

Ice Age Trail Thousand Miler Essay

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My first hike on the Ice Age National Scenic Trail was at Devil's Lake in December 2019 with my now husband, Colton, and our dog, Shadow. We were new college grads who had just moved to Wisconsin and had never heard of the trail. Of course, we were stunned by the beauty of Devil's Lake and intrigued by the very existence of the trail. At first we had no intention of completing the whole trail, and used it as a guide to help us explore the new state we were living in. It wasn't until May 2022 we decided to commit to hiking the entire trail. Completing the trail 2 years later, in May 2024, is my most proud and meaningful personal accomplishment thus far in my life.

The trail is very special to me for many reasons and this milestone reflects several things I love and value at this time in my life; spending time outdoors, doing hard things, pushing myself mentally and physically, movement, goofing off and laughing, deep conversation, introspection, quality time spent with Colton and Shadow and the many friends and family members who joined us along the way, and finding and appreciating the beauty that both surrounds us and exists within. I feel so blessed and fortunate to have had this opportunity and will cherish the memories forever.

