

The whim that turned into an adventure

It was October 12th, 2020 when we began our Ice Age adventure unbeknownst to us. A few of our biking buddies were also hikers. We were invited to join them for hiking the Loew Lake segment the fall of 2020. My husband and I were devoted enthusiasts of biking, and hiking wasn't even on our radar. Our mutual friends were hikers and they coaxed us into joining them. Then came along COVID-19. Like many others, we chose to stop using our indoor gym membership and opt for being out in the fresh air and away from germs. Thus began our adventure. Our friend, Mary Kay proposed hiking segments of both the south and north Kettle Moraine. It was relatively close to our house, and the weather in the fall was perfect for hiking. We could only muster 5 mile hikes at the time, but we finally finished what I thought would be the only segments of the IAT we would do. After all, we hiked from Whitewater to Greenbush, which I thought was quite an accomplishment at the time. During that time our addiction unfolded. We could see the wildlife up close, not to mention the beautiful scenery and parts of the state that were hidden as you passed them in a car. We were hooked. In the interim, we joined the Wisconsin Go Hiking club in the Milwaukee area as well as a friends organized hiking group. We were getting in better shape and then joined up with other hikers. So we hiked with Wisconsin Go Hiking several years in a row especially in fall to add to our Mammoth challenge and crank out more miles, as we hiked the IAT with friends and by ourselves. Before we realized it, hiking with friends, meeting new friends through Get off the couch, 1000 wannabe's and the IAT website, we were gaining a network of fellow hikers to share our experiences. Then after breaks in our hiking schedule in 2023 I was diagnosed with stage one lung cancer. I was worried that I wouldn't finish the IAT after lung surgery, but continued to walk and eventually hike after my recovery. We were never the fastest hikers, but we were very determined to finish the IAT, and of course we did. We finished about four years later in October of 2024. We couldn't have done it without all of the support of our friends, trail angels, and all the wonderful people we met along the way. And of course the IAT organization. Without all this support, we wouldn't have turned a whim into an adventure.

1/9/2025

Mark + Harriet
Mark Steinhilber
Harriet Pfersch