikes are a great way to work on the program.



Mark tracking his hiking miles on his journey to be a Thousand Miler during a moonrise over Lake Michigan. Photo by Mark Graczykowski

For anyone considering how to get connected to an Ice Age Trail volunteer opportunity, Mark suggests attending a Chapter meeting (the annual meeting is currently scheduled for Sunday, January 26, 2025) or attend the Alliance's annual conference. Talking to people and being open to learning about what others are doing is a great way to learn about volunteer opportunities. Then you can figure out what you like to do and what you don't like to do. For Mark, going out alone on smaller projects, he found more motivation to do more. He suggested that whether you can give a day, 50 or 600 hours a year, people should give as much as they can. If you have skills and talents, bring your ideas.

Connectors & Segments

Heather Baertlein, Oregon, WI
 Sara Bremser, Fitchburg, WI
 Eric Da Costa, Rochelle, IL
 Donna Hellenbrand, Madison, WI
 Bailey Hellenbrand, Madison, WI
 Diahann Lohr, Watertown, WI
 Marty Matzinger, Verona, WI
 Denise Nettum, Verona, WI
 Nancy Smithback, Madison, WI
 Dianne Yeske, Verona, WI

Segments

Alley Feierstein, Milwaukee, WI
 Candy Flynn, Middleton, WI
 Jann Kalscheur, Madison, WI
 Kari Knowles, Madison, WI
 Mark Miller, Madison, WI
 Beth O'Callaghan, Madison, WI
 Cheryl Radomski, New Berlin, WI
 Susan Webb, Mineral Point, WI

Volunteer Spotlight: Mark Graczykowski

By Lynsey Ray

Mark Graczykowski started seeing Ice Age Trail signs pop up on maps when he first started hiking in college, but didn't start volunteering until 7 years ago after a trip to Zion National Park. While at Zion, Mark volunteered by leading youth programming. When he came back to Wisconsin, he reached out to Tess Mulrooney and began volunteering in different capacities for the Dane County chapter, ranging from trail building and maintenance with Ed Spoon to habitat restoration projects with Dave Lonsdorf. He currently serves as the trail monitor for the Lodi Marsh segment. Today, the volunteer work that brings him the most joy is working with kids. He routinely signs up to support the Alliance's Think Outside program, which aims to introduce 4th graders around the state to the Trail, Wisconsin history and geography. "I love to help get kids outside and having fun. Every hike is so different and I've learned to not have an agenda."

Annual Meeting and Elections

By Tom Gross

A quick glance at the old calendar on the wall tells me it's time to announce another Chapter annual meeting and election of officers.

Time: 5:45 P.M., Sunday January 26, 2025
Place: Rosemary Garfoot Public Library,
2107 Julius St., Cross Plains (use the side entrance)

What Happens: This is a pot-luck event so bring a dish to pass. About 7:00, we will finish our dining and socializing and get down to business. An agenda and proposed budget will be sent out prior to the meeting. (If you have not been receiving meeting notices but would like to, please contact Carrie at: carrie.m.preston@gmail.com)

The business portion of the meeting will involve approval of the annual budget and the election of officers for 2024. The nominating committee is pleased to announce that these incumbents have agreed to continue serving and are hereby nominated: Bob Kaspar, Coordinator; EJ Temme, Co-coordinator, Carrie Preston, Secretary. The Treasurer does not wish to continue so that position is open at this writing. Nominations will also be accepted at the meeting. If the proposed candidate is not present at the meeting, their written permission must be presented in order that they be considered for an office.

Following the meeting, we will learn about **Gathering Waters (GW)** from two of its staff: Charlie Carlin and Morgan Rusnak. Their topic is legislative efforts to conserve land in Wisconsin. GW is the umbrella organization that serves all land trusts in the state, including the IATA.

SAVE THE DATE

WINTER HIKE OR SNOWSHOE OUTINGS!

January 19 – 10:30 am
Springfield Hill
(meet at Ballweg Rd kiosk)

February 9 – 1pm
Lodi Marsh
(meet at Robertson trailhead)

DANE COUNTY HIKE-A-THON
Saturday, June 7, 2025



Thank you to Inkworks for helping
us print this newsletter.